

Pre-General Assembly Preparations by Rev. Fred Greco.

PLEASE NOTE:

The assessments below are my own, but they are also informed by discussions and materials prepared by others. In a similar way, I know that I may be persuaded by the debate at the Assembly. It is also possible that one or more Overtures could be amended by the work of the Overtures Committee in such a way as to convince me to change my mind. Further, in all my comments, I am commenting as a churchman and presbyter. **Nothing in these comments should be taken as addressing any pending or impending matter before the Standing Judicial Commission.** You may forward this to others so long as this document is not altered and this disclaimer is included.

This is the ninth year that I have provided this document for commissioners, elders, and interested parties. Two of my friends and colleagues on the SJC, David Coffin and Howie Donahoe, have written similar commentaries. This has become a bit of a cottage industry as men prepare for the General Assembly. I am glad for that – inasmuch as it portends greater preparation on the part of commissioners to the Assembly. One of my great goals is to encourage men in the PCA to be *churchmen*, and participate knowledgeably in the Assembly. Both David Coffin’s and Howie Donahoe’s commentary (as well as this document) can be found in Google documents, together with a more organizational (as opposed to commentary) document by my friends Jared Nelson and Scott Edberg, linked on the PCA Historical Center page: <https://www.pcahistory.org>. References to *CH* are to the latest edition of the Commissioner Handbook.

Find the full text of the overtures at: <https://pcaga.org/resources/#overtures>

ON ORDER OF BUSINESS: I have often (in conjunction with RE Howie Donahoe) proposed a docket for the Overtures Committee (OC), setting forth the order in which the OC takes up the overtures. It has helped the committee get through the significant amount of work before it. This year, especially because of the large number of overtures (41!) before OC, I hope that the OC will adopt a docket to take up overtures in groups by topic. This makes it easier to deal with multiple overtures on the same topic and helps to ensure that the best overture of the group is the starting point. Additionally, because overtures proposing amendments to the Rules of Assembly Operations (RAO) require a vote of not only a 2/3 majority but also a majority of the *total enrollment* of commissioners (RAO 20), a partial OC report early Wednesday morning with the RAO overtures would be wise.

#	SUBJECT	POSITION	PRESB	COC
1	Amend BCO 32-2 to Clarify that a Court May Investigate When Charges are Filed	<p>NEGATIVE.</p> <p>This Overture muddies the clear distinction between a court taking action against an accused following a formal investigation (BCO 31-2) and a person pursuing an offender in accordance with Matthew 18 (BCO 32-2). These two processes in the BCO are parallel and distinct; this Overture would do away with the right of a person to pursue a Matthew 18 claim against another with an aim toward restoration and repentance. Current BCO 32-2 goes back at least 150 years and has served us well. Courts already have the right to determine whether: the charge is an offense that can be proved from Scripture (BCO 29-1), a voluntary prosecutor is disqualified for a variety of reasons (BCO 31-8), or the accuser is unwilling to be a voluntary prosecutor and risk be censured as a “slanderer of the brethren” for bringing charges on slight evidence (BCO 31-9).</p> <p>The Overture would give the court great power and discretion in all disciplinary cases over vague matters – what is it exactly for it to be “reasonable to expect the offense can</p>	Northern New England	CCB, OC

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		<p>be proven,” or what is “a level warranting judicial process”? Are we to have a future Overture to draft a list of judiciable offenses?</p> <p>The Overture also presents a particular problem for those who wish to bring charges against a Teaching Elder who is under the jurisdiction of a Presbytery. Should a layperson bring such charges under this Overture and the Presbytery determine (apart from any adversarial hearing or ability for the accuser to bring evidence) not to commence process, the accuser would <i>not</i> have the right of Complaint due to a lack of standing (not being subject to the jurisdiction of the Presbytery) (BCO 43-1).</p> <p>This Overture should be rejected and our historic polity and process of discipline upheld.</p> <p>CCB advises that the proposed amendment is in conflict with the Constitution (BCO 29-1 and 31-9). <i>CH</i>, 371-372.</p>		
2	Expand Boundaries of South Florida Presbytery	<p>AFFIRMATIVE if approved by MNA CoC</p> <p>MNA recommends affirmative <i>CH</i>, 707, item 4.</p>	South Florida	MNA
3	Erect Ad Interim Committee on Christian Nationalism	<p>ANSWER BY REFERENCE to Overture 48.</p> <p>This year contains perhaps the most requests for Ad Interim Committees (or “Study Committee”) in recent memory, despite the fact that “study committee fatigue” is a real thing in the PCA. Study Committees are best reserved for potential changes to the Constitution or issues where there is a need for clarity and unity on issues before the PCA. Perhaps the best example of this is the excellent Human Sexuality Report. While the issues raised by the Overture have received much notice on the internet, there does not appear to be any significant division on this. The Overture purports to have the PCA study such modern and broad issues such as “Christian Nationalism” (whatever that is), “Theonomic Reconstruction,” and “similar viewpoints” (one wonders what the limitation on that is, especially in light of Overture 4’s reference to “Moscow Theology”). It would be better to study the historically Reformed view on the civil magistrate instead; but this work is already being done, particularly by my friend Kevin DeYoung.</p> <p>There is no need to go to the expense of a Study Committee, particularly because RAO 9-3 stipulates that a 2/3 majority is required to approve more than two Ad Interim Committees in one year. There are two better options (see Overtures 26 and 49 below).</p>	Arizona	OC, AC

