

**Comments on 83 of the 90 Overtures to the 53<sup>rd</sup> GA in Louisville - May 18 ver.**

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83 are referred to OC = 20 RAO, 55 BCO & 8 misc. Titles are paraphrased.

**Overtures are hyperlinked on their numbers.** \* Indicates 10 for which CCB found some conflict.

7 of 90 overtures are referred only to MNA (10, 44, 62, 70, 87) and one each to AC (88) and CC/CTS (83).

"All" (below) indicates referred to 11: AC, CC, CDM, CTS, GBG, MNA, MTW, PCAF, RH, RUF, OC.

Below is a summary of what is recommended in this commentary.

16 Y = Affirmative 2025-49, 4-6, 8, 12, 15, 16, 42, 43, 51, 63, 67, 69, 78, 81 (7 BCO, 7 RAO, 2 misc.)

10 Am = Yes, if Amended 3, 7, 9, 13, 30, 35, 45, 50, 66, 85 (5 BCO, 3 RAO, 2 misc.)

26 N = Negative 1, 11, 20, 26-29, 31, 32, 37, 46\*, 49, 54\*, 55-59, 64\*, 65\*, 68, 75, 80, 82, 84, 86

11 RB = Refer Back 2\*, 17-19, 21-25, 33, 61

20 R# = Reference to # 9 diaconal (14, 34\*, 36\*, 38\*, 48, 52, 71\*, 72\*, 74) +39, 40, 41, 47, 53, 60, 73, 76, 77, 79, 89

Readers should also consider comments of other brothers who prepare commentaries, like Dave Coffin, Steve Tipton, Jim Eggert, and a joint one by David Nelson and Scott Edburg, especially since we each often disagree.

17	Y	<b>2025-49 Pacific NW</b>		Appoint Study Committee on Artificial Intelligence	All
18	N	<b>1 Potomac</b>	BCO 23-1	Assoc/Asst Pastor Succeeding Sr. Pastor	OC
19	RB	<b>2 Wisconsin *</b>	BCO 5-4	Mission Church Members' Consent for Church Planter	MNA, OC
20	Am	<b>3 NY State</b>	BCO 32-20	Add Procedural Steps Before Dismissing Charges	OC
21	Y	<b>4 Pacific NW</b>	prayer	Prayer of Thanks for Adult Professions of Faith	OC
22	Y	<b>5 Pacific NW</b>	RAO 5-1	11 AC Members Must Be from Different Presbyteries	AC, OC
23	Y	<b>6 Pacific NW</b>	RAO 14-9	10% Vote to Remove Item from Omnibus	OC
24	Y	<b>7 Pacific NW</b>	RAO 16	RPR Report to GA - Fewer Recommendations	OC
25	Y	<b>8 Pacific NW</b>	RAO 8-4.i	Earlier Deadline for Floor Nominations (24 hrs. earlier)	OC
26	Am	<b>9 Hills &amp; Plains</b>	RAO 8-4.i	Info on Floor Nominations Re "Presbytery Proportionality"	OC
27	-	<b>10 Ohio</b>	MNA	Boundaries of Pittsburgh & Ohio Pphys - no churches effected	MNA
28	N	<b>11 Ohio</b>	RAO 4-21	Require Assessment Data from MNA	MNA, OC
29	Y	<b>12 Chesapeake</b>	BCO 21-4.a	Allow Alternative to B.A. Prerequisite for Ordination	OC
30	Am	<b>13 Great Lakes</b>	BCO 15-2	Session Commissions	OC
31	R37	<b>14 SW Florida</b>	BCO 7-3	Restricting Titles for Non-Ordained People	OC
32	Y	<b>15 SW Florida</b>	BCO 42-4	Clarify Deadline for Filing Complaints and Appeals	OC
33	Y	<b>16 SW Florida</b>	BCO 43	Clarify "Circularizing" the Court	OC
34	RB	<b>17 Westminster</b>	BCO 5-2	Dissolution of Mission Churches	OC
35	RB	<b>18 Westminster</b>	BCO 5-4	Allow Mother Church to Call Church Planter	OC
36	RB	<b>19 Westminster *</b>	BCO 5-8	Include "Ecclesiastical" Government	OC
37	N	<b>20 Westminster *</b>	BCO 5	Add Section on Churches Without a Governing Body	OC
38	RB	<b>21 Westminster</b>	BCO 13-6	Clarify Exam for TEs from Other Denominations	OC
39	RB	<b>22 Westminster</b>	BCO 13-8	Churches Joining from Outside PCA	OC
40	RB	<b>23 Westminster</b>	BCO 14	Renumber and Restructure BCO Chapter 14	OC
41	RB	<b>24 Westminster</b>	BCO 15-2	Require Full Pby to Conduct Ordination Exam	OC
42	RB	<b>25 Westminster</b>	BCO 21	Restructure BCO 21-1 through 21-4	OC
43	N	<b>26 Westminster</b>	BCO 26-2	Abstaining Pphys Won't Count as NO Votes on BCO amendments	OC

1	N	27	Westminster	BCO 34-1	GA Assumption of Original Jurisdiction	OC
2	N	28	Westminster	BCO 41-7	Allow Church Member Complaint in Session-Referenced Matter	OC
3	N	29	Westminster	BCO 42	Clarify Difference between Oral and Written Notice	OC
4	Am	30	Westminster	BCO 46-6	Recording TE Dismissed to Another Pby	OC
5	N	31	Westminster	BCO 58-5	Only TEs & REs Serve Bread & Cups to Multiple Communicants	OC
6	N	32	Westminster	RAO 14-3	Require Permanent Comm & Agency Board Rules & Manuals	All
7	RB	33	Westminster	RAO 16-7	RPR Minority Reports	OC
8	R37	34	Savannah Riv *	BCO 9-2	Require a Diaconate	OC
9	Am	35	Illiana	BCO 31-2	Establish Deadline for Issuing Indictments	OC
10	R37	36	Catawba Vly *	BCO 8-11	Add Two Paragraphs about Elder & Deacon Duties	OC
11	N	37	Pacific *	BCO 9-3	Allow Women to be Ordained as Deacons	OC
12	R37	38	Metro ATL *	BCO 7-3	Allow Flexibility Re the Diaconate	OC
13	R55	39	Central FL	BCO 22	Limit Asst P to 5 yrs; then either Associate or Call Dissolved	OC
14	R43	40	Savannah River	RAO 4-9	Jan 1 to Dec 31 Terms for Stated Clerk & Coordinators	All
15	R43	41	Savannah River	RAO 4-9	Require 2/3 to Elect Stated Clerk & Coordinators	All
16	Y?	42	N. California	BCO 29-1	Restore Reference to Westminster Standards at the End	OC
17	Y	43	Pacific NW	RAO 4-9	4-Year Terms for 4 Coordinators + Stated Clerk (cf. 77)	AC, etc., OC
18	-	44	Covenant	MNA	Divide Covenant into Two Presbyteries (Arkansas)	MNA
19	Am	45	Covenant	RAO 8-4.i	Floor Nominee Only if Pby Submitted to Nom Com first	OC
20	N	46	NY State *	BCO 29-5	Public Allegations and the 9th Commandment	OC
21	R45	47	Suncoast FL	RAO 8-4.i	Floor Nominee Only if Pby Submitted to Nom Com first	OC
22	R37	48	NW Georgia	BCO 7-2,3	Disallow Commissioning & Titling of Non-Ordained Persons	OC
23	N	49	NW Georgia	BCO 13-1	Increase a Church's RE Representation at Pby and GA	OC
24	Am	50	MS Valley	prayer	Urge a Day of Fasting and Prayer for Revival and Renewal	OC
25	Y	51	MS Valley	BCO 5	Add Section on "Assisted Churches" (i.e., lost Session quorum)	OC
26	R37	52	MS Valley	BCO 7-4	Prohibit Creation of "Ecclesiastical Offices"	OC
27	R7	53	Great Lakes	RAO 16	Prohibit RPR Members from Floor Debate on RPR Report	OC
28	N	54	Hills & Plains *	BCO 42-2	Give Person Deemed Contumacious the Right to Complain	OC
29	N	55	SW Florida	BCO 22-3	Tenure of Asst Pastors	OC
30	N	56	SW Florida	BCO 32-19	Limit Representation in Judicial Process to Officers	OC
31	N	57	South Texas	BCO 12-7	Require Minutes of Congregational Mtg to be in Session Records	OC
32	N	58	Calvary	BCO 10-4	Specify Session & Presbytery Clerks Must be Elders	OC
33	N	59	Calvary	BCO 38-3.a	Allow Removal from Membership Roll at Member's Request	OC
34	R31	60	Calvary	BCO 58-5	Only Ordained Men May "Distribute/Serve" the Bread and Cups	OC
35	RB	61	Calvary	statement	Declare the Danvers Statement as Biblically Faithful	OC
36	-	62	TN Valley	MNA	Divide Presbytery	MNA
37	Y	63	South Texas	RAO 19-4.f	Commissioner Who Removed from Omnibus to Speak First	OC
38	N	64	Canada West *	BCO 23-2	Establish Associate Memberships for Honorably Retired TEs	OC
39	N	65	Canada West *	BCO 38-1	Confessions & Cases without Process	OC
40	Am	66	Philadelphia	statement	Lengthy Thanks on 250th Anniv. of Nation's Founding (cf. 76)	OC
41	Y	67	Potomac	BCO 40-5	Court Shall Make 2 Determinations Before Citing Lower Court	OC
42	N	68	Catawba Valley	BCO 14-1	Committees and Agency Appointees Nonvoting AC Members	All
43	Y	69	SW Florida	BCO 32-18	Clarify Contents of the Record of the Case in Judicial Cases	OC

1	-	<b>70 Korean NW</b>	MNA	Add AK, HI, OR and WA to Presbytery	MNA
2	R37	<b>71 N. California *</b>	BCO 5-9	+ 9.2 & 9-7; Allow Session to Administer Diaconal Ministry	OC
3	R37	<b>72 Ascension *</b>	BCO 12-8	Require Sessions to Report Elders and Deacons in Minutes	OC
4	R43	<b>73 TE Hooper</b>	RAO 4-9	2/3 to Elect Coordinators + Stated Clerk after 3 years of Service	All
5	R37	<b>74 E. Carolina</b>	BCO 17	New Chapter on Commissioning for Non-Ordained Ministry	OC
6	N	<b>75 Central FL</b>	BCO 42	Clarify Process for Filing an Appeal	OC
7	R66	<b>76 Calvary</b>	statement	Lengthy Thanks on 250th Anniv. of Nation's Founding (cf. 66)	OC
8	R43	<b>77 SE Alabama</b>	RAO 4-9	Elect Coordinators and Clerk to 4-yr Terms (cf. 43)	AC, etc. OC
9	Y	<b>78 SE Alabama</b>	RAO 4-21	Authorize Electronic Perm Comm Meetings	AC, etc. OC
10	R78	<b>79 Calvary</b>	RAO 4-21	Authorize Electronic Perm Comm Meetings (cf. 77)	AC, etc. OC
11	N	<b>80 Calvary</b>	AIC	Erect AIC on Critical Race Theory	AC, OC
12	Y	<b>81 Potomac</b>	RAO 1-1	Require Wine & Juice at GA Lord's Supper	OC
13	N	<b>82 Rocky Mtn</b>	BCO 12+	Clarify Right of Congregation to Consent to Leaders	OC
14	-	<b>83 NW Georgia</b>	policy	Doctrine + Scripture Classes Can Only Be Taught by Elders	CC, CTS
15	N	<b>84 NW Georgia</b>	BCO 12+	Require Annual Attestation of Officer Vows	OC
16	Am	<b>85 NW Georgia</b>	BCO 44	Add Chapter on Objections	OC
17	N	<b>86 Grace Session</b>	BCO 43	Rename Complaints as Inquiries	OC
18	-	<b>87 Pittsburgh</b>	MNA	Boundaries of Pittsburgh & Ohio (cf. 10)	MNA
19	-	<b>88 Siouxlands</b>	AC	Format BCO for Ease of Printing	AC
20	R66	<b>89 Fellowship</b>	statement	Lengthy Thanks on 250th Anniv. of Nation's Founding (cf. 66)	OC

21 *Introductory Thoughts* - This commentary recommends answering 12 BCO overtures in the Affirmative (or  
22 Affirmative as Amended) and the same for 10 RAO amendments and 4 miscellaneous. And recommends  
23 answering the other 57 in the Negative, or by Reference to another, or by Referring Back to the Presbytery.

24 For the last 6 years, the Assembly has averaged 33 Overtures referred to the Overtures Committee ("OC").  
25 This year there are at least 83, which is 2.5 times the annual average. The OC simply does not have enough time  
26 to debate 83 Overtures. Last year there were 132 men on OC. And it takes a three-fourth's (3/4) majority to "call  
27 the question" in OC (RAO 15-6.g). Many of this year's 83 overtures will need to be referred back to Presbyteries  
28 because there is not enough time to consider them. The OC has about 13 hours for business, beginning work  
29 Monday at about 11 am, meeting Monday night, and adjourning at 4:00 pm Tuesday.

30 Granted, RAO 15-3 stipulates the OC can be off the floor during GA business. But it's not fair or prudent to  
31 require 130 OC members to be off the floor to consider Overtures that are not critical or have little chance of being  
32 approved by 58 presbyteries. It's not reasonable to expect 130 men to debate 83 Overtures in 13.5 hours, many of  
33 which deal with controversial topics. Such a workload will not ordinarily promote excellence.

34 In addition, the Assembly does not have enough time to debate recommendations on 83 Overtures. And  
35 with that number, this year's Assembly could have a historic number of OC Minority Reports ("MR"). It only  
36 takes 10% of the OC members to file an MR. And each MR could take 90 minutes of floor time (RAO 15-8.g.)  
37 With 83 on the OC docket, the potential for several MRs should be concerning to all. And there's only about 16.5  
38 hours of Assembly floor time each year available for business (+ 2.5 hours for the 15-minute programs of 5 Perm  
39 Comms and 5 Agency Boards.) So, a single OC minority report could use 9% of the Assembly's total debate time.

40 Hopefully, this GA will be fondly remembered as the "Refer Back" Assembly. It's been a long time since  
41 any Assembly has done business on Friday morning. It would be unwise to consider important business on Friday  
42 morning when Commissioner attendance will surely have decreased significantly.

43 While many of the RAO overtures could save the Assembly time if adopted, there are 55 Overtures proposing  
44 BCO changes. It would be unwieldy to send even half of those down to the Presbyteries for their votes.

45 Finally, it's highly doubtful any of the 10 Overtures dealing with titles, diaconates, deacons, deaconesses,  
46 etc., would be approved by 58 Presbyteries. For that reason, and some others, this commentary recommends  
47 answering Pacific 37 in the Negative (which proposes allowing women to be ordained as deacons) and answering  
48 the other 9 by Reference to the Answer on Pacific 37.

1	Y	2025-49	Pacific NW	AIC	Appoint Study Committee on Artificial Intelligence	All
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2 The 2025 GA deferred this to 2026. The Overture has been referred to each of the 5 Permanent Committees and  
3 5 Agency Boards for their advice, and we'd be wise to consider their advice.

