

1 **OVERTURE 28** from Pittsburgh Presbytery (to CCB, OC, and to MNA for advice)  
2 “Amend *BCO* 8-7 by Adding Chaplain Endorsement Requirements and  
3 Recommendations”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the presbytery has under its care teaching elders and candidates for the ministry  
6 (examine, license, receive, dismiss, ordain, install, remove, and judge) (*BCO* 13.9);  
7 and  
8

9 **Whereas**, the Sixth General Assembly of the PCA (1978) approved the establishment of the  
10 Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel  
11 (PRCCMP or PRCC) and assigned the duties of examination, endorsement, and  
12 oversight of chaplains through the PRCCMP to Mission to North America; and  
13

14 **Whereas**, endorsement verifies a denomination has at a minimum utilized a process to address  
15 the following core standards with each endorsee: ministerial and theological  
16 competence, good standing and accountability within the denomination, ability to  
17 minister within diverse and pluralistic settings, and willingness of the endorsee to  
18 maintain communication and theological accountability to the denomination and the  
19 endorsing agent; and  
20

21 **Whereas**, endorsement is a credential requirement that establishes the legal and ecclesiastical  
22 oversight of those chaplains hired for all federal government chaplain positions and  
23 many other organizations who educate, certify, or hire chaplains; and  
24

25 **Whereas**, the role of MNA Chaplain Ministries and the PRCC is not well known in all  
26 presbyteries, and PCA military chaplains have sought endorsement through other  
27 agencies not authorized by the General Assembly for such purpose; and  
28

29 **Whereas**, the only Department of Defense approved Ecclesiastical Endorser that can insure  
30 PCA Presbyteries that their Chaplains have the freedom to preach and teach the Word  
31 and can assure that they will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of  
32 our Church is the only one authorized by and under the authority of the PCA General  
33 Assembly (see proposed *BCO* 8-7 addition below); and  
34

35 **Whereas**, the PRCC may be seen in the same light as the work of MTW’s (Mission to the  
36 World’s) role with denomination missionaries (serving under other organizations), this  
37 is not the same as religious liberty issues for chaplains at the Federal, State, and local  
38 level. Those issues fall outside the church within the sphere of secular society that  
39 require timely and accurate information and action the PRCC has garnered and applied  
40 for over forty-years; and  
41

42 **Whereas**, many of the organizations a teaching elder may serve with as a chaplain (military  
43 or civilian, paid or volunteer) fall outside the jurisdiction of a Presbytery, let it be  
44 known that MNA Chaplain Ministries through the PRCC is the Reformed subject  
45 matter expert on Chaplaincy, and is, therefore, best able to assist Presbyteries in  
46 extending ecclesiastical care over its ministers who are chaplains;

1 **Therefore, be it resolved** that *BCO* 8-7 be amended by adding the underlined paragraph  
2 below:

3  
4 A teaching elder requiring an ecclesiastical endorsement to serve as a chaplain (e.g.,  
5 military chaplains) after the presbytery's approval shall be endorsed through the  
6 denomination's endorsing agency authorized by the General Assembly for such  
7 purpose. Teaching elders ministering as paid or volunteer chaplains not requiring  
8 ecclesiastical endorsement are highly encouraged to seek and obtain the same  
9 endorsement.

10  
11 So that *BCO* 8-7 as amended would read:

12  
13 8-7. A Presbytery may, at its discretion, approve the call of a teaching elder to work  
14 with an organization outside the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in America,  
15 provided that he be engaged in preaching and teaching the Word, that the Presbytery  
16 be assured he will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church,  
17 and that he report at least annually on his work. As far as possible, such a teaching  
18 elder shall be a member of the Presbytery within whose bounds he labors. (See *BCO*  
19 20-1.)

20 A teaching elder requiring an ecclesiastical endorsement to serve as a chaplain  
21 (e.g., military chaplains) after the presbytery's approval shall be endorsed through the  
22 denomination's endorsing agency authorized by the General Assembly for such  
23 purpose. Teaching elders ministering as paid or volunteer chaplains not requiring  
24 ecclesiastical endorsement are highly encouraged to seek and obtain the same  
25 endorsement.

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27 *Adopted by Pittsburgh Presbytery at its stated Meeting April 2, 2022*

28 *Attested by /s/ TE LeRoy Capper, Stated Clerk*