

1 **OVERTURE 32** from Tennessee Valley Presbytery (CCB, OC)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 14-1.10, 14-1.11, and 14-1.12 to Allow Non-ordained Persons  
3 to Serve on Committees and Boards (Version 4)  
4

5 **Whereas**, vigorous participation of women in the life of the early church is attested by the  
6 New Testament: they helped select (Acts 1:14) and train (Acts 18:26) leaders of the  
7 church, were prophets (Acts 21:8-9), served the church through deeds of mercy in vital  
8 ways (Acts 9:36–41), were instrumental in the planting of churches (Acts 16:12–15;  
9 17:4,12) and other missionary endeavors (Acts 18:1f), and were acknowledged as  
10 important leaders for the church (Rom. 16:3-4); and  
11

12 **Whereas**, the Presbyterian Church in America believes Christ has called his church to be a  
13 “spiritual commonwealth” (*BCO* 3-1), in which members elect godly men to be  
14 ordained as elders who are given the power of jurisdiction as they act jointly in the  
15 courts of the church (*BCO* 3-2); and  
16

17 **Whereas**, a robustly complementarian perspective affirms the oversight of these elders and  
18 the proper, vital and full expression of the gifts given by Christ to men and women for  
19 his service; and  
20

21 **Whereas**, as part of the calling of church leaders to “equip the saints for the work of ministry  
22 for building up the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12), many sessions throughout the PCA  
23 identify gifted men and women to serve on committees of the church, such as missions,  
24 building, and pastoral search committees; and  
25

26 **Whereas**, in contrast with a commission in the PCA, which is "authorized to deliberate and  
27 conclude the business referred to it," committees are appointed by courts “to examine,  
28 consider and report” to their constituting court concerning the matters that court  
29 delegates to them (*BCO* 15-1) and thus do not exercise governing authority; and  
30

31 **Whereas**, in accordance with this principle, Permanent Committees established by the  
32 General Assembly are “to serve and not to direct any Church judicatories. They are  
33 not to establish policy, but rather execute policy established by the General Assembly”  
34 (*BCO* 14-1.7); and  
35

36 **Whereas** neither the NT evidence nor the constitutional evidence cited above seem to have  
37 been given adequate consideration by the 17th GA in their denial of O.24 asking for a  
38 study committee to determine whether "women could be included on some or all of  
39 the permanent committees and agencies of the GA," which was the precedent cited for  
40 rejecting the overtures presented last year to open participation on Boards and  
41 Permanent Committees to non-ordained members; and  
42

43 **Whereas**, these considerations suggest there is no impediment to an unordained member in  
44 good standing in the PCA serving on a Permanent Committee or Agency of the  
45 General Assembly established in *BCO* 14-1.12; and

1 **Whereas**, the 45th General Assembly adopted the recommendation of The Ad Interim  
2 Committee on Women Serving in the Ministry of the Church that stated, “sessions,  
3 presbyteries and the General Assembly strive to develop, recognize, and utilize the  
4 gifts, skills, knowledge, and wisdom of godly women in the local, regional, and  
5 national church, and particularly consider overtures that would allow qualified women  
6 to serve on appropriate committees and agencies within the church”; and  
7

8 **Whereas**, the 46th General Assembly answered in the negative an overture to allow non-ordained  
9 members on General Assembly Agency Boards on the grounds that *BCO* 14-1.11 had  
10 to be amended prior to amendment of the PCA Bylaws, which governs the Agencies,  
11

12 **Therefore be it resolved** to amend *The Book of Church Order* 14-1.10, 14-1.11, and 14-1.12  
13 as follows: [Proposed additions underlined and deletions noted by strike out.]  
14

15 *BCO* 14-1.

16  
17 ~~10. The committees are to be established on the basis of an equal number between~~  
18 ~~teaching and ruling elders.~~  
19

20 11.10. A Nominating Committee shall be comprised of one representative  
21 elected by each Presbytery in the following manner. Each Presbytery shall be  
22 assigned to a class by the stated clerk based on its date of formation. The  
23 members shall serve in classes of three year terms, alternating between ruling  
24 and teaching elders. When necessary, unexpired terms shall be filled by an elder  
25 of the same class, teaching or ruling.

26 This committee is to present all nominations for which it is responsible to  
27 the next meeting of the Assembly from a slate of ~~men~~ candidates nominated by  
28 the Presbyteries. Presbyteries shall utilize the nominating forms provided by the  
29 stated clerk for their nominations. Each presbytery may present one teaching  
30 elder, ~~and~~ one ruling elder, and, when applicable, one non-elder candidate to  
31 fill openings that are designated for members at large for each committee or  
32 agency. Any non-ordained person nominated must meet the qualifications  
33 outlined in *BCO* 14-1.11.

