



THE ETHICS & RELIGIOUS  
LIBERTY COMMISSION  
OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

2024

# Annual Report

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# The Mission of the ERLC

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission exists to assist Southern Baptist churches by helping them understand the moral demands of the gospel, apply Christian principles to moral and social problems and questions of public policy, and to promote religious liberty in cooperation with churches and other Southern Baptist entities.

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## Brent Leatherwood

PRESIDENT

Brent Leatherwood was elected as president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in 2022, after a year of leading the organization as acting president. Previously, he served as chief of staff at the ERLC, as well as the entity's director of strategic partnerships. He brings an expertise in public policy to his work, having been the executive director of the Tennessee Republican Party, the director of communications and policy strategy in the Tennessee General Assembly, and working for several years on Capitol Hill.

***“The ERLC will always take care to listen to our churches and help them, which will ensure that this Commission continues to bring a deep, abiding, consistent, and thoroughly Baptist voice to the public square. And that is our foremost aim: Render assistance to our churches and, from that service, speak to a watching world.”***

- BRENT LEATHERWOOD

## Four Focus Areas

THE ETHICS & RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION BRINGS HOPE TO THE PUBLIC SQUARE AS WE ASSIST CHURCHES IN applying God’s Word to cultural issues and advocate for the convictions of Southern Baptists. From our offices in Nashville, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C., our work is rooted in the authority of Scripture as faithfully interpreted by the [\*Baptist Faith & Message 2000\*](#) and can be categorized in four main areas: life, religious liberty, marriage and family, and human dignity.

We see ourselves as sent by Southern Baptists to bring the hope of the gospel to a confusing and chaotic public square. We pray our words are a source of truth and hope, pointing to the goodness of our Father, the gift of his Son, and the hope of his Kingdom.



### Life

*Promote a culture of life.*

Now that *Roe v. Wade* is in the past and the issue of abortion is focused at the state level, the pro-life movement has seen both wins and losses. While thousands of precious lives have been saved, challenges, such as the spread of the abortion pill and abortion tourism, reveal that our work is far from over. The dignity of the preborn should motivate us all to promote a culture of life, working and praying for the day when abortion is both illegal and unthinkable, mothers are served, and families are given the best chance possible to succeed.



### Religious Liberty

*Protect a free church in a free state.*

Currently, religious liberty has a strong judicial footing in the United States. However, every year pro-life and pro-religious liberty protections, such as the Hyde amendment, face opposition. In addition, individuals have faced increasing resistance as they seek to live according to their deeply held religious beliefs when it comes to matters of gender and sexuality. The ERLC will always defend the Baptist distinctive of religious liberty—our first freedom—believing that a “free church in a free state” provides the best protection for our churches and allows for the greatest gospel proclamation.



### Marriage and Family

*Champion God’s good design.*

The *Baptist Faith and Message* affirms that the God-ordained institutions of marriage and family bring about flourishing and are critical in preserving and prospering our society. The ERLC will champion God’s good design, proclaiming the truth that marriage is between one man and one woman for life and that children are a blessing to their parents, who have been endowed with special rights and responsibilities in the upbringing of their children. We will advocate for policies that maintain and protect these essential aspects of life together, whether or not our culture recognizes these things to be true.



### Human Dignity

*Honor all people as made in God’s image.*

Sin has brought suffering into our world. Many human beings, made in God’s image, struggle to have their basic needs met and are repeatedly devalued by their fellow man. We see this manifested in anger, misinformation, violence, war, and international religious persecution, among other things. Grounded by the *imago Dei*, the ERLC will always honor the world’s most vulnerable, including the immigrant, the preborn baby, the trafficked, the outcast, the victimized, and the persecuted.



# Letter from the President

IT IS MY PRIVILEGE TO PRESENT THIS REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE ETHICS AND RELIGIOUS Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. In this report, you will find a summary of the prior year's ministry, as well as some highlights regarding how we have fulfilled our mission to assist the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. We consider this mission a high honor, given to us by the churches, and we count it a privilege to come alongside them in this important work.

To carry out the task given to us, we arrange our work in four broad categories of historic and ongoing concern for Southern Baptists: life, religious liberty, marriage and family, and human dignity. In our efforts, we see our work as that of missionaries, striving to bring hope to a chaotic public square as we apply the moral and ethical demands of the gospel to the challenges of our current age.

As we move forward into 2025, Southern Baptists should know that their ERLC will be diligently monitoring and actively engaging the issues that matter to them—issues of life, religious liberty, marriage and family, and human dignity. But beyond that, even in the midst of these challenging times, we will be about the business of bringing hope to the public square, representing our Savior, Jesus Christ, in word and in deed.

Joyfully in Christ,

F. BRENT LEATHERWOOD

PRESIDENT, THE ETHICS & RELIGIOUS COMMISSION



▲ ERLC staff members attended the 2024 March for Life in Washington, D.C.