4 I wasn't present at the PNW meeting where this Overture was adopted, but I recently watched a newly released  
5 documentary in the titled: "*The AI Doc: How I Became an Apocaloptimist.*" It's both scary and encouraging. We  
6 should realize AI is changing so fast, that many studies will be outdated before they're published. Nonetheless,  
7 below are links to three of the more recent highly regarded peer reviewed articles.

- 8 [International AI Safety Report 2026](#)
- 9 [The AI Risk Repository: A Comprehensive Meta-Review](#)
- 10 [The Science and Practice of Proportionality in AI Risk Evaluations](#)

12	N	1	Potomac	BCO 23-1	Revise the Rule for Assoc/Asst Pastor Succeeding a Sr. Pastor	OC
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13 Negative. The current paragraph already provides the most important safeguard, i.e., "Presbytery needs to  
14 determine if the dissolution of the pastoral relationship with the senior pastor was brought about in Christian love  
15 and good order on the part of the parties concerned." Granted, it could accomplish this without needing an 80%  
16 congregational vote, but there have been few instances where the current paragraph hasn't sufficed.

17	RB	2	Wisconsin *	BCO 5-4	Mission Church Members' Consent for Church Planter	MNA, OC
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18 Refer Back. While it's important to consider any advice offered by the MNA Permanent Committee, CCB advises  
19 this conflicts with BCO 25, which only applies to particular churches. However, the Overture addresses a potential  
20 problem and could be helpful if revised.

21 This Overture addresses the less-likely situation where a Presbytery appoints a Temporary Session for a Mission  
22 Church that receives members *before* Presbytery ever approves the call of a church planter. Or this situation could  
23 occur during the period after the first church planter leaves and another planting pastor is called. The Overture's  
24 proposed addition is underlined below.

- 25 5-4. Pastoral ministry for the mission church may be provided:
  - 26 a. by a minister of the Presbytery called by Presbytery to serve as pastor, or
  - 27 b. by stated, student, or ruling elder supply (BCO 22-5, -6), or
  - 28 c. by a series of qualified preachers approved by the temporary government (BCO 12-5.e).

29 If members of the mission church have been received according to BCO 5-5 at the time the  
30 Presbytery calls a minister to serve as pastor for the mission church under BCO 5-4.a, the  
31 members must give their consent to the pastor by a majority vote at a congregational meeting  
32 held according to BCO 25. This consent must be reported to the Presbytery prior to its calling  
33 a minister as pastor.

34 Note, however, that BCO 5-4.b allows the mission church Temporary Session to ask Presbytery to approve a  
35 Stated Supply for one year (renewable) without needing congregational approval, and the Overture does not  
36 address that. Also, in the proposed change a Presbytery would act to "call" a minister *pending* congregational  
37 approval, rather than vice versa. So, Presbytery might consider amending the last sentence to replace "its calling"  
38 with "its installing."

39	Am	3	NY State	BCO 32-20, -21	Add Procedural Steps Before Dismissing Charges	OC
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40 Approve, if amended. The Overture's proposal is shown below.

41 32-20. The accused or a member of the court may object to the consideration of a charge, for  
42 example, if he thinks the passage of time since the alleged offense makes fair adjudication  
43 unachievable. The court ~~should~~ shall consider ~~factors such as~~ the gravity of the alleged offense as  
44 well as what degradations of evidence and memory may have occurred in the intervening period  
45 along with any other relevant factors.

1 *all new* BCO 32-21 No charge within an indictment shall be dismissed without a hearing of the  
2 court where both parties are able to present arguments for or against dismissal. Statements offered  
3 by either party shall be narrowly focused on the reasons for dismissal and not stray into  
4 testimony. If the motion to dismiss is on the grounds of the memory of the witnesses, each witness  
5 shall be interviewed by the court and a ruling made on their ability to recall the facts in question.

6 An amendment to the last sentence of the proposed new BCO 32-21 would help. The amendment below shows  
7 two phrases from the Overture stricken and two new clauses shown underlined in italics.

8 *amended* Overture 3 - ... If the motion to dismiss is on the grounds of the memory of the witnesses,  
9 each witness shall be interviewed by the court under oath by both parties and the court, and a  
10 ruling made on their ability to recall the facts in question, whether their testimony will be  
11 admissible at trial.

12 A weak recollection alone does not ordinarily disqualify a witness, but it often affects the weight that will probably  
13 be given to his testimony. In many U.S. criminal cases there might be pre-trial "Competency" hearing regarding  
14 the memory of a witness. [There could also be other pretrial hearings: Evidentiary/Admissibility (e.g., motions in  
15 limine, hearsay disputes), Suppression (e.g. of certain evidence), Expert Witness Qualification (e.g., scientific  
16 credibility, relevance, Daubert hearing), Reliability of Certain Evidence (e.g., coerced statements), and Privilege  
17 Hearings (e.g., spousal). In these hearings, the parties can be cross-examined, and the sworn testimony would be  
18 entered into the trial record.]

19 Regarding memory and the proposed new *BCO* 32-21, the defense or prosecution could file a pre-trial motion  
20 asking the court to limit or exclude a witness's testimony. Either party could argue the witness lacks personal  
21 knowledge, the memory is too unreliable, prior statements contradict current claims, or the testimony would  
22 mislead or confuse the court.

23 But the Overture's proposed sentence has *the court* directly questioning the memory of the witness and not the  
24 prosecutor or defense counsel. It's unclear whether our courts would know enough about the facts in question -  
25 before the trial - to know the best questions to ask. Not all judges will have been part of the investigative team,  
26 even at the Session level. So, it seems the prosecutor and defense counsel (or defendant) should be the ones to  
27 question such witnesses pre-trial, under oath, in the presence of the court. And the questioning should be limited  
28 to helping the court decide whether the witness or evidence will be admissible. It certainly benefits the parties to  
29 know - before the trial - which of their witnesses and pieces of evidence will be admissible.

30	<b>Y 4 Pacific NW</b>	- - -	Prayer of Thanks at GA for Adult Professions of Faith	* OC
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31 Approve. A reasonable proposal that's valuable and should only take about two minutes of GA floor time.

32 *Be it resolved* that the 53rd GA offer a prayer of thanks to God during the Assembly in Louisville for  
33 the 5,656 adult professions of faith reported in the PCA Statistical Report, which reflects data from  
34 the last annual report of the 1,723 churches shown.

35 The data in the Overture was Accessed 8/12/25 from <https://presbyteryportal.pcanet.org/Report/StatsReport>. On  
36 5/18/26, the updated Statistics of the "Last Submitted" church reports showed 1,748 churches whose last reports  
37 totaled 5,882 adult professions of faith and 3,327 adult baptisms, but the Overture was not amended to show it.

38	<b>Y 5 Pacific NW</b>	RAO 5-1	11 AC Members Must Be from Different Presbyteries - revised	AC, OC
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39 Approve. The amendment would add a sentence to RAO 5-1.a as shown below.

40 RAO 5-1.a The Administrative Committee of General Assembly (AC) shall consist of twenty  
41 (20) members:

- 42 a. Eleven members in classes elected through the standard nomination and election procedure;.  
43 No person may be elected as one of the 11 members of the AC or as an alternate if there is  
44 already a member from the same Presbytery; but if a person is elected and changes  
45 Presbytery, he may continue to serve his full term.

1 This change would only apply to elections hereafter, and not to any of the current 11 members. The proposed  
2 amendment uses the same language as that in the BCO 15-4 (below) regarding the SJC membership.

3 BCO 15-4. "... No person may be elected [to the SJC] if there is already a member of the  
4 commission from the same Presbytery; but if a person is elected and changes Presbytery, he may  
5 continue to serve his full term. ..."

6 It's reasonable that each of the 24 SJC members must come from different Presbyteries, and it's reasonable to  
7 require the same of the 11 AC members. AC is unique amongst the Permanent Committees.

8 In addition, as Overture 9 from Hills & Plains rightly observes, when the GA Nominating Committee's  
9 Supplemental Report is published the night before the GA floor elections, it does not mention the presbyteries of  
10 the current Committee members. Thus, it's possible a floor nominee might become the second or third member of  
11 that Committee from the same Presbytery if he is elected from the floor. Contrast that with the Nominating  
12 Committee, which knows every candidate's Presbytery and can easily comply with RAO 14-1.9 regarding  
13 "proportional representation of all Presbyteries." But the GA Commissioners do not have that information readily  
14 available when they vote on the floor elections. This might help explain how three floor nominees were elected to  
15 AC last year, even though AC already had members from the same three Presbyteries.

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Y	6	Pacific NW	RAO 14-9	150 Votes Required to Remove Item from Omnibus - revised	OC
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17 Approve. The proposed change is shown below.

18 RAO 14-9.d. The Moderator may put to the Assembly in gross all recommendations passed by the  
19 committee, unless there is ~~objection from the floor to the inclusion of specific recommendation(s),~~  
20 ~~in which case such recommendation(s) shall be voted upon separately.~~ a request from the floor to  
21 remove a recommendation from the omnibus (the "en gross" package). In that case, the Moderator  
22 shall put the removal question to the Assembly, without any debate. An item shall be removed from  
23 omnibus if 150 commissioners vote in favor of the removal.

24 Our current RAO provision is unreasonable. No single GA commissioner out of 2,000 should be able to demand  
25 that a recommendation from a Permanent Committee, Agency Board, RPR, or the Overtures Committee be  
26 debated on the floor. At present, this demand can be made even if the recommendation is *unanimous* from a  
27 Permanent Committee and its Committee of Commissioners, or the 60+ member RPR, or 130+ member OC. That  
28 defeats the purpose of having GA committees. This is a reasonable change and should help save time. The motion  
29 to remove will be non-debatable and the GA Moderator will put the question on removal immediately to the floor.  
30 If there are 2,000 voting Commissioners, 150 equates to about 7.5% of that total.

31 If the OC considers the number 150 to be too high, it could amend it to 100 or even 50, which are better than 1.

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Am	7	Pacific NW	RAO 16	RPR Report to GA - Fewer Recommendations - revised	OC
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33 Approve. Below is the Overture's main part, without showing the conforming amendments (but which are still  
34 proposed). After interacting with some long-term RPR members, I plan to propose the following amendment in  
35 the Overtures Committee (shown double-underlined in italics below).

36 RAO Article XVI - Review of Presbytery Records

37 16-7. Guidelines for Reporting on Presbytery Records

38 1. The Committee has authority:

39 a. To ~~determine~~ *recommend the Assembly* approve a Presbytery's minutes as being without any  
40 exceptions.

41 b. To determine an exception of form and inform the Presbytery of such.

42 c. To determine an exception of substance and ~~ete~~ *ask* the Presbytery to respond to the Committee.

43 d. To determine whether a Presbytery's initial response is satisfactory, and if not, ~~ete~~ *ask* the  
44 Presbytery to respond again to the Committee.

45 e. To recommend to the Assembly whether a second Presbytery response be judged *satisfactory or*  
46 unsatisfactory (RAO 16-10.c).

f. To recommend to the Assembly whether the provisions of OMSJC 15 should be initiated in a BCO 40-5 matter.

g. All the Committee determinations and recommendations above shall be reported to the Assembly, but only the recommendations in (a), (e) and (f) are presented for Assembly action, and Minority Reports from Committee members can only be filed on those recommendations.

Here is some rationale.

1. A deliberative Assembly with over 2,000 commissioners cannot reasonably consider 500 recommendations contained in a 215-page RPR Report that is posted online 12-days before the Assembly convenes. (ShareFile indicates it was uploaded last year on 6/12/25.)
2. Last year, RPR's Report recommended 410 exception-of-substance citations for 73 Presbyteries, and 90 recommendations to find 32 Presbyteries' *first* responses Unsatisfactory. These 500 recommendations required 105 minutes of GA floor time. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r345Hdcojo4>.
3. In addition to the sheer number of recommendations, any can presently be removed from an omnibus motion at the request of a single individual - even if the RPR vote was unanimous. Theoretically, the Chattanooga GA could have had 10 minutes of debate on all 500 RPR recommendations. Last year, the 60+ member RPR committee was unanimous in its overall vote on over 70 Presbyteries.
4. This amendment does not decrease RPR authority, nor does it increase it much. The most important issue has been and will remain judging whether a presbytery's *second* response is Satisfactory. And this would not delay any decision on such. After this change, when RPR asks presbytery to respond to what initially appears to be an exception of substance, it's asking as a committee, and not as the GA. But the presbytery should still respond to the RPR Committee.
5. RPR does not need to be a commission of the Assembly. If any presbytery declines to respond to the RPR Committee, it could eventually come before the GA as an RPR recommendation to find the presbytery's second non-response Unsatisfactory, which could then be referred to the SJC.
6. It's important to remember RAO 16-8 stipulates: "Neither the report of the [RPR] committee nor the General Assembly's approval or disapproval of this report establishes doctrinal precedent."

**Y 8 Pacific NW** RAO 8-4.i Earlier Deadline for Floor Nominations (24 hrs. earlier) - rev. rationale OC

Approve. It's a helpful amendment, setting the deadline just a day earlier. Below is the Overture's proposed amendment to the final section of RAO 8-4.i.

~~The deadline for these nominations is the close of the afternoon session of the first full day of the Assembly~~ 4:30 pm on the day the Assembly convenes. The Clerk's office shall issue a supplement to the Assembly's Nominating Committee report ~~during the second day's business sessions~~ before noon the following day.

The current RAO deadline for floor nominations is end of business on the 2nd day of GA (normally 4:30 pm Wednesday) and the Nom Comm Supplemental Report with floor nominees is ordinarily uploaded to the GA Sharefile late Wednesday night. Last year, the Committee Nominee v. floor nominee elections commenced early Thursday at 09:30. That's not sufficient time to read competing bios of men in floor elections (60+ bios last year).

This Overture proposes the floor nomination deadline simply be backed up one day to 4:30 the day GA convenes (Tuesday), which would allow the Nom Comm Supp Report to be uploaded to Sharefile by Noon on Wednesday, which would give Commissioners at least 20 hours more to review the Supp Report. The Stated Clerk's office has confirmed it can upload the Supp Report by noon on Wednesday with this change.

All floor nominations were filed electronically last year, and 60 % of them (23 of 38) were filed before the GA convened, which is what this Overture proposes. The Nom Comm Report is ordinarily uploaded to ShareFile by mid-May (on 5/15 this year) so Commissioners have at least a month to electronically file any floor nomination.

**Am 9 Hills & Plains** RAO 8-4.i Info on Floor Nominations Re "Presbytery Proportionality" OC

Approve, if amended. The goal is helpful, but the proposed mechanism should be amended. Underlined below is what's proposed by the Overture, followed by a different solution to the problem.

1 RAO 8-4.i. Additional nominations may be submitted either (1) in writing or (2) electronically, in  
2 either case on forms supplied by the Stated Clerk, which shall include consent of the nominee to  
3 serve, if elected, and a brief statement regarding the nominee-, and information regarding the  
4 nominee's Presbytery and an explanation of how this nomination contributes to the General  
5 Assembly's goal of proportionate representation of all Presbyteries as set forth in BCO 14-1.9.

