



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM WEEKLY

from

Americans for Freedom of Religion

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IRS Declares: Churches and Non-Profits May Openly Endorse Political Candidates

On July 7, 2025 the IRS filed a legal document clearly stating that churches and other non-profits may endorse political candidates without losing their tax-exempt status. For the first time since the 1954 Johnson Amendment, which held that such endorsements were illegal, churches can now communicate with their congregations about political matters as part of their normal pastoral communications and conversations.

The IRS statement is a result of a 2024 lawsuit filed by the National Religious Broadcasters Assn. and two churches asserting that the Johnson Amendment deprived churches of First Amendment freedom of speech and the free exercise of their religion.

Churches are still to avoid paying for ads backing a specific candidate, church backed public rallies for a candidate or using church resources to support a candidate. However, pastors, priests and faith leaders can now speak about political issues, candidates for election and public policy during regular church communications without fear of losing their tax-exempt status.

However, the Catholic church will not endorse political candidates according to a July 8, 2025 statement from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The USCCB states, "The Church seeks to help Catholics form their conscience in the Gospel so they might discern which candidates and policies would advance the common good. The Catholic Church maintains its stance of not endorsing or opposing political candidates."

"It belongs to the Church always and everywhere to announce moral principles, even about the social order, and to render judgment concerning any human affairs insofar as the fundamental rights of the human person or the salvation of souls requires it," canon law explains.

Read more: <https://tinyurl.com/2mwxdra> <https://tinyurl.com/3tvzn926> <https://tinyurl.com/5n85sd89>
<https://tinyurl.com/nzv26eu2>

"The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool." - Martin Luther King, Jr.