# Policy

OVER THE PAST YEAR, OUR LELAND House team in the nation's capital has tenaciously advocated on behalf of Southern Baptists for issues related to life, religious liberty, marriage and family, and human dignity before the U.S. government, pushing forward numerous public policy victories. Despite the challenges of this

current political moment, the ERLC continues to advance a hope-filled vision in the public square while championing biblical values.

## Life

Our work advocating for vulnerable preborn lives over the past year has emphasized appropriations (e.g.,

government funding bills) advocacy, responding to the ethical concerns of in vitro fertilization (IVF), and continuing pro-life advocacy at the federal level.

## Appropriations

During the 2021 Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting,

messengers unanimously supported a [resolution](#) condemning attempts to remove the [Hyde Amendment](#), a longstanding appropriations provision that ensures federal funding does not go toward abortion and calling Congress to uphold all pro-life appropriations riders. Since that time, the “Hyde-family” of riders have become even more essential as the Biden administration has sought ways to circumvent them.

In both Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 and FY2025 appropriations negotiations over the past year, our team has been vocal in our advocacy to retain and expand existing pro-life provisions and conscience protections. For FY2024 appropriations bills, which were finally passed this spring, the ERLC did a thorough review of all of the originally proposed appropriations bills and extensively [communicated](#) our concerns to lawmakers. After significant advocacy alongside like-minded organizations, these pro-life and conscience protection riders were ultimately included in the [final FY2024 bills](#).

The FY2025 appropriations negotiations are underway, and our team has again done a [comprehensive review](#) of areas of support and concern in this year’s proposed bills and sent an additional [letter](#) to lawmakers

outlining our top requests related to the protection of life.

### **Post-Dobbs Advocacy**

In a post-*Dobbs v. Jackson’s Women’s Health Organization* landscape, the Biden administration has [promoted abortion access](#) as a top priority, while states have become a battleground for protecting the preborn. The ERLC has closely

**Despite the challenges of this current political moment, the ERLC continues to advance a hope-filled vision in the public square while championing biblical values.**

monitored [state-level abortion ballot initiatives](#) and has worked with state conventions to inform the members of our churches and equip them to engage on this issue at the ballot box.

Last year, we spoke to you about a number of problematic pro-abortion [regulations](#) being put forth by the Biden administration. Since that time, the Biden administration has continued to put forward additional harmful regulations and has worked to finalize many previously proposed regulations. In response, our team

has submitted numerous [public comments](#), raising concerns about these moves, and has been encouraged to see how our advocacy has improved some of these most harmful finalized regulations.

In one such new regulation, the ERLC [submitted comments](#) pushing back on a proposed rule that required facilitating abortion-related travel and covering associated costs for unaccompanied immigrant children at the border. The ERLC argued this disgraceful pro-abortion provision endangers more migrants and preborn children and violates longstanding federal appropriations prohibitions on taxpayer funding for abortion.

While the *Dobbs* decision did send power back to state legislators on the issue of abortion, the ERLC remains firm that this does not absolve our federal officials from having a role to play in protecting life. The ERLC has sent [letters](#) urging both the Republican National Committee and Democratic National Committee to include pro-life commitments in the respective official party platforms during the election year and joined a [coalition letter](#) to this end. Protecting vulnerable preborn lives remains a top priority for the ERLC as we work to see

abortion in any form made both illegal and unthinkable.

**IVF Response**

The ERLC has led the way in equipping Southern Baptists to consider the ethical concerns of IVF from a biblical worldview in light of the [Alabama Supreme Court ruling](#). Following this important decision, the ERLC’s Policy and Research teams quickly worked together to develop both a policy-specific [guide](#)

and a robust [ethical and theological considerations resource](#). These resources were shared widely with individuals on Capitol Hill and were received with gratitude as many lawmakers and staff grappled with these issues for the first time.

Since that time, the ERLC has been active in [opposing measures](#) that would expand taxpayer funding for IVF, expand its coverage to those in same-sex relationships, or prevent any future regulation of the IVF industry.

This policy area has garnered significant attention, and we are grateful for the thought given to this important matter at the 2024 annual meeting of the SBC in the resolution [“On the Ethical Relations of Technologies and the Dignity of the Human Embryo.”](#) which includes a call to “advocate for the government to restrain actions inconsistent with the dignity and value of every human being, which necessarily includes frozen embryonic human beings.”



▲ The ERLC’s office in Washington, D.C., the Leland House, serves as the hub for our public policy staff.







► A new feature on our website is the policy center, where you can read about our policy priorities, the SBC resolutions that undergird them, and the actions taken in alignment with them.

the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission. For each of these items, the ERLC submitted public comments arguing that including sexual orientation and gender identity issues into discrimination on the basis of sex will actually result in more discrimination and is seeking to engage litigation that has emerged from this rulemaking.

Additionally, through supporting legislation like the [Protecting Minors from Medical Malpractice Act](#), the [End Taxpayer Funding for Gender Experimentation Act](#), and a [Congressional Review Act](#) to vacate the Title IX rule, the ERLC is advocating for robust legislative action on this issue.

