

# Baptist church-state expert named to White House post

March 13, 2013

The White House announced March 13 that Melissa Rogers, a Baptist church-state specialist who formerly worked at the [Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty](#), will serve as special assistant to the president and director of the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

“I’m honored to be able to serve President Obama by forging and promoting a wide range of effective partnerships with faith-based and secular nonprofits that help people in need,” Rogers said Wednesday morning.

Rogers, director of the Wake Forest University [School of Divinity Center for Religion and Public Affairs](#) and a non-resident senior fellow within the Governance Program of The Brookings Institution, previously served as inaugural chair of President Obama’s Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

A graduate of [Baylor University](#), Rogers earned her law degree from the University of Pennsylvania. Before coming to Wake Forest she was general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee and executive director of the [Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life](#).

Co-author of a 2008 casebook titled *Religious Freedom and the Supreme Court*, Rogers is frequently quoted by media as a leading expert in church-state relations. Associated Baptist Press honored her in 2011 with its 13th Religious Freedom Award, established in 1994 to honor individuals who advance the principles and practice of religious freedom.

Rogers succeeds Joshua DuBois, a Pentecostal minister and one of

President Obama's longest-serving aides, who resigned Feb. 8.