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4	Erect Ad Interim Study Committee on Christian Nationalism	ANSWER BY REFERENCE to Overture 48. See commentary on Overture 3.	South Texas	OC, AC
5	Grant BCO 60-63 Full Constitutional Status	ANSWER BY REFERENCE to Overture 26. The current text of the Directory of Worship hails from the 1930s and contains much material that would not be helpful as a constitutional guide to worship. Better to tackle the project whole than piecemeal. CCB advises the proposed amendment IS NOT in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. <i>CH</i> , 372, item B.	Calvary	CCB, OC
6	Amend BCO 18-2 to Allow Flexibility on Applications to Come Under Care	AFFIRMATIVE as AMENDED. The Overture rightly points out a problem in BCO 18-2, which is that it unduly constricts a Presbytery with respect to the receipt of applications for candidacy. Better to amend the sentence that is the subject of the Overture to: “Every applicant must file his application with the clerk of the Presbytery at least one month before the meeting of the Presbytery. ” CCB advises that the proposed amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution. <i>CH</i> , 372	Rocky Mountain	CCB, OC
7	Amend BCO 34-1 Regarding Advisors and Original Jurisdiction in Process Against a TE	NEGATIVE. BCO 34-1 is a constitutional mess. My previous attempt to amend this section and make it useful failed to receive 2/3 approval by Presbyteries after the 49 th Assembly in 2022. This attempt is worse for the wear. It would permit “non-voting advisors,” which is already permitted; it would change the number of petitioning presbyteries to five without any justification for that number; it would insert the vague standard of “failed to uphold the Constitution” as a triggering event, which is difficult to define (especially when there is inaction!) and could be triggered by something as mundane as missing a filing deadline by a day; and finally, it would create a dissonant standard with BCO 33-1. In all respects, this Overture not only fails to fix the problem, but it does not even address the problem as well as <i>current</i> BCO 34-1. CCB advises that the proposed amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution. <i>CH</i> , 372	Missouri	CCB, OC
8	Amend BCO 24-1 To Require REs and Deacons to State Confessional Differences	AFFIRMATIVE as AMENDED. Because the Constitution treats both Teaching and Ruling Elders as “one class of office” (BCO 8-10) and requires the examination of Ruling Elders and Deacons in three of the areas in which Teaching Elders are examined (English Bible, theology and government – BCO 24-1), it makes	Nashville	CCB, OC

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		<p>perfect sense to ask men to state their potential differences to the court (here the Session).</p> <p>The Assembly has already spoken to the importance of not allowing Sessions to allow REs or Deacons stated differences that are “out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” or “strikes at the vitals of religion.” In <i>Bowen v. Eastern Carolina</i> (Case 90-8, MGA 1991 p. 84f.) the SJC held that “<i>Infant Baptism (WCF 28-4) and Limited Atonement (WCF 3-3, 8-5 and 11-4) are to be considered fundamentals of the system of doctrine and that there can be no exceptions given in the case of officers in the church.</i>”</p> <p>My friend, Howie Donahoe, rightly points out that there is no mandate for recording stated differences in Session minutes for review by Presbyteries as there is for Presbytery review by the Assembly (cf. RAO 16-3.e(6)). Therefore an amendment at the end of what would be new BCO 24-1.e would be beneficial:</p> <p><u>“The Session shall record in its records (BCO 12-7) such declared differences and its assessment of the difference in accordance with the categories set forth in RAO 16-3.e(6).”</u></p> <p>CCB advises that the proposed amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 372</p>		
9	Amend BCO 14-1 to Make AC Members Appointed by Committees and Agencies Non-voting Advisory Members	<p>AFFIRMATIVE as AMENDED.</p> <p>The overture would give greater representation for men elected directly by the Assembly on the AC. The main reason that BCO 14-1-12 was amended in 1989 to its current form is no longer relevant. In 1989, there was no forum for our Permanent Committees and Agencies to gather, discuss, and facilitate common ministry goals and emphasis for the PCA. We now have a Cooperative Ministries Committee (RAO 7) that serves this exact purpose very well.</p> <p>The AC’s recommendation on this overture actually points out a further problem that could be fixed by amendment: “If Overture 9 were to pass, no Committee or Agency could vote on its own budget.” This is correct. It seems to me odd that each Committee and Agency only gets <i>one</i> representative to vote on its budget. If the PCA had a “unified budget,” this would be understandable. But the PCA does not. An amendment to RAO 4-11 giving each Committee and Agency direct access to present its budget through its Committee of Commissioners would be preferable. Each Committee and Agency understands its budget better than the AC as a whole.</p>	James River	CCB, OC, AC, CC, CDM, CTS, Geneva, MNA, MTW, PCAF, RH, RUF