### Supporting Parents

At the SBC Annual Meeting this year, messengers passed a resolution [“On the God-Given Rights and Responsibilities of Parents,”](#) which called upon the government to support, rather than hinder, the work of parents in raising their children.

The ERLC has supported the [Families’ Rights and Responsibilities Act](#), a bill that would ensure the government must meet the highest standards of the law in order to supersede the right parents have to raise their child. Additionally, our team





► The Leland House welcomed a full class of interns this summer.

that end, the ERLC filed [public comments](#) urging the rule be rescinded due to the devastating implications addictive substances have on our families and communities.

## Looking Ahead

### State Policy Agenda

This year, the ERLC team produced the first [State Policy Agenda](#) in partnership with our state Baptist conventions, after doing a state level review in 2023. With increasing gridlock in Congress, there is a growing need to engage with public policy at the state level. This document mirrors the [2024 Public Policy Agenda](#) and encompasses a variety of helpful approaches to protecting life, promoting religious liberty, supporting healthy families, and honoring the dignity of every person as made in God’s image to support state legislators in thinking through how to best serve their constituents. Our team plans to continue and expand this agenda in 2025.

### Congress

The ERLC’s federal appropriations work for Fiscal Year 2025 will continue through the end of the current Congress and potentially into the 119th Congress. The ERLC will continue advocating against the



federal funding of abortion, gender transitions, and the expansion of IVF, and in support of religious liberty protections.

In 2025, Congress will also negotiate new tax measures following the expiration of 2017 Trump-era tax provisions. Our team submitted comments to the tax negotiation teams at the beginning of October

outlining pro-life, pro-family, and pro-marriage policies we would like to see included.

As we look toward the end of this year, our team will begin strategizing for how best to engage both a new presidential administration and a new Congress while seeking to push forward our advocacy priorities in the lame duck session.







▲ Brent Leatherwood delivers a lecture on Christian witness in the public square at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary as part of its Carver-Barnes lecture series.

## Staff Representation

WHILE MUCH OF THE ERLC's work is done behind the scenes, our staff have been busy connecting face to face with government leaders, academics, and ministry leaders this past year.

### **Israel's Prime Minister**

In July, Brent Leatherwood had the opportunity to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanya-

hu. During that gathering, Brent was able to express to the Prime Minister that Israel has the fervent prayers of many Southern Baptists, especially after the horrible attacks of Oct. 7.

### **State Conventions**

Knowing that relationships with our state convention leaders are vital to our Southern Baptist cooperation,



Brent traveled to Arizona for the meeting of the SBC state executives and to Illinois for the Midwest Leadership Summit, a gathering of midwest Baptist leaders from 12 states and nine state conventions. In addition, the ERLC staff attended and spoke at 13 different state convention meetings in 2023.

### Baptist Schools

A trip to Southeastern Seminary afforded Brent the opportunity to give the Carver Barnes lectures, interact with faculty and students, and connect with North Carolina Baptists.

In addition, on a trip to Texas, Brent was able to visit Dallas Baptist University where he was a keynote speaker for the Veritas Lecture Series and spoke in chapel.

### Academic Gatherings

The ERLC had a strong presence at the Evangelical Theological Society this year. Miles Mullin moderated a panel for the American Christianity section, and Jason Thacker moderated a panel on Just War Theory. Alex Ward presented a paper titled “‘Help Us to Live Like Brothers:’ The Christian Life Commission, Human Rights, and Contested Orthodoxy” which explored the contested nature of the Christian Life Commission’s support for *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).

As part of connecting with other academics and educators, Alex and Miles represented the ERLC at the 2024 gathering of the International Alliance for Christian Education (IACE) in Dallas, hosted at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Senior Fellows Nathan Finn and Gregg Allison presented at the conference, and RaShan Frost was able to join as well.

Alex was also part of the Acton Institute’s Vital Family gathering in New York, which brought together representatives from various organizations for a time of teaching and collaboration on strengthening the family in America. Additionally, he participated in a gathering

hosted by the Land Center at Southwestern Seminary for a project focused on nationalism, Baptist political theology, and American democracy.

Jason Thacker has spoken at various places this past year. Examples of colleges and institutions include Huntington University, North Greenville University, Spring



▲ Brent Leatherwood talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a gathering for U.S. evangelical leaders.

Arbor University, and the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. His keynote at Southwest Baptist University launched their new artificial intelligence initiative. Additionally, he has been a featured speaker at conferences hosted by churches to equip their members including First Baptist Church (Grove City, Pennsylvania), Watkinsville First Baptist (Watkinsville, Georgia), Grace Baptist Church (Manhattan, Kansas), and National Presbyterian Church (Washington, D.C.).



▲ Episodes of the ERLC Podcast release biweekly on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and directly on our site.

