

Southern Baptist Leader Endorses Ted Cruz for President

Republican presidential candidate U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) has received the endorsement of another key evangelical leader in his bid for the White House.

Dr. Tommy Kelly, outgoing president of the South Carolina Southern Baptist Convention and the pastor of Varnville First Baptist Church, made the announcement Friday, then joined Cruz for a rally at North Greenville University that evening. More than 2,100 churches in the early voting state are part of the SCSBC, which has a membership of 750,000 statewide.

"I am looking for a president who leads with wisdom, compassion and strength," Kelly said. "In Ted Cruz I have been pleased to find a man of character and a battle-tested leader. Of all the candidates, I am confident that Mr. Cruz will make the best commander in chief, and he is the candidate best positioned to win. I look forward to helping Ted Cruz turn out the vote among Southern Baptists. If people of faith go to the polls, we will reignite the promise of America."

The Cruz camp says more than 400 pastors and religious leaders have endorsed his presidential campaign. But the endorsement of the leader of the first state Southern Baptist Convention is important.

"I am thrilled to welcome Dr. Kelly to our faith and religious liberty coalition," Cruz said. "More than 100 other faith leaders in South Carolina have already endorsed our campaign, and I appreciate Pastor Kelly's leadership among South Carolina Baptists. I look forward to working with him to bring conservatives together behind our campaign."