

# Paynter joins Pastors for Texas Children leadership

January 7, 2019

Suzii Paynter, who announced plans last July to retire as executive coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, has been named co-director of Pastors for Texas Children.

Paynter will join Executive Director Charles Foster Johnson and Associate Director Charles Luke on the public education advocacy group's leadership team.



Suzii Paynter announced last July her plans to retire as Cooperative Baptist Fellowship executive coordinator . (CBF Photo)

"I'm honored to join pastors and church leaders who joyfully minister and bring the strength of their community leadership to enrich the well-being of all children," Paynter said. "One of the best uses of this chapter of my life is to over-invest in the future by helping Pastors for Texas Children."

Johnson characterized Paynter as "well-known and respected not only in the capitol in Austin, but also in our local Texas churches."

"Suzii brings her gold mine of knowledge and experience back home to

Texas where she will invest her treasure of God-given talents on behalf of 5.4 million Texas schoolchildren,” he said.

“We are honored and grateful for Suzii’s partnership with Pastors for Texas Children and look forward to an even more productive mission ahead with her leadership and service.”

Paynter served the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission from 2001 to 2013, first as director of public policy and later as CLC director and leader of the Baptist General Convention of Texas Advocacy Care Center. Previously, she worked 25 years as a reading specialist, literacy professional and educator in public school and at the university level.

While at the CLC, Paynter was instrumental in the creation of Pastors for Texas Children. She was recognized twice as Outstanding Nonprofit Lobbyist at the Texas Legislature.

## **‘Make things better for children’**

“Suzii Paynter has worked to make things better for children her entire adult life,” said Bobby Broyles of Garland, chair of Pastors for Texas Children. “She brings great knowledge of the legislative process and of how churches work. She has the ability to work with people from all along the political spectrum. I believe she will catapult Pastors for Texas Children to the next level when it comes to helping our kids in Texas.”

Paynter expressed her desire to “shine light” on the good work many churches already are doing to support public schools, students, teachers and parents.

“I want to be part of the answer to the prayer of one mother who said, ‘I want to cry—tears of joy, that is—at the graduation of each of my kids, knowing they had the full support of their community to become their best

selves—head, heart and soul.”

When Paynter left the CLC in March 2013, she became the first woman and the third Texan to serve as CBF executive coordinator. She will continue to serve CBF as interim executive coordinator until her successor there is named. The organization appointed a search committee last August.

Paynter, a San Antonio native, earned her undergraduate degree from Baylor University and her master's degree from Stephen F. Austin State University. Dallas Baptist University granted her an honorary doctorate.

Throughout her career, Paynter has advocated for separation of church and state and against vouchers for private parochial schools. The Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty presented her the J.M. Dawson Religious Liberty Award in 2013.

She serves on the executive committee of the Baptist World Alliance and chairs its human rights advocacy committee.

Paynter was ordained to the gospel ministry May 7, 2017, by Austin Heights Baptist Church in Nacogdoches.