6 In its place, perhaps the Louisville OC and GA - by simple majority - could adopt instructions for the GA Nom  
7 Comm to accomplish this in its annual Supp Report hereafter. The Overture could be amended without needing  
8 any change to the RAO. Just ask GA to adopt instructions to its Nominating Committee like the following:

9 Amendment = The GA directs the Nominating Committee to note, in its 2027 Supplemental  
10 Report and thereafter, if a floor nominee's Presbytery already has a member or members on the  
11 same Permanent Committee or Special Committee and if so, how many.

12 Instead of requiring the information to be on the Form submitted by the person making the floor nomination, the  
13 information should be determined by the Nom Comm and included in its Supp Report to GA. Only the Nom  
14 Comm members see the completed floor nomination forms, but all GA Commissioners see the Supp Report. If  
15 there are already members of a Permanent Committee or Special Committee from the same Presbytery as the floor  
16 nominee, the Supp Report could footnote his name and indicate how many other members of his Presbytery are  
17 already on that Committee (or some annotation like that).

18 BCO 14-9.1 says: *"The Assembly's committees are to include proportionate representation of all presbyteries,*  
19 *wherever possible."* BCO 14-9.1 does not refer to the five Agency Boards, which have a total of 84 members.  
20 AC, CDM, MNA, MTW, RUF, CCB, IRC, and TEC have a total of 107 members (91 primary and 16 alternates).  
21 Those 107 slots divided by 87 Presbyteries equals 1.2 slots per Presbytery.

22 However, proportional representation should be more than just simple division. For example, the 2024 online  
23 PCA Statistics show the churches of one Presbytery reported 10,692 communing members and another Presbytery  
24 reported 236. One might argue that a Presbytery with 10,692 communing members should have 45 times the  
25 number of men on Committees as a Presbytery with 236. Assembly Committees are neither like the US Senate  
26 (two senators per state) nor like the US House, where California has 40 seats while AK, DE, ND, SD, VT, and  
27 WY each have one.

28 In addition, the phrase "wherever possible" should not be interpreted rigidly. If a man is nominated by a Presbytery  
29 that already has a man on one of the Permanent Committees or Special Committees, it would not serve the PCA  
30 well to nominate a far less qualified man just because he is from a Presbytery that has no members on any of those  
31 Committees. But it would certainly be "possible" to do so. BCO 14-9.1 should be understood as expecting  
32 discretion and judgment to be applied by the Nom Comm and GA.

33	- 10 Ohio	MNA	Boundaries of Pittsburgh & Ohio Phys - no churches effected	MNA
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34 Not referred to OC. No existing churches are involved; just counties.

35	N 11 Ohio	RAO 4-21.d	Require Assessment Data from MNA	MNA, OC
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36 Disapprove, unless MNA Permanent Committee recommends otherwise. The three Whereas clauses don't  
37 demonstrate why this is needed. For example, one rationale clause says: "It is impossible for commissioners to  
38 provide sufficient oversight without sufficient information and data." But that's one reason we elect men to 5-  
39 year terms on the 15-member MNA Permanent Committee and elect its Coordinator. Let them manage this. In  
40 2027 when the new MNA Coordinator is elected, if he thinks this is prudent, he can implement it as he and the  
41 MNA Committee deem best.

42	Y 12 Chesapeake	BCO 21-4.a	Allow Alternative to B.A. Prerequisite for Ordination
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43 Approve. It seems wise and prudent to explicitly allow a Presbytery to consider accepting different educational  
44 and experience-based avenues - other than a standard undergrad degree - for ordination requirements. Below is  
45 what's proposed.

BCO 21-4.a. An intern applying for ordination shall be required to present:

- (1) a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved college or university,
- (2) a diploma of Associate from some approved college or university together with credible evidence of not less than three (3) years of full-time vocational work experience, demonstrating maturity, leadership, and communication skills relevant to gospel ministry, or
- (3) a General Education Diploma together with credible evidence of not less than (10) ten years of full-time vocational work experience, demonstrating maturity, leadership, and communication skills relevant to gospel ministry;

and also a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved theological seminary or authentic testimonials of having complete a regular course to theological studies, or a certificate of completion of and endorsement from a theological study program approved by the GA and one of the Presbyteries of the PCA. ...

The BCO already allows alternatives for post-undergrad educational avenues, so it's reasonable to do the same with undergrad avenues.

<b>Am 13</b>	<b>Great Lakes</b>	BCO 15-2	Session Commissions	OC
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Approve, if amended. It's reasonable to allow some Session commissions to have only RE members. But it would be prudent to amend Overture 13 to bump the quorum to three REs for judicial matters, rather than the two proposed in the Overture, because an odd number would be better for any Session trial commission.

<b>R37 14</b>	<b>SW Florida</b>	BCO 7-3	Restricting Titles for Non-Ordained People	OC
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This is the first of 10 Overtures seeking to change things regarding titles, deacons, deaconesses, diaconates, mercy ministry, commissioning, etc. It's highly unlikely any can get approval from 58 Presbyteries. This commentary suggests the OC recommend GA answer Pacific 37 in the Negative and answer the other 9 by Reference to Pacific 37 - including SWFL 14. CCB advises 6 of the 10 have some kind of constitutional conflict (noted by \*).

<u>14</u>	SW Florida	14	BCO 7-3	Restricting Titles for Non-Ordained People
<u>34</u> *	Savannah River		BCO 9-2	Require a Diaconate
<u>36</u> *	Catawba Valley		BCO 8-11	Add Two Paragraphs about Elder & Deacon Duties
<u>37</u> *	Pacific		BCO 9-3	Allow Women to be Ordained as Deacons
<u>38</u> *	Metro ATL		BCO 7-3	Allow Flexibility Re the Diaconate
<u>48</u>	NW Georgia		BCO 7-2,3	Disallow Commissioning & Titling of Unordained Persons
<u>52</u>	Mississippi Valley		BCO 7-4	Prohibiting Creation of Ecclesiastical Offices
<u>71</u> *	N. California		BCO 5-9	9.2 & 9-7; Allow Session to Administer Diaconal Ministry
<u>72</u> *	Ascension		BCO 12-8	Require Noting Elders and Deacons in Session Minutes
<u>74</u>	E. Carolina		BCO 17	add New Chapter on Commissioning Non-Ordained People

If the OC does not recommend answering Overture 14 by Reference to the Answer on Pacific 37, then 14 should be answered in the Negative. The Overture goes too far. The only restricted titles should be the ones used in the BCO for ordained officers. For example, it says: "No churches may ... designate any unordained individuals into any ecclesiastical roles ..." But the phrase "ecclesiastical roles" is undefined. Does it mean "roles that may only have ordained men"? Or should a church "treasurer" also be considered as holding an ecclesiastical role? Director of Church Ministries? If not, why not?

Below are some points to consider.

1. In 2017, the GA Study Committee on "Women Serving in the Ministry of the Church" reported several recommendations. Shown below are Recommendations 2, 6, and 7, which were among those adopted by the 45th GA in Greensboro, followed by the Committee's Rationale. (Drs. Ligon Duncan and Harry Reeder were among the Committee's 7 voting members and are recorded as voting for the Committee's Recommendations.)

Rec 2: That sessions, presbyteries, and the General Assembly recognize that, from the founding of the PCA, there has been a variety of views and practices regarding the ways in which women may serve the

1 Lord and the church within scriptural and constitutional parameters, without ordination, and that such  
2 mutual respect for said views and practices continues.

3 Rec 6: BCO 9-7 says: "It is often expedient that the Session of a church should select and appoint  
4 godly men and women of the congregation to assist the deacons in caring for the sick, the widows,  
5 the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may be in any distress or need. These assistants to the  
6 deacons are not officers of the church (BCO 7-2) and, as such, are not subjects for ordination (BCO  
7 17)." Thus, for the well-being of the church, the committee recommends that sessions and  
8 presbyteries select and appoint godly women and men of the congregation to assist the ordained  
9 diaconate.

10 Committee's Rationale: BCO 9-7 presently provides for sessions to recognize the unordained  
11 women laboring in diaconal work alongside ordained deacons. These women have been  
12 given a variety of names, job descriptions, and roles (within the parameters of Scripture and  
13 the confession), and thus, it is appropriate for sessions to establish the role of unordained  
14 deaconess to assist the deacons in their labors. A way to recognize these women, following  
15 training and testing, is through commissioning. Commissioning is a general term, used for  
16 occasions when people are set apart for a particular task, usually accompanied by public  
17 prayer.

18 Rec 7: That presbyteries and the General Assembly consider an overture that would establish formally the  
19 right of sessions, presbyteries, and the General Assembly to establish the position of *commissioned* church  
20 worker within the PCA for qualified and gifted unordained men and women. (emphasis added)

21 Part of the Committee's Rationale: The minutes of the PCA's First General Assembly in 1973 record  
22 the commissioning of six missionaries, three men and three women. The minutes record:

23 The following new National Presbyterian Church missionaries were presented and  
24 commissioned in a service in which Ruling Elder Gerald Sovereign led in prayer,  
25 Ruling Elder Roger DeHaven read Scripture, and Teaching Elder Will McIlwaine  
26 pronounced the benediction: Mr. and Mrs. [Marie] John Lynch, Rev. Cecilio Woody  
27 Lajara, Dr. and Mrs. [Rebecca] Peter Jones, and Miss Ellen [Sue] Barnett (M1GA,  
28 1973, item 1-56, p. 37).

29 Note that the term "commissioned" is used. Messrs. Lajara and Jones were already ordained  
30 teaching elders. The minutes do not reflect whether Mr. Lynch was unordained, or if he were an  
31 ordained ruling elder or deacon. Mrs. Lynch, Mrs. Jones, and Miss Barnett were not ordained. The  
32 General Assembly publicly commissioned all six people as missionaries, those who were ordained  
33 along with those who were not ordained.

- 34 2. In 1982 when the RPCES joined the PCA, that denomination routinely used the title "deaconess" and those RP  
35 churches were received being allowed to retain that practice. Some RPCES churches even had ordained women  
36 deacons, and they were not forced to resign. The PCA allowed those ordained RP women deacons to continue  
37 serving but naturally attrit over time. See history [here](#) or at link below.

38 [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AjQngDROBa57bGNaxRFPfBd5cUeXC\\_QV/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AjQngDROBa57bGNaxRFPfBd5cUeXC_QV/view?usp=sharing)

- 39 3. The PCA has historically affirmed fraternal relations with denominations that ordain women deacons (RPCNA  
40 and ARP). However, our relationship with the CRC was treated differently. In 1995, the CRC Synod voted to  
41 permit women to hold the offices of minister and elder. That same year the 23rd GA in Dallas adopted a  
42 recommendation from its Interchurch Relations Committee and "instructed the IRC to use all due process  
43 afforded to them to remove the CRC from membership in NAPARC, if the CRC does not repent of and rescind  
44 the action of the 1995 Synod at the 1996 Synod." (M23GA, p. 167) At the NAPARC meeting in Pittsburgh on  
45 November 19-20, 1996, the PCA's IRC delegation moved "that NAPARC initiate the process to suspend the  
46 CRCNA from its membership." (M25GA, p. 382) Seven months later, in June 1997 the Colorado Springs GA  
47 voted to suspend and then terminate fraternal relations, concluding that CRC's action represented a departure  
48 from what the PCA understood to be biblical and confessional teaching on church office. We did not do the  
49 same for ARP or RPCNA.

1 The fact that we had such a different approach toward women elders vs. women deacons seems to imply we  
2 saw a categorical difference between the two. RPCNA has allowed ordained women deacons for the last 138  
3 years (since 1888). And the ARP has allowed the same for the last 57 years, since 1969. to allow women  
4 deacons to be ordained. But there does not appear to have been any effort to downsize our fraternal relations  
5 with RPCNA or ARP or put any pressure on NAPARC regarding their memberships.

- 6 4. While not advocating for the ARP decision, below is an excerpt from the ARP's 20-year old paper: "*Women in*  
7 *the Life of the Church: A Position Paper Approved by the General Synod of the Associate Reformed*  
8 *Presbyterian Church June 2005.*" [Link](#)

9 "Women in the Diaconate—As noted above, the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in 1969  
10 allowed the Session of each congregation to decide whether to allow women to stand for election to the  
11 Diaconate. To be sure, there is some diversity of opinion (rooted in different exegetical conclusions  
12 regarding particular texts and in somewhat differing theologies of office and ministry) within the church  
13 on this matter, but we believe that both positions can be advocated in a manner that honors and affirms  
14 the full authority of Scripture and the confessional standards of the church. Given the fact and character  
15 of this diversity of opinion, we believe that the current policy is one which promotes the peace and  
16 purity of the church, and that it should be continued. We also believe that the biblical distinction between  
17 the offices of elder and deacon, as affirmed by our Form of Government, should be recognized and  
18 preserved." (p. 16 of 17)

19  
20 **Y 15 SW Florida** BCO 42-4 & 43-3 Clarify Deadline for Filing Complaints & Appeals OC

21 Approve. This proposal helps avoid a semantical problem recently encountered in an SJC judicial case. The  
22 proposal is below, which adds only one word:

23 BCO 42-4. Notice of appeal may be given the court before its adjournment. Written notice of appeal,  
24 with supporting reasons, shall be filed by the appellant with both the clerk of the lower court and  
25 the clerk of the higher court, within thirty (30) days of written notification of the last court's decision.

26 **Y 16 SW Florida** BCO 43 Clarify "Circularizing" the Court OC

27 Approve. It proposes moving the last sentence of BCO 43-2 to the end of the very next section, BCO 43-3 instead:

28 "No attempt should be made to circularize the court to which complaint is being made by either party."

29 Rationale makes it clear that the sentence belongs more appropriately in the *second* section of BCO 43. As the  
30 Overture explains, it's *helpful* rather than harmful to allow arguments to be circulated when the *original* court  
31 hears a complaint. Such a complaint is essentially just a motion or request to the original court to rescind or amend  
32 something previously adopted. Circularization should only be prohibited if the complaint goes to the *higher* court.

33 **RB 17 Westminster** BCO 5-2.c Dissolution of Mission Churches OC

34 Refer Back or Disapprove because what it proposes should already be understood.

35 We note Overture 17 is the first of Westminster's 17 Overtures (15 on the BCO and 2 on RAO). If every Presbytery  
36 did the same we'd have 1,479 Overtures this year. (My Presbytery, Pacific NW, filed 6 Overtures but none are  
37 proposing BCO changes. Five of the six from PNW are RAO changes seeking to make GA more efficient and  
38 one overture asks for a brief GA prayer of thanksgiving for adult professions of faith.) While there's no rule against  
39 filing 17 overtures, it doesn't seem reasonable. Because Westminster didn't indicate which of the 17 it deemed  
40 most important to consider, the OC will probably need to triage.

41 This commentary suggests answering Westminster's #s 30 in the Affirmative as Amended. But #s 20, 26, 27, 28,  
42 29, 31, and 32 should be answered in the Negative and eight Overtures should be referred back to Presbytery (17-  
43 19, 21-25, 33). If we decline to do so, it will probably invite excessive overture filing in future years.

