

1 **OVERTURE 26** from Tennessee Valley Presbytery (to AC, OC)  
2 “Establish Study Committee on Domestic Abuse” (Version 5)

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4 **Whereas**, the sins of domestic abuse and sexual assault are expressly forbidden (2 Timothy  
5 3:2-5; Jude 7; Exodus 21:15; Deuteronomy 22:25-27; also *WLC* 135 and 139); and

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7 **Whereas**, these sins are especially heinous because they are “against the express letter of the  
8 law,” “break many commandments,” “admit of no reparation,” and often involve  
9 various other aggravations (*WLC* 151); and

10  
11 **Whereas**, these sins are grievously prevalent in our society; and

12  
13 **Whereas**, these sins often produce in the victims a complex response of denial along with  
14 immense fear and shame that persist with varying severity throughout life (e.g.,  
15 2 Samuel 13:1-22); and

16  
17 **Whereas**, it is the responsibility of the elders of the church to exercise their authority,  
18 severally and jointly, to shepherd those who are under their care by guarding against  
19 such sinful behavior as much as possible, by wisely caring for those victimized by the  
20 sins of others, and by appropriately disciplining those guilty of such sins toward a full  
21 repentance; and

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23 **Whereas**, these sins have been a concerning subject of attention not only in other  
24 denominations but even in the proceedings of the 46th General Assembly; and

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26 **Whereas**, the 42nd General Assembly previously exhorted the PCA and its courts to respond  
27 boldly against one form of these sins, namely the sexual abuse of children; and

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29 **Whereas**, no standardized resources for pastoral care on these sins and their complex  
30 consequences exist for officers, church courts, and agencies in the PCA; and

31  
32 **Whereas**, no clear guidelines for policy or practice with regard to these sins exist for the  
33 officers, church courts, and agencies in the PCA that would protect individuals and  
34 congregations; and

35  
36 **Whereas**, the Rules of Discipline make no consideration for the unique heinousness of these  
37 sins and their practical effect on victims;

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39 **Therefore, be it resolved** to hereby overture the 47th General Assembly of the PCA to form  
40 a committee to study:

- 41  
42 (1) the nature of domestic abuse and sexual assault;  
43 (2) pastoral resources available for the care of survivors of these sins;  
44 (3) pastoral resources available on the perpetrators of these sins;

- 1 (4) the best practices and policy guidelines for elders, church courts, and agencies for  
2 protecting against these sins and for responding to them;  
3 (5) the possibility of changes to the Rules of Discipline that would appropriately  
4 protect victims of these sins within a biblical process; and  
5 (6) the possible need for repentance as a church; and  
6

7 **Be it further resolved** that the committee shall be appointed by the moderator, and shall  
8 include among its members or advisory members at least two subject-matter experts  
9 and at least two women; and  
10

11 **Be it further resolved** that the budget for the study committee be set at \$15,000/year and that  
12 funds be derived from gifts to the AC designated for that purpose; and  
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14 **Be it further resolved** that the committee shall present their findings and recommendations  
15 for adoption by the 48th General Assembly.  
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17 *Adopted by Tennessee Valley Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 12, 2019*

18 *Attested by /s/ TE Jacob A. Bennett*