

1 **OVERTURE 13** from Ascension Presbytery (to OC)  
2 "Petition United States Government to End Abortion"

3  
4 **Whereas**, the Scriptures forbid murder of human life, as confessed in the Standards of the  
5 Presbyterian Church in America under the Sixth Commandment in Larger Catechism  
6 134-136 and Shorter Catechism 67-69, and;

7  
8 **Whereas**, The Holy Scriptures recognize human life before birth in the womb (Exodus 21:22-  
9 25, Psalm 17:14, Jeremiah 1:5, Isaiah 44:24, Luke 1:41, etc.), and;

10  
11 **Whereas**, Christians as far back as the writing of the Didache in the First or Second Century  
12 recognized that "you shall not abort a child or commit infanticide."<sup>1</sup> and;

13  
14 **Whereas**, the Reformed tradition has recognized the evil of abortion from the days of the  
15 Reformation, with pastors such as John Calvin noting: "...*the unborn, though enclosed*  
16 *in the womb of his mother, is already a human being, and it is an almost monstrous*  
17 *crime to rob it of life which it has not yet begun to enjoy. If it seems more horrible to*  
18 *kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man's house is his most secure*  
19 *place of refuge, it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy the unborn in*  
20 *the womb before it has come to light.*"<sup>2</sup> and;

21  
22 **Whereas**, abortion ends human life in the womb and is legal in the United States of America,  
23 and;

24  
25 **Whereas**, *Westminster Confession of Faith* 31.4. confesses: "Synods and councils are to  
26 handle, or conclude nothing, but that which is ecclesiastical: and are not to intermeddle  
27 with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of *humble petition*  
28 *in cases extraordinary*; or, by way of advice, for satisfaction of conscience, if they be  
29 thereunto required by the civil magistrate."<sup>3</sup> and;

30  
31 **Whereas**, in 1978 the PCA studied the issue of abortion and communicated the following  
32 statement to the civil authorities: "God declares in Sacred Scripture that civil  
33 government, no less than the Church, is a divine institution and owes its authority to  
34 God. The Bible is the supreme revelation of God's will and teaches that the unborn  
35 child is a human person deserving the full protection of the Sixth Commandment,  
36 "You shall not murder". We who love our nation, in the name of God who alone is  
37 sovereign, call upon you to renounce the sin of abortion, to repent of the complicity in  
38 the mass slaughter of innocent unborn children, who are persons in the sight of God,  
39 and to reverse the ruinous direction of both law and practice in this area. The obedience

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<sup>1</sup> Didache. 2.2 – as translated by Michael Holmes in *The Apostolic Fathers*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

<sup>2</sup> See: John Calvin. Commentary on Exodus 21:22 in *Harmony of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. Vol 3, page 41-42.

<sup>3</sup> *Emphasis added.*

1 to God which places us in subjection to your rightful authority, requires of us to  
2 proclaim the counsel of God as it bears upon the same God-given authority.”<sup>4</sup>

3  
4 **Whereas**, in 1986 the PCA again communicated its position on abortion to the civil  
5 authorities,<sup>5</sup> and;

6  
7 **Whereas**, since 1986, we have not petitioned the vast majority of the current federal  
8 government, as 97 out of the current 100 Senators were not serving, 430 out of the  
9 current 435 Representatives were not serving, and 9 out of the current 9 Supreme Court  
10 Justices were not serving, and;

11  
12 **Whereas**, the legal murder of around 60 million babies since 1973,<sup>6</sup> many disproportionately  
13 coming from minority communities, poses a civil rights and biblical justice  
14 abomination, and therefore constitutes such an extraordinary case, and;

15  
16 **Whereas**, since the PCA’s last formal petition in 1986, tens of millions more innocent human  
17 lives have been destroyed through abortion, constituting an ongoing and extraordinary  
18 violation of justice,

19  
20 **Therefore Be it Resolved**, Presbytery of the Ascension overtures the General Assembly to  
21 humbly petition the United States Government as below, to be sent by the Stated Clerk  
22 of the PCA:<sup>7</sup>

23  
24  
25 **Humble Petition to the Honorable President, Members of Congress,**  
26 **and Justices of the Supreme Court**

27  
28 The 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America humbly petitions the  
29 President of the United States of America, Members of Congress, and Justices of the Supreme  
30 Court to take any and all legal measures to protect the lives of unborn and newly-born babies  
31 from the brutality of abortion and infanticide. We support this petition with the following  
32 considerations.