1 RB 18 Westminster BCO 5-4 Allow Mother Church to Call Church Planter OC

2 Refer Back. But if it's considered, it should be Disapproved because a Session is already free to (1) recommend  
3 that Presbytery create a new mission church and (2) recommend which TE should pastor that mission church. In  
4 addition, the Overture seems to be proposing that a local Session sometimes be given the power to "call" the pastor  
5 of a mission church as an alternative to Presbytery doing so, which would be a significant change.

6 RB 19 \* Westminster BCO 5-8 Include "Ecclesiastical" Government OC

7 Refer back. Or answer in the Negative because it is unnecessary.

8 N 20 \* Westminster BCO 5 Add Section on Churches Without a Governing Body OC

9 Disapprove. The change is unnecessary. The matter addressed in the Overture was adjudicated in SJC's 22-1  
10 Decision in Case 2024-20: *Complaint of Fout v. Ohio Valley*, which will be in the SJC's 2026 Report to the GA  
11 in the GA Sharefile and in the GA Commissioner's Handbook by mid-May (CH, p. 2278). That Decision and its  
12 Reasoning is sufficient to clarify the matter (and differs from what's proposed by the Overture). See also SJC's  
13 22-0 Decision in Case 2024-07 *PCA v. Columbus Metro.* (CH, p. 2219) Overture 20 proposes four new BCO  
14 paragraphs with 280 words. Ordinarily, and understandably, such a sizable revision faces a steep uphill climb  
15 regardless. See Approval recommendation of MS Valley Overture 51.

16 RB 21 Westminster BCO 13-6 Clarify Exam for TEs from Other Denominations OC

17 Refer Back. But if considered, it should be Disapproved because Whereas clauses don't demonstrate a need.

18 RB 22 Westminster BCO 13-8 Churches Joining from Outside PCA OC

19 Refer Back. But if considered, it should be Disapproved because Whereas clauses don't demonstrate a need.

20 RB 23 Westminster BCO 14 Renumber and Restructure BCO Chapter 14 OC

21 Refer Back. But if considered, it should be Disapproved because Whereas clauses don't demonstrate a need.

22 RB 24 Westminster BCO 15-2 Require Full Pby to Conduct Ordination Exam OC

23 Refer Back. But if it's considered, it should be Disapproved because Presbyteries should retain the long-held  
24 liberty to conduct part of an Ordination Exam by a Commission.

25 RB 25 Westminster BCO 21 Restructure BCO 21-1 through 21-4 OC

26 Refer Back. But if considered, it should be Disapproved because Whereas clauses don't demonstrate a need.

27 N 26 Westminster BCO 26-2 Abstaining Pbys Won't Count as NO votes on BCO Amendments OC

28 Disapprove. Our current 2/3-majority-of-all-presbyteries should remain as the requirement to approve any change to  
29 the BCO. This Overture proposes a significant revision which would lower the bar for BCO amendments to be  
30 approved. That would not be wise. There are some matters important enough to require recorded support from a  
31 super-majority of members, not just a super-majority of those who vote. And that includes Constitutional changes.

32 Robert's Rules recognize that for certain very important matters, the *entire membership* needs to be factored  
33 into a vote and not just those members who cast votes. (RONR (12th ed.) 44:9.b) The only time a two-thirds vote  
34 of the "entire membership" is unwise is when the membership is in a "large organization." That would apply, for  
35 example, to a GA with 2,000 registered commissioners. But when Presbyteries vote on BCO amendments there  
36 are only 87 voting entities, and thus, far short of the "large organization" voting numbers envisioned by Robert's  
37 Rules. (RONR 56:55) Several Presbyteries, for example, have 87 voters at their stated meetings. It's wise to  
38 maintain the requirement that two-thirds of our 87 Presbyteries intentionally affirm any change to the BCO. And  
39 there are often different reasons why some Presbyteries decline to vote on a particular BCO amendment.

40 If this Overture is adopted, and if 18 presbyteries choose to abstain from voting on some proposed BCO  
41 amendments (as was the case in 2025) that would mean a BCO amendment could pass with support of only 46 of  
42 our 87 presbyteries (i.e., two-thirds of the 69 voting). And 46 would only represent just 53% of our total 87  
43 presbyteries. That is simply not enough affirmative support for a change to the Constitution.

1	N	27	Westminster	BCO 34-1	GA Assumption of Original Jurisdiction (AOJ)	OC
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2 Disapprove, *UNLESS* two significant amendments are made. And if made, it should be heartily supported.  
3 For this to have a reasonable chance of getting approval from two-thirds of our 87 Presbyteries (i.e., 58), the  
4 petitioning threshold needs to be increased from the proposed three (3) presbyteries to 20% of the presbyteries.  
5 The Overture proposes taking jurisdiction from a Presbytery based on the request of less than 4% of our  
6 Presbyteries (i.e., only 3 of 87).

7 If a matter is important enough, then we should assume 18 Presbyteries (20%) would be willing to send a short  
8 email to the GA Stated Clerk simply asking GA (i.e., the SJC) to assume original jurisdiction of a minister. No  
9 "evidence" would need to accompany such a request. The SJC's first step would take would be to appoint a Panel  
10 that would commence an investigation. (SJC Manual Chapter 16)

11 With the suggested amendment to the Overture proposed below, any petitioning Presbytery simply needs to  
12 credibly assert (1) there has been no indictment and (2) the alleged offense involves a doctrinal matter or is a case  
13 of public scandal. If there aren't 20% of our Presbyteries interested in doing this, then it probably means the matter  
14 does not warrant it.

15 In addition, it would be vitally important to replace the phrase "refuses to act" with "does not indict" to remove  
16 the subjectivity. The vague phrase "refuses to act" has never been defined. Thus, a better alternative is shown  
17 below. This is probably the only version that could garner support from 58 Presbyteries.

18 *(amendment to the Overture)* BCO 34-1. Process against a minister shall be entered before the  
19 Presbytery of which he is a member. However, if the Presbytery ~~refuses to act~~ **declines to indict**  
20 in doctrinal cases or cases of public scandal and ~~two~~ **twenty percent (20%) of the** other  
21 Presbyteries request the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction (to first receive and  
22 initially hear and determine), the General Assembly shall do so.

23 If Presbyteries are unwilling to revise BCO 34-1 in this way, assumption of original jurisdiction will continue to  
24 be just an unrealizable aspiration. But there won't be 58 Presbyteries willing to adopt the change to BCO 34-1 in  
25 the form proposed by the Westminster Overture.

26 See [here](#) and the link below for a 12-page Legislative and Judicial History of BCO 34-1.

27 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UfhfQLFfmtvuaWyYADQmgZafv2RMQUWps/view?usp=sharing>

28	N	28	Westminster	BCO 41-7	Church Member Complaint in a Session-Referenced Matter	OC
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29 Disapprove. Even in a referenced matter, a church member should not have standing to complain against a  
30 Presbytery action. That is reserved by Presbytery members, i.e., TE members or churches (through one of their  
31 RE Commissioners to the meeting at which the action on the referenced matter is taken, or via their Session.)

32	N	29	Westminster	BCO 42	Clarify Difference between Oral and Written Notice	OC
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33 Disapprove. This addresses an existing problem, but several amendments to the Overture would help. BCO 42  
34 on appeals needs significant revision, including the area addressed by this Overture, but it would be better to  
35 propose a comprehensive change rather than piecemeal. See extended comments on Central Florida 75.

36	Am	30	Westminster	BCO 46-6	Recording TE Dismissed to Another Pby	OC
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37 Approve, as amended. A proposed addition to the Overture is shown double underlined in italics below.

38 **46-6.** When a Presbytery shall dismiss a minister, licentiate or candidate, the name of the Presbytery  
39 to which he is dismissed shall be given in the certificate, and he shall remain under the jurisdiction  
40 of the Presbytery dismissing him until received by the other. *The dismissing Presbytery shall record*  
41 *in its minutes the date of reception of the minister, licentiate, or candidate who was dismissed.*

1 **N 31 Westminster** BCO 58-5 Only TEs & REs Give Bread & Cups to Multiple Communicants OC

2 Disapprove (and do the same with Calvary 60). It would not be wise to consider any changes to the current  
3 Directory of Worship until after the GA has considered the recommendations of the Ad Interim Committee on  
4 DoW, and after Presbyteries have voted on the DoW if it is sent down. Below is the Overture's proposal, which  
5 includes adding a sentence to 58-5 with a footnote.

6 58-5 ... Apart from extra-ordinary circumstances, ruling elders shall assist the minister in  
7 distributing<sup>1</sup> the elements, for they share the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 16:19, cf. BCO 12-5.a).

8 <sup>1</sup> Distributing refers to the act of handing the elements to multiple communicants. It  
9 does not refer to the passive action of passing trays or elements down rows or pews.

10 A similar proposal was disapproved by the Assembly last year. The 2025 Overtures Committee recommended the  
11 GA approve Providence Presbytery's [Overture 12](#), but the Assembly instead adopted an OC Minority Report  
12 disapproving Overture 12 by vote of 1080-922 (54% majority). If such a proposal can't be adopted at GA then it  
13 surely can't pass two-thirds of the Presbyteries. See 12-minute Minority Report at timestamp 1:31:20 at [this link](#):  
14 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOBNhKlbWXs>

15 See also this [six-page paper](#) for additional rationale against this repeated proposal. (Link also below.)  
16 [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XaIGbus9\\_muAR5jXKYIVzrzMu5Ue84vd/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XaIGbus9_muAR5jXKYIVzrzMu5Ue84vd/view?usp=sharing)

17 In his Institutes of the Christian Religion, John Calvin wrote:

18 “But as for the outward ceremony of the action—whether or not the believers take it in their hands,  
19 or divide it among themselves, or severally eat what has been given to each; whether they hand the  
20 cup back to the deacon or give it to the next person; whether the bread is leavened or unleavened;  
21 the wine red or white—it makes no difference. These things are indifferent and left at the church’s  
22 discretion.” (IV.xvii.43)

23 We should discourage raising similar matters year after year. Men should first seek to develop consensus outside  
24 of the GA. Repeatedly raising the same matter is vexing at best, and counterproductive to developing consensus.

25 **N 32 Westminster** RAO 14-3 Require Perm Comm & Agency Standing Rules & Manuals All

26 Disapprove. The Overture doesn't demonstrate any need for this and seems to misunderstand the nature of  
27 Permanent Committees and Agency Boards. The GA's primary method of overseeing Perm Comms and Agency  
28 Boards is through the GA's election of the 155 men who serve on those 10 Committees and Boards. And about 35  
29 of those positions are up for election every year.

30 **RB 33 Westminster** RAO 16-7 RPR Minority Reports OC

31 Reference to Answer on PNW 7. However, if it's considered, it should be Disapproved because it's common sense  
32 and parliamentary ethics that nobody can sign a minority report unless they voted in the minority on the particular  
33 recommendation, and that seems to be what this Overture seeks to codify. If that happened last year, then someone  
34 on the RPR should have reported that the Minority Report failed to meet the requirement of RAO 16-7.h.(2). Then  
35 someone could have asked the Moderator to rule on the question. Below is Overture 33.

36 RAO 16-7.h.(2) The [RPR] minority report, from at least six (6) members of the committee who  
37 voted in the minority on the Presbytery as a whole, must be filed with the chairman of the committee  
38 and the office of the Stated Clerk of General Assembly not more than seven (7) days after the  
39 adjournment of the RPR Committee meeting.

40 At the same time, it's possible that when RPR votes on the recommendation for which an eventual MR is filed,  
41 there is no recording of a counted vote or the names of those in the minority. So, we may just need to rely on the  
42 integrity of those signing an MR that they voted in the minority on the matter.

43 **R37 34 \* Savannah River** BCO 9-2 Expectation of Establishing a Diaconate OC

44 Answer by Reference to the answer on Pacific 37 or Refer Back to the Presbytery. Overture 34 is below.

1 BCO 9-2 ... In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and authority of the  
2 Session. In a church in which it is impossible ~~for any reason to secure deacons, to secure the appointment~~  
3 of a sufficient number of Deacons due to the absence of spiritually qualified men (BCO 9-3), the duties  
4 of the office shall devolve upon the ruling elders, and not upon unordained persons within the church.

5 However, if considered, it should be answered in the Negative. It's not reasonable to mandate that a Session fulfill  
6 every duty related to mercy ministry when suitable non-ordained volunteers are available for work not requiring  
7 ordained officers. For example, in a smaller church where Reformed and paedobaptist deacons can't be found, it's  
8 reasonable for the Session to recruit other members to fulfill mercy ministry duties not requiring ordination. In  
9 addition, the Overture would not necessarily accomplish what seems to be the goal. In addition, because the BCO  
10 does not mandate a quorum for a diaconate, a church could establish a diaconate of one ordained man and still  
11 have a mixed gender, non-ordained mercy or benevolence team. This Overture has very little chance of getting  
12 support from 58 Presbyteries.

13	Am 35 Illiana	BCO 31-2	Establish Deadline for Issuing Indictments	OC
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14 Approve if amended. Below is the change to BCO 31-2 as proposed by the Overture (proposed changes  
15 underlined.) Following that is an amended version.

16 31-2. If such investigation, however originating, should result in raising a strong presumption of the guilt of  
17 the party involved, the court shall institute process, and shall appoint a prosecutor to prepare the indictment  
18 and to conduct the case. The prosecutor shall draft the indictment promptly, and the indictment shall be filed  
19 with the clerk of the court within sixty (60) days following the meeting of the court. This prosecutor shall  
20 be a member of the court, except that in a case before the Session, he may be any communing member of  
21 the same congregation with the accused. If the prosecutor neglects to file an indictment, he shall receive  
22 proper rebuke by the court and shall be dismissed from his duties as the prosecutor of the case, and the court  
23 shall appoint a new prosecutor to prepare an indictment and to conduct the case.

24 If the Overture's proposed 60 days expire without an indictment being filed, *replacing* the prosecutor could easily  
25 result in another 60-day delay as the new prosecutor gets up to speed. Rather than helping achieve a speedy trial,  
26 appointing a new prosecutor would delay it further. If we really want teeth in this provision, then the court should  
27 be required to *dismiss* the charges if an indictment is not filed by some constitutionally defined deadline, as done  
28 in criminal process in most US jurisdictions. Below is an amendment to the Overture shown double underlined  
29 and italicized, which proposes charges be dropped if an indictment is not served within 90 days.

