

INTEGRITY

LAW FIRM, PLLC

Dedicated to Solving Your Problems

www.IntegrityLawLynchburg.com

P.O. Box 10953, Lynchburg, VA 24506 • Ph 434-401-2093 • Fax 434-239-3651 • rickboyerlaw@gmail.com

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - February 18, 2022

RE: David Platt loses another round in case alleging rigged election at McLean Bible Church

FAIRFAX, Virginia. Today, the Fairfax County Circuit Court gave a crucial victory to Plaintiffs suing McLean Bible Church for alleged illegal denial of voting rights to church members.

Steve Gaskins and four other Plaintiffs, all current or former members of McLean Bible Church (MBC) filed suit in July alleging that Senior Pastor David Platt and the Board of Elders of MBC were illegally removing members from the church membership rolls or placing them in “inactive” nonvoting status, in an effort to predetermine the outcome of congregational elections for three handpicked candidates for the Board of Elders, the governing body of MBC. Plaintiffs noted that the MBC Constitution grants voting privileges at church business meetings to all active members over 16 years old.

Plaintiffs also allege that, after losing a June vote on their chosen candidates for Elder, Platt and the Elders ended a decades-long practice of secret ballots for Elder elections, forcing members to place their names on their ballots in order to vote, in an effort to intimidate members who worked on church staff into voting for candidates leadership supported at a second vote held in July.

Defendants filed a demurrer in the case, arguing to the court that Plaintiffs had failed to plead a valid case for breach of contract. **Judge John Tran in Fairfax County Circuit Court today denied the demurrer and allowed Plaintiffs’ breach of contract case to move forward.** Following argument from counsel, Judge Tran ruled that Plaintiffs have pleaded facts sufficient to state a case that Defendants denied voting rights to members in violation of the MBC Constitution.

This is the second consecutive court defeat for Platt and the MBC Elders. The Court had previously denied the defendant’s motion to dismiss on alleged First Amendment grounds in December. Today’s ruling means that discovery can proceed and the case can move toward a jury trial.

Rick Boyer of Integrity Law Firm in Lynchburg, Virginia, attorney for the Plaintiffs, responded to the court’s ruling. “We are pleased by the Court’s clear ruling today. The Elders at MBC have repeatedly violated the church constitution, destroyed MBC members’ rights to a free and fair secret ballot, and illegally denied voting rights to members in good standing, when they couldn’t win a fair secret ballot otherwise. Of all places where truth and transparency should be expected, the church is that place. We look forward to a transparent trial and the opportunity to defend the constitution of McLean Bible Church and the voting rights of its members.”

Plaintiff Steve Gaskins said, “We as members of McLean Bible Church are grateful that the judge denied the motion and let the case move to trial. Illegally denying church members their right to vote, in an attempt to rig an election, is a clear breach of the church constitution. We are confident the jury will see the same thing at trial. This case is about truth and justice. We ask only that the church to do what is right, follow its constitution, and protect the rights of its members.”

Plaintiff Roland Smith said, “We thank God that the judge clearly saw that we have pleaded a strong case for breach of contract due to the Elders’ repeated illegal violations of the MBC constitution. We look forward to a final determination at trial protecting the rights of all MBC members to vote in selecting their leadership.”