

## HOW TO FIX THE JOHNSON AMENDMENT

From the time of the first Pilgrims, American pastors enjoyed the freedom to speak boldly from their pulpit about the most crucial social and political issues of the day. But in 1954, the carefully manipulated passage of one outrageous piece of legislation – the Johnson Amendment – profoundly undermined this crucial freedom.

Nearly 60 years later, the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) convened a Commission to study, among other things, whether the Johnson Amendment should be amended or repealed.

The Commission was advised by panels of representatives from the non-profit sector, legal experts, and religious leaders.

After studying the issue, the Commission [recommended](#) amending the Johnson Amendment to restore the Constitutional right of free speech to churches and other non-profit organizations.

The Commission recommended amending the Johnson Amendment to allow:

1. Speech that would be no added cost or a very minimal cost to the organization (such as a sermon).
2. If the speech of the organization would cost more than that minimal amount, then the Johnson Amendment would only prohibit speech that clearly identifies candidates and expressly advocates for those candidates' election or defeat.

This fix, if adopted, will relieve a great deal of pressure on churches and other non-profit organizations. It will get the IRS out of the business of censoring what a pastor says from the pulpit and will go a long way to bringing clarity to the IRS' enforcement of the Johnson Amendment.

ECFA's proposal overrides the negative effects of the Johnson Amendment without even having to repeal it. It is a practical, realistic way to restore a fundamental right to churches and other non-profits that everyone, including Congress, can get behind.

Today, there is a movement of pastors in the United States standing up for their right to free speech by signing up for Pulpit Freedom Sunday. This movement seeks to encourage Congress to consider and pass this reasonable amendment.

Sign up today at [www.pulpitfreedom.org](http://www.pulpitfreedom.org) to uphold free speech and let Congress know it is their duty to do the same.