30 **31-2.** If such investigation, however originating, should result in raising a strong presumption of the  
31 guilt of the party involved, the court shall institute process, and shall appoint a prosecutor to prepare  
32 the indictment and to conduct the case. The prosecutor shall draft the indictment promptly, and the  
33 indictment shall be filed with the clerk of the court within ~~sixty (60)~~ *ninety (90)* days following the  
34 meeting of the court, *or the charges shall be dismissed.* This prosecutor shall be a member of the court,  
35 except that in a case before the Session, he may be any communing member of the same congregation  
36 with the accused. ~~If the prosecutor neglects to file an indictment, he shall receive proper rebuke by the~~  
37 ~~court and shall be dismissed from his duties as the prosecutor of the case, and the court shall appoint a~~  
38 ~~new prosecutor to prepare an indictment and to conduct the case.~~

39  
40 First, to protect an offended person from being unable to see his accusations considered at trial, if the 90-day  
41 deadline isn't met for an indictment, the accuser still has freedom to write a BCO 40-5 letter to the court next  
42 higher alleging an "important delinquency" and the higher court would determine if it's a "credible report." If it  
43 is, the higher court would cite the lower court to appear and answer for why it found a strong presumption of guilt  
44 but could not get an indictment filed within 90 days of that "strong presumption of guilt" finding.

45 In addition, if Westminster Overture 27 is adopted on Assumption of Original Jurisdiction (in the amended version  
46 proposed in this commentary) then a revised BCO 34-1 would make it possible for sufficient petitions to trigger  
47 a higher court assuming original jurisdiction, issuing an indictment, and conducting judicial process. Dismissal of  
48 a charge does not automatically trigger double jeopardy protections, even if we had such protections. If the OC  
49 and GA wish to do so, the provision could be amended to say, "the charges shall be dismissed *with prejudice.*"

1 While a prosecutor has primary responsibility of drafting the indictment, the court has primarily responsibility for  
2 the prompt filing of an indictment. If a court finds a strong presumption of guilt based on strong and solid  
3 evidence, then it should be relatively easy for a prosecutor to file the indictment within 90 days. But some of our  
4 courts find a strong presumption of guilt based on information that is insufficient for prosecution, which makes it  
5 more challenging to promptly prepare a clear and sufficient indictment.

6 Whenever a recruited PCA prosecutor is not part of the investigation, he needs time to get up to speed. (That's a  
7 plug for recruiting a prosecutor who was part of the investigative team.) Sometimes, investigative committees  
8 don't "depose" potential witnesses under oath or ask them if they're willing to testify under oath at trial. And if the  
9 prosecutor learns important witnesses are unwilling, that will delay his work. Granted, BCO 35-14 would apply  
10 to PCA witnesses: "An officer or private member of the church refusing to testify may be censured for contumacy."  
11 But not all witnesses will be under PCA jurisdiction.

12 A court can always replace a prosecutor if it deems he is not giving sufficient attention to his task, and a rebuke  
13 might not be necessary. And we need to remember that none of our prosecutors are paid, and many (perhaps most)  
14 are first-time prosecutors. A Session or Presbytery might vote that there is a strong presumption of guilt, but the  
15 prosecutor needs to prepare the case, ensure witnesses will testify, collect evidence for trial, etc., and usually do  
16 this in his "free" time. While Federal Law requires the federal government to file an indictment within 30 days of  
17 arrest (1974 Speedy Trial Act), it's different because the alleged defendant is probably in jail, and the US  
18 government has paid professional investigators and prosecutors for this.

19 The amendment proposed to the Overture is particularly important in the scenario where a Presbytery enacts the  
20 "non-disciplinary" suspension of BCO 31-10: *"When a member of a church court is under process, all his official*  
21 *functions may be suspended at the court's discretion; but this shall never be done in the way of censure, and this*  
22 *requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority."* Rarely will the "non-disciplinary" BCO 31-10 suspension of a minister  
23 look much different than a disciplinary suspension, especially when judicial process is delayed. It's one thing for  
24 a ruling elder to be "administratively" suspended from office. An RE can be more patient because he doesn't lose  
25 salary, but it's likely a TE will lose some compensation while his church funds his replacement. Few churches can  
26 financially afford to keep an administratively suspended pastor on staff a during prolonged judicial process.

27	R37	36 *	Catawba Valley	BCO 8-11	Add Two Paragraphs about Elder & Deacon Duties	OC
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28 Answer by Reference to the answer on Pacific 37 or Refer Back to the Presbytery..

29	N	37 *	Pacific	BCO 9-3	Allow Women to be Ordained as Deacons	OC
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30 Negative.

31	R37	38 *	Metro ATL	BCO 7-3	Allow Flexibility Re the Diaconate	OC
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32 Answer by Reference to the answer on Pacific 37 or Refer Back to the Presbytery.

33	N	39	Central Florida	BCO 22	Limit Asst Pastor to 5 yrs; then Associate or Dissolve His Call	OC
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34 Answer by Reference to Answer on SW Florida 55 (which hopefully will be Negative).

35	R43	40	Savannah River	RAO 4-9	Set Jan 1-Dec 31 Terms for Stated Clerk & Coordinators	OC
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36 Answer by Reference to Answer on PNW 43, unless each of the 5 GA-elected Permanent Committees see wisdom  
37 in this. In the meantime, the rationale does not demonstrate this would be wiser than our present procedure.

38	R43	41	Savannah River	RAO 4-9	Require 2/3 to Elect Stated Clerk & Coordinators	All
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39 Answer by Reference to PNW 43 or Disapprove. This would require these 5 men to be approved annually by (1)  
40 a majority of the Permanent Committee, (2) approved by majority of the Committee of Commissioners, and then  
41 (3) by two-thirds of GA. And unless RAO is revised as proposed by PNW Overture 43, these three approvals  
42 would be required *every year*. Few CEO's would accept such terms of employment. And it's unlikely many  
43 ministers would ever take a call with such a provision - i.e., two-thirds approval required at every annual  
44 congregational meeting, or else the call is dissolved - on the spot!

1 **Y? 42 N. California** BCO 29-1 Restore Reference to Westminster Standards at the End OC

2 Approve. A simple and wise proposal for reasons outlined in the Overture. Below is the proposed change.

3 BCO 29-1. ... Nothing, therefore, ought to be considered by any court as an offense, or admitted as a  
4 matter of accusation, which cannot be proved to be such from Scripture as interpreted in these Standards.

5 *However*, it's possible this proposed change can be accomplished by fixing an earlier clerical error, which  
6 caused the deletion of that five-word phrase.

7 **Y 43 Pacific NW** RAO 4-9 4-Year Terms for 4 Coordinators + Stated Clerk AC, etc., OC

8 Approve, but consider advice from the Perm Comms and Agency Boards. Below is the proposed change.

9 RAO 4-9. The four program Committees shall nominate ~~annually~~ a coordinator for election by the  
10 General Assembly for a four-year term. The Administrative Committee shall also nominate ~~annually~~  
11 a Stated Clerk for election by the General Assembly for a four-year term. These men may serve  
12 multiple, successive terms if reelected to such. If the nominee has not been examined by the  
13 Theological Examining Committee, such an examination must take place prior to the election when  
14 it is a first time employment. ~~A~~ After election, a new coordinator or Stated Clerk shall assume office  
15 at the end of the Assembly meeting, or at such time thereafter as designated by the General Assembly.

- 16 1. It's more reasonable to elect men to these leadership positions for 4-year terms rather than one year. (The  
17 members of those five Permanent Committees are each elected to 5-year terms.)
- 18 2. Some of these men need to live near the PCA office - or visit it frequently - in order to do their job, and it's not  
19 reasonable to relocate their family for a job that requires re-election by GA every year.
- 20 3. RAO does not require the Presidents or Executive Directors of our 5 Agencies to be reelected every year, and  
21 they have no set term of office (Covenant College, CTS, Geneva Benefits, PCA Foundation & Ridge Haven).
- 22 4. In the rare instance where a man needs to be replaced for cause prior to the end of his term, the Permanent  
23 Committee can still recommend such to the General Assembly. This change does not prevent that.
- 24 5. This change would be effective at the 54th GA in Milwaukee for the four Program Committees (CDM, MNA,  
25 MTW, RUF). In other words, those four Permanent Committees would nominate a Coordinator next year for  
26 a four-year term. However, it would be effective this year for the AC's nomination of a Stated Clerk; his term  
27 would expire in June 2030.
- 28 6. Initially, the terms would expire for the 4 Perm Comm Coordinators at the 2031 GA. However, over time these  
29 would likely stagger as men leave those roles of their own volition prior to the expiration of their terms.

30 **-- 44 Covenant** MNA Divide Covenant into Two Presbyteries (new "Arkansas" Pby) MNA

31 Not assigned to OC. The Mississippi River would be the dividing line between Covenant and the new "Arkansas"  
32 Pby, which would have 9 churches and 1 mission church, with 1,200 total communing membership. The new Pby  
33 would include all of Arkansas except 5 of the 75 Arkansas counties.

34 **Am 45 Covenant** RAO 8-4.i Floor Nominee Only if Pby Submitted to Nom Com first OC

35 Approve if amended as shown below. (Suncoast 47 is same as Covenant 45.) Some concerns have been raised  
36 about various scenarios, and those concerns are remedied in the italicized amendment below.

37 1. *Late Vacancies* - The following italicized amendment should be added to the Overture to address this:

38 RAO 8-4.i Such additional nominations shall only be considered valid if the individual nominated was  
39 previously submitted by a Presbytery for consideration by the Nominating Committee but was not  
40 included in the Committee's final report. *This requirement would not apply to men who are nominated*  
41 *from the floor for vacancies that arose after the deadline for Presbyteries to file nominations.*

42 The amendment to the Overture would address the situation where a Committee or Agency Board vacancy arises,  
43 for whatever reason, after the Presbytery filing deadline. (This year it was February 23). For example, if a member  
44 of the XYZ Committee resigns from the Committee in mid-April, the Nominating Committee would not ordinarily

1 meet to add a nominee to the Nominating Committee Report, and a floor nominee would be needed. Granted,  
2 Nom Comm could convene a Zoom, but that's awkward with 75+ Presbytery reps. The amendment above would  
3 alleviate that. Two other scenarios are addressed below, but neither would require an amendment to the Overture.

4 *2. Presbytery Clerk Mistake* - Sometimes, a Presbytery Clerk fails to file the Form 059 by the deadline. In that  
5 instance, if this Overture passes, the Nom Comm would not consider the man even though nominated by his  
6 Presbytery. To remedy this, perhaps the Stated Clerk's office could stagger the deadlines for Form 060 (Nominee's  
7 Form) and Form 059 (Presbytery Clerk's Form). We could keep the third week of Feb as the Nominee's deadline  
8 but delay the Clerk's Deadline to the second week of March. (Nom Comm presently meets last Saturday of March.)  
9 When the nominee submits his Form 060 in late Feb., we could add a box where he attests that his Presbytery  
10 nominated him. And he would be added to the list of nominees. Then, the Presbytery Clerk's deadline could be a  
11 few weeks later. About 70 of our 87 Presbyteries have stated meetings in January or February, but this year's  
12 deadline for Clerks submitting Form 059 and nominees submitting Form 060 was February 23. There could be  
13 situations where a man has been nominated by his Presbytery, but his Clerk failed to file the Form 059 listing all  
14 that Presbytery's nominees, even though the man filed his Form 060 by the deadline.

15 *3. Nominee Mistake* - If GA adopts Overture 45, and Presbytery nominates a man, but he fails to file his Form 060  
16 by the late Feb. deadline, then the Nom Comm would not consider his name. And he will have lost the right to  
17 be a floor nominee, but that's on him. The Form is very simple, only one-page, and can be filed online or emailed.

18 

N	46 *	NY State	BCO 29-5	Public Allegations and the 9th Commandment	OC
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19 Disapprove. It's a reasonable attempt at addressing what many believe has become a significant and widespread  
20 problem. But mandating that such statements "*shall* be considered a *probable* violation" implies that a strong  
21 presumption of guilt exists. And that might go too far. *Some* investigation would seem prudent. If a strong  
22 presumption of guilt exists (i.e., there's already a "probable violation"), then the next step would ordinarily be to  
23 appoint a prosecutor to prepare an indictment, not to investigate. There also might be some scenarios where it  
24 would be unwise to expect or require an abused person to follow the exact steps of Matthew 18 (which is  
25 presumably why the word "ordinarily" is in the Overture). At the same time, it would ordinarily be inappropriate  
26 for a person alleging abuse to make public allegations against a PCA member without first seeking redress from  
27 the court having jurisdiction over that person.

28 

R45	47	Suncoast FL	RAO 8-4.i	Floor Nominee Only if Pby Submitted Name to Nom Com First	OC
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29 Answer by Reference to Answer on Covenant 45, which proposes the same thing.

30 

R37	48	NW Georgia	BCO 7-2, 3	Disallow Commissiong & Titling of Unordained Persons	OC
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31 Answer by Reference to the answer on Pacific 37 or Refer Back to the Presbytery.

32 

N	49	NW Georgia	BCO 13-1	Increase a Church's RE Representation at Pby and GA	OC
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33 Disapprove. This is the *least* helpful proposal this year. The current BCO representation provision already affords  
34 smaller churches a disproportionately large ratio on representation. Below is some data reported in ByFaith online  
35 in a January 20, 2026 article:

36 Half of all PCA churches have membership of 125 or fewer. Of the 1,716 churches reporting  
37 statistics, 68% have below 200 members. Any church with 500 or more members would be in the  
38 top 10% of churches, with only 47 churches having more than 1,000 members.

39 Our current rule of 2 RE commissioners per church is quite sufficient representation for the 860 PCA church with  
40 125 communicant members or less. And 2 RE Commissioners is still disproportionately large representation for  
41 churches under 200 communicant members (i.e., for 68% of our churches).

42 At present, a church with 125 communing members has the equivalent of one RE rep for every 63 members. But  
43 a church twice that size, with 349 communing members, only has one RE rep for every 175 members. And a  
44 church with 1,800 members has one RE rep for every 450. As written, this Overture would greatly *increase* that  
45 disproportionality.

1 There's no Biblical reason why smaller churches should have higher proportional representation than larger ones.  
2 Small churches already have disproportionate representation in Presbyteries and GA, and small Presbyteries have  
3 disproportionate representation on RPR & Nominating Committees, as well as on each GA Committee of  
4 Commissioners and the Overtures Committee. One of our English-speaking Presbyteries has 400 communing  
5 members, and another has 11,800, and yet both have equal weight vote on BCO amendments sent down, and 2  
6 slots on the GA Overtures Committee, and one on RPR. We have 13 Presbyteries with less than 1,000 communing  
7 members and 16 Presbyteries with more than 5,000. This Overture will increase the imbalance.

8 **Am 50 MS Valley** prayer Urging a Day of Fasting and Prayer for Revival and Renewal OC

9 Approve, if amended by changing one verb (italicized below). While it would be great to designate a particular  
10 day, it could be done without *urging* (pleading, beseeching, imploring) Presbyteries to convene a meeting. So,  
11 the part of the Overture's proposal where Presbyteries are "*urged* to hold a solemn convocation" could be amended  
12 to say: "Presbyteries are ~~urged~~ encouraged to consider holding a solemn convocation."  
13

14 **Y 51 MS Valley** BCO 5 Add Section on "Assisted Churches" - i.e., lost Session quorum OC

15 Approve. Below is the proposed addition, which would be an all new BCO 5-11.

16 BCO 5-11 (*all new*)

17 a. An assisted church is a church that has only one ruling elder and no pastor and has been assigned by  
18 Presbytery a BCO 15-1 commission to serve as a temporary Session of that church (cf., BCO 5-3.c).  
19 The church's one ruling elder shall be a member of that temporary Session.