33  
34 Based on the Word of God and His Law evident in nature, terminating the life of an unborn  
35 or newly-born baby without just cause violates God's moral standard and therefore is sin and  
36 a great evil. According to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, murder and the  
37 unjust taking of another's life is forbidden, as all humans are made in the Image of God (Gen  
38 1:26-27) and therefore taking innocent life is a great sin against God (Genesis 9:6). The  
39 particular sin of sacrificing of children, as was done to the false god Molech, is called an

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4 “Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Abortion,” [6th General Assembly (1978), Appendix O, pp. 270 - 281.], <https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/digest/studies/2-015.html>

5 Actions of the 14<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (1986), p. 187, 14-85, III, 2. [https://pcahistory.org/pca/ga/14th\\_pcaga\\_1986.pdf](https://pcahistory.org/pca/ga/14th_pcaga_1986.pdf)

6 [https://www.grtl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Abortion\\_US.pdf](https://www.grtl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Abortion_US.pdf)

7 Format and Wording follows the format of a OPC Humble petition of 1993 found here: <https://opc.org/GA/homosexuality.html>

1 abomination and worthy of judgment (Leviticus 20:2-5, 1 Kings 11:7, etc). By the light of  
2 nature, moreover, we know that the unborn is human, feels pain from an early stage, has a  
3 beating heart from an early stage, and is not some other species but a fellow human. Thus our  
4 God-given conscience testifies that inflicting pain, stopping a beating heart, and thereby  
5 killing another defenseless, fellow human being is a great evil.

6  
7 While we are reluctant to address the civil magistrate except in “cases extraordinary,” the  
8 legalization of the murder of a helpless class, that disproportionately targets the poor and  
9 minorities, has resulted in the loss of around 60 million lives since 1973, and thus the tragedy  
10 and evil of the legal extermination of the unborn rises to just such a status, as few events have  
11 in the history of our nation. The Scriptures declare that a failure to discharge faithfully our  
12 duties to these, our helpless neighbors, would incur the judgment of God, just as it did of the  
13 watchmen and shepherds of Israel (Isaiah 56:9-12; Ezekiel 33:1-9; 34:1-10).

14  
15 The duties of the civil government include the enforcement of laws, as a duty from God, to be  
16 a “terror to bad conduct” as you are called to be God's servants (Romans 13:1-7). We implore  
17 you to fulfill your divinely granted duty before God and eliminate from our land, by any and  
18 all available means, the legal murder known as abortion, and to call our nation to, “Let  
19 everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows? God  
20 may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish” (Jonah 3:8-9).

21  
22 Therefore, for the honor of Christ and his Church, and the welfare of our nation, we exhort  
23 you to remember the words of the wisest magistrate, "Righteousness exalts a nation; but sin  
24 is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34) and “Rescue those who are being taken away to  
25 death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter” (Proverbs 24:11). We pray for you,  
26 your families, and your vocations, and we commend to you the salvation that comes only  
27 through Jesus Christ our Lord. We urge all faithful believers to pray for you, as we have been  
28 instructed from God's Word: "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and  
29 thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live  
30 peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

31  
32 Very respectfully submitted,  
33 The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America

34  
35 *Adopted by the Presbytery of the Ascension at its stated meeting, January 29, 2022*  
36 *Attested by/s/ RE Frederick Neikirk, stated clerk*