

1 **OVERTURE 6** from Georgia Foothills Presbytery

(to OC)

2 “Child Protection in the PCA”

3
4 **Whereas** our Lord Jesus demonstrated his righteous anger at his own disciples, rebuking
5 those who would do anything to prevent children from coming unto him, saying “to
6 such belongs the Kingdom of God,” (Mark 10:14) and condemning those who would
7 harm children, saying “it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened
8 around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6); and
9

10 **Whereas** an epidemic of child sexual abuse exists in our culture, with the vast majority of
11 such children being harmed by someone they know and trust, wounding children
12 physically, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually with lifelong ripple effects;
13 and
14

15 **Whereas** the silence of the church – when we fail to appropriately address “rape, incest,
16 sodomy and all unnatural lusts” (*WLC* 139) by not reporting disclosures of child
17 sexual abuse, or not caring for those who disclose child sexual abuse, or not
18 proactively taking steps to prevent child sexual abuse – is a fundamental failure of
19 servant leadership, rendering the church complicit and culpable before the Lord,
20 driving people away from the safety, healing and hope of Jesus Christ; and
21

22 **Whereas** Scripture warns leaders against the “careless exposing, or leaving [those in their
23 care] to wrong, temptation, and danger” (*WLC* 130), and every jurisdiction
24 acknowledges that child sexual abuse is a serious felony and has its own mandated
25 reporting laws;
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27 **Therefore, be it resolved** that we exhort all church leaders to become informed and to take
28 an active stance toward preventing child sexual abuse in the church by screening
29 staff and volunteers, training them in child protection, and actively maintaining child
30 protection policies pertaining to our obligations to love our children and protect their
31 rightful interests as God’s image-bearers from the devastating actions of abusers
32 (Matthew 18:5-6; *WLC* 129-130); and
33

34 **Be it further resolved** that we remind all churches that the heinous crime of child sexual
35 abuse must be reported to duly appointed, God-ordained civil authorities, and that we
36 must cooperate with those authorities as they “bear the sword” to punish those who
37 do evil “in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered . . . to offer any
38 indignity, violence, abuse, or injury to any other person whatsoever” (Romans 13:1-
39 7; 1 Peter 2:13-14; *WCF* 23.3); and
40

41 **Be it further resolved** that we urge all church leaders to use their influence for the
42 protection of children, by any and all godly means, including preaching and teaching
43 against the heinous sin of child sexual abuse, warning anyone with knowledge of
44 these sins to “take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose

1 them” (Ephesians 5:11), and by supporting victims who often suffer in silence and
2 shame without the vocal and compassionate support of the church; and
3

4 **Be it further resolved** that we direct the Permanent Committees and Agencies of the
5 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to review their policies,
6 procedures and practices in the area of child protection, including their response to
7 child sexual abuse disclosures, their faithfulness in reporting child sexual abuse to
8 duly appointed God-ordained civil authorities, their care for survivors of child sexual
9 abuse, and their future plans to help educate the PCA on child sexual abuse, and
10 report back to the 43rd General Assembly; and
11

12 **Be it finally resolved** that the 42nd General Assembly urge all members of the PCA to
13 renew our allegiance to our Lord Jesus by loving our children as he loves our
14 children, “for to such belongs the Kingdom of God” (Mark 10:14).
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16 *Adopted by Georgia Foothills Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 18, 2014*

17 *Attested by /s/ TE Charles Garland, stated clerk*