



A statement from the SBC Executive Committee Officers

In recent days, questions have been raised concerning the SBC Executive Committee officers' contract with Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP (Bradley). The officers quickly secured Bradley as legal counsel in October 2021, on a temporary basis, following the waiving of attorney-client privilege by the SBC Executive Committee on October 5 and the decision of Guenther, Jordan, and Price to terminate their longtime agreement to represent the SBC Executive Committee on October 11.

The urgency of the effort to cooperate with the Sexual Abuse Task Force investigation was, and is, critical to the reputation of the SBC Executive Committee and in demonstrating its commitment to transparency during the investigation and to the Convention at large.

Bradley came highly recommended with expertise in critical areas being faced by the SBC Executive Committee. Since their engagement began, they have resolved potential litigation, ensured maximum cooperation with the Sexual Abuse Task Force's investigation, demonstrated an understanding of our statement of faith and mission as well as our polity, earned the trust of Guidepost Solutions and the Committee on Cooperation, and tirelessly worked to protect and preserve the interests of the SBC Executive Committee.

Bradley is, however, a secular corporation. Federal law requires Bradley (and all other non-religious employers) "to ensure that its employees work in an environment free from prejudice, harassment, discrimination, and that each employee is afforded the same opportunity for promotion and success." This federal mandate requires them to consider and employ individuals that may not typically be hired by Southern Baptist churches or entities.

As a result, Bradley supports multiple diversity and inclusion efforts and internal affinity groups. Some of these efforts may be out of step with Southern Baptist convictions expressed in the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, but most churches and state conventions are faced with similar challenges when they engage in business with various secular companies.

It has been 56 years since the SBC Executive Committee has had to secure permanent legal counsel. After the 2022 SBC Annual Meeting, the SBC Executive Committee intends to initiate a search process to secure permanent legal counsel. The SBC Executive Committee requires sophisticated legal counsel to guide the SBC in our faithful response to the findings and recommendations from the Sexual Abuse Task Force's Investigation, and we are determined to secure such counsel.

For 177 years, the Southern Baptist Convention has focused on the spreading of the Gospel to the nations and the neighborhoods, and our mission remains focused on doing just that. Please join us in praying for the 2022 SBC Annual Meeting in Anaheim, CA.