

Leading North Carolina Pastor Urges Voters to Support Ted Cruz

In the next few weeks, the presidential primary events will begin to stack up, particularly on the Republican side, meaning candidates will be seeking endorsements that can impact broader audiences and wider swaths of the country.

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) landed a big one Tuesday evening in Dr. Mark Harris. The senior pastor at First Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, offered his endorsement, and joined the Cruz campaign as state co-chair in the Tar Heel State.

“I am committed to working toward a victory for Ted Cruz,” he said. “Our nation suffers economically and spiritually, and we hunger for a wise commander in chief, a leader who respects our Constitution and fears the Lord. Ted Cruz will stand up to the Washington cartel, stand in defense of the American dream, and stand in defense of the innocent. I and many other North Carolina pastors are standing with him, and we look forward to turning out the vote among people of faith.”

Harris, in partnership with Family Research Council, organizes cultural impact teams in the state, training more than 500 North Carolina pastors to impact their communities for Christ. In 2008, he was named president of the North Carolina Pastor’s Conference, and from 2011-2013 he served as the president of the North Carolina Baptist Convention.

He also was a leader in the passage of the North Carolina Marriage Amendment in 2012, helping to form the Vote for Marriage NC campaign. That led to his unsuccessful bid to win a seat in the U.S. Senate in 2014.

North Carolina's primary is currently scheduled for March 15, but a federal court opinion deemed the state's congressional district maps unconstitutional. The state has been ordered to redraw its districts, which could take months, unless the U.S. Supreme Court intervenes, which is unlikely given its current eight-member structure.

However, Harris' endorsement reaches a much broader audience. From 1999 to 2009, he also served as a trustee of the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, where he earned his Masters of Divinity degree and a Doctor of Ministry degree in Christian Leadership. He also was formerly involved in the leadership team for the Mike Huckabee presidential campaign.

"I am honored to receive Dr. Harris' endorsement, and I am grateful for his prayers," Cruz said. "Mark's commitment to be a guiding light in the cultural and political arenas has impacted Christians in North Carolina and across the nation. As leaders of faith continue to coalesce around this campaign, we will work together to reignite the promise of America."