

SBC Executive Committee discusses U.S. Department of Justice subpoena in Aug. 15 special called meeting

NASHVILLE (The Baptist Paper and local reports) – Members of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee heard more details Aug. 15 related to the Aug. 12 announcement of a federal investigation into SBC executives' management of sexual abuse allegations over the years.

The special called meeting has been reported as an information-only discussion and not open to the public, but more details related to the Executive Committee's next steps in a number of areas are anticipated in the coming days.

The Aug. 12 news report and accompanying statement by SBC entity and auxiliary leaders and SBC president Bart Barber does not indicate when SBC Executive Committee leaders first learned of the U.S. Department of Justice investigation, but does state the investigation will include "multiple SBC entities."

The DOJ also has not released any information on the investigation.

"I'd like to encourage every Mississippi Baptist to pray for Dr. Willie McLaurin [Interim President of the SBC Executive Committee] and other SBC leaders as this investigation unfolds," said Shawn Parker, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

"This investigation also serves as a reminder to pray for our Sexual Abuse Response Team as they formulate recommendations in preventing and responding to sexual abuse reports within

Mississippi," he said.

A Sexual Abuse Task Force was appointed in June by Mississippi Baptist Convention President Lloyd Sweatt, pastor of Meadowood Church, Amory. More information on the task force will be announced soon.

The current work being done by federal prosecutors is technically only fact-finding in nature at this point. Its purpose is to determine whether any criminal activity allegedly occurred by any individual or group that appears in the sexual abuse report released by Guidepost Solutions.

The report was the culmination of the 2021 SBC messengers' call for a third-party investigation into the Executive Committee's handling of sexual abuse claims.

According to the DOJ's website, evidence obtained by the prosecutors in cases such as this one will be presented to a grand jury, and the grand jury will in turn vote on whether indictments should be issued.

At press time, the Executive Committee is the only group confirmed thus far to have received a subpoena from DOJ. No individuals have been subpoenaed, according to an Executive Committee spokesperson.

Along with contacting the Executive Committee, The Baptist Paper has reached out to each of the 11 other entities and one auxiliary, the Woman's Missionary Union, and all but three have responded that no subpoena has been received.

Information will be updated as more details become available. To read full statement from SBC leaders, [click here](#).