



GOVERNMENT REFORM

**Questionnaire Excerpt: Allowing Non-Profits to Endorse Political Candidates
 NOVEMBER 2017**

Fielded by: Nielsen Scarborough **Fielding Dates:** September 7-October 3, 2017
Sample size: 2482 registered voters **Margin of Error:** 2.0%

As you may know, under current law, there are certain organizations that do not have to pay taxes, such as religious institutions (churches, synagogues, or mosques), universities, foundations or other charities. However, to keep this tax-exempt status they cannot endorse political candidates or participate in political campaigns.

A proposed bill in Congress reverses this law, allowing tax-exempt organizations to endorse political candidates and provide them money and other support, while keeping the organization’s tax-exempt status.

Here is an argument **in favor** of the proposal

Q1. For many Americans, the decisions they make about who to vote for are deeply linked to their religious values. It is very important for them to be free to discuss these issues in their house of worship and to hear how their religious leaders apply religious principles to political decisions. We should not muzzle religious leaders --they have important things to say about the political issues of our time. Some religions may feel that they want to keep religion separate from political issues--but that should be their choice, not something imposed on them by the government.

How convincing or unconvincing do you find this argument?

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Refused / Don't know
National	16.4%	29.4%	45.8%	18.7%	34.4%	53.1%	1.0%
 GOP	22.6%	34.5%	57.1%	18.6%	23.6%	42.2%	0.9%
 Dem.	11.7%	25.5%	37.2%	18.2%	43.7%	61.9%	0.9%
 Indep.	13.8%	27.6%	41.4%	20.4%	36.7%	57.1%	1.5%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
-33 to -14	15.9%	31.1%	47.0%	20.6%	31.8%	52.4%	0.6%
-13 to -8	18.6%	32.6%	51.2%	14.9%	33.1%	48.0%	0.8%
-7 to -1	16.5%	25.8%	42.3%	20.1%	36.8%	56.9%	0.8%
+1 to +8	18.4%	27.1%	45.5%	18.9%	33.7%	52.6%	1.9%
+9 to +17	13.8%	31.2%	45.0%	21.3%	32.4%	53.7%	1.3%
+18 to +44	15.1%	30.1%	45.2%	17.0%	37.0%	54.0%	0.8%

Here is an argument **against** the proposal.

Q2. The whole idea of tax-exempt organizations is that they are providing a service for the common good. When people make contributions to tax-exempt organizations and get a deduction, this takes money away from the US Treasury, so in a way we all pay for the donation. Political activity in support of a political candidate is something that may serve some citizens, while others feel it is a disservice to them. Political activity should not be done on the taxpayer's dime.

How convincing or unconvincing do you find this argument?

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Refused/ Don't know
National	42.0%	31.0%	73.0%	13.6%	13.0%	26.6%	0.4%
 GOP	33.9%	30.6%	64.5%	17.2%	18.2%	35.4%	0.1%
Dem.	49.6%	32.5%	82.1%	9.7%	7.7%	17.4%	0.6%
Indep.	42.0%	28.1%	70.1%	15.1%	14.3%	29.4%	0.5%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
-33 to -14	34.3%	34.1%	68.4%	17.2%	14.0%	31.2%	0.4%
-13 to -8	39.9%	31.4%	71.3%	14.3%	14.3%	28.6%	0.0%
-7 to -1	44.4%	27.9%	72.3%	13.7%	13.9%	27.6%	0.1%
+1 to +8	45.4%	29.4%	74.8%	14.4%	9.5%	23.9%	1.3%
+9 to +17	46.2%	32.9%	79.1%	8.4%	12.6%	21.0%	0.0%
+18 to +44	43.6%	30.2%	73.8%	12.8%	13.0%	25.8%	0.4%

Here is another pair of arguments **for and against** the proposal:

Q3. The First Amendment right of free expression is a core American value. We should not restrict Americans' freedom of expression when it comes to talking about who to vote for, whether in a church, a university, or in a conversation with neighbors. The choices we make as American voters are some of the most important decisions we make. Americans should be allowed to express their support for candidates wherever they may be or whatever position they may have in an organization.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref. /Don't know
National	27.0%	30.6%	57.6%	20.2%	21.3%	41.5%	0.8%
 GOP	35.0%	30.6%	65.6%	18.1%	15.3%	33.4%	0.9%
Dem.	20.8%	30.3%	51.1%	23.3%	24.9%	48.2%	0.6%
Indep.	23.8%	31.2%	55.0%	17.1%	26.7%	43.8%	1.2%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
-33 to -14	28.3%	31.3%	59.6%	19.0%	20.9%	39.9%	0.6%
-13 to -8	29.1%	29.9%	59.0%	19.4%	20.9%	40.3%	0.7%
-7 to -1	23.4%	32.7%	56.1%	21.2%	21.9%	43.1%	0.8%
+1 to +8	29.5%	25.8%	55.3%	23.4%	20.7%	44.1%	0.5%
+9 to +17	27.1%	30.9%	58.0%	19.1%	21.8%	40.9%	1.1%
+18 to +44	25.2%	32.1%	57.3%	19.2%	22.1%	41.3%	1.3%

