



## **EMPOWERING PASTORS AND CHURCHES IN POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT** NAVIGATING 501(C)(3) REGULATIONS WITH CONFIDENCE

### **RIGHTS OF PASTORS AND CHURCHES**

#### **EXPRESS PERSONAL POLITICAL VIEWS AS PRIVATE CITIZENS**

- ✓ Pastors can express their personal political opinions outside of church functions.
- ✓ Pastors must clearly indicate that they are speaking for themselves, not the church.
- ✓ Personal political activities should be conducted on the pastor's own time and using personal resources.

#### **PREACH ON MORAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

- ✓ Pastors can address moral and social issues from the pulpit, even if they have political implications.
- ✓ Pastors can discuss how faith intersects with current events and policy matters. However, they should avoid framing these issues in terms of specific candidates or political parties.

#### **CONDUCT NON-PARTISAN VOTER EDUCATION ACTIVITIES**

- ✓ Churches can provide neutral, unbiased information about candidates and their positions.
- ✓ Churches can distribute voter guides that cover a broad range of issues.
- ✓ Voter registration drives are allowed if conducted in a non-partisan manner.

#### **INVITE POLITICAL CANDIDATES TO SPEAK AT CHURCH EVENTS IN A NON-CANDIDATE CAPACITY**

- ✓ Candidates can be invited to speak as subject matter experts or community leaders.
- ✓ The event should not be used to promote or oppose the candidate's campaign.

#### **HOSTING CANDIDATE FORUMS**

- ✓ Churches can host forums where all candidates are invited to speak.
- ✓ The format should be neutral, with equal time and opportunity for all candidates.
- ✓ Questions should cover a broad range of issues and be presented without bias.

#### **THE EXTENT OF ALLOWED ISSUE ADVOCACY**

- ✓ Churches can engage in some lobbying activities, but it cannot be a substantial part of their overall activities.
- ✓ Churches can advocate for or against specific legislation based on moral principles.

# RESTRICTIONS ON PASTORS AND CHURCHES

## ENDORISING OR OPPOSING POLITICAL CANDIDATES IN OFFICIAL CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS

- ✘ Pastors cannot use sermons, church bulletins, or official church social media to support or oppose candidates.
- ✘ The church cannot display political campaign signs on its property.
- ✘ Church resources (like mailing lists) cannot be used for political campaign purposes.

## MAKING FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS FROM CHURCH FUNDS

- ✘ Churches are prohibited from donating money or in-kind contributions to political campaigns, this includes indirect support, such as paying for campaign events or materials.

## DISTRIBUTING PARTISAN CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

- ✘ Churches cannot distribute campaign literature for specific candidates.
- ✘ Churches cannot allow campaign materials to be distributed on church property.

