

# President Trump Issues Stern 'Warning' to Faith Leaders

President Donald Trump privately urged faith leaders Monday evening to use their pulpits to help Republicans win their mid-term elections, *The New York Times* has reported.

Following a dinner for a group of about 100 evangelical ministers in the White House State Dining Room, and with reporters out of the room, Trump told those gathered that "you're one election away from losing everything you've got," according to an audiotape provided to *The New York Times* by someone who attended the event.

"I just ask you to go out and make sure all your people vote," *The New York Times* revealed that Trump said. "Because if they don't—it's Nov. 6—if they don't vote, we're going to have a miserable two years, and we're going to have, frankly, a very hard period of time."

According to the report, President Trump reportedly spoke of eliminating the Johnson Amendment, a 1954 provision of tax law that threatened religious organizations and churches with the loss of tax-exempt status for endorsing or opposing political candidates.

The Johnson Amendment, he said, has kept many from voicing their political opinions from the pulpit.

But eliminating the Johnson Amendment isn't solely up to the president and would require action from Congress.

In May 2017, Trump signed an executive order directing the IRS not to aggressively pursue cases where a church endorses a candidate or makes political donations *The New York Times* reported.

*The New York Times* also reported that Trump “warned” the group that if “Republicans do not retain control of Congress, religious communities would lose all of the gains he had secured on their behalf.”

“They will end everything immediately,” Trump said, according to the recording. “They will overturn everything that we’ve done, and they’ll do it quickly and violently. And violently. When you look at Antifa, and you look at some of these groups, these are violent people.” {eoa}