# Resources

IN ADDITION TO ADVOCATING FROM OUR SOUTHERN Baptist churches in the public square, we are committed to coming alongside and helping Southern Baptists engage cultural issues to which the Bible speaks, particularly within the four main areas of life, religious liberty, marriage and family, and human dignity.

Our strategy is to produce a variety of resources in multiple formats so that we can reach and serve the greatest number of people, whether that’s the Southern Baptist grandmother who wants to help her grandchild, the politician who disagrees with our convictions, the pastor who wants to disciple his church members, or the individual

who is genuinely interested in the moral claims of Christianity. Ultimately, it is our hope that our resources will equip Southern Baptists to confidently address the cultural issues we face from a biblical perspective and humbly walk through open doors to share the hope of Jesus Christ.

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## Podcast

Podcasts are a widely utilized means of communication in our modern technological age. The [ERLC Podcast](#) is one important way we are able to reach our audience when they are on the go, are auditory learners, or have limited time. Since September 2023, our [relaunched ERLC Podcast](#), which runs every other week and is in a narration and interview format, has covered several topics within our ministry assignment relevant to real-time cultural moments. Here is a rundown of recent series we have produced.

### Gender and sexuality

- Jason Thacker and Alex Ward | [What the Bible teaches about gender and sexuality](#)
- Katie McCoy | [Society's spiraling sexual crisis](#)
- Christopher Yuan | [A powerful testimony about honoring God with your sexuality](#)

- Steve and Amy Castello | [Talking with our kids about gender and sexuality](#)
- Shaka Mitchell | [Navigating gender and sexuality in schools](#)
- Bart Barber | [How pastors can address gender and sexuality](#)

### Life

- Benjamin Watson | [The pro-life movement after Roe](#)
- Scott Klusendorf | [Why the pro-life case is compelling](#)
- Todd Unzicker | [The life-saving work of pregnancy resource centers](#)
- Herbie Newell | [Adoption and foster care and on the issue of IVF](#)

### Christians and politics

- Brent Leatherwood | [The definition of the public square](#)
- Tony Beam | [The importance of local and state elections](#)
- Yuval Levin and Brooke Medina | [The 2024 presidential election](#)
- Hunter Baker | [Best practices for Christian political engagement](#)

### Mental health

- RaShan Frost | [How does mental health relate to human dignity?](#)
- Mark Dance and Kristen Kansiewicz | [How can pastors take care of their mental health?](#)
- Jason Thacker, Eliza Huie, and Megan Dickerson | [How social media affects the mental health of teens](#)
- Jonathan Holmes and Brad Hambrick | [How biblical counseling can benefit our mental health](#)

## Light

Print media is not a relic of the past. There is still a large contingency of people who like to hold something in their hands, turn pages, and read from an actual piece of paper. To that end, one of the most consistent, informative, and practical resources the Communications

team produces every year is *Light* magazine. *Light* is a bi-annual print product, beautifully designed and focused on equipping Southern Baptists on a specific topic within our four broad ministry categories. Since our last report, we have released two new issues which have aligned with other initiatives including our podcast series. The two issues were:

- [“Gender Chaos: Christian Answers in a Sexually Confused Culture”](#)
- [“Bringing Hope to an Election Year”](#)

“Gender Chaos” was our December 2023 edition, released in the midst of discussions and events related to gender identity, parental rights, and “gender-transition” surgery for children. Articles and authors included:

- Alex Ward | [Navigating pronouns](#)
- Brett McCracken | [Evaluating pop culture](#)
- Eric Baxter | [Protecting parental rights](#)
- Patrick Schreiner | [Jesus’ teaching about sexuality](#)
- Jenn Kintner and Josh Wester | [What it means to be male and female](#)

“Bringing Hope” is our contribution to navigating the potential chaos of an election year with fellow Southern Baptists. We want to be able to enter together into the public square with conviction and compassion. Articles and authors in this issue include:

- Allison Cantrell | [Holding leaders to a higher standard](#)
- Three Baptist state leaders | [How to engage in different contexts](#)



▲ Our latest issues of *Light* magazine are available in print and online.

