

Former SBC president Jack Graham wants to defund ERLC

May 26, 2025

PLANO (BP)—Former Southern Baptist Convention President Jack Graham said he believes the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission should be defunded.

Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, made the comments on X—the platform formerly known as Twitter—the day after 10 former SBC presidents released a [letter expressing their support](#) for the commission.

Saying he'd been asked multiple times, [Graham posted](#): “Since I’ve been asked multiple times ... no, I do not support the ERLC and believe the organization has been the single most divisive entity of the SBC since the days of Russell Moore. I believe it should be defunded. I’m sure this is the reason I was not asked to sign this letter. ... I’ve been clear on this for a decade.”

Moore left the helm of the ERLC in May 2021.

In 2017, Prestonwood Baptist Church conducted an internal study to evaluate Cooperative Program giving. In February of that year, the [church said it would escrow Cooperative Program funds](#) during the study citing “various significant positions taken by the leadership of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.”

Later that year, the church announced it would resume giving “without designation.”

A quote from a [December 2016 Wall Street Journal article](#) points to

Graham's frustration: "There was a disrespectfulness towards Southern Baptists and other evangelical leaders, past and present," Baptist pastor Jack Graham said of Mr. Moore's denunciations of Mr. Trump and some of his supporters. "It's disheartening that this election has created this kind of divisiveness."

Graham was [announced last week](#) as a member of the advisory board to President Trump's Religious Liberty Commission.

10 other former presidents want ERLC to continue

In the letter released May 22, 10 other former SBC presidents said the ERLC "for decades" has "steadfastly defended our Southern Baptist commitment to religious liberty."

The letter also highlights the ERLC's work in areas of importance to Southern Baptists, such as promoting life, marriage and family and opposing *Roe v. Wade*, pornography and transgender ideology.

The leaders acknowledged a diversity of opinion among the group but a common desire for the commission to continue.

"Our opinions about the past decade of work at the ERLC are as diverse as those of the broader body of Southern Baptists," it says. "Some of us have been enthusiastic supporters of the ERLC. Some of us have been vocal critics. However, we remain unconvinced by the case for discontinuing the ERLC.

"And just as our diverse coalition can find unity in opposing the abolishment of the ERLC, we hope that the messenger body can unify to oppose any such motion, too."

On an April 30 episode of the Baptist21 podcast, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary [President Al Mohler said](#) he “has grave doubts about the utility of the ERLC. And it’s not just about the current moment.”

The Southern Baptist Convention is set for June 10-11 in Dallas.