

1 **OVERTURE 17** from Pacific Northwest Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
2 “Revise *RAO* 9-3 to Clarify Funding for Ad Interim Committees”
3

4 **Be it resolved**, that *RAO* 9-3 be amended by deleting the current paragraph and replacing with
5 a new paragraph as follows (strike-through for deletion and underlining for new
6 paragraph):
7

8 ~~**RAO 9-3.** Only two (2) ad interim study committees may be appointed or
9 continued in any given year, (with no committee continuing with undesignated
10 Administrative Committee funding beyond the third year of its inception and
11 no more than two [2] committees existing in any one [1] year), and any
12 additional committees would have to be approved by a two-thirds vote of
13 commissioners, with financing provided from outside the Administrative
14 Committee budget.~~

15
16 Proposed replacement paragraph:

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18 **RAO 9-3.** The General Assembly may appoint or continue any number of ad
19 interim committees. However, no committee may be funded with undesignated
20 AC funding after its third year, and only two committees may be funded with
21 undesignated AC funding in any given year.
22
23

24 **Rationale:**

- 25 1. The *Rules of Assembly Operations* rightfully privilege the GA's Administrative
26 Committee in annually presenting budgets for GA consideration. At the same time, the
27 *RAO* also allows for changes to AC recommendations.
28

29 *RAO* 4-11....Budgets of permanent Committees and Agencies that are agreed
30 upon by the Administrative Committee may be changed only by a two-thirds
31 vote of the Assembly commissioners present and voting at the time the budget
32 is submitted for adoption....The requirement of a two-thirds vote of the General
33 Assembly applies only to changes not recommended by the Administrative
34 Committee, initiated on the floor of the Assembly.
35

36 Thus, if an Overture seeks to have GA partially fund an Ad Interim or Study Committee
37 from *inside* the AC budget, it can only happen if (1) the AC recommends adding the
38 funding to an increased AC budget if the GA creates the Ad Interim Committee, or (2) a
39 two-thirds GA majority votes to increase the AC budget. But no Rule needs to be
40 suspended to do so because *RAO* 4-11 already provides the procedure.
41

- 42 2. Alleviate Confusion: Despite the provisions in *RAO* 4-11, there are some differing
43 interpretations of *RAO* 9-3. One contends that our Rules require *every* ad interim
44 committee to *only* be funded from outside the AC budget. Another holds that our Rules
45 only require this in two instances: (1) for any committee in its fourth year, or (2) for a third

1 committee at any time. We understand *RAO 9-3* in the second sense. And while we
2 believe the wording proposed by the Overture says the same thing as the current *RAO 9-*
3 *3*, the proposed language is clearer and should help resolve the interpretive confusion.

- 4
5 3. In 2019, Pacific NW Presbytery filed Overture 7 proposing a Study Committee on Abuse.
6 The 47th GA approved the Overture, as amended. Below is Part 4 from the original
7 Overture.

8
9 Overture 7, Part 4: Committee budget shall be \$15,000. *This expense shall be*
10 *included in the Administrative Committee budget.* Presbyteries, churches, and
11 individuals are highly encouraged to contribute funds to the AC, designated for
12 this work. (The Pacific NW Presbytery has approved \$1,000 to that end.)¹
13 [Emphasis added. [M47GA](#), p. 596.]

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15 Prior to the GA, the 2019 AC reported Recommendation 5:

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17 That, in the event the Assembly, upon recommendation of the Overtures
18 Committee, answers Overtures 7, 10, 13, 20, 26, 31, 38, 43, and 47 in the
19 affirmative, approving the establishment of an ad interim committee on the
20 study of Domestic Violence, the budget of such committee be \$25,000, *to be*
21 *provided solely by designated gifts to the AC.* ([M47GA](#), p. 184. Emphasis
22 added.)

23
24 Also prior to the GA, the 2019 Committee on Constitutional Business reported this advice:

25
26 In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 7 **is in conflict** with other parts of the
27 Constitution. *RAO 9-3* requires ad interim committees be established with
28 "financing provided from outside the Administrative Committee budget."
29 [[M47GA](#), p. 399. Emphasis original; underlining added. The CCB vote was
30 6-1-1.]

