



# Resolution

## Opposing the Chill of the Johnson Amendment

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- WHEREAS** National Religious Broadcasters is a nonpartisan, international association of Christian communicators whose member organizations reach millions of listeners, viewers, and readers.
- WHEREAS** The First Amendment guarantee of free speech is vital to the mission of Christian communicators.
- WHEREAS** A 1954 provision authored by then-Senate Democratic Leader Lyndon B. Johnson to stop Section 501(c)(3) organizations from “intervening” in political campaigns has since been interpreted to bar ministers and nonprofit leaders from making political statements at their organizations’ functions or in their publications.
- WHEREAS** This constitutionally suspect rule has been vaguely and inconsistently applied by the Internal Revenue Service, resulting in a chilling effect.
- WHEREAS** At the 2017 National Prayer Breakfast, U.S. President Donald Trump proclaimed that America “was formed on the basis that freedom is not a gift from government, but that freedom is a gift from God,” and he promised to eliminate the Johnson Amendment to “allow our representatives of faith to speak freely and without fear of retribution.”
- WHEREAS** The Free Speech Fairness Act has been introduced in Congress to fix the Johnson Amendment by clarifying that political statements by 501(c)(3) organizations are permissible as long as they are made in the ordinary course of the organization’s activities. Thus, churches and charities would still be prohibited from making targeted political expenditures, but need not fear expressing views in the normal course of business.
- THEREFORE  
BE IT  
RESOLVED** NRB urges government and ministry leaders to stand against the Johnson Amendment’s chill of the constitutional free speech rights of churches and ministries, and NRB supports legislation like the Free Speech Fairness Act to provide a statutory remedy.