Q4. Americans are free to express their political views. But churches and universities should be special places where people can worship or study, not places where they are pressured to vote for specific candidates. If churches and universities can endorse political candidates, donors may start saying they will only contribute if the organization endorses a particular candidate. Houses of worship and universities may become affiliated with specific parties. Congregations will fracture. We already have enough political rancor and polarization in our society.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref./Don't know
National	57.0%	24.6%	81.6%	10.4%	7.5%	17.9%	0.4%
GOP	49.1%	25.7%	74.8%	13.8%	10.9%	24.7%	0.4%
Dem.	65.2%	23.9%	89.1%	6.9%	3.7%	10.6%	0.2%
Indep.	54.9%	23.9%	78.8%	11.0%	9.5%	20.5%	0.7%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
-33 to -14	54.9%	24.1%	79.0%	14.0%	6.7%	20.7%	0.3%
-13 to -8	56.6%	24.5%	81.1%	10.0%	8.4%	18.4%	0.4%
-7 to -1	62.0%	21.6%	83.6%	8.6%	7.7%	16.3%	0.1%
+1 to +8	55.5%	25.1%	80.6%	9.8%	9.2%	19.0%	0.4%
+9 to +17	54.3%	29.7%	84.0%	8.4%	6.9%	15.3%	0.7%
+18 to +44	58.2%	22.9%	81.1%	11.8%	6.7%	18.5%	0.3%

Here is another pair of arguments **for and against** the proposal.

Q5. Before the 1960s, nonprofit organizations and houses of worship had the freedom to speak on political matters. They exercised that right responsibly and houses of worship were not turned into arms of political parties. We should return to the principle that every American should be able to speak freely about their conscience and convictions, within any institution, without fear that the institution will lose its tax-exempt status.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref./Don't know
National	23.6%	28.7%	52.3%	21.9%	24.8%	46.7%	1.0%
GOP	32.6%	30.6%	63.2%	20.2%	15.5%	35.7%	1.1%
Dem.	17.8%	26.1%	43.9%	23.6%	31.7%	55.3%	0.7%
Indep.	17.2%	31.1%	48.3%	21.4%	29.0%	50.4%	1.3%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
-33 to -14	23.8%	30.0%	53.8%	21.1%	24.3%	45.4%	0.7%
-13 to -8	24.7%	30.4%	55.1%	22.4%	21.8%	44.2%	0.8%
-7 to -1	23.5%	26.7%	50.2%	20.6%	28.3%	48.9%	1.0%
+1 to +8	25.3%	24.0%	49.3%	25.2%	24.8%	50.0%	0.6%
+9 to +17	19.5%	35.5%	55.0%	19.2%	24.6%	43.8%	1.2%
+18 to +44	24.9%	26.5%	51.4%	23.0%	24.2%	47.2%	1.4%

Q6. If we let tax-exempt organizations support political candidates, pretty soon most political contributions will be channeled through them because people can get a tax deduction for making the donation, something that particularly helps rich people. There are also no limits on how much you can give to a tax-exempt organization. This will open up the floodgates for unlimited and tax-deductible money to flow through houses of worship and other nonprofits in support of political candidates.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref./Don't know
National	51.9%	26.1%	78.0%	12.3%	8.9%	21.2%	0.8%
GOP	41.0%	27.4%	68.4%	16.4%	14.5%	30.9%	0.7%
Dem.	62.7%	24.3%	87.0%	8.9%	3.3%	12.2%	0.8%
Indep.	50.0%	27.4%	77.4%	11.6%	10.0%	21.6%	1.0%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
-33 to -14	52.3%	23.5%	75.8%	14.2%	8.4%	22.6%	1.6%
-13 to -8	49.0%	29.1%	78.1%	12.1%	9.0%	21.1%	0.8%
-7 to -1	52.3%	26.3%	78.6%	10.9%	10.0%	20.9%	0.5%
+1 to +8	50.0%	30.5%	80.5%	9.2%	9.8%	19.0%	0.5%
+9 to +17	56.1%	22.5%	78.6%	14.0%	6.8%	20.8%	0.6%
+18 to +44	51.7%	24.9%	76.6%	13.6%	9.2%	22.8%	0.6%

So again, under current law, if organizations, such as religious institutions (churches, synagogues, or mosques), universities, foundations or other charities wish to have tax-exempt status, they cannot endorse political candidates or participate in political campaigns.