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		CCB advises that the proposed amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution. <i>CH, 373</i>		
10	Amend BCO 22 to Affirm the 'Consent of the Governed' Regarding Assistant Pastors	<p>NEGATIVE.</p> <p>This Overture seeks to modify a provision in our polity that has caused tension. An Assistant Pastor is a voting member of Presbytery and GA, while not being a voting member of Session. The Assistant Pastor is also a "pastor" in the congregation (BCO 22-1), while not being elected by the members of the congregation in an apparent contradiction of BCO 16-2.</p> <p>As a frequent reviser of the BCO, I have some sympathy for this attempt to resolve the tension. But I fear this solution causes more problems than it fixes. First, if the Assistant Pastor does not pass the proposed vote (or if the Session does not desire to have a congregational vote), the Assistant Pastor is automatically terminated after five years, even if both he and the Session believe his ministry is fruitful in the church. Second, the Overture has the odd provision of requiring a super majority of $\frac{3}{4}$ more reminiscent of a staff pastor succeeding a senior pastor (BCO 23-1) than of electing <i>either</i> a senior or associate pastor, in which only a majority vote is required. It would actually be a <i>lower threshold</i> to call a vote to make the man an Associate (BCO 22-2)! Third, I believe an unintended consequence of this Overture would be to unduly delay the ordination of young seminary graduates. Many Sessions would like to assess the gifts, maturity, and fit of a young man before entrusting him with the decisions made by a Session (whose Ruling Elders would often be decades older than him). So I believe such churches, instead of starting a five-year clock on a young man, would simply call men as unordained "directors" in order to have time to make those assessments. This would essentially delay ordination for men for a number of years with no real benefit to anyone. Finally, as my friend RE Donahoe points out, churches often would rather have staff pastors be Assistants instead of Associates to avoid disruption and division in the church when a congregational meeting is required to dissolve a man's call.</p> <p>This issue needs further study and a better solution.</p> <p>CCB advises that the proposed amendment is ambiguous in not addressing how current Assistant Pastors would be treated. <i>CH, 373</i></p>	Central Florida	CCB, OC

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11	To Study Incorporating Bitcoin into Session, Presbytery, and Committee & Agency Balance Sheets	NEGATIVE. See commentary on Overture 3. In addition, this is a matter not particularly suited to <i>ecclesiastical</i> study.	South Texas	OC, AC, CC, CDM, CTS, Geneva, MNA, MTW, PCAF, RH, RUF
12	Amend BCO 58-5 to Specify Only Officers May Distribute the Lord's Supper	AFFIRMATIVE as AMENDED. This Overture would mandate the following of a basic principle of our worship and theology that the Sacraments belong to the Church through its officers, much as the preaching of the Word does. The Lord's Supper should be under the administration of the Teaching Elder <i>and</i> the Session (BCO 12-5.e), and non-ordained persons should not be seen (or assumed) to administer the Supper. There seems to me a world of difference between passing the plate between rows as the elders bring the elements and having non-ordained persons appear <i>in charge</i> of the distribution. I do believe the Overture would benefit from some additional clarity. For that reason, I am currently thinking about potential amendments that would help. CCB advises that the proposed amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution. <i>CH</i> , 373	Providence	CCB, OC
13	Amend BCO 25-1 to Specify Only Members in Good Standing May Vote	NEGATIVE. While I am all for consistency in the BCO, I do not think there is a problem to be resolved here. These two provisions (BCO 24-3 and 25-1) have existed side by side in the BCO for more than a century and I am unaware of any controversy or even confusion that has resulted. As others have pointed out, the two provisions are addressing different issues: the difference between communing members in good standing and those under discipline (24-3), and the difference between communing and non-communing members (25-1). This Overture also appears to be in conflict with BCO 25-7 and 25-11 (CCB report, <i>CH</i> , 373) and would cause confusion should Overture 22 pass.	Great Lakes	CCB, OC
14	Amend BCO 38-1 to Indicate Ways a Court May Interact with an Offended Party	NEGATIVE. This Overture would specify a particular way that a court must interact with an offended person in a Case without Process (BCO 38-1). First, I do not believe a mechanism has to be approved in advance to meet the new provision in 38-1 that an offended party be given the opportunity to comment on a Confession. A court could use a committee,	Great Lakes	CCB, OC