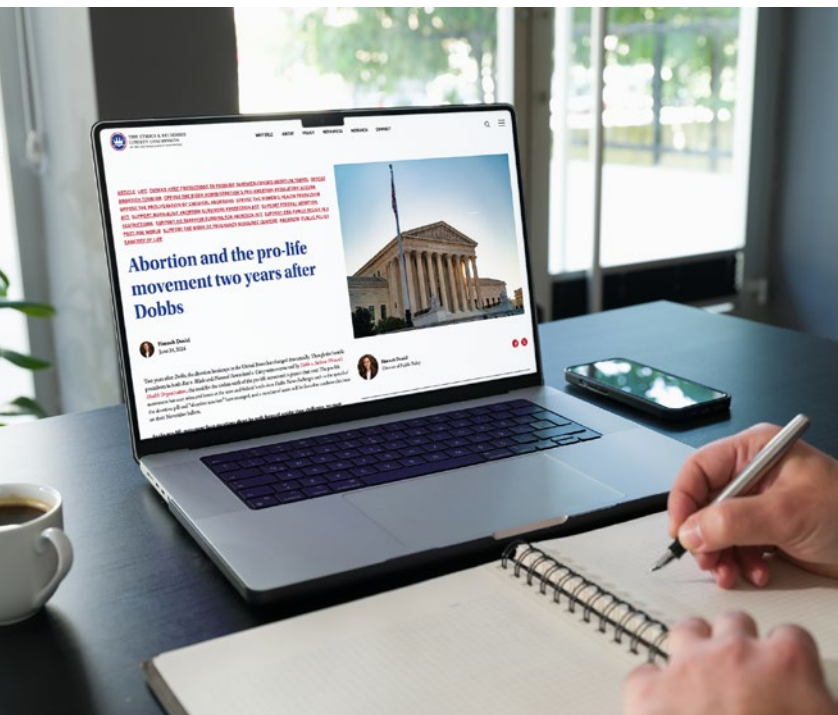
- Eric Costanzo, Dan Darling, and Jon Nelson | [A pastor’s role in politics](#)

### Online assets

Under Brent’s leadership, we have switched from an article-heavy strategy to one in which our assets are more diversified. However, we still produce a variety of valuable online resources. We are able to create written assets that effectively and efficiently communicate information important and helpful to our Southern Baptist churches. Below is a sample of the high-quality resources we’ve produced over the last year:

### Articles

We aim to provide relevant articles that enable churches



◀ On erlc.com, you can find a variety of helpful, free resources.

understand why it matters and what they can do about it.

- In line with our work on the Hill advocating for life and conscience protections, we created an accessible resource to answer: [What are congressional appropriations?](#)
- We produced several pieces about the Supreme Court’s decisions over the summer that were related to Southern Baptist convictions including:
  - [Explainer: Supreme Court fails to resolve challenge to Idaho pro-life law](#)
  - [Explainer: Supreme Court throws out abortion pill case](#)

to discern the times we are living in and how to respond in a way that is faithful to biblical teaching and principles.

- [Top issues to watch in 2024](#) explains what is happening in our culture in our four areas of work.
- In light of the Alabama Supreme Court decision about in vitro fertilization and in alignment with our Research team, we answered an important question: [What should I know about Southern Baptists and IVF?](#)
- The [2024 abortion state ballot initiatives tracker](#) demonstrates where Southern Baptists have an opportunity to protect preborn lives in their state this fall.
- [Abortion and the pro-life movement two years after Dobbs](#) takes a look at how those who want to protect the sanctity of life can move forward in that good work.

### Explainers

Some of our most popular online resources are detailed explanations of an event or issue that align with the broader work of the ERLC and help Christians

### Bulletin Inserts

Every year, we create free bulletin inserts for use by Southern Baptist churches on emphasis days associated with the SBC calendar. These include:

- [Life](#)
- [Religious Liberty](#)
- [Racial Reconciliation](#)
- [Orphans and Widows](#)
- [Caring Well](#)

### Statements

Statements are a way for us to join with other like-minded organizations and individuals in order to lead the way in how Southern Baptists—and evangelicals, in general—can approach the issues of our day from a biblical perspective. The [Evangelical Statement in Support of Israel](#), developed in partnership with Daniel Darling of the The Land Center for Cultural Engagement at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, was a way for us to ask policymakers to confront evil, promote peace, and protect the vulnerable.



▲ Brent Leatherwood prepares for his interview on News Nation at the 2024 March for Life in Washington, D.C.

## Press and Media

THE ROLE OF PRESS AND MEDIA relations remains an integral part of our communication strategy at the ERLC. The ways in which we engage in media interviews, publish press releases to national journalists, and contribute to cultural conversations through written commentary allows our organization to be on the record about our core beliefs and elevates issues Southern Baptists care most about. This year, our staff has conducted 50 interviews on a wide variety of topics that matter to Southern Baptists.

Public relations is a core component in how we influence, engage, and build relationships with our audience to better shape the public's perception of the ERLC. Not only has earned media paved a way for us to expand our footprint on Capitol Hill and gain the support of lawmakers and government leaders, resulting in policy changes from the top, down, but we believe earned media is a way in which the ERLC can represent a biblical perspective and the hope of the gospel to a watching world.

Here are top issues we have discussed with the media in 2023–2024:

### IVF and Reproductive Technologies

The [Alabama state legislature](#) brought the issue of IVF into national focus in their rush to pass a law that protected IVF providers and undermined the dignity of life. The ERLC played an important role in helping policymakers consider carefully the practice of IVF and its implications.

Hannah Daniel, ERLC's director of public policy, engaged on the topic



▲ TOP: Hannah Daniel engages the topic of IVF in an interview with Swiss Broadcasting. BOTTOM: Brent Leatherwood talks with Marni Hughes on News Nation to explain why the ERLC gathers at the March for Life and clarify what it’s going to take to promote a culture of life in our country.

of IVF as seen in her [interview](#) with Swiss Broadcasting, an international media outlet out of Switzerland that reaches 50 million people around the world, including in the U.S.