20 b. In such cases, the Presbytery shall acknowledge the condition of the church as an assisted church and  
21 shall determine one or more of the following courses of action, as it deems most conducive to the  
22 peace, purity, and progress of the church:

- 23 1. To encourage and assist the church toward the election and training of additional ruling elders;  
24 2. To recommend dissolution, merger, or other reorganization of the church, should such action  
25 appear necessary (BCO 13-9.f).

26 c. The Presbytery shall review the status of an assisted church at least annually and shall record its actions  
27 and determinations in its minutes.

28 First, a Presbytery can already do what the Overture proposes. Nevertheless, it might help to create an explicit  
29 third category in addition to Particular and Mission churches. A church whose Session loses its quorum does not  
30 revert to mission church status, despite what some assert.

31 Granted, if a Session loses its quorum it can no longer govern and Presbytery automatically becomes the  
32 Temporary Session (BCO 13-9). That's been the historical understanding and practice of US Presbyterianism at  
33 least since 1879. For example, no congregational meeting can be called for any purpose unless a Temp Session  
34 calls it. And no prospective elders can get on any ballot without approval of a Temp Session. See recent SJC  
35 Decisions in Cases 2024-07 PCA v. Columbus Metro and 2024-20 Fout v. Ohio Valley. (CH, pp. 2217 & 2278)

36 **R37 52 Mississippi Valley** BCO 7-4 Prohibit Creation of "Ecclesiastical Offices" OC

37 Answer by Reference to the answer on Pacific 37 or Refer Back to the Presbytery. Overture 52 proposes we add  
38 the following new 138-word paragraph.

39 *all new* BCO 7-4. Courts of the church are warranted by the general principles of the Word of God and  
40 the dictates of Christian prudence to make use of qualified men and women in a variety of un-ordained  
41 ministry positions. However, since Christ, as King and Head of the church, has given officers to His  
42 Church, and has appointed His system of church government in Holy Scripture, church courts are not  
43 free to create ecclesiastical offices. Neither may a court of the church vest any part of the church power  
44 granted to officers by the rite of ordination in any un-ordained person, or intrude such persons upon the  
45 church or the consciences of its members, whether by means of popular election, or the use of vows not  
46 mandated by the Word of God and the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America.

1  
2 Whereas #1 references WCF 1.6 and sees allowances for "permitting the church to employ qualified men and  
3 women in various forms of un-ordained Christian service according to the dictates of Christian prudence." Agreed.

4 Whereas #2 contends that "the church is not free to invent offices." Also agreed, as long as we are only referring  
5 to the ordained office of Elder and Deacon.

6 Whereas #3 contends that "BCO 3-2 [makes] it clear that, apart from the power to choose its officers, which power  
7 resides in the people (BCO3-1), the exercise of ecclesiastical power is placed in the hands of the officers alone."  
8 No dispute. But does everyone agree on how should we define the phrase "the exercise of ecclesiastical power"?  
9 What might be the difference between (a) a court delegating some of its authority along with the commensurate  
10 "power" to complete the task and (b) "vesting church power granted only to officers .. in [some] unordained  
11 person"? For example, below is BCO 12-5.e. describing some of the "church power granted only to officers."

12           The church Session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the church, for which  
13 purpose it has power: ... e. To exercise, in accordance with the Directory for Worship, authority  
14 over the time and place of the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments,  
15 over all other religious services, *over the music in the services*, ... (emphasis added)

16 In the exercise of its ecclesiastical power, couldn't a Session delegate some of that power and authority to the  
17 Minister to choose the music in the service each week? Presumably it could, and very often does. And  
18 presumably, th Session or the Minister could further delegate *some* of that power and authority to a Director of  
19 Music. It does not delegate *responsibility*, because that always remains with the Session. But it can surely delegate  
20 *some* power and authority.

21 Whereas #4 - It's unclear what role besides the ordained office of TE, RE, or Deacon would constitute an  
22 "ecclesiastical office." The Overture doesn't give examples of any "ecclesiastical offices" that presumably have  
23 been created and which, presumably, this Overture seeks to outlaw. Perhaps the 4th Whereas gives an example  
24 when it says: "no officers may be imposed upon the church, and only those offices ordained by God in Holy  
25 Scripture may serve in the government of the church." I don't think anyone would dispute that assertion. But that  
26 prompts the question: What is an example of an "officer" imposed on the church and "serving in the government  
27 of the church"? What does Whereas #4 have in mind?

28 Whereas #5 - This contends that "to impose invented officers upon the church, without the warrant of the Word  
29 of God, is to violate the consciences of the people." Most would probably also agree with that assertion. But the  
30 Overture avoids naming or describing the way any Session might be doing this. It would be more helpful to  
31 specifically describe what the Overture seeks to outlaw, rather than use relatively vague language that different  
32 people might interpret differently.

33 Would Church Treasurer be regarded as an ecclesiastical office? Ministry Coordinator? Supervisor of Counseling?  
34 Director of Small Groups? Music Director? The BCO vests budgetary authority solely in the Session. Could the  
35 Session-appointed Chair of the Budget Committee or the Finance Director be a non-ordained person? Wouldn't  
36 that important role have *some* "part of church power granted to officers"?

37  
38 

R 7	53	Great Lakes	RAO 16	Prohibit RPR Members from Floor Debate on RPR Report	OC
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39 Answer by Reference to Pacific NW 7 re the RPR's Report. If GA adopts PNW 7, Overture 53 is probably moot.  
40 However, if PNW 7 is not adopted, Overture 53 might still have problems. Disallowing an RPR member from  
41 speaking on the floor might encourage that member to recruit 5 others in the RPR minority at the May RPR  
42 meeting to file a minority report instead, and each MR can take one hour of GA floor time (RAO 16-7.g.2).  
43 Overture 53 might actually *increase* the time needed to finish debating the RPR Report.

44 Approving PNW's Overture 6 would probably solve the same problem identified in Great Lakes 53. PNW 6  
45 would require 150 voting commissioners to remove an item from an omnibus, which pertains to most RPR  
46 recommendations.

47

1 **N 54 \* Hills & Plains** BCO 42-2 Give Person Deemed Contumacious the Right to Complain OC

2 Disapprove. Below is the revision proposed by the Overture.

3 42-2. The only parties entitled to an appeal are those who have submitted to a regular trial, those  
4 appealing a censure in a *BCO* 38-1 case without process, and those appealing a *BCO* 34-10  
5 divestiture without censure. If the court has dealt with the party as contumacious, the party may  
6 not appeal but may complain against the court.

7 First, the Overture doesn't seem to address the most common way people are deemed contumacious - i.e., they  
8 willfully ignore a 2nd citation to plead at an arraignment. If that person is allowed to complain against that  
9 automatic finding of contumacy, it could postpone adjudication of underlying charges for almost a year. *BCO*,  
10 *BCO* 43-1 was revised last year and now includes the following: "... If, at any time after process has commenced,  
11 a *BCO* 43-1 complaint is timely filed, the court's adjudication [of the complaint] shall be delayed until after the  
12 judicial case has been completed, or, if an appeal is filed, after it has been fully adjudicated or withdrawn. ..."

13 If the accused believes the initial charge is unwarranted, then he should (1) have his defense representative move  
14 to dismiss the charge, or (2) should plead not guilty at the arraignment and submit to the trial. If this Overture  
15 passes, it's likely more accused persons will ignore arraignment citations and then file a complaint if they're found  
16 contumacious. They have nothing to lose by doing so and it will delay prosecution.

17 If a Session or Presbytery allegedly errs in finding a person contumacious, and in censuring him on that ground,  
18 perhaps *BCO* 40-5 provides an avenue by which he or anyone else could seek higher court review.

19 **N 55 SW Florida** BCO 22-3 Tenure of Asst Pastors OC

20 Disapprove. (Central FL 39 should be answered by Reference to SWFL 55.) First, 5 years is arbitrary. Why not  
21 3, or 7? Second, the rationale doesn't demonstrate why the freedom of Sessions and congregations should be  
22 limited in this way. It's reasonable to assume many congregations, their Sessions, and even their assistant pastors  
23 are happy with the status quo. Third, the Overture makes an important and unwarranted assumption. The rationale  
24 equates "indefinite assistant pastorates" with "ongoing pastoral authority without congregational election." But  
25 that is certainly not always the case. For many jobs, assistant pastors do not have and do not need the same  
26 "pastoral authority" as Session members. An assistant pastor serving as a Youth Pastor or as a Pastor to Seniors  
27 does not have "pastoral authority" *over the congregation*, so there is no reason he must be on the Session.

28 In addition, there are many examples in the PCA, and in SJC Decisions, of complications arising when a Session  
29 deems that an Associate Pastor should seek another call. The requirement that the congregation must weigh in on  
30 the dissolution of an Associate's call often results in disrupted peace, that is, unless the Associate already has  
31 another call that he genuinely prefers to his current one. This Overture will only exacerbate that problem. That  
32 alone is reason enough to allow congregations and Sessions to hire long-term Assistant Pastors.

33 **N 56 SW Florida** BCO 32-19 Limit Representation in Judicial Process to Officers OC

34 Disapprove. Last year, the PCA amended *BCO* 32-19 to allow expanded representation, but this Overture does  
35 not demonstrate that recent change has created problems. Between the 2024 and 2025 GAs, the Presbyteries voted  
36 64-5 for the change. We realize SW Florida was one of the five voting against it, but it's not a good practice to  
37 undo a recently amended *BCO* provision without giving it more time to demonstrate its wisdom or folly.

38 **N 57 S. Texas** BCO 12-7 etc. Require Minutes of Congregational Meeting to be in Session Records OC

39 Disapprove. The Overture proposes revisions to *BCO* 12-7, 13-9.b, and 25-5. Below is the one for 12-7.

40 12-7. Every Session shall keep an accurate record of its proceedings, and the proceedings of  
41 congregational meetings, which record shall be submitted at least once in every year to the  
42 inspection of the Presbytery.

1 Congregational meeting minutes are *not* part of Session/court records - and don't need to be. For example, a  
2 congregation may wish to have a meeting at which disaffiliation from the PCA is discussed. And it might prefer  
3 that the Presbytery not be apprised of that meeting, at least for a time. That should be the congregation's choice.

4 The SJC has ruled that congregational actions are **not** reviewable. Only the actions of a court are. So, in  
5 the *Wilson* and *Psiaki* cases against Pacific NW, the congregational voting age restriction was unreviewable until  
6 the Session installed elders who were elected with a voting age restriction. So, the SJC denied Wilson's complaint  
7 and sustained Psiaki's complaint a year later. Those Decisions, and most others, can be found on the PCA  
8 Historical Center site at <https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/sjc/index.html>.

9 [https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/sjc/cases/2022-20\\_Wilson\\_v\\_PacificNW.pdf](https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/sjc/cases/2022-20_Wilson_v_PacificNW.pdf)  
10 [https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/sjc/cases/2023-11\\_Psiaki\\_v\\_PacificNW.pdf](https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/sjc/cases/2023-11_Psiaki_v_PacificNW.pdf)  
11

12 **N 58 Calvary** BCO 10-4 Specify that Session & Presbytery Clerks Must be Elders OC

13 Disapprove. One Whereas rightfully argues: "PCA Clerks need to be accountable to the church courts in which  
14 they serve because of their membership and delegated authority on behalf of the Court they serve." But a non-  
15 ordained church member is already directly accountable to that Session. Here's how the Overture's addition reads:

16 The clerk shall be a Ruling or Teaching Elder within the Presbyterian Church in America.

17 However, if a TE is a Session Clerk, he is *not* directly accountable to that court. Furthermore, the proposed addition  
18 would allow a Session Clerk to be any RE or TE in the PCA and not necessarily an RE or TE that attends the  
19 church at which he serves as Session Clerk. If the OC desires this rule, then perhaps it should be amended by  
20 adding the italicized clause shown here: "The clerk shall be a Ruling or Teaching Elder within the Presbyterian  
21 Church in America and subject to the jurisdiction of the court for which he clerks."

22 **N 59 Calvary** BCO 38-3.a Allow Removal from Membership Roll, w/o Transfer, at Mbr's Request OC

23 Disapprove. This allows a person to administratively remove himself from membership in the universal Church  
24 without transferring or reaffiliating.

25 **38-3. a.** When a member or officer in the Presbyterian Church in America shall attempt to withdraw from the  
26 communion of this branch of the visible Church by affiliating with some other branch (*BCO 2-2*) or by  
27 communicating his intent to affiliate with some other branch, if at the time of the attempt to withdraw he is  
28 in good standing, the irregularity shall be recorded, his new membership or intentions acknowledged, and his  
29 name removed from the roll. But if at the time of the attempt to withdraw there is a record of an investigation  
30 in process (*BCO 31-2*), or there are charges (*BCO 32-3*) concerning the member or minister, the court of  
31 original jurisdiction may retain his name on the roll and conduct the case, communicating the outcome upon  
32 completion of the proceedings to that member or minister. If the court does not conduct the case, his new  
33 membership or intentions shall be acknowledged, his name removed from the roll, and, at the request of the  
34 receiving branch, the matters under investigation or the charges shall be communicated to them.  
35

36 **R31 60 Calvary** BCO 58-5 Only Ordained Men May "Distribute/Serve" the Bread and Cups OC

37 Refer to negative answer on Westminster 31 for the same reasons given on 31. Calvary 60 below differs slightly  
38 from Westminster 31 (also later below). Both add something to the end of BCO 58-5.

39 Calvary 60: ... Only men lawfully ordained as elders or deacons (when there is not a sufficient number of elders  
40 present) shall assist the officiating minister in the distribution (or serving, as distinct from merely  
41 passing) of the elements, for Christ our Lord has given to His specially called and ordained elders the  
42 keys of His kingdom (Matthew 16:19; BCO 3-2; 12-5.a).

43 Westminster 31: ... Apart from extra-ordinary circumstances, ruling elders shall assist the minister in distributing  
44 the elements, for they share the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 16:19, cf. BCO 12-5.a).

45 <sup>1</sup> Distributing refers to the act of handing the elements to multiple communicants. It does not  
46 refer to the passive action of passing trays or elements down rows or pews.

1 As mentioned regarding Westminster 31, a similar proposal was disapproved by the Chattanooga GA last year.  
2 The 2025 Overtures Committee recommended GA approve [Overture 12](#), but the GA adopted an OC Minority  
3 Report disapproving the Overture by a vote of 1080-922 (54%-46%).