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		<p>a commission, or even the offended person's pastor for such purpose, as wisdom dictates. Nothing in the second paragraph of 38-1 requires the court to have even completed that process – the offended person, for example, might be unwilling to engage with the court. At the same time, it is the court itself (or a commission) that must approve the Confession, presumably by raising the question of whether the offended person had been contacted and what the result of that was. If the court was unconvinced that this had been properly done, it could postpone consideration of the Confession and then specify by whom and how the offended person would be contacted.</p> <p>CCB advises that the proposed amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 373</p>		
15	Amend BCO 36-4 to Add Language for the Administration of Definite Suspension from Office	<p>AFFIRMATIVE as AMENDED.</p> <p>This is a helpful and wise proposal that is consistent with the other provisions of BCO 36. RE Donahoe has described a helpful amendment to replace the duration of the suspension with the dates of the suspension (from X date until Y date) for clarity.</p> <p>CCB advises that the proposed amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 373</p>	Mississippi Valley	CCB, OC
16	Amend BCO 36-5 to Conform the Language to BCO 37-3 re Suspension from Office	<p>AFFIRMATIVE.</p> <p>An uncontroversial and welcome change for consistency.</p> <p>CCB advises that the proposed amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 373</p>	Mississippi Valley	CCB, OC
17	Change the Boundaries of Covenant and Mississippi Valley Presbyteries	<p>AFFIRMATIVE if approved by MNA CoC</p> <p>MNA recommends affirmative <i>CH</i>, 707, item 7.</p>	Mississippi Valley	MNA
18	Direct RUF to Update "Campus Ministry Manual" for GA Approval	<p>AFFIRMATIVE.</p> <p>I understand RUF's concern about having details of its ministry subject to each Assembly's whim, but I believe that having a basic manual would be a help to RUF Teaching Elders, churches, and the PCA as a whole. Having a guide that the Assembly is aware of is a good policy. For example, the Assembly in 2014 directed all the Permanent Committees and Agencies to review their policies, procedures, and practices relating to child protection and report back to the Assembly. I am not aware of any such report being made. Especially in a student ministry context, it would be supremely helpful for RUF to have and publish for the Assembly such procedures.</p> <p>RUF recommends negative, <i>CH</i>, 907, item 6.</p>	Gulf Coast	RUF

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19	Amend BCO 57-5 to Revise the Membership Vows	<p>NEGATIVE.</p> <p>Over the years, numerous attempts to amend the membership vows have been made. None have succeeded, and I believe that is for good reason. The current vows are Biblical, Trinitarian (see #1-3), and easily understood.</p> <p>I do not believe that the Constitution gives Sessions the freedom to change, alter, add, or subtract to the questions of BCO 57-5. The “may” language in that section clearly applies to the optionality of the questions being propounded in “the presence of the congregation.” Many Sessions propose the questions in a Session meeting rather than a congregational meeting or worship service.</p> <p>CCB advises that the proposed amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 373</p>	Eastern Carolina	CCB, OC
20	Change the Boundaries of Covenant and Mississippi Valley Presbyteries	<p>AFFIRMATIVE if approved by MNA CoC</p> <p>MNA recommends affirmative <i>CH</i>, 707, item 7.</p>	Covenant	MNA
21	Change the Boundaries of Covenant and Hills & Plains Presbyteries	<p>AFFIRMATIVE if approved by MNA CoC</p> <p>Interestingly, the <i>CH</i> does not contain any MNA recommendation on this matter.</p>	Covenant	MNA
22	Amend BCO 20-3, 24-3 and 25-1 to clarify “Regular Standing” re minimum voting age	<p>AFFIRMATIVE if Overture 33 is approved.</p> <p>I am torn about this Overture. I think there are good arguments to be made for limiting voting rights in some situations (although I did not need 20 pages of rationale for that!). At the same time, my friend Dr. Guy Waters makes some excellent points in his article, <i>Some Thoughts on Overture 22</i>. But my main concern, as expressed to RE Donahoe for almost a year, is that this amendment could open the door to an increase in young child communion for those who do not truly understand the Supper or the Church. I believe Overture 33 mitigates those concerns.</p> <p>One other very salient point: this Overture does not <i>mandate</i> voting limits, it merely <i>permits</i> them. So congregations that do not wish to have any voting limitations may keep the status quo.</p>	Pacific Northwest	CCB, OC
23	Amend BCO 41-3 to Allow Supplemental Judges for a Session Trial	<p>AFFIRMATIVE.</p> <p>This is a helpful and wise addition to our BCO. It allows Sessions an option not presently available that would maintain the two levels of appeal (Presbytery and General Assembly) for a Session-level trial. The Rationale for the Overture is persuasive.</p> <p>CCB advises that the proposed amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 374</p>	Pacific Northwest	CCB, OC

