

Tony Perkins: President Trump's National Prayer Breakfast Remarks Were 'Outstanding'

Following President Donald Trump's speech at last week's National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C., Family Research Council President Tony Perkins gave a big thumbs-up.

In a statement released by FRC, Perkins said:

President Trump's remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast were outstanding—right on target. The president was very clear that religious freedom needs to flourish because our country's ability to flourish is contingent upon it. I know his speech is a great encouragement for people of faith, both at home and abroad, and especially for those who have faced persecution because of their religious beliefs.

I commend President Trump for calling for the repeal of the Johnson Amendment, echoing the call that he raised repeatedly on the campaign trail.

In 2015 alone, we know of 99 different churches singled out by the IRS for violation of the Johnson Amendment. It's time for this IRS intimidation of churches and clergy to come to an end.

Dr. Martin Luther King—the greatest “political pastor” in the nation—spoke forcefully from the pulpit about how the issues of the day were to be driven by pastors and the people in pews. For the whole of American history, churches have been at the forefront of shaping debate and public policy. That's where they ought to stay. Pastors should be held to accountable to God alone for what they say behind

the pulpit, not the IRS.

I urge Congress to pass the Free Speech Fairness Act and once again allow churches and nonprofit organizations the freedom to speak without fear of government punishment.

FRC is promoting the Free Speech Fairness Act, a bill sponsored by House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.), U.S. Rep. Jody Hice (R-Ga.) and Senator James Lankford (R-Okla.) that would address the shortcomings of the Johnson Amendment which in 1954 was inserted into the tax code by Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson (D-Texas), without floor or Committee debate. The Johnson amendment prohibits churches and nonprofits from engaging in any activity that might be interpreted as participating in or intervening in a campaign on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for public office, including a simple oral or written statement. {eoa}