

Kelly Shackelford: 'Today Was a Good Start'

Tuesday afternoon, evangelical leaders from around the country met with Republican presidential nominee-in-waiting Donald Trump in New York City.

First Liberty Institute President and CEO Kelly Shackelford, regarded as one of the nation's foremost legal experts on religious freedom, was on the meeting's steering committee. He also was one of six people designated to ask questions about his potential judicial appointments to the Supreme Court, as well as hundreds of judicial seats across America, during the event.

Following the event, he issued the following statement:

"For me, there are two ultimate issues in this election: religious freedom and the federal courts. I was grateful that the No. 1 topic of today's conversation was religious liberty, giving us a good starting point to understand where Mr. Trump stands on the issue.

"I appreciated how, very early in the meeting, Mr. Trump brought up First Liberty's client, Coach Joe Kennedy, and expressed his concern that a high school football coach would be fired for praying after a game. Mr. Trump said attacks on faith like this need to stop, and I agree.

"During the conversation, I asked Mr. Trump to discuss his future judicial appointments and to explain what he would do to ensure that religious liberty is protected for people of faith, which includes people like Coach Kennedy. Mr. Trump noted that the courts will decide these types of cases and said he plans to release a list of four to five more judicial candidates he would consider appointing.

"I look forward to seeing his list and hope it will contain judicial nominees who would be devoted to protecting our constitutional right of religious liberty.

"Although there is still more to learn about where Mr. Trump stands on some of the top religious freedom cases in America, like the Little Sisters of the Poor and military chaplains, I think today was a good start and I look forward to continuing the conversation. I will do all I can to ensure that our next president, whoever it may be, will protect the rights of all Americans to practice their faith freely."