

Dear SBC Family,

Thank you for the resolve you showed last year at the annual meeting in an overwhelming vote to address sexual abuse in the SBC with determination. Thank you for showing your commitment by providing funding that allowed a world-class organization like Guidepost Solutions to conduct a thorough and independent investigation and report. We are grateful for the excellent work that Guidepost has completed, as well as their gracious financial accommodation to our budget. We are grateful and sobered that the Convention entrusted the task force with managing this very sensitive but necessary assignment.

As the task force, we grieve for what has been revealed in this report. We lament on behalf of survivors for how they have not been protected and cared for as they deserve and as God demands. With broken hearts, we want to lead the way by publicly repenting for what has happened in our convention. We implore our Southern Baptist family to respond to this report with deep repentance and a commitment to the ongoing moral demands of the gospel as it relates to sexual abuse. We must resolve to give of our time and resources to not only care well for survivors of sexual abuse, but to provide a culture of accountability, transparency, and safety as we move forward. We acknowledge that any act of repentance requires ongoing, deliberate, dedicated obedience and sacrifice. This is the calling of our Savior to unite as a body in following after Him.

As we are brought face to face with the sin that has been done, especially in the name of Christ and in our own community, we can be tempted to want to minimize what has happened or to look only at the most obvious wrong actors. We must resist the temptation to minimize, to look away, to find the easy “scapegoats” for what was uncovered in this report, and instead ask “what could we have done better?” and “what should we do now?” As a Convention, we did not hold our own leaders accountable, and we did not listen to the warnings. Leaders had access to expertise but chose not to seek assistance, and in some cases, rejected any assistance that was offered.

On April 4, 2022, the SATF met with leaders and state task force members from many of the SBC state conventions to open a dialogue and receive feedback for what they need to be properly resourced. The SATF recognizes that most churches will not call Nashville when there is a sex abuse crisis in the local church but will instead look to state and local leaders for help. With that in mind, several of our forthcoming formal recommendations will be targeted to assisting local and state associations. Those formal motions and recommendations will be published between now and the upcoming convention in Anaheim, but here are a few initial needs your Sexual Abuse Task Force has identified:

- We recommend that an Abuse Reform Implementation Task Force be appointed by the next SBC president to assist with the implementation of reform initiatives in our convention for a period of three years. This Task Force will evaluate all recommendations by Guidepost and bring a report at next year’s convention on recommended reforms. This Task Force will also work with the Executive Committee to create and maintain a process that will work within our Baptist polity for

alerting the community to the presence and activity of credibly accused offenders, including the establishment of a “ministry check” website. Additionally, this Task Force will work with and resource the Credentials Committee to help them function more effectively, including formalizing and improving their processes, procedures, and standard principles of cooperation. The Task Force and Executive Committee will take steps to establish a relationship with an independent firm to assist the Credentials Committee in their work.

- We recommend that the Executive Committee hire a subject matter expert(s) to receive calls, provide initial guidance for reports of sexual abuse, and work with state conventions for training and educational opportunities.
- We recommend that all entity boards and standing committees have training regarding sexual abuse prevention and survivor care, as well as background checks as part of their orientation and selection.
- We recommend that IMB, NAMB, and our six SBC seminaries require formal preparation for their denominational workers and students in regard to prevention, training, and survivor care.
- We recommend that the Executive Committee set aside a budget and hire a salaried staff person for the Credentials Committee.