An SBOM task force unveiled suggested wording for "a potential marriage statement" during the Aug. 16 state board meeting in Montgomery. The statement is a starting point for churches interested in considering a bylaw change related to same-sex marriage concerns and "is not binding on local congregations, which are entirely self-governing," SBOM officials noted.

Jim Guenther, an SBC attorney, said there is no "magic language" that a church can use in its governing documents. He also said that current First Amendment protections should hold up on churches' behalf in court.

The statement reads:

**Bylaws**

"We believe that marriage is a union between one man and one woman, following biblical principles ([Gen. 2:19–24](http://biblia.com/bible/hcsb/Gen.%202.19%E2%80%9324" \t "_blank), [Lev. 18:22](http://biblia.com/bible/hcsb/Lev.%2018.22" \t "_blank), [Matt. 19:4–6](http://biblia.com/bible/hcsb/Matt.%2019.4%E2%80%936" \t "_blank), [Rom. 1:18–27](http://biblia.com/bible/hcsb/Rom.%201.18%E2%80%9327" \t "_blank), [Eph. 5:22–23](http://biblia.com/bible/hcsb/Eph.%205.22%E2%80%9323" \t "_blank), [Heb. 13:4](http://biblia.com/bible/hcsb/Heb.%2013.4" \t "_blank)). We believe that God sanctions only the union in marriage of a man to a woman, including civil unions. Therefore, this church sanctions only a ceremony compatible with those standards."

**Policies**

1. Due to our belief in the biblical teachings about marriage, same-sex couples will not be married in any facilities or on any properties owned by the church.

2. Ministers of (insert church's name) Baptist Church will not perform any same-sex 'marriages' or civil unions whether on or off church-owned properties. Doing so would be grounds for termination."