

1 **OVERTURE 39** from Fellowship Presbytery (to AC [RAO 10-4; 11-5])  
2 "Reduce Registration Fee for Ruling Elders to \$250"  
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4 [Editorial Note: This overture is identical to Overture 24 from Tennessee Valley Presbytery]  
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6 **Whereas** the principle of the parity of elders is foundational to Presbyterian polity and "Elders  
7 being of one class of office, ruling elders possess the same authority and eligibility to  
8 office in the courts of the Church as teaching elders..." (BCO 8-9); and  
9

10 **Whereas** the Presbyterian Church in America's polity underscores this principle by requiring  
11 significant participation on General Assembly committees and boards, setting required  
12 minimum numbers of Ruling Elders in many cases; and  
13

14 **Whereas** "The PCA was started primarily through the efforts of Ruling Elders," according to  
15 Stated Clerk Emeritus Roy Taylor; and  
16

17 **Whereas** the percentage of Ruling Elder commissioners attending General Assembly has  
18 dropped steadily, from averaging 44% in the 1970s to 23% since 2000;;and  
19

20 **Whereas** true (not merely theoretical) parity would be enabled by broader and greater  
21 participation of Ruling Elders in the General Assembly; and  
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23 **Whereas** the high costs of General Assembly attendance would seem to ensure that higher-  
24 income or retired Ruling Elders (who are more able to afford to attend) are over-  
25 represented, thus hurting the diversity of the elders by age and income; and  
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27 **Whereas** Ruling Elders who are not full-time employees of churches and who are otherwise  
28 employed sustain loss of income or vacation time to attend not only the meetings of  
29 presbyteries, but especially the General Assembly (while many Teaching Elders are  
30 paid to attend the courts of the church court and/or lose no vacation time to do so); and  
31

32 **Whereas** the average PCA church has fewer than 100 members and can barely afford to send  
33 a Teaching Elder to General Assembly, much less even one accompanying Ruling  
34 Elder; and  
35

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

39  
40 *1600 total elders at full registration fees at current fees of \$450 each = \$720,000*  
41 *set against 1600 total elders (25% REs & 75% TEs) with fees of \$250 and \$500*  
42 *respectively = \$700,000*  
43

44 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 49th General Assembly set the commissioner registration  
45 fees as follows: \$250 for Ruling Elders; \$500 for Teaching Elders; Honorably retired  
46 or emeritus elders would continue to pay \$150; Teaching Elders from churches with  
47 annual incomes below \$100,000, as per their 2020 statistics, may register for \$300.  
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49 *Adopted by Fellowship Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 23, 2021*

50 *Attested by John M. McArthur, Jr., stated clerk*