34 In addition to nominees for expired terms, the Committee shall nominate  
35 for each permanent Committee one ruling, ~~and~~ one teaching elder and a  
36 member at large candidate as alternates to fill any vacancies that may occur  
37 during the year. Each alternate should attend each meeting and fill any vacancy  
38 necessary to meet a quorum. In addition to the new nominees from the  
39 Presbyteries, alternates not assuming any vacancies during a year will be  
40 automatically considered by the Nominating Committee as candidates for  
41 nomination to that same committee.  
42

43 11. To be qualified for nomination and election to serve on a Permanent  
44 Committee or Agency as a member at large, a non-ordained candidate must be  
45 a member in good standing of a Church in the Presbyterian Church in America

1 and must receive an endorsement from their Session. The endorsement will  
2 consist of testimony regarding the candidate's Christian character, knowledge  
3 of and adherence to the Constitution and promise of faithful service to the  
4 General Assembly.  
5

6 12. The Assembly permanent committees are the Administrative Committee of  
7 the General Assembly, Committee on Discipleship Ministries, Committee on  
8 Mission to North America, Committee on Mission to the World, and  
9 Committee on Reformed University Fellowship.

10 The Administrative Committee of the General Assembly (AC) shall consist  
11 of twenty (20) members:

- 12 a. Eleven members, six elders and five members who are not elders, shall  
13 be in classes elected through the standard nomination and election  
14 procedure,  
15 b. One member from each of the following program committees or  
16 agencies:  
17 1. Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM)  
18 2. Covenant College (CC)  
19 3. Covenant Theological Seminary (CTS)  
20 4. Mission to North America (MNA)  
21 5. Mission to the World (MTW)  
22 6. PCA Foundation (PCAF)  
23 7. PCA Retirement & Benefits, Inc. (RBI)  
24 8. Reformed University Fellowship (RUF)  
25 9. Ridge Haven Conference Center (RH)

26 The eleven elected members ~~at large~~ shall serve a term of four years. The  
27 chairman of the Administrative Committee shall be one of its elected ordained  
28 members ~~at large~~.

29 Each program committee and agency shall designate its member each year  
30 at the last meeting of the committee or board before the meeting of the General  
31 Assembly. The chief administrative officers of the program committees and  
32 agencies may attend any meeting of the Administrative Committee. They shall  
33 be entitled to the privilege of the floor but shall not have a vote and must be  
34 excluded when an executive session is called.

35 Committee on Discipleship Ministries, Committee on Mission to North  
36 America, Committee on Mission to the World, and Committee on Reformed  
37 University Fellowship shall consist of fifteen (15) ~~men~~ members divided into  
38 five classes of three ~~men~~ members. Three classes will have one TE, one RE and  
39 one member at large. One class shall have one TE and two members at large  
40 and one class shall have one RE and two members at large, each, with two  
41 ~~men being TEs and one RE or two men being REs and one TE on alternate~~  
42 years, Each class shall be elected to serve five-year terms. Committees on  
43 Discipleship Ministries, Committee on Mission to North America, Committee  
44 on Mission to the World, and Committee on Reformed University Fellowship  
45 shall have one ruling elder, and one teaching elder and one member at large as  
46 alternates to fill any vacancy that may occur during the year. A quorum for

1 each Committees shall be eight (8) members, with a majority of those present  
2 being elders. The Chairman of each Committee shall be an elder.

3 Persons who have served for a full term, or for at least two years of a partial  
4 term, on one of the Assembly's permanent committees or agencies shall not be  
5 eligible for re-election to an Assembly committee until one year has elapsed.  
6 (Exceptions may be permitted in agency bylaws approved by the Assembly).  
7

8 So that *BCO* 14-1.10, 14-1.11, and 14-1.12 as amended would read:  
9

10 *BCO* 14-1

11  
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13 elected by each Presbytery in the following manner. Each Presbytery shall be  
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16 and teaching elders. When necessary, unexpired terms shall be filled by an elder  
17 of the same class, teaching or ruling.

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23 are designated for members at large for each committee or agency. Any non-  
24 ordained person nominated must meet the qualifications outlined in *BCO* 14-1.11.

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27 large candidate as alternates to fill any vacancies that may occur during the  
28 year. Each alternate should attend each meeting and fill any vacancy necessary  
29 to meet a quorum. In addition to the new nominees from the Presbyteries,  
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16 Administrative Committee shall be one of its elected ordained members.

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20 any meeting of the Administrative Committee. They shall be entitled to the privilege  
21 of the floor but shall not have a vote and must be excluded when an executive session  
22 is called.

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25 Fellowship shall consist of fifteen (15) members divided into five classes of three  
26 members. Three classes will have one TE, one RE and one member at large. One class  
27 shall have one TE and two members at large and one class shall have one RE and two  
28 members at large. Each class shall be elected to serve five-year terms. Committee on  
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34 Committee shall be an elder.

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36 on one of the Assembly's permanent committees or agencies shall not be eligible for  
37 re-election to an Assembly committee until one year has lapsed. (Exceptions may be  
38 permitted in agency bylaws approved by the Assembly).  
39

40 **Further, be it resolved** that the Stated Clerk shall be responsible for developing the  
41 nomination forms necessary to implement this process and shall be responsible for converting  
42 the composition of each class as each class term expires.  
43

44 *Approved by Tennessee Valley Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 13, 2019*

45 *Attested by /s/ TE Jacob A. Bennett, stated clerk*