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24	Amend BCO 24-1 to Clarify a Session's Role in Examining Officer Nominees	<p>AFFIRMATIVE.</p> <p>It may be the case that the BCO already allows what the Overture proposes, namely, the authority of the Session to render a decision on the Christian experience of a previously ordained officer. The BCO nowhere prohibits that, so it would appear to be allowed. But our BCO is more than a manual for procedure; it is also a public statement of our principles of government. As such it is helpful to have important principles (like the examination and election of officers) spelled out for all to read.</p> <p>I disagree with my friend David Coffin's assessment that this amounts to "effectively an act of discipline without due process." The Overture would not depose or censure any man. But it could be possible that a previously ordained man would not fit the qualifications for an officer in the estimation of his new Session. This is especially true because there is no provision for Ruling Elders or Deacons that is parallel to BCO 34-10 regarding Teaching Elders. It is possible that a man could be ordained, transfer to a new church, and retain his ordination for decades before being nominated for office again. Certainly, in such an instance (and changed circumstances!) his Session should be able to make a contemporaneous assessment of his Christian character.</p> <p>CCB advises that the proposed amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 374</p>	Evangel	CCB, OC
25	Amend BCO 46-4 to Add a Class of Associate Membership for Honorably Retired TEs	<p>NEGATIVE.</p> <p>The Overture is unnecessary and confusing. Currently, a Teaching Elder retains his membership (and is subject to the jurisdiction) of a Presbytery. If he wanted to come under the jurisdiction of a Session, he could demit the ministry (BCO 38-2). He is also free to attend (and should!) worship in a local church and benefit from the ministry and shepherding of the Session. No change should be made.</p> <p>CCB advises that the proposed amendment is in conflict with the Constitution (BCO 13-1 and 13-2). <i>CH</i>, 374.</p>	Northwest Georgia	CCB, OC

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26	Erect Ad Interim Committee to Revise the Directory for Worship for Authoritative Use	AFFIRMATIVE. I am generally against Study Committees (see comments on Overture 3), but a committee to suggest revisions to the 1930s era Directory of Worship would be helpful. I believe it would likely simplify and clarify the worship of the PCA. This is far superior to amending a chapter at a time. Further, because this is merely a committee to study and propose, there is no danger of it foisting unwanted changes on the Church.	Northwest Georgia	OC, AC
27	Erect Ad Interim Committee to Receive Suggestions for Permanent Committee and Agency Operations, Resources, and Expenses	NEGATIVE. I am not opposed to, but rather favor, efficiency. As such, I believe a better method for finding efficiencies is not the erection of a (costly?) committee but rather allowing Sessions and Presbyteries to do studies and make suggestions.	Northwest Georgia	OC, AC, CC, CDM, CTS, Geneva, MNA, MTW, PCAF, RH, RUF
28	Demand Mission to North America (MNA) to Apologize and Terminate Personnel	NEGATIVE. The Overture argues that following the United States Code makes its actions necessary. But taking the actions in the Overture could amount to admitting breaking the law and lead to liability. MNA has previously issued an apology for the conduct in question and assured the Church that it will not be repeated. Better to hold them to that standard and leave well enough alone.	Northwest Georgia	MNA
29	Amend BCO 15-5.c to Clarify the Handling of an SJC Minority Decision by GA	AFFIRMATIVE as AMENDED. As the author of this Overture, I obviously recommend its adoption. The Rationale for the Overture is of course my reasoning. I would, however, amend the Overture to match my original submission before it was amended on the floor of my Presbytery, removing the reference to the General Assembly on 108, line 3: If the General Assembly finally disapproves of both proposed decisions, it must set the case for hearing before the General Assembly or a special commission The current language allows either for the General Assembly to hear the case or a special commission. To ask the entire Assembly (a body in excess of 2,000 commissioners) to sit and hear a judicial case is unwieldy and inefficient. This is one of the main reasons that the SJC was established in <i>BCO</i> 15-4 and currently exists. CCB advises that the proposed amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution. <i>CH</i> , 374	Houston Metro	CCB, OC

