

# Chair resigns ERLC board, issues apology

July 23, 2024

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (BP)—Southern Baptist pastor Kevin Smith announced Tuesday morning, July 23, he has resigned as chairman and from the board of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. Smith's resignation comes on the heels of a turbulent 24 hours for the Southern Baptist public policy entity.

The ERLC [announced Monday evening](#), July 22, the board's executive committee had removed President Brent Leatherwood "in accordance with our bylaws." However, that [decision was rescinded](#) early this morning.

In a statement provided to Baptist Press, Smith said: "After multiple conversations with Executive Committee members of the ERLC, I was convinced in my mind that we had a consensus to remove Brent Leatherwood as the president of the ERLC. It is a delicate matter and, in an effort to deal with it expeditiously, I acted in good faith but without a formal vote of the Executive Committee. This was an error on my part, and I accept full responsibility."

Smith went on to note: "At this time, the Executive Committee does not wish to move forward with my course of action."

He confirmed his resignation from the board saying: "I have been a proud participant in Southern Baptist Convention life for 35 years. I love the SBC. I love the ERLC. And I trust the Executive Committee to take the best course of action moving forward. I will look forward to focusing on ministry in my neighborhood church."

Smith is a pastor at Family Church in West Palm Beach, Fla. He previously

served as executive director of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware and has been on the ERLC board since 2018.

The ERLC trustees are scheduled to meet Sept. 10-11 in Nashville.

## **Full statement**

Smith's full statement follows:

"It has been my honor to serve as a trustee at the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) of the Southern Baptist Convention. As to recent events: After multiple conversations with Executive Committee members of the ERLC, I was convinced in my mind that we had a consensus to remove Brent Leatherwood as the president of the ERLC. It is a delicate matter and, in an effort to deal with it expeditiously, I acted in good faith but without a formal vote of the Executive Committee. This was an error on my part, and I accept full responsibility. At this time, the Executive Committee does not wish to move forward with my course of action. Therefore, I am resigning as the Chairman of the ERLC Board of Trustees and as a Trustee. I have been a proud participant in Southern Baptist Convention life for 35 years. I love the SBC. I love the ERLC. And I trust the Executive Committee to take the best course of action moving forward. I will look forward to focusing on ministry in my neighborhood church."