

1       **OVERTURE 2** from Potomac Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2       “Amend *RAO* 19-4.d, 14-9.h, and 15-8.g Governing Debate on  
3       Minority Reports”  
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5       **Whereas**, the new rules for the proceedings of the General Assembly continue to prove  
6       helpful in fostering focused debate on important questions before the Assembly; and  
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8       **Whereas**, the current limitations on time with respect to the consideration of a question  
9       restrict the opportunity for full debate in cases where a minority report is offered—  
10       cases that are typically of some importance; and  
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12       **Whereas**, the current limitations on time with respect to the speeches of commissioners may  
13       provide ample time to simply express one’s opinion, but do not offer the opportunity  
14       for careful argument or counter-argument in cases where a minority report is offered,  
15       cases where the expression of thoughtful argument will most serve the Assembly’s  
16       deliberations; and  
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18       **Whereas**, the current limitations on time effectively allow for a simple majority to cut off  
19       debate, contrary to the wisdom of requiring a super-majority to carry a motion for the  
20       *Previous Question*; and<sup>1</sup>  
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22       **Whereas**, the efficiency fostered by the new rules has considerably relieved the pressure of  
23       time upon the Assembly during its regular proceedings;  
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25       **Therefore be it resolved** that the 37<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, at the earliest possible place on  
26       the docket, adopt the following amendments to the *Rules of Assembly Operations*:  
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CURRENT “RAO”	PROPOSED AMENDMENT	
19-4.d. Debate on the main motion shall be limited to ten (10) minutes unless extended. . . . Each commissioner shall be limited to three (3) minutes on the same question . . . .”	ADD to 19-4.d., at the beginning of the first sentence: “ <b>Unless otherwise provided</b> , debate . . .” and at the beginning of the last sentence: “ <b>Unless otherwise provided</b> , each . . .”  <i>Rationale: Language added to make 19-4 consistent with proposals set forth below.</i>	1
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<sup>1</sup> Apart from the will of the majority, the current rules allow for only 10 minutes on the main question and three minutes per speaker—thus allowing merely three and a third speakers from among hundreds of commissioners on questions that are typically of great importance.

CURRENT "RAO"	PROPOSED AMENDMENT	
	<p>ADD to 14-9.h, as follows: <b>(3). Debate on the main motion and the substitute shall be limited to a total of sixty (60) minutes unless extended. When the allotted time has elapsed the Moderator shall put the question to the Assembly: "Will the Assembly extend the time on the question ten (10) minutes?" A simple majority shall extend the time; otherwise the Moderator shall put the question or questions as the case may be. If time is extended, the question of extension shall again be put every succeeding ten (10) minutes until the matter is concluded. Each Commissioner shall be limited to five (5) minutes on the same question unless the Court by a simple majority grants additional time.</b></p> <p><i>Rationale: The ten-minute limit on the consideration of a question is not sufficient for a full and fair debate in the case of a minority report, nor is the 3 minute limit on a commissioner sufficient for the full and fair expression of argument or counter-argument in this case.</i></p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22</p>
	<p>ADD to 15-8.g, as follows: <b>(3). Debate on the main motion and the substitute shall be limited to a total of sixty (60) minutes unless extended. When the allotted time has elapsed the Moderator shall put the question to the Assembly: "Will the Assembly extend the time on the question ten (10) minutes?" A simple majority shall extend the time; otherwise the Moderator shall put the question or questions as the case may be. If time is extended, the question of extension shall again be put every succeeding ten (10) minutes until the matter is concluded. Each Commissioner shall be limited to five (5) minutes on the same question unless the Court by a simple majority grants additional time.</b></p> <p><i>Rationale: See rationale above.</i></p>	<p>23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39</p>