4 See the 12-minute Minority Report at timestamp 1:31:20 at [this link](#):  
5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOBNhKlbWXs>

6 If such a proposal can't be adopted at the GA then it surely can't be approved by 58 Presbyteries. And the same  
7 matter should not be raised year after year. Overture writers should first spend time seeking to develop consensus  
8 outside of the GA. Bringing the same matter up year after year is counterproductive to developing consensus.  
9

10	RB	61	Calvary	declaration	Declare the Danvers Statement as Biblically Faithful	OC
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11 Refer Back to the Presbytery or Postpone Consideration Indefinitely

12 Seventeen years ago, the 2009 General Assembly in Orlando voted against a similar Overture on the Danvers  
13 Statement filed by Grace Presbytery. (Overture 13, M37GA, p. 279) The 2009 Overtures Committee provided the  
14 following Grounds: "The overture seeks to deal with matters of controversy with a lengthy statement whose  
15 complex propositions have not been examined in detail by the Church." That hasn't changed. Hopefully we can  
16 be as clear thinking as the 2009 Assembly.

17 However, if it is considered, it should be Disapproved. There's no need to do this. There is no reason to declare  
18 such things as the 1987 Danvers Statement to be "biblically faithful," unless we believe our Confession and  
19 Catechisms are deficient. And if our Standards need additional statements, they should be drafted and incorporated  
20 into the Standards via the normal course. Any Presbytery is free to do what Calvary is proposing, but it's  
21 unnecessary and unhelpful for the GA to do so.

22 One of the reasons Calvary Presbytery gives for this is: "7. the emergence of roles for men and women in church  
23 leadership that do not conform to Biblical teaching but backfire in the crippling of Biblically faithful witness."  
24 But declaring Danvers as "biblically faithful" will not likely help with the deacon questions prominent at this  
25 year's Assembly. Two of the most influential men in the crafting of the Danvers Statement *affirm* women in  
26 diaconal roles. Below are a few quotes from John Piper and Wayne Grudem.

27 "We do not find in the New Testament a clear statement that women cannot be deacons." (Piper &  
28 Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991, p.  
29 71). Bethlehem Baptist Church has [women deacons](#).  
30 <https://bethlehem.church/about/staff/campus/undefined/position/deacon/>

31 "There is evidence in the New Testament that women served as deacons in the early church."  
32 (Grudem, in *RBMW*, pp. 248–252 in discussion of Romans 16:1 and 1 Timothy 3:11)

33 "Phoebe is called a 'deacon' (*diakonos*) of the church at Cenchreae (Rom. 16:1)... This suggests  
34 that women as well as men could serve as deacons." (Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 2nd ed.,  
35 Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020, pp. 1089–1090)

36 "The qualifications for deacons in 1 Timothy 3 do not clearly exclude women... therefore there is  
37 no good reason to prohibit women from serving as deacons." (Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical*  
38 *Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 2nd ed., Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, pp. 230–232)

39 In addition, the 1988 Danvers Statement has a strong "cultural crisis" tone that doesn't often lend itself to  
40 persuasion, at least not 38 years later. If a statement is needed, an updated tone would be better.

41 Several general concerns about Danvers that have been raised in the literature since 1988 include:

- 42 – Over-reliance on authority/submission language
- 43 – Ambiguity in how "male headship" is defined
- 44 – Insufficient ecclesiological precision

1 Danvers speaks broadly of male headship, but Reformed theologians and pastors like the Rev. Dr. Kevin DeYoung  
2 (our current GA Moderator) have helpfully narrowed the practical claim by arguing that the decisive issue is *male*  
3 *eldership and pastoral office*, not universal male authority across all civil or social spheres. (DeYoung, *Men and*  
4 *Women in the Church*, (Crossways, 2021. DeYoung in italics here and below.)

5 I don't assume Dr. DeYoung opposes Danvers or would urge others to vote against. He is on record as affirming  
6 it, but based on my reading of him, he would probably agree that some of Danvers' statements could be improved  
7 upon. So, let's do that instead of declaring Danvers to be biblically faithful.

8 Here is a link to a July 2022 article DeYoung wrote after his *Men and Women in the Church* book came out. I'd  
9 be happier to adopt this article rather than Danvers. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/death-to-the-patriarchy>  
10 Now to DeYoung and Danvers.

11 Danvers #1 says: "Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in  
12 their manhood and womanhood." DeYoung contends it would help if it also said something like: "*Men and*  
13 *women are equal in dignity and worth as image bearers of God.*"

14 Danvers 7 says: "The Bible teaches that men should bear primary responsibility to lead the church." That seems  
15 overly broad. A better and more ecclesiastically specific statement is one from DeYoung again: "*Elders carry*  
16 *out the ministry of the Word; deacons carry out the ministry of mercy.*"

17 Danvers 8 says: "Husbands should love and lead; wives should affirm and support." DeYoung emphasizes love  
18 and restraint, softening hierarchical caricatures when he suggests: "*Christian wives submit rather than usurp and*  
19 *Christian husbands love rather than domineer.*"

20 Danvers 10 says: "We are convinced that denying these principles leads to destructive consequences." DeYoung  
21 again is more temperate and avoids the more alarmist tone sometimes associated with early complementarian  
22 rhetoric. He writes: "*When the church obscures biblical distinctions, confusion follows.*" And he ties male  
23 eldership to ordained authority structures rather than generalized male dominance.

24 Another reason given for the Overture is: "8. the increasing prevalence and acceptance of hermeneutical oddities  
25 devised to reinterpret apparently plain meanings of Biblical texts." However, Danvers contributed somewhat to  
26 the "eternal subordination of the Son" controversy, and thus we should use caution against grounding male-female  
27 role distinctions in eternal authority structures within the Trinity. This is significant because some later  
28 complementarian defenses (though not strictly in Danvers itself) leaned heavily on that Trinitarian analogy.

29 Finally, this proposed action has far fewer teeth than many suppose. A single Assembly "declaring something to  
30 be biblically faithful" is simply the opinion of that single Assembly. It has no binding impact on any Presbytery  
31 or church in the PCA. Even if an Assembly *adopted* the Danvers Statement verbatim, nobody could say, "*The*  
32 *PCA adopted the Danvers Statement.*"

33 Bottom line: We don't need to, and shouldn't, adopt any position on Danvers. And *if* some statement is needed, a  
34 better one can be crafted than this 38-year-old one. Declaring Danvers to be "biblically faithful" will simply  
35 demonstrate to the world that the PCA is lazy.

36	-	<b>62 TN Valley</b>	MNA	Divide Presbytery	MNA
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37 Not referred to OC. After dividing, TVP would include 24 churches and 1 mission church, and the new Smokey  
38 Mountain Presbytery would include 12 churches and 4 mission churches. Smokey Mountain would include 19  
39 counties in TN and TVP would include 8 counties in TN and 5 in GA.

41	Y	<b>63 South Texas</b>	RAO 19-4.f	Allow Man Who Split Out from Omnibus to Speak First	OC
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42 Approve. A reasonable (but perhaps unnecessary) proposal (shown below).

43 RAO 19-4.f. (all new) Notwithstanding any other rule of recognition, when a commissioner objects  
44 to the inclusion of an in gross recommendation, including an overture (as provided in RAO 14-9.d  
45 or RAO 15-8.b), the objecting commissioner shall have preference in recognition (see RONR [12th  
46 ed.] 42:7) when debating the separated recommendation.

1 Common sense says that a man who requests a matter be removed from omnibus should have the opportunity to  
2 thereafter speak first rather than recognizing someone, for example, who immediately rises to move the previous  
3 question. Thus, perhaps we don't need to codify what should be common sense. For example, last year, a  
4 commissioner successfully requested a matter be pulled out of omnibus, but before he could speak to the matter  
5 another TE moved the previous question at a mic, which received a 2/3 majority, and a vote was then taken without  
6 debating the matter removed from omnibus.

7 Here's an excerpt from M52GA, p. 93.

8 "[After a removed matter was voted on without debate, a TE] raised a point of order that it is not  
9 appropriate to call the question even before the man who pulled the item from the omnibus had an  
10 opportunity to speak to the matter. The Moderator ruled the point of order well taken. "

11 In other words, we might not need an RAO change for a mistake one Moderator made and admitted.

12 **N 64 \* Canada West BCO 23-2 Establish Associate Memberships for Honorably Retired TEs OC**

13 Disapprove. Reasons are given after the Overture's proposal shown below.

14 23-2. The Presbytery may designate a minister as honorably retired when the minister by reason of  
15 age wishes to be retired, or as medically disabled when by reason of infirmity is no longer able to  
16 serve the church in the active ministry of the Gospel. A minister ~~medically disabled or honorably~~  
17 ~~retired~~ so designated shall may continue to hold membership in his Presbytery, ~~He may serve on~~  
18 ~~committees or commissions if so elected or appointed. with all the rights and privileges thereof,~~  
19 provided that he also maintain an active associate membership (or its equivalent) in a faithful local  
20 church, subject to the same limitations as BCO 46-4.

21 It's unclear what is the problem the Overture seeks to solve. There might be examples where this change becomes  
22 complicated. If such a minister moves to be near his adult children, he might worship at their church, which might  
23 not have "associate membership (or its equivalent)." And if he becomes a regular member of that church, then  
24 there would be overlapping jurisdictional authorities - the local church leadership and his Presbytery. As currently  
25 written, BCO 23-2 precludes such duel jurisdictional authority.

26 Finally, there could be another problem. If this Overture is adopted, could a TE with associate membership in a  
27 PCA church file a BCO 43 complaint against a Session action or decision, like other associate members? BCO  
28 46-4 says: "An associate member shall have *all the rights* and privileges of that church, with the exception of  
29 voting in a congregational or corporation meeting and holding an office in that church." (emphasis added)

30 **N 65 \* Canada West BCO 38-1 Confessions & Cases without Process OC**

31 Disapprove. Below are the proposed changes to BCO 38-1.

32 38-1. When any person shall come forward as the first witness in order to ~~and~~ make his offense  
33 known to the court of his own volition, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment  
34 rendered without process. ... In such cases where anyone other than the offender reveals his offense  
35 to the court, the court shall investigate into the veracity of the accusations and draw up a document  
36 detailing the alleged offenses to serve as a written confession which the accused may sign if he  
37 willfully confesses his guilt in regard to the alleged offenses. If the accused refuses to sign the  
38 document, the court may proceed with process.

39 The first sentence of the Overture seems to unhelpfully imply such investigation is only needed when accusations  
40 come from someone other than those that are self-confessed. But a court needs to "investigate into the veracity."  
41 No court should simply assume a confessing offender has confessed the whole story.

42 More importantly, the proposed change seems to describe a take-it-or-leave-it confession document drawn up by  
43 the investigators. While it might be prudent for that to be an initial document, it need not be the only allowable  
44 draft. Sometimes an accused offender could point out discrepancies in the document which, if remedied, could  
45 make it such that he could sign. Why not allow that option? The court never needs to agree to co-sign a document  
46 if it does not believe it is acceptable as a sufficient confession.

1 Am 66 Philadelphia statement Lengthy Thanks on 250th Anniversary of Nation's Founding OC

2 Disapprove, unless significantly amended. First, the Resolution paragraph begins with: "Therefore, be it resolved  
3 that the 53rd General Assembly issue a formal "Declaration of Thanksgiving ... by publishing *the foregoing*  
4 *statements* together with this resolution, to be spread upon the minutes and published electronically by the  
5 Administrative Committee through byFaith ..." (emphasis added)

6 The "foregoing statements" presumably refer to the 15 Whereas clauses, containing over 1,100 words. Rarely has  
7 GA been asked to officially "declare," as its own statement, 1,100 words and include them as the GA's position in  
8 the Minutes and publicly feature them in our online magazine.

9 This Overture should be amended to simply propose:

10 Be it resolved that the 53rd GA adopt the following statement:

11 "The 53rd PCA General Assembly declares its thanks to the Lord for the United States  
12 of America as we approach the 250th Anniversary of the Nation's Founding."

13 Debate on anything else might not be resolved until the 251st anniversary of our nation's founding ...

14 Y 67 Potomac BCO 40-5 Court Shall Make 2 Determinations Before Citing Lower Court OC

15 Approve. A reasonable and very helpful proposal, as shown below.

16 BCO 40-5. When any court having appellate jurisdiction shall receive a ~~credible~~ report with respect  
17 to the court next below of any important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings of  
18 such court, the first step shall be to make two determinations:

- 19 1. Would the matter reported, if true, be judged to be an important delinquency or a  
20 grossly unconstitutional proceeding?
- 21 2. Is there sufficient evidence provided to support the allegation and is it reported by a  
22 credible source (e.g. BCO 31-8)?

23 If the higher court determines the answer to both questions is Yes, then the higher court shall cite  
24 the court alleged to have offended to appear before the higher court ~~having appellate jurisdiction,~~  
25 or its commission, by representative or in writing, at a specified time and place, and to show what  
26 the lower court has done or failed to do in the case in question. The citation to appear must specify  
27 the instance(s) of important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceeding and show what  
28 portion of the Constitution has been violated.

29  
30 Answering those two questions will determine if the report is "credible" and warrants a citation to appear.  
31

32 N 68 Catawba Valley BCO 14-1 10 Committees & Agency Appointees = Nonvoting AC Members All

33 Disapprove. Last year, by a 65% majority, the Assembly adopted the recommendation of the Overtures Committee  
34 and referred [Overture 9](#) back to James River Presbytery. Catawba Valley 68 proposes essentially the same thing.  
35 It isn't helpful to send up the same overture in consecutive years, unless the Overture reports it has worked to  
36 develop consensus among the PCA for such a change. Otherwise, it can be a misuse of the Assembly's time.

37 An OC Minority Report was presented last year recommending James River 9 be approved, but a 65%  
38 majority of the Assembly adopted the Overture's Committee's recommendation instead. (M52GA, p.92)  
39 Repetition does not make a rejected idea wiser. In addition, last year 8 of 10 Committees of Commissioner for the  
40 5 Permanent Committees and 5 Agency Boards recommended answering James River 9 in the Negative. (The  
41 RUF CoC did not report a recommendation and the MTW CoC recommended Affirmative by vote of 29-21.)

42 Y 69 SW Florida BCO 32-18 Clarify Contents of Record of the Case in Judicial Cases OC

43 Approve. Helpful change. But one of the proposed additional phrases might benefit from clearer wording:  
44 "... the citations and returns thereto ..."

1 - **70 Korean NW** MNA Add AK, HI, OR and WA to KNW Presbytery MNA

2 Not assigned to OC. These four states are not geographically within any Korean Presbytery boundary, though  
3 there are seven Korean PCA churches in those four states. If this proposal is approved, only Montana, Idaho,  
4 Utah and New Mexico will be outside the boundaries of any Korean Presbytery.

5 R37 **71 \* N. California** BCO 5-9 + 9.2 & 9-7; Allow Session to Administer Diaconal Ministry OC

6 Answer by Reference to the answer on Pacific 37. However, if consensus develops over some form of this, it  
7 might help resolve some of the tension and conflict over how diaconal ministry must be conducted.

8 R37 **72 \* Ascension** BCO 12-8 Require Noting Elders and Deacons in Session Minutes OC

9 Answer by Reference to the answer on Pacific 37. Below is the paragraph proposed to be added:

10 12-8. Every Session shall annually record in its minutes a list of all persons who comprise the  
11 Session and the Diaconate. If the local church has no Diaconate, then the Session's minutes shall  
12 indicate why, and whether the duties have devolved upon the Session according to BCO 9-2.

