

Donald Trump: 'I Want to Give Power Back to the Church'

In an exclusive interview with The Brody File, Donald Trump wants to see Christian pastors speak more boldly from the pulpit because as he sees it, "the church has to have more power." He's referring to the passage of The Johnson Amendment in which the U.S. tax code was altered so that tax-exempt organizations (like churches in many instances) would not be allowed to endorse or oppose political candidates.

Trump says the federal government should never have done that. "They've taken a lot of the power away from the church. I want to give power back to the church. ... Christianity is really being chopped; little by little it's being taken away." Trump continues: "I want pastors and ministers to be able and get up and speak on behalf of Christianity, and they're afraid to do it right now because they don't want to lose their tax exempt status. We will take care of that."

The Brody File has interviewed Trump numerous times, and this is the first time he's ever mentioned the Johnson amendment as it relates to pastors speaking out from the pulpit. Trump leads with evangelicals in South Carolina. His no-nonsense strong approach is attractive to some evangelicals. In public, he can be rough around the edges for sure but his narrative is of a guy who gets things done. His brand is accomplishment and so when he says he's going to "take care of the evangelicals" and start winning again for Christianity, many people believe him at face value. It's a great "trump" card to have in your political hip pocket.

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David Brody: "Tell me about your core—because you say a lot of good stuff up there, but people want to make sure that you're

going to be able to deliver.”

Donald Trump: “I’m a Christian. I’m Protestant. I’m Presbyterian. I think that Christianity frankly, I think Christians in our country are not treated properly. The bill that was passed during the Lyndon Johnson era is horrible because I see churches where they’re afraid to be outspoken because they don’t want to lose their tax-exempt status and I realize that is one of the problems. I know people who want to endorse me but they’re afraid to endorse anybody because they don’t want to get political so essentially they’ve taken a lot of the power away from the church. I want to give power back to the church because the church has to have more power. Christianity is really being chopped; little by little it’s being taken away.”

David Brody: “So you just invoked Lyndon Johnson there in 1952, the tax-exempt status so just so I understand you’re basically saying that you want pastors to be more involved and speak more boldly from the pulpit like they did in Revolutionary War times, is that it?”

Donald Trump: “I want pastors to be able to speak. They’re afraid to speak now, they’re afraid to get involved in politics because of tax-exempt status and I want pastors to be able to speak. ... I want pastors and ministers to be able and get up and speak on behalf of Christianity, and they’re afraid to do it right now because they don’t want to lose their tax exempt status. We will take care of that.”