30	Amend BCO 8-4, 20-1, 21-1, 21-12, and 23-1 re the Calling and Dissolution of TE Relationships for Needful Works	<p>AFFIRMATIVE as AMENDED.</p> <p>This Overture is the result of several years of ruminations, ponderings, and discussions I have had. I will not repeat the full page of Rationale that I drafted (<i>CH</i>, 119-120), but highlight a few items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The current BCO makes no real provision for calling, ordaining, and installing of Teaching Elders to non-congregational calls. Examples of these include RUF calls, missionary calls, chaplain calls, and the like. 2. The predecessor to our BCO contained an extended chapter on “The Elder” which described such calls as “works as may be needful to the Church.” Our BCO recognizes that there are such calls and that they are indeed needful to the Church (BCO 8-4). 3. The ordination and installation questions of BCO 21 are only applicable to congregational calls. A man being ordained to an RUF ministry, for example, cannot answer question 8: <i>“Are you now willing to take the charge of this church, agreeable to your declaration when accepting their call? And do you, relying upon God for strength, promise to discharge to it the duties of a pastor?”</i> Nor is there a congregation to answer the “Questions to the Congregation” in BCO 21. I am told anecdotally in such ordinations and installations, the questions are modified impromptu and informally. While I do not blame the presbyteries and candidates for making the best of a bad situation, a Constitutional solution is needed. 4. There is no current clarity around calls that originate with a permanent Committee or Agency (<i>e.g.</i>, the Coordinator of a Permanent Committee). 5. The text of this Overture is longer than the bare necessity because, as I spoke with fellow elders, they advised me that greater clarity and less jumping from one section of the BCO to another would be better. So I chose to center the bulk of the changes in a new BCO 21-12 section for ease of reference. <p>A few other salient comments in light of recommendations to defer the disposition of this Overture and comments from CCB.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. I realize that several of the Permanent Committees and Agencies have not had an opportunity to review this Overture in the context of a formal meeting. However, I have personally spoken to many of the Coordinators of our Committees and Agencies, and each of them agrees that this is a hole in our polity that needs to be fixed. I have incorporated comments that they have given me privately. 	Houston Metro	CCB, OC, AC, CC, CDM, CTS, Geneva, MNA, MTW, PCAF, RH, RUF
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		<p>7. After reviewing CCB’s advice on the Overture (<i>CH</i>, 375) and discussions with other elders after the Overture’s publication, I plan to offer a series of amendments to remove any perceived conflict with our Constitution and any perceived ambiguity with “out of bounds calls.” In particular, my good friend and polity expert, Dr. Guy Waters, has suggested some helpful language, including deleting “and Calls from Outside the PCA” from the title and removing the absolute requirement that the “calling entity” be addressed. I believe these and other amendments in the Overtures Committee will provide a polished, final product.</p> <p>In my opinion, there is no reason to delay finishing the work on this Overture.</p>		
31	Amend BCO 31-10 to Require Vote of the Entire Court to Suspend an Officer’s Official Functions during Process	<p>AFFIRMATIVE.</p> <p>As the author of this Overture, I obviously recommend its adoption. As the Rationale explains, allowing a small number of men to suspend an officer from his official duties without the concurrence of the entire court may lead to injustice. The requirements for a called meeting of a court (BCO 12-6, 13-4) together with the ability to conduct such a meeting over videoconference make this additional protection less than onerous.</p> <p>CCB advises that the proposed amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 375</p>	Houston Metro	CCB, OC
32	Amend BCO 36 to Provide for Elevation of a Censure without an Entirely New Trial	<p>AFFIRMATIVE as AMENDED.</p> <p>This Overture answers the question of <i>how</i> a court can elevate the censure of a person from indefinite suspension (from the sacraments or office, BCO 36-5) to deposition or excommunication. The current BCO offers no process. In the past, the SJC had ruled that such elevation could occur by the mere legislative act of the court, without the censured person even being made aware that the court was considering that (<i>see</i> Case 2001-25 <i>TE Anthony Dallison v. North Florida Presbytery</i> (M30GA, 2002, pages 156-162)).</p> <p>When this issue came again before the SJC in 2023-09 <i>TE Aaron Myers v. Illiana Presbytery</i> (M51GA, 2024, pages 824-834), the SJC rejected both that previous process and the option of a <i>de novo</i> process with a new trial (the suggestion of Overture 38). This Overture seeks to codify the SJC ruling and provide Constitutional guidance to Sessions and Presbyteries as to how to elevate a censure in a way that balances due process with the reality that the burden of showing repentance is on the one proven guilty.</p>	Houston Metro	CCB, OC

