

## **SPECIAL REPORT**

# **Houses Of Worship Freedom Of Speech Restoration Act!**

Congress is currently debating passage of the **Houses of Worship Freedom Of Speech Restoration Act (H.R. 235)**.

This bill is sponsored by Rep. Walter B. Jones (R-NC). TVC's Chairman, Rev. Louis P. Sheldon has worked with Jones on this legislation since its inception more than four years ago.

H.R. 235 is designed to undo an injustice committed against non-profit organizations—including churches—by Senator Lyndon Johnson in 1954.

In 1954, Johnson ran for re-election to the U.S. Senate after his questionable victory in 1948. Johnson was being opposed by two conservative anti-communist non-profit groups in Texas. These groups considered him soft on communism.

Before he won re-election to the Senate, Johnson decided he would punish non-profit groups for their efforts against him. He inserted language into the IRS Code that prohibited 501 (c) (3) organizations from endorsing or opposing political candidates.

*The CPA Journal* of New York (8/2004) details Johnson's strategy against non-profits:

In 1954, at the height of the McCarthy era, Senator Lyndon B. Johnson sought a legislative route to silence some of his anticommunist critics. Encouraged by Johnson, the U.S. Senate passed a major tax code revision by a voice vote. Although Johnson's revision was targeted specifically at non-profit groups that were contesting his seat, churches—which also are non-profit organizations—fell under the new tax code provisions.

Prior to Johnson's vengeful act against non-profit anti-



*As a Senator, Lyndon Johnson inserted IRS restrictions on non-profit groups in re-venge for being opposed for re-election by two anti-communist groups in Texas.*

communist organizations opposing his re-election to the Senate, churches and non-profits were free to endorse or oppose political candidates and legislation!

### **Restore What Was Stolen From Non-profits!**

This Johnson-inspired injustice against non-profits has continued unchanged for more than 50 years. This provision must be amended in the IRS Code to give back to non-profits (including churches) a right stolen from them by Johnson.

**H.R. 235 will amend the IRS Code allowing ministers, rabbis, priests and leaders of non-profit organizations to speak from their Houses of Worship when a moral and Biblical issue is pending even though it is political and involves a candidate.** The H.R. 235 web site ([www.hr235.org](http://www.hr235.org)) says this: "All faith-based ministries will be free to speak their mind about any issue, including political and moral issues, without financial reper-

cussion. This was the original intent of the framers of our Constitution. Since 1954, that right [of pastors to speak freely for or against candidates and legislation] has been distorted, misused, and abused. This legislation simply corrects that injustice, and levels the playing field for all faiths, religions, and denominations."

As TVC's Chairman Rev. Louis P. Sheldon has observed: "The IRS Code prohibition must be removed to restore the constitutional right of pastors and non-profit leaders to freely criticize political leaders without fear of losing their tax-exempt status." H.R. 235 must be passed this year!

**TAKE ACTION: Urge your Representative and two U.S. Senators to support immediate passage of H.R. 235. Access [www.hr235.org](http://www.hr235.org) for additional details on this bill and TVC's web site: [www.traditionalvalues.org](http://www.traditionalvalues.org)**