13 The Committee on Constitutional Business advises that there is some constitutional conflict with what's being  
14 proposed in Overture 72.

15 R43 **73 TE Hooper** RAO 4-9 2/3 to Elect Coordinators + Stated Clerk after 3 years of Service All

16 Answer by Reference to Answer on PNW 43. This Overture was proposed to, but rejected by, Ascension  
17 Presbytery. (TE Hooper is pastor of Berean Presbyterian Church in Ellwood City, PA.) Below is his proposed  
18 addition to RAO 4-9:

19 RAO 4-9. "... If a nominee to the position of Stated Clerk or coordinator of a program Committee  
20 has served three consecutive years in the position for which he was nominated, then his nomination  
21 shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting in the General Assembly to secure  
22 election for each successive year. ..."

23 R37 **74 E. Carolina** BCO 17 New Chapter on Commissioning for Non-Ordained Ministry OC

24 Answer by Reference to the answer on Pacific 37.

25 Below is the proposed new Chapter to be added; all new below. It raises some interesting propositions.

26 BCO 17 - Of Commissioning for Non-Ordained Ministry

27 17-1. **Definition.** Commissioning is an act of the church, through a Session or Presbytery, publicly  
28 recognizing and setting apart a qualified member of the church for a particular ministry role that does  
29 not involve the exercise of the authority vested in the ordained offices of elder or deacon.

30 17-2. **Biblical Basis.** Commissioning reflects the pattern in Scripture whereby the church—while reserving  
31 ordination for specific offices—also sends, authorizes, or sets apart individuals for ministry through  
32 prayer and public recognition (e.g., Acts 23 13:1-3; Acts 15:22, 27, 32).

33 17-3. **Nature of Commissioning.**

34 a. Commissioning does not confer ecclesiastical office and does not authorize the exercise  
35 of the governing authority belonging to elders.

36 b. Commissioned individuals may serve in roles of teaching, discipleship, mercy,  
37 leadership, administration, counseling, or other ministries under the oversight of the  
38 Session or Presbytery.

39 c. Commissioning may be conferred upon men or women.

1 17-4. **Authorization.** The Session of a local congregation may commission individuals for congregational  
2 ministries under its oversight. Presbyteries may commission individuals for presbytery-wide or  
3 denominational ministries.

4 17-5. **Process.**

- 5 a. Candidates for commissioning will ordinarily be members in good standing and examined in  
6 those matters relevant to their ministry assignment (e.g., Christian character, doctrinal  
7 understanding, spiritual gifts, and particular skills).  
8 b. The commissioning act shall clearly distinguish it from ordination to office.  
9 c. A written description of the ministry role, responsibilities, and limits of authority shall be  
10 adopted by the Session or Presbytery and communicated to the church's or Presbytery's  
11 members.

12 17-6. **Accountability.** Commissioned individuals serve under the direct oversight of the Session or Presbytery  
13 that authorized them and shall report on their ministry as required. Commissioning may be concluded  
14 or revoked at the discretion of that court.

15 17-7. **Safeguards.** Commissioning shall not be used to create new ecclesiastical offices, to introduce ruling  
16 or teaching authority apart from ordained office, or to blur the distinctions set forth in BCO 7 and 8  
17 concerning church government.

18	N 75	Central FL	BCO 42	Clarify Process for Filing an Appeal	OC
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19 Disapprove (unless significantly amended). This Presbytery has identified a real problem, and while changes are  
20 warranted to BCO 42 Appeals, the proposed solution doesn't seem the best. Below is Central Florida's proposal.

21 ~~42-4. Notice of appeal may be given the court before its adjournment. Written notice of appeal,~~  
22 ~~with supporting reasons, shall~~ Written appeal with supporting reasons must be filed by the appellant  
23 with both the clerk of the lower court and the clerk of the higher court, within thirty (30) days of  
24 notification of the last court's decision.

25 42-5. It shall be the duty of the clerk of the lower court to file with the clerk of the higher court, not  
26 more than thirty (30) days after receipt of ~~notice of the written appeal~~ with supporting reasons, a  
27 copy of all proceedings in connection with the case, including the ~~notice of~~ appeal and reasons  
28 therefor, the response of the lower court, the evidence, and any papers bearing on the case, ...

29 42-6. ~~Notice of~~ The filing of the written appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of  
30 the lower court until the case has been finally decided in the higher court. However, the court of  
31 original jurisdiction may, for sufficient reasons duly recorded, prevent the appellant from  
32 approaching the Lord's Table, and if an officer, prevent him from exercising some or all his official  
33 functions, until the case is finally decided (cf. BCO 31-10; 33-4). This shall never be done in the  
34 way of censure, and only when in the judgment of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the court of original  
35 jurisdiction there is a risk of the appellant doing harm to the name of Christ and His church before  
36 the case is finally decided. ~~shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority.~~

37 First, the PCA's appeal process has three steps (notice of appeal, written appeal, and appellant's brief) whereas  
38 most US jurisdictions only have two (notice of appeal and later, the appellant's brief). Ours leads to confusion.

39 It's probably unwise for our BCO to say notice of intention to file an appeal must contain "supporting reasons."  
40 Those can be and should be reserved for the Appellant's brief. In almost all U.S. criminal cases, the notice of  
41 appeal does *not* need to include the reasons or arguments for the appeal. The reasons and arguments for the appeal  
42 are prepared later. And US States usually allow between 10 and 30 days to file notice of appeal. (Idaho is 42 days.)  
43 Under the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure (Rule 3), the notice of appeal is intentionally simple. It generally  
44 must: (1) identify who is appealing, (2) specify the judgment or order being appealed, and (3) name the court to  
45 which the appeal is taken. That's all. It's a jurisdictional filing, not an argument.

46 Arguments come later in the Appellant's Brief. As I understand it, in Federal appeals courts, the Appellant's Brief  
47 is limited to 13,000 words (FRAP Rule 2), which would be about 55 pages using 12-point Times New Roman

1 font, with one-inch margins, double-spaced. Most states have similar limits and allow an Appellant Brief, an  
2 Appellee Brief, and an Appellant Response Brief (usually half the size of the Appellant Brief).

3 However, unlike in the PCA, giving notice of intention to file an appeal in most US States does not suspend the  
4 sentence. The conviction is presumed valid unless overturned by a higher court. It's left to the discretion of the  
5 original court as to whether the sentence remains in effect during appeal.

6 If Central FL Overture 75 is approved as filed, a censured person who intends to appeal will be censured during  
7 the 30-day filing period and the censure would not be suspended until the written appeal is filed. Granted, if the  
8 censured person files quickly, the judgment and censure will be suspended quickly. But the provision could also  
9 say that giving oral or written notice of intention to appeal would suspend the judgment and censure during that  
10 initial 30-day period. Then, if no written appeal is filed, the censure is enacted. But that is awkward also.

11 Regarding the optional "non-censure suspension of official functions" in BCO 42-6, there is currently nothing in  
12 the BCO that prohibits the original court - immediately after the censure is announced - to vote by two-thirds  
13 majority to "prevent him from exercising some or all his official functions" regardless of when the notice of appeal  
14 or the written filing of an appeal occur.

15 While this commentary doesn't propose any amendments to Overture 75, it might be worth considering some BCO  
16 changes in the future. It might be helpful if our BCO said something like what's below (in some form or fashion):

17 1. **Notice** - Oral or written notice of intent to appeal, noted by the court, should be given to the court as soon  
18 as possible, so the court can decide if the BCO 42-6 [non-censure] suspension from the Table or from  
19 official functions is necessary. If such notice is given, the court can also begin initial preparation of the  
20 Record of the Case (including transcript) to assist the Clerk in filing the Record with the higher court. It  
21 is this notice of intent to appeal that suspends the judgment and censure in the PCA. (Though I still wonder  
22 about the wisdom of suspended those during an Appeal.) No "supporting reasons" should be required in  
23 the notice of intent to appeal.

24 2. **The "Appeal"** - As I understand it, in US jurisdictions there is nothing akin to "the written Appeal"  
25 document described in BCO 42, which in our BCO is in addition to the "notice of Appeal." A convicted  
26 person shouldn't need to file "supporting reasons" prior to his Appellant Brief. The Appeal is argued in the  
27 Brief, not in some pre-Brief "Appeal" document. That Brief's argumentation is far more important than  
28 any initial "supporting reasons." Part of the problem with the PCA requiring "supporting reasons" to be  
29 filed within 30-days of notification of the last court's decision is that it's possible that sometime after that  
30 Appeal is filed, the Appellant could recruit an assistant who notices another error that could legitimately  
31 be raised on appeal. That additional reason should be allowed in the Appellant's Brief, and considered by  
32 the higher court, even though it wasn't initially included in the "supporting reasons" of the written  
33 "Appeal," assuming it was raised in the original court. In other words, supporting reasons should just wait  
34 for the Brief.

35 For example, here's a summary of the sequence in Idaho:  
36 1. File notice of appeal (usually within 42 days of judgment).  
37 2. The Record and transcripts are prepared and filed,  
38 3. Then a 35-day clock starts for filing the Appellant's brief.

39 So, the Appellant's briefing deadline in Idaho can come weeks or even months after the notice of appeal,  
40 depending on how long it takes for the record prep and transcription.

41 3. **BCO 42-6** - The original PCA court can vote to enact the BCO 42-6 [non-censure] suspension from the  
42 Lord's Supper or from official functions *at any time* after the censure is announced, i.e., immediately or  
43 any time during the course of the Appeal.  
44

45 R66 76 Calvary statement Lengthy Thanks on 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Nation's Founding OC

46 Answer by Reference to Philadelphia 66 (which needs to be amended heavily before approving.)

1	R43	77 SE Alabama	RAO 4-9	Elect Coordinators and Clerk to 4-yr Terms	AC, etc. OC
2	Answer by Reference to Pacific NW 43 (recommended approval)				
3	Y	78 SE Alabama	RAO 4-21	Authorize Electronic Perm Comm Meetings	AC, etc. OC
4	Approve. Permanent Committees should be able to decide for themselves if an electronic meeting is wiser than				
5	an in-person meeting, given the time and cost of an in-person meeting. If the SJC has the freedom to choose to				
6	conduct a called meeting electronically, so should GA Perm Comms - which have fewer members than the SJC.				
7	R78	79 Calvary	RAO 4-21	Authorize Electronic Perm Comm Meetings	AC, etc. OC
8	Answer by Reference to recommended approval of SEAL 78.				
9	N	80 Calvary	AIC	Erect Study Committee on Critical Race Theory	AC, OC
10	Disapprove. We don't need a Study Committee on this. Anyone is free to write a paper addressing the subject or				
11	publish an annotated bibliography. The overturing Presbytery is certainly free to do so. Furthermore, it's unlikely				
12	a Study Committee will make recommendations that an Assembly would adopt. Over the years, most study				
13	committees simply publish on a subject, but don't make any recommendations that have teeth. And unless an AIC				
14	recommendation proposes changing the Constitution, any "statement" that might be adopted by an Assembly is				
15	simply the statement of the commissioners at that particular Assembly - not the "PCA statement" on the matter.				
16	Y	81 Potomac	RAO 1-1	Require Wine & Juice at GA Lord's Supper	OC
17	Approve. This is long overdue. I chaired the host committee for the 2003 GA in Charlotte, and we were told we				
18	could only use juice in the Lord's Supper. Seemed odd then and still does. Nonetheless, this doesn't need an RAO				
19	change if AC willing to use wine along with juice. Perhaps this should have also been referred to AC because if				
20	AC endorses the idea, we don't need to change the RAO. Granted, AC membership changes every year, and				
21	perhaps AC might like this codified, so it doesn't get criticized for doing it. It would be my happy privilege to buy				
22	the wine for the first Assembly that does this.				
23	N	82 Rocky Mtn	BCO 12+	Clarify Right of Congregation to Consent to Leaders	OC
24	Disapprove. This creates more problems than it solves. Clarification regarding what happens when a church				
25	session cannot make a quorum can be found in two SJC decisions rendered in October 2025 and reported in this				
26	year's Commissioner Handbook - Cases 2024-07 <i>PCA v. Columbus Metro</i> and 2024-20 <i>Complaint of Fout v. Ohio</i>				
27	<i>Valley</i> . I wrote a Concurring Opinion in each, linked below.				
28	2024-07	<a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YV9M2nO8_JPN8o0LQuQ3PI-DuAoe-CK3/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YV9M2nO8_JPN8o0LQuQ3PI-DuAoe-CK3/view?usp=sharing</a>			
29	2024-20	<a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-QGKSaC_viluksp0GOJm8Kkptr_SvBbk/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-QGKSaC_viluksp0GOJm8Kkptr_SvBbk/view?usp=sharing</a>			
30	-	83 NW Georgia	policy	Doctrine + Scripture Classes Can Only Be Taught by Elders	CC, CTS
31	Not referred to OC. Defer to recommendations from the Boards of Covenant College and Covenant Seminary.				
32	N	84 NW Georgia	BCO 12+	Require Annual Attestation of Officer Vows	OC
33	Disapprove. The idea of annually reaffirming vows misunderstands the nature of vows. They do not need to be				
34	repeated. The PCA elder vows I took in 1986 are as obligatory on me today as they would be if I had repeated				
35	them every year since. While some married couples might "reaffirm" their wedding vows, that is more ceremonial				
36	than substantive, and most of us don't see the need for doing so.				
37	Am	85 NW Georgia	BCO 44	Add New Full Chapter on Objections	OC
38	Approve, but only if significantly amended. The Overture proposes adding three sections to BCO 44 which is				
39	shown now as "vacated." It would also delete all references to "Objections" in BCO 45. If I understand the				
40	Overture correctly, it would be much simpler to just add a sentence to BCO 39-2, in a different part of the BCO,				
41	as shown below.				

1 BCO 39-2. When the proceedings of a lower court are before a higher court, the members of the lower  
2 court shall not lose the right to sit, deliberate and vote in the higher court, except in cases of appeal or  
3 complaint. At the Presbytery level, after a complaint or an appeal is adjudicated that arose from a  
4 Session act or decision, the Session members who were prohibited from voting on the matter in  
5 Presbytery may file an objection to the action or decision on that complaint or appeal (BCO 45-4).

6	N	<b>86 Grace Church Session</b>	BCO 43	Rename Complaints as Inquiries	OC
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7 Disapprove. The noun "inquiry" is less clear than the word "complaint" which this Overture seeks to replace. The  
8 word inquiry denotes a question whereas the word complaint denotes an objection to something, which is what a  
9 BCO 43 complaint is. This comes from Grace Covenant Church in Dallas, GA (NW GA Pby).

10	-	<b>87 Pittsburgh</b>	MNA	Boundaries of Pittsburgh & Ohio (cf. 10)	MNA
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11 See MNA recommendation.

12	-	<b>88 Siouxlands</b>	AC	Format BCO for Ease of Printing at Home	AC
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13 See AC recommendation.

14	R66	<b>89 Fellowship</b>	statement	Lengthy Thanks on 250 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Nation's Founding	OC
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15 Answer by Reference to answer on Philadelphia 66 to answer in Affirmative, but only if significantly amended.