31
32 The AC's recommendation was in order, per *RAO 4-11*. But, we believe, the CCB's
33 interpretation of *RAO 9-3* was incorrect.

34
35 Eventually, the 2019 Overtures Committee recommended approval of Overture 7, but with
36 the following amended version of the funding part: "The budget for the [Abuse] Study
37 Committee shall be \$25,000 and *that funds be derived from gifts to the AC designated for*
38 *that purpose.*" [Emphasis added. [M47GA](#), p. 91. See also pp. 79, 89, 596.] The OC did
39 not provide grounds for why it recommended amending this part of Overture 7, but it
40 might have been due to the CCB opinion. Thus, our Presbytery believes the interpretation
41 of *RAO 9-3* should be clarified.

- 42
43 4. Interpretation - The 2019 CCB seems to have interpreted the final eight-word clause of
44 *RAO 9-3*, underlined above, to apply to *all* ad interim committees, rather than just

¹ Pacific NW sent its promised contribution in July 2019.

1 committees in two particular scenarios. But that interpretation appears internally
 2 inconsistent. Applying the outside financing clause to *every* committee contradicts a
 3 stipulation made earlier in *RAO 9-3*, i.e., "no committee may *continue* with undesignated
 4 AC funding beyond the third year of its inception."
 5

6 *RAO 9-3* is a 64-word sentence that should be worded more clearly. Nonetheless, as
 7 currently written, the "outside financing" Rule *only* applies to two scenarios: (a) any
 8 committee in its fourth year, or (b) a third committee at any time. The table below depicts
 9 that understanding of the Rule.
 10

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Ad Interim A	GA decides funding	GA decides		
Ad Interim B	GA decides funding	GA decides	GA decides	Outside financing only
Ad Interim C		Outside financing only	GA decides	GA decides

11 This interpretation is reinforced two paragraphs later, when *RAO 9-5* envisions a study
 12 committee might *sometimes* have *some* effect on the AC budgets.
 13
 14

15 *RAO 9-5*. All ad interim and study committees shall be considered by the GA
 16 for appointment or extension at the time during the GA docket of the AC
 17 Committee's report so that due consideration be given as to their priority and
 18 their effect on the budgets.
 19

20 If every ad interim committee must — *per the Rules* — be entirely supported "with
 21 financing provided from outside the AC budget," then there is no reason for *RAO 9-5*
 22 because no ad interim committee would ever have any effect on the AC budget.
 23

24 Our Presbytery's interpretation also seems to be the one held by the 2019 Administrative
 25 Committee and the 2019 AC Committee of Commissioners. Both *recommended* that the
 26 47th GA stipulate only outside funding be used for the AIC on Abuse. But if *RAO 9-3*
 27 mandates outside funding in every case (i.e., if the 2019 CCB interpretation was correct)
 28 there would be no reason for the AC recommendations.
 29

30 AC Rec. #5 - That in the event the Assembly, upon recommendation of the
 31 Overtures Committee, answers Overtures 7, 10, 1, 20, 26, and/or 31 in the
 32 affirmative, approving the establishment of an ad interim committee on the
 33 Study of Domestic Violence, the budget of such committee be \$15,000, *to be*
 34 *provided solely by designated gifts to the AC*. [Emphasis added. [M47GA](#), p.
 35 69 & 184.
 36

- 37 5. This revision (or clarification) to *RAO 9-3* is important for future committees, because
 38 Assemblies should not expect members of ad interim and study committees to be

1 fundraisers, nor should they be expected to forego reimbursement for expenses. To expect
2 or imply otherwise could affect the Assembly's ability to recruit the most experienced and
3 gifted members for these committees.

- 4
5 6. If someone believes *every* ad interim committees should *always* function exclusively with
6 outside funding, they can ask their Presbytery to overture a change to *RAO* 9-3, and a
7 deletion of *RAO* 9-5.

8
9 *Proposed to the Pacific Northwest Presbytery at its stated meeting on January 24, 2020*

10 *Final version adopted by an Administrative Commission of Presbytery on April 8, 2020*

11 *Attested by /s/ TE Nathan Chambers, interim stated clerk*