

TFL defends churches from Des Moines Register's attack

Commentary by Nathan Oppman, published as a letter to the editor in the Des Moines Register

The Des Moines Register's May 12 editorial argues America's 1.6 million tax-exempt charities, including 400,000 "religious entities," are a burden on the taxpayer "that drives up the federal deficit, hurts local governments and forces the rest of us to pay more to compensate."

No mention is made of the fact that local "religious entities" run many of our soup kitchens, food pantries, homeless shelters, counseling services, crisis pregnancy centers, endangered women's homes and more. No mention is made of "religious entities" like the Red Cross, which has provided disaster relief for thousands of Iowans, or the Salvation Army, which has clothed thousands more through its second-hand stores.

The editorial speaks of nonprofits only in terms of speech and money. But churches and charities are about far more: They are about doing good and improving our communities. Think of the children helped at St. Jude's Children's Hospital, or the church roots of many hospitals in Des Moines, or the crime prevented because a child learned the Ten Commandments in Sunday school, or the single mother who got her children to school because a group from church got together and fixed her car for free.

Far from a drain on government revenue by "evading taxes," churches and charities provide vital services and community benefits it would cost government and the taxpayers incalculable dollars to replicate. Taking away their tax-exempt status is what would really "force the rest of us to

pay more to compensate.”

Christianity and your religious liberty are under attack from every angle.

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– Nathan Oppman is chief of staff for The FAMiLY LEADER