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		<p>CCB has advised that the term “hearing” is ambiguous, which is different than “conflicting.” The term hearing is meant to be ambiguous to give courts discretion as to what to allow and how to conduct the hearing. This is not a new trial, and therefore, the censured person does not have the rights under the Rules of Discipline of a person who has not been convicted.</p> <p>CCB also reports that it is ambiguous whether the censured person has the right to Appeal an elevated suspension. This is solved by adding a final sentence to BCO 36-8 and a phrase to BCO 42-2:</p> <p><u>36-8. “A person whose suspension is so elevated has the right of Appeal (BCO 42-2).”</u></p> <p><u>42-2. “The only parties entitled to an appeal are those who have submitted to a regular trial, those appealing a censure in a BCO 38-1 case without process, those appealing the elevation of a censure under BCO 36-8, and those appealing a BCO 34-10 divestiture without censure.</u></p> <p>Finally, CCB reports that the phrase “original trial court” is ambiguous with respect to a full court or trial commission. An amendment resolves this ambiguity:</p> <p><u>42-2. “before the original trial court <u>having jurisdiction (BCO 33-1, 34-1) and not any trial commission.</u>”</u></p>		
33	Amend BCO 57-2 re the Examination of Young Persons for Admission to the Sealing Ordinances	<p>AFFIRMATIVE.</p> <p>This Overture was rejected by my Presbytery on a close vote for a number of reasons, most prominently the view that “we already do this.” Another objection is that “we don’t want to micromanage Sessions.” Both of these arguments are unpersuasive, and so I carried this Overture directly to the Assembly (RAO 11-10).</p> <p>The Overture does not mandate specific questions, length of examination, or any other matter that could be considered “micromanaging.” Further, if Sessions are already covering the subjects set forth in the Overture, there is no harm in spelling that out. It would be a help to the members of churches to know what the broad parameters are in examination for admission to the sealing ordinances. Some had suggested to me more detailed language that was helpful and Biblical, but I wanted to keep this addition as simple as possible.</p> <p>I began thinking about this Overture after being made aware of what would become Overture 22. I remain</p>	TE Fred Greco	CCB, OC

#	SUBJECT	POSITION	PRESB	COC
		<p>concerned (despite the assurances of Overture 22's author) that if Overture 22 passes, Sessions will be more likely to admit very young children to the Lord's Supper, secure in the knowledge that they can be prohibited from voting in congregational meetings.</p> <p>CCB advises that the proposed amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 375</p>		
34	Amend RAO 16 to Require Reporting on Session and Diaconate Membership and Duties	<p>AFFIRMATIVE.</p> <p>Given the requirements of BCO 9-2 (that the work of the deacons is to be done by ordained deacons or, in their absence, the ruling elders), it would be helpful for Presbyteries to know if their churches are complying with the Constitution. I do confess that I am unsure about whether the proper venue for such reporting would be in RAO 16 or a BCO amendment to BCO 9-2 (or 12-7).</p>	Savannah River	CCB, OC
35	Request AC to Study and Report on GA Meeting Locations	<p>AFFIRMATIVE.</p> <p>Yes, yes, a hundred times, yes! We need an assessment to help contain the costs of Assembly and to choose locations that are in airline hubs and have sufficient hotel and restaurant space.</p>	Pacific Northwest	AC
36	Change the Boundaries of Georgia Foothills and Metro Atlanta Presbyteries	<p>AFFIRMATIVE if approved by MNA CoC</p> <p>MNA recommends affirmative <i>CH</i>, 707, item 10.</p>	Georgia Foothills	MNA
37	Amend BCO 12-3 so that a Session May Elect One of Its Members as Moderator in Judicial Cases	<p>AFFIRMATIVE.</p> <p>This Overture will fix an unfortunate anomaly in our Constitution. Currently, a Ruling Elder may chair a judicial case before Presbytery, a Presbytery commission, or the Standing Judicial Commission (I was on such an SJC trial panel in which a Ruling Elder ably moderated), but NOT a judicial case before a Session. There are more than capable Ruling Elders in our denomination and Sessions should be given this <i>option</i>. This should be changed.</p> <p>CCB advises that the proposed amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution. <i>CH</i>, 375</p>	Southeast Alabama	CCB, OC

