

CHURCHES & ELECTIONS LEGAL GUIDE*

Pastors should be supported in their goal of helping their church members be good stewards in representing their faith in all areas of our society and in their civic duties. This is especially important in light of the fact that only about half of Christians in America are voting today.

Unfortunately, many churches and pastors have been given false information in an attempt to scare them from impacting their culture. The law is actually very supportive of pastors and churches in fulfilling their mission to equip their congregation. Even as a non-profit corporation, there is *very little* a church may *not* do.



CHURCHES CAN

- Register their members as voters
- Pass out non-partisan Voter's Guides
- Invite all candidates in a race to speak up (O.K. if only one shows up)
- Speak directly about specific issues and legislation (abortion, marriage, etc.)
- Endorse or oppose candidates or policies using customary internal communication channels with congregants



CHURCHES CAN'T

- Contribute to or use church resources for one candidate over another (including free use of church list)

Individually, a pastor can endorse, support a member's campaign, etc., as long as it's not done with church resources. There are no limitations on the pastor individually. The few limitations above are only for the church entity and only if the church is a non-profit corporation.

Pastors should not be intimidated from calling their people to vote and giving them information so they can make informed decisions in the voting booth.

¹ Internal Revenue Service, The Tax Guide for Churches & Religious Organizations, I.R.S. Pub. 1828 at 2 (Rev. 8-2015), <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p1828.pdf>; see also 28 U.S.C. §508(c)(1)(A). (While churches may seek official 501(c)(3) recognition, this IRS document itself says that churches "are not required to apply for and obtain recognition of tax-exempt status from the IRS" to be considered tax exempt.)

Questions?

Call (972) 941-4444
or email info@firstliberty.org



* Applies to all houses of worship including, but not limited to synagogues, mosques, temples and other religious organizations.