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**ARKANSAS BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION SUED FOR ALLOWING ONE
OF ITS PASTORS TO SEXUAL ABUSE A TEENAGE BOY:
The Suit Alleges Its Top Executive Ignored Warning from Pastor's Ex-
Wife that Pastor Was Sexually Abusing Children**

January 8, 2020

Little Rock, Arkansas –

The suit, filed in Pulaski County Circuit Court in Little Rock, Arkansas, alleges Plaintiff, Riley Fields, was repeatedly raped over a period of years by his pastor and guardian, Teddy Hill Jr., former Senior Pastor at Millcreek Baptist Church in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Millcreek Baptist Church and Pastor Hill are part of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, a statewide organization made up of Southern Baptist member churches in Arkansas.

Plaintiff alleges that Hill's ex-wife explicitly warned Arkansas Baptist State Convention ("ABSC") Executive Director J.D. "Sonny" Tucker that Hill was sexually abusing kids. Plaintiff alleges Hill's ex-wife detailed behavior she personally observed, such as Hill holding hands with minors, having minors spend the night with him in the church parsonage, and reaching for the genitals of an underage boy spending the night in Hill's home. Plaintiff alleges that although Hill's ex-wife followed-up her telephone report to ABSC's Tucker with an in-person meeting just weeks later, neither the ABSC, Diamond Lakes Baptist Association, the regional Baptist association, nor Millcreek Baptist Church took any steps to remove Hill or prevent further sexual abuse to Plaintiff.

The ABSC has already released a statement concerning this lawsuit, in which it states that "the Convention has no responsibility in this case for his [Hill's] and/or the local church's actions."

Joshua Gillispie, of the law firm Green & Gillispie, one of the attorneys representing the Plaintiff in this matter, takes issue with this denial of responsibility by the ABSC: "We believe this claim of member church autonomy, routinely used over the years by state conventions to avoid liability for pedophile pastors, is dubious. It has never been tested in an appellate court. It is a calculated legal strategy used by the ABSC and other Southern Baptist state conventions to avoid responsibility for the actions of its member churches and pastors. The ABSC's position is simply that they have zero responsibility for the protection of the children in their flock, even

when they have reason to believe a child in a member church is in danger. We believe that position is untenable.”

The Arkansas Baptist State Convention describes itself on its own website as “as a family and network of Arkansas Baptist churches, agencies, and institutions around the state that have chosen to cooperate together to advance the Kingdom of Jesus.”

“It is more than just cooperation,” argues Gillispie. “The Southern Baptist Church in Arkansas is a hierarchal organization in which the money flows up. Each year millions of dollars in donations collected from congregants of member churches like Millcreek make their way into the ABSC coffers, yet when it comes to the sexual abuse of congregants at the hands of the ABSC’s own predatory member pastors, the Convention’s official position is that it is not their problem,” states Gillispie.

Plaintiff seeks over \$10 million in compensatory damages, as well as punitive damages against each defendant for intentional and grossly reckless misconduct. Fields is also represented by Ronald Weil and Iva Ravindran of Weil Snyder & Ravindran, P.A. of Miami, Florida, as well as Joshua Gillispie of Green & Gillispie of Little Rock, Arkansas.

For further information please contact Mr. Gillispie at (501) 244-0700 or via email at josh@greenandgillispie.com. Mr. Weil may be contacted at (305) 372-5352 or via email at RWeil@weillawfirm.net.

Victims of sexual abuse seeking additional information and helpful resources are encouraged to visit <https://greenandgillispie.com/>

Anyone with information concerning this case or Pastor Teddy Hill is asked to contact the victim’s attorneys as well, at the above numbers.