Hannah was also featured in a [Politico](#) article on IVF, where she says, “It took a really long time to get to where we are now, and it’s going to require persistent work both on the legislation front but also informing the hearts and minds of Americans on this topic to truly see life as

valuable regardless of that person’s ability, regardless of their stage of development, regardless of their gender.”

At this year’s SBC Annual Meeting, messengers adopted a [resolution](#), “On the Ethical Realities of Reproductive Technologies and the Dignity of the Human Embryo.” ERLC Senior Fellow Jason Thacker, who served as an advisor to the resolutions committee, has spoken supportively about the resolution as indicated in

his interviews with [Politico](#), [NewsNation’s Cuomo](#) and [CBN’s 700 Club](#).

As IVF and reproductive technology remain at the forefront of political and cultural conversations, the ERLC will continue to advocate for vulnerable preborn life at all stages of development.

## Sanctity of Life and Abortion

One of the [Supreme Court cases](#) the ERLC engaged this year centered around the abortion pill, mifepristone, and the court’s decision to reject a bid for more restrictions on the drug. Brent [called](#) the ruling “heartbreaking” and said, “Unfortunately, by not ruling on the merits and allowing this drug to remain available on procedural grounds, the court is affording more time for the abortion industry to target vulnerable mothers with these harmful chemicals. Preborn lives will inevitably be lost as a result. That is what makes today’s loss so heartbreaking.”

Brent’s comments were included in a [story](#) by *Christianity Today’s* Harvest Prude, who met with him at the Leland House earlier in the year to lay groundwork for this case and talk about other issues of importance to Southern Baptists.

Brent’s voice was also included in this [RNS piece](#) on the abortion pill case where he said, “As Christians, our advocacy must continue until every preborn life is safe from annihilation and every mother is protected from a predatory abortion industry.”

In January, our staff traveled to Washington, D.C., for the annual March for Life to demonstrate our commitment to the pro-life movement. During the opening ceremonies of the march, Brent [interviewed](#) live with NewsNation's Marni Hughes to talk about how the *Dobbs* decision left the work on the pro-life movement unfinished and ways the work will continue in the midst of this election year.

## ERLC Support for Israel

As mentioned above, in October, the ERLC joined with SBC and other Christian leaders in developing an

significant media response. We had approximately 15 reporters in the room to cover the event, and several stories were filed with various outlets including:

- [Politico](#)
- [RNS](#)
- [WISH-TV](#)
- [Tennessean](#)

Furthermore, Brent [wrote letters](#) to the chairman of the Republican National Committee (RNC) and the chairman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) expressing his concern for a lack of pro-life priorities

**We believe earned media is a way in which the ERLC can represent a biblical perspective and the hope of the gospel to a watching world.**

[“Evangelical Statement in Support of Israel,”](#) in response to the horrific atrocities committed against the people of Israel by Hamas.

## 2024 Presidential Election

As our nation prepared for the 2024 presidential election, we hosted an event at this year's SBC Annual Meeting with Vice President Mike Pence that focused on serving in the public square which generated a

in both party platforms. The commitment to protect precious and vulnerable preborn lives remains a top priority for the ERLC, and these letters were sent in order to urge both major political parties to include policies that reflect the government's responsibility to protect its citizens.

As a result of sending these letters to the RNC and DNC, Brent wrote an [op-ed](#) for Religion News Service on July 8 which stated, “Is the GOP the party of life and liberty no more?

*Dobbs* gave states power to deal with abortion. It didn't end the federal government's responsibility to protect life.”

Media metrics from Aug. 1, 2023–July 31, 2024 included:

