

1 **OVERTURE 24** from Tennessee Valley Presbytery (to AC [RAO 10-4; 11-5])
2 "Reduce Registration Fee for Ruling Elders to \$250"
3

4 **Whereas** the principle of the parity of elders is foundational to Presbyterian polity and "Elders
5 being of one class of office, ruling elders possess the same authority and eligibility to
6 office in the courts of the Church as teaching elders" (BCO 8-9); and
7

8 **Whereas** the Presbyterian Church in America's polity underscores this principle by requiring
9 significant participation on General Assembly committees and boards, setting required
10 minimum numbers of Ruling Elders in many cases; and
11

12 **Whereas** "The PCA was started primarily through the efforts of Ruling Elders," according to
13 Stated Clerk Roy Taylor; and
14

15 **Whereas** the percentage of Ruling Elder commissioners attending General Assembly has
16 dropped steadily, from averaging 44% in the 1970s to 23% since 2000;;and
17

18 **Whereas** true (not merely theoretical) parity would be enabled by broader and greater
19 participation of Ruling Elders in the General Assembly; and
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21 **Whereas** the high costs of General Assembly attendance would seem to ensure that higher-
22 income or retired Ruling Elders (who are more able to afford to attend) are over-
23 represented, thus hurting the diversity of the elders by age and income; and
24

25 **Whereas** Ruling Elders who are not full-time employees of churches and who are otherwise
26 employed sustain loss of income or vacation time to attend not only the meetings of
27 presbyteries, but especially the General Assembly (while many Teaching Elders are
28 paid to attend the courts of the church court and/or lose no vacation time to do so); and
29

30 **Whereas** the average PCA church has fewer than 100 members and can barely afford to send
31 a Teaching Elder to General Assembly, much less even one accompanying Ruling
32 Elder; and
33

34 **Whereas** the amount of "revenue" lost by the reduction of the Ruling Elder registration fee
35 would be offset almost entirely by a small increase in Teaching Elder registration fees,
36 e.g.

37 *1600 total elders at full registration fees at current fees of \$450 each = \$720,000*
38 *set against*

39 *1600 total elders (25% REs & 75% TEs)*
40 *with fees of \$250 and \$500 respectively = \$700,000;*
41

42 **Therefore be it resolved** that the 49th General Assembly set the commissioner registration
43 fees as follows: \$250 for Ruling Elders; \$500 for Teaching Elders; Honorably retired
44 or emeritus elders would continue to pay \$150; Teaching Elders from churches with
45 annual incomes below \$100,000, as per their 2020 statistics, may register for \$300.
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47 *Adopted by Tennessee Valley Presbytery at its stated meeting, July 14, 2020*

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