

2024-2025
BCO AMENDMENTS SENT DOWN TO PRESBYTERIES
by the 51st GENERAL ASSEMBLY
for ADVICE AND CONSENT

NOTE: The Stated Clerk's Office sends the proposed amendments only in their final form as approved by the General Assembly.

ITEM 1: Amend BCO 13-6 for clarity in transfers of ordination (strikethrough for deletions, underlining for additions)

[Overture 2 was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee.]

13-6. Ministers Transferring into the Presbytery

- a. A Ministers seeking admission to a Presbytery from another Presbyteries Presbytery in the Presbyterian Church in America shall be examined on Christian experience, and also ~~touching as to his~~ their views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government. If the examining Presbytery does not accept the Minister seeking admission, it shall record this fact along with its rationale, if one is adopted, in the minutes, and shall communicate its rationale to his current Presbytery.
- b. If an applicants comes from another denominations, the Presbytery shall examine him ~~them~~ thoroughly ~~in knowledge and views~~ as required by the trials listed in BCO 21-4 and require ~~them~~ him to answer in the affirmative the questions put to candidates at their ordination. Ordained ministers from other denominations being considered by Presbyteries for reception may come under the extraordinary provisions set forth in *BCO 21-4*.
- c. In every case, Presbyteries shall also require each ordained ministers ~~coming from other denominations entering the Presbytery~~ to state the specific instances in which ~~they~~ he may differ with the *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms* in any of their statements and/or propositions, which differences the court shall judge in accordance with ~~BCO 21-4 (see BCO 21-4.f-g (see also RAO 16-3.e.6.a-d).~~

[**Stated Clerk's Note:** The *BCO* currently reads "*BCO 21-4.e,f.*" However, last year, GA added a new 21-4.e, renumbering the e and f referred to here so as to become f and g. This GA also amended *RAO 16-3.e*, moving subparagraphs 16-3.e.5.a-d to 16-3.e.6.a-d.]

ITEM 2: Amend BCO 13-6 to add personal character and family management to the examination of transferring ministers (underlining for additions)

[Overture 27 was answered in the affirmative]

13-6. Ministers seeking admission to a Presbytery from other Presbyteries in the Presbyterian Church in America shall be examined on Christian experience

(including personal character and family management), and also touching their views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government.

[**Stated Clerk's Note:** If both Items 1 and 2 pass, the new 13-6.a will incorporate both amendments and read as follows.]

13-6. Ministers Transferring into the Presbytery

- a. A Minister seeking admission to a Presbytery from another Presbytery in the Presbyterian Church in America shall be examined on Christian experience (including personal character and family management), and also as to his views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government. If the examining Presbytery does not accept the Minister seeking admission, it shall record this fact along with its rationale, if one is adopted, in the minutes, and shall communicate its rationale to his current Presbytery.

ITEM 3: Amend BCO 32-19 to expand representation of accused persons before church courts (strikethrough for deletions, underlining for new wording)

[**Overture 26** was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee.]

32-19. No professional counsel shall be permitted as such to appear and plead in cases of process in any court; but an accused person may, if he desires it, be represented before the Session or the Presbytery by any member in good standing of a church in the same Presbytery or by any Teaching Elder member of that Presbytery, or before the General Assembly by ~~by any communing member of the same particular church, or before any other court, by any member of that court~~ any member in good standing in the PCA. A member of the court so employed shall not be allowed to sit in judgment in the case. Courts are encouraged to suggest to the accused/appellant the names of potential representatives and potential advisors he might contact.

ITEM 4: Amend BCO 43-1 to change the prohibition against 'interlocutory appeal' by complaint (strikethrough for deletions, underlining for new wording)

[**Overture 21** was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee.]

43-1. A complaint is a written representation made against some act or decision of a court of the Church. It is the right of any communing member of the Church in good standing to make complaint against any action of a court to whose jurisdiction he is subject, except that no complaint is allowable in a judicial case ~~in which an appeal is pending~~ after process has commenced. If, at any time after process has commenced, a BCO 43-1 complaint is timely filed, the court's adjudication shall be delayed until after the judicial case has been completed, or, if an appeal is filed, after it has been fully adjudicated or withdrawn. During judicial process, the accused may raise BCO 32-14 objections on a variety of matters and the original court shall decide each. Those decisions could be reviewable on appeal.