- 50 interviews
- 42 press releases

## Additional Media Highlights

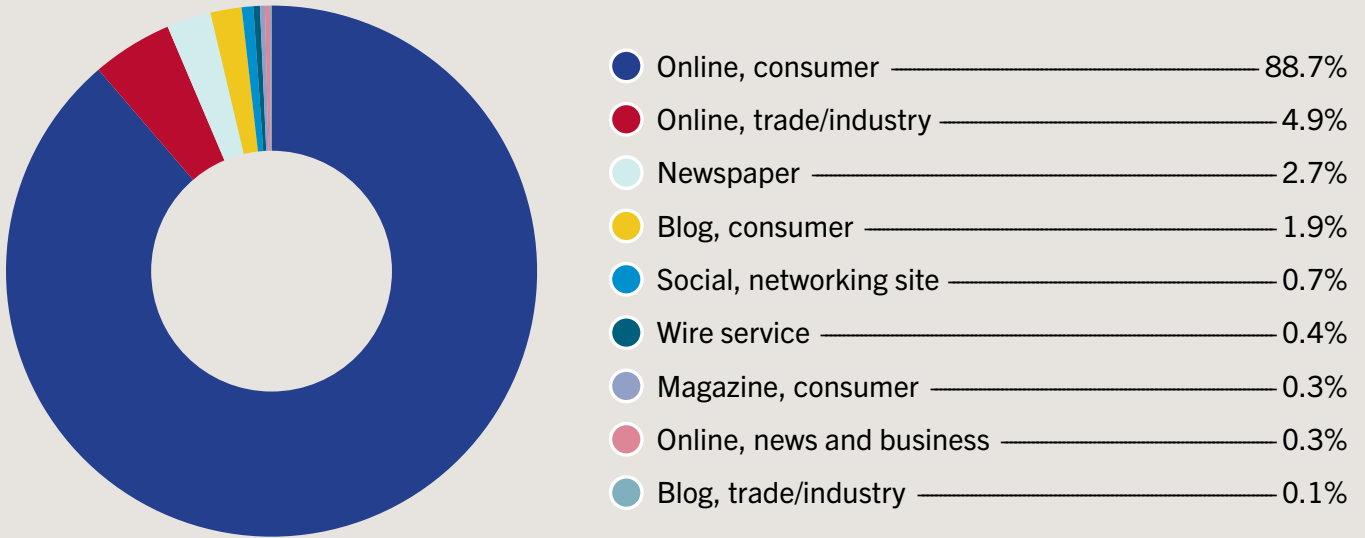
- Brent interviewed with the [Associated Press](#) on Jan. 7 on same-sex unions saying, “The reality is marriage has been defined by God ... It is a union between one man and one woman for life,” Leatherwood said. “Southern Baptists remain anchored in this truth.”
- Brent was [featured](#) on NPR's Morning Edition, July 16, to talk about pro-life priorities in the RNC party platform.
- Brent interviewed with [Politico](#) on July 8 to talk about party platforms for the RNC and his letter to the chairman urging them to include pro-life policies.
- Jason [interviewed](#) with *The Wall Street Journal* on June 12 to talk about the SBC resolution on IVF.

Over the course of the year, the ERLC commissioned 44 Baptist Press stories to be written that included quotes from ERLC staff members Brent Leatherwood, Miles Mullin, Hannah Daniel, Allison Cantrell, Jason Thacker, Alex Ward, and Rachel Wiles.



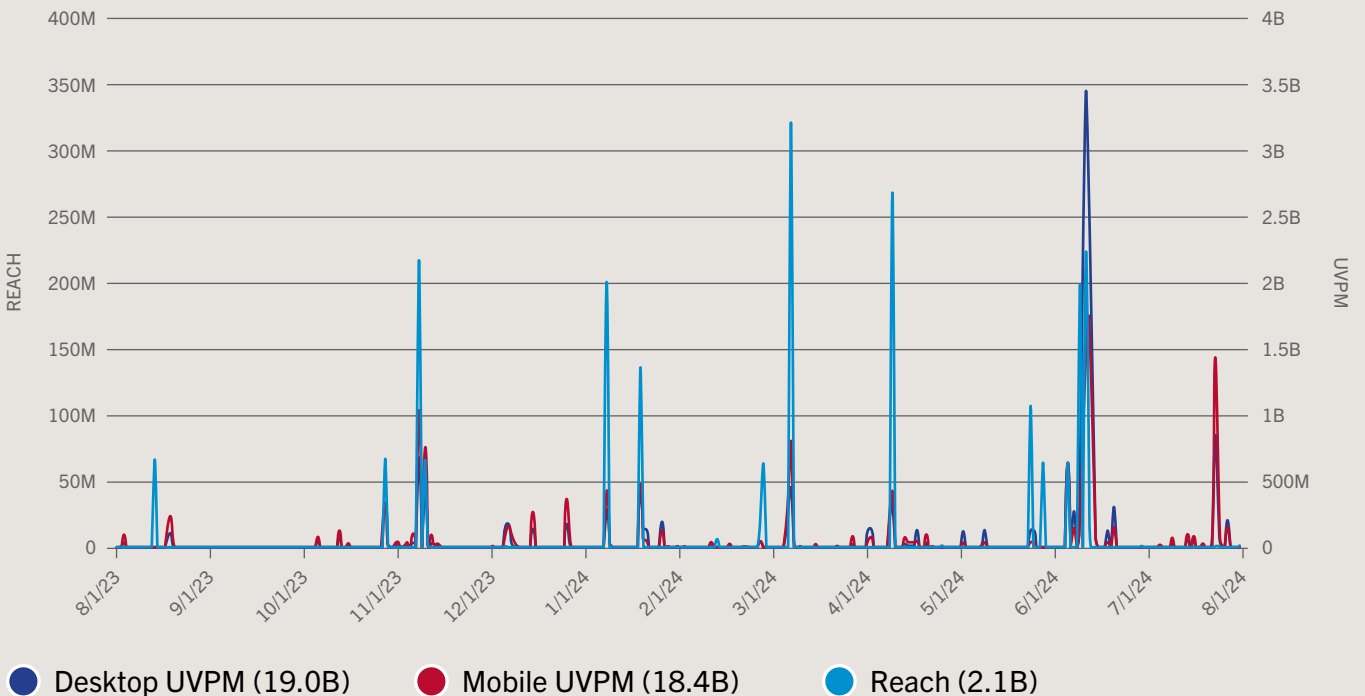
# Coverage by Media Type

Breakdown of the collection of clips based upon their media type.



