

SBC Executive Committee hires firm to review allegations

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NASHVILLE (RNS)—Responding to allegations that it has mishandled allegations of abuse in the past, the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee announced June 11 it had retained a firm to "conduct an independent review of its processes," according to a statement from Ronnie Floyd, president of the Executive Committee.

The review by Guidepost Solutions comes in response to allegations by Russell Moore, until recently the president of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, claiming Floyd and Georgia pastor Mike Stone had tried to delay attempts to deal with abuse and to silence abuse survivors.

"Guidepost Solutions is a global leader in monitoring, compliance, sensitive investigations, and risk management solutions and has deep experience providing advice and counsel to faith communities in this area," the statement reads.

Besides reviewing Moore's allegations, Guidepost will "review and enhance training" provided to the Executive Committee staff and trustees in responding to abuse matters.

"The SBC Executive Committee commits to providing full support and transparency to Guidepost Solutions, including making individuals available for interviews and providing relevant documents," the statement also reads.

Some prominent members of the SBC worried that the Executive Committee's review would fall short of a full investigation. Dwight McKissic, senior pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, cast

doubt on a review that would be “something less than an independent investigation launched by the convention,” and not the Executive Committee.

Abuse advocate and attorney Rachael Denhollander, who has been critical in the past of SBC officials’ treatment of alleged sex abuse victims, called Guidepost Solutions a “highly qualified firm” capable of reviewing the Executive Committee’s actions and advising SBC leaders.

“The question is whether the Executive Committee allows them to do their job,” said Denhollander, a former gymnast who was the first to accuse former USA Gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar of abuse.

Denhollander called for the SBC Executive Committee to expand the mandate given to Guidepost to include a full written report and a review of all paid staff and elected officials.

“If they get those two things, Guidepost can do their job,” she said.

Denhollander criticized SBC leaders during a 2019 Caring Well Conference on responding to abuse, leading to pushback from those leaders. In leaked clips of meetings with Moore, then head of the SBC’s Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, Floyd said he was not worried about “what survivors can say.”

“I am not worried about that,” he is heard saying in the audio clips, released by a College Station pastor who is a former ERLC staffer. “I’m thinking of the base. I just want to preserve the base.”

Floyd has said those audio clips mischaracterize his response to abuse.

Moore, who resigned recently after years of controversy, cited the pushback over abuse and over the ERLC’s work on race in a letter to ERLC trustees before his resignation. That letter was recently published by

Religion News Service.

Rolland Slade, chairman of the Executive Committee, has expressed support for an independent investigation into Moore's allegations. Two Southern Baptist pastors have announced plans to propose an independent investigation during the SBC's annual meeting in Nashville, which is expected to draw more than 16,000 attendees.