

You've Been Silenced,' Trump Tells Pastors As He Vows To Get Christians' Voice Back

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"If I get elected ..."

[Jack Davis](#) August 12, 2016 at 4:15pm

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump told Christian leaders Thursday that under his presidency, people who have been silenced will be given back their voice.

"Free speech is being taken away from people that are great people, from people that are saying good things, not bad things," Trump told Jenna Browder of the Christian Broadcasting Network. To remedy that, Trump said he will work to overturn the Johnson Amendment, a federal law banning non-profits from being involved in political causes.

Trump said for the amendment to be abolished, he must be elected.

"Everyone has to get out and vote," he told Browder, adding that in 2012, "Christians didn't vote."

Browder probed for the man behind the message.

"I'm less perfect than some people, but I have certain abilities that are good, like being able to do things," he said.

Earlier Thursday, Trump spoke at a gathering of evangelical Christians in Orlando, where he decided to go off-script for the evening.

"So I had a long, beautiful speech written and I read it and I said 'Boy this is boring, this is not what we want to talk about,'" he told the pastors.

He began by noting their shared belief.

"Without religious liberty, you don't have liberty," he said.

He then focused on his main message — his pledge to abolish the Johnson Amendment, proposed by then senator and former President Lyndon Johnson.

“If I get elected president one of the early things, one of the absolute first things I’m gonna do is work on totally knocking out the Johnson Amendment,” Trump said.

According to Southern Baptist minister and Trump supporter Pat Robertson, the law has “been used as a club by the IRS to silence a vocal group of our citizens” The amendment particular silences churches and pastors, as tax-exempt status is at risk if they engage in certain political activities or political endorsements.

“Your power has been totally taken away,” he told the pastors and others gathered at the event. “I mean, I don’t want to insult anybody, but your power has been totally taken away.”

Trump said that will change once he is president.

“So, we’re going to get your voice back. We’re going to get it back,” he promised.

Trump said this lack of platform has led to a decline of church attendance and Christian influence as a whole.

“And if you look what’s happened to religion, if you look at what’s happening to Christianity, and you look at the number of people going to churches — and evangelicals know this also — it’s not on this kind of a climb, it’s on this kind of a climb of slow and steady in the wrong direction,” Trump said.

Trump said abolishing the Johnson Amendment can change that.

“And a lot of it has to do with the fact that you’ve been silenced. You’ve been silenced like a child. You’ve been silenced, you’ve been silenced. Strong, brilliant, great people that want to do the right thing. We’re not talking about bad people, we’re talking about great people,” Trump said.

Trump received a standing ovation for his speech.