#	SUBJECT	POSITION	PRESB	COC
38	Amend BCO 30-4 to Require a New Case with Process for Elevation of Indefinite Suspension to Excommunication	<p>ANSWER BY REFERENCE to Overture 32.</p> <p>This Overture represents the minority position in the SJC Case 2023-09 <i>Myers v. Illiana</i> (MGA 2024 p. 824f). As I stated in the Rationale for Overture 32:</p> <p>“While a censured person is entitled to some rights, clearly he is not entitled to all rights under the Rules of Discipline. One who has been judged guilty by a court does not have the right to a presumption of innocence. There is no person to make out a BCO 32-2 charge, nor are there common fame reports to provoke a BCO 31-2 investigation. The court has already been dealing with the indefinitely suspended person for some time, and by its previous action, the court has already found indefinitely suspended person impenitent.”</p> <p>CCB advises that the proposed amendment is in conflict with Overture 32. <i>CH</i>, 376</p>	Southeast Alabama	CCB, OC
39	Amend BCO 34-8 and add BCO 33-5 to Clarify the Process for Elevating Suspension from Office to Deposition	<p>ANSWER BY REFERENCE to Overture 32.</p> <p>This Overture is unnecessary should Overture 32 be approved. Overture 32 is the superior amendment to the BCO.</p>	Southeast Alabama	CCB, OC
40	Amend BCO 35-9 to Require Recording All Parts of a Trial	<p>AFFIRMATIVE.</p> <p>This Overture makes clear what I believe is already required. However, there have been cases where a party has argued that the BCO only requires the recording of <i>testimony</i>. All parts of a trial, including opening statements, closing statements, and motions, should be recorded for the appellate court to review.</p>	Southeast Alabama	CCB, OC
41	Direct the AC to Collect & Report Each Congregation’s Public Worship Service Times	<p>AFFIRMATIVE.</p> <p>This Overture places a very modest reporting from churches, and the reporting is not required in the BCO in any event. In fact, one of my greatest annoyances is that we are denied a true picture of the PCA because almost half (!) of PCA churches do not report even basic statistics. For most churches, this requires between 30 and 60 seconds of work.</p>	Calvary	AC
42	Direct the Stated Clerk Not to Collect Statistical Data Pertaining to Age or Ethnicity	<p>AFFIRMATIVE.</p> <p>This Overture, <i>contra</i> Overture 41, prevents the collection of time-consuming and sensitive personal data. Whereas Overture 41 asks for <i>public</i> data, collecting <i>private</i> data that is complex and sensitive (What ethnicity does a family consider itself? How does a Session poll its members to obtain their ethnicity?) is unwarranted. As the Stated Clerk’s Office has already alerted churches that such data will begin to be collected in 2026, best to stop this now.</p>	Calvary	AC

#	SUBJECT	POSITION	PRESB	COC
43	Amend RAO 4-11 regarding Data on Age and Ethnicity	AFFIRMATIVE. See comments on Overture 42.	Calvary	CCB, OC, AC
44	Transition byFaith to a Press-Release-Based Publication	AFFIRMATIVE. Decreasing the expense of ByFaith, currently proposed at the amount of \$311,605 (8% of the total budget, CH 504), would be wise. That says nothing of the several public controversies that have been the occasion of “op-ed” articles in ByFaith as opposed to new articles.	Pee Dee	AC
45	Change the Boundaries of Covenant and Hills & Plains Presbyteries	AFFIRMATIVE if approved by MNA CoC MNA recommends affirmative <i>CH</i> , 707, item 7.	Hills and Plains	MNA
46	Change the Boundaries of Georgia Foothills and Metro Atlanta Presbyteries	AFFIRMATIVE if approved by MNA CoC MNA recommends affirmative <i>CH</i> , 707, item 10.	Metro Atlanta	MNA
47	Erect Ad Interim Committee on Christian Nationalism	ANSWER BY REFERENCE to Overture 48. See commentary on Overture 3.	Great Lakes	OC, AC
48	Erect an Ad Interim Committee for a Pastoral Letter on Christian Citizenship and Church-State Relations	AFFIRMATIVE. This Overture provides a less expensive, less time-consuming option to Overtures 3, 4, and 47. In 2023, a commission drafted a letter to the civil magistrate on the subject of transgender medical procedures for minors. It had no expenses, worked quickly, and produced an excellent document that was an encouragement to the Church. This Overture would create a simpler process for answering the concerns of several Presbyteries this year.	Tennessee Valley	OC, AC
49	Erect an Ad Interim Committee on AI	AFFIRMATIVE. I am generally against Study Committees (see comments on Overture 3), but this Overture is asking for a study of an issue that is not widely known in the PCA and on which the average elder is not fully versed. The issue of artificial intelligence is changing virtually every aspect of our lives, far beyond computer technology, and it would be very helpful to have sound pastoral advice on a matter that has wide-ranging ethical implications.	Pacific Northwest	CCB, OC, all Perm Cmtes
50	Encouragement to Discernment and Compassion regarding Immigrants	POSTPONE INDEFINITELY. This Overture purports to make wide-ranging declarations on a variety of exceedingly complex issues which divide Christians of good character and wisdom. This would be a difficult and fraught proposition if it were offered in the wake of a detailed and thought through Study Committee report (I am not asking for such a committee!). The best disposition of this matter is to do <i>nothing</i> with it – postponing it indefinitely rather than lighting an unneeded controversy in the Church.	Chesapeake	OC