Q7. How acceptable would it be to you for Congress to pass a proposed bill, which would change current law and allow tax-exempt organizations to endorse political candidates and provide them money and other support, while keeping the organization's tax-exempt status.

	Mean	Unacceptable (0-4)	Just Tolerable (5)	Acceptable (6-10)	Ref./Don't know
National	2.4	71.7%	9.9%	18.1%	0.3%
GOP	3.3	61.9%	10.6%	27.3%	0.2%
Dem.	1.6	81.0%	8.7%	10.2%	0.2%
Indep.	2.4	71.2%	11.4%	16.4%	1.0%
Cook's PVI (D-R)					
-33 to -14	2.4	70.4%	11.3%	18.1%	0.3%
-13 to -8	2.6	69.9%	8.9%	20.4%	0.8%
-7 to -1	2.3	74.7%	6.1%	18.9%	0.4%
+1 to +8	2.6	69.4%	11.7%	18.9%	0.0%
+9 to +17	2.2	74.1%	10.9%	14.5%	0.5%
+18 to +44	2.4	71.2%	12.2%	16.6%	0.0%

Q8. So, how would you recommend that your Members of Congress vote:

1. in favor of the proposed bill
2. against the proposed bill, thus keeping the current law

	Favor	Oppose	Ref./Don't know
National	20.0%	79.4%	0.6%
GOP	29.0%	70.5%	0.5%
Dem.	11.5%	88.3%	0.2%
Indep.	20.4%	77.7%	1.9%

Cook's PVI (D-R)			
-33 to -14	20.4%	78.5%	1.1%
-13 to -8	22.0%	77.3%	0.6%
-7 to -1	19.0%	80.5%	0.5%
+1 to +8	20.6%	78.4%	1.0%
+9 to +17	16.6%	83.4%	0.0%
+18 to +44	20.8%	78.9%	0.4%

[IF "in favor of the proposed bill" Q8=1, PRESENT Q9a]

Q9a. How important do you think it is to pass this bill? **(Note: results are percent of total)**

	Very	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all	Ref./Don't know
National	6.0%	8.4%	4.1%	0.6%	0.9%
GOP	10.0%	11.2%	5.4%	0.8%	1.7%
Dem.	2.9%	6.1%	2.4%	0.1%	0.1%
Indep.	4.4%	7.6%	5.8%	1.5%	1.0%

Cook's PVI (D-R)					
-33 to -14	6.1%	7.7%	4.3%	0.7%	1.6%
-13 to -8	5.7%	9.3%	6.1%	0.2%	0.7%
-7 to -1	7.1%	6.5%	4.4%	0.3%	0.8%
+1 to +8	6.4%	9.0%	3.8%	0.7%	0.7%
+9 to +17	3.7%	7.6%	3.6%	0.4%	1.3%
+18 to +44	6.2%	10.2%	2.5%	1.4%	0.3%

[IF "against the proposed bill . . ." Q8=2, PRESENT Q9b]

Q9b. How important do you think it is to keep the current law? **(Note: results are percent of total)**

	Very	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all	Ref./Don't know
National	55.1%	16.9%	3.6%	0.5%	3.3%
GOP	44.9%	17.5%	4.4%	0.4%	3.3%
Dem.	66.4%	16.1%	2.6%	0.1%	3.1%
Indep.	50.6%	17.4%	4.5%	1.6%	3.5%

Cook's PVI (D-R)

-33 to -14	55.3%	13.4%	4.6%	0.5%	4.7%
-13 to -8	53.4%	15.2%	3.1%	1.1%	4.4%
-7 to -1	56.9%	18.1%	2.0%	0.0%	3.4%
+1 to +8	52.8%	17.6%	5.6%	0.5%	2.1%
+9 to +17	58.5%	18.0%	3.2%	1.0%	2.7%
+18 to +44	52.7%	20.0%	4.2%	0.0%	1.9%

Q10 – Q53b. Being held for future release.