# Audience Reach

Distribution of clips over time based upon their reach. Print and broadcast content is measured as audience reach based upon the circulation or viewership of those outlets and programs. Online content is measured in unique visitors per month for the outlet.





▲ Miles Mullin talks with an attendee of the 2024 SBC Annual Meeting at the ERLC’s booth.

# Events

EVENTS ARE AN ADDITIONAL MEANS by which we are able to carry out our ministry assignment, providing encouragement to Southern Baptists through online and in-person gatherings. In addition, by recording the video and audio, we are able to diversify and continue our use of the material for the building up of the Church.

## Online Events

In an effort to help weary Christians

during yet another contentious election year, we hosted a live online event called [“Bringing Hope to an Election Year,”](#) featuring Brent and Daniel Darling. They answered questions like:

- How do we remain hopeful and engaged during an election year?
- Where are Christians tempted during an election season?

- How do we hold to our biblical convictions while pushing for wise policy?

We posted the event video online, broke it into clips for social media, and also hosted [the event audio in two parts on the ERLC Podcast](#) during the month of July so that more of our audience could be encouraged and spurred on to engage well during this election.

► TOP: Brent Leatherwood interviews Vice President Mike Pence at our SBC Annual Meeting lunch event: *Serving in the Public Square*. BOTTOM: Some of our staff and this year’s interns stand at the redesigned ERLC booth debuted at the 2024 SBC Annual Meeting.

## SBC Annual Meeting 2024

Visitors to the 2024 SBC annual meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, experienced a redesigned ERLC booth which featured our four policy areas and showcased a short video about each lane. Messengers were encouraged to pick up our latest resource guides, copies of *Light* magazine, and our new collection of buttons and stickers.

This year, the ERLC shifted from evening programming to hosting a sold-out lunch event with over 400 attendees. Our event began with a ministry panel with Jon Kelly, a pastor; Dana Hall McCain, a staff member for a U.S. senator; and moderated by Lindsay Nicolet. The panelists discussed navigating ministry with hope in the midst of an election year. Attendees were then able to hear Brent interview Vice President Mike Pence about his journey into politics, Pence’s thoughts on how pastors can partner with elected officials, and how we all can engage with hope in the public square. We were then able to feature the interview with Vice President Pence on the ERLC Podcast in July in order to reach Southern Baptists who were not able to be in Indianapolis.



# Psalm 139 Project

THE PSALM 139 PROJECT, A PRO-LIFE ministry of the ERLC, exists to place ultrasound machines in pregnancy resource centers and pro-life clinics. Each placement allows abortion-vulnerable and abortion-determined women to get a glimpse of the life inside them. One hundred percent of all donations given to the Psalm 139 Project go toward the purchase of life-saving machines and the training of the clinic staff who will utilize them.

Since September 2023, the Psalm 139 Project has placed 12 ultrasound machines in seven states, plus one international placement.

- Lanett, AL
- Brevard, NC
- Hammond, LA
- Greeneville, TN
- Big Spring, TX
- Southeast Asia, in partnership with the IMB
- Harrisburg, NC
- Hobbs, NM
- Sealy, TX

- Boone, NC
- Martinsville, VA
- Hartsville, TN

Baptist state conventions in Alabama, North Carolina, Louisiana, Tennessee, Texas (both SBTC and BGCT), and Virginia (SBCV) have all partnered financially with the Psalm 139 Project to make many of these placements a reality.

As the abortion landscape in the U.S. continues to change after the *Dobbs* ruling, the ERLC, through the Psalm 139 Project, will continue to pray for and work toward opportunities to place life-saving ultrasound machines in abortion-destination states. The rise of abortion tourism—travel for the purpose of obtaining an abortion where it’s legal—and the abortion pill means that pro-life advocates have much work that still needs to be done. The Psalm 139 Project stands ready to enable pregnancy centers to shine a light on the precious life of every person, serve vulnerable women, and change families for generations.



▲ CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Dedication attendees pray over a new mobile ultrasound unit dedicated to Gate Pregnancy Resource Center in Harrisburg, NC; Volunteers at a clinic in Southeast Asia pose with their new ultrasound machine; A nurse at Sav-A-Life Pregnancy Resource Center in Lanett, AL, shows how to preform an ultrasound with the center's new machine.



**Thank you, Southern Baptists,  
for the opportunity to partner  
with and serve you as we  
champion a culture of life,  
protect a free church in a free  
state, celebrate God's good  
design for marriage and family,  
and champion human dignity.  
We praise God for what he has  
done and look forward to all he  
will do in the year ahead.**

