

1 **OVERTURE 7** from Ascension Presbytery (to CCB, OC, AC, CC, CDM,
2 “Amend RAO 11-5 to Clarify Process CTS, GEN, MNA, MTW,
3 for RAO Amendments” PCAF, RH, RUF)
4

5 **Whereas**, as *RAO* 11-5 is difficult to follow; and
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7 **Whereas**, it appears to some that *RAO* 11-5 is internally inconsistent. The first sentence
8 requires all overtures proposing amendment of the *Book of Church Order* or the
9 *Rules of Assembly Operations* be referred to the Committee on Constitutional
10 Business for its advice to the Overtures Committee. This indicates that all overtures
11 proposing changes to the *RAO* fall within the jurisdiction of the Overtures
12 Committee. The third sentence of 11-5, however, says that any overture “having to
13 do with the nature or responsibilities of a permanent Committee or Agency” shall be
14 referred to the appropriate permanent Committee or Agency, unless the overture
15 proposes an amendment to the Constitution (which does not include the *RAO*); and
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17 **Whereas**, *RAO* 12-1 and 15-1 state that the Overtures Committee is to consider and make
18 recommendations on all overtures proposing amendment to the Constitution and all
19 other overtures referred by the Stated Clerk; and
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21 **Whereas**, at the 50th General Assembly, there was debate regarding whether an overture
22 proposing an *RAO* change that would impact permanent Committees and Agencies
23 should be referred by the Stated Clerk to the Overtures Committee or to the relevant
24 permanent Committees and Agencies; and,
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26 **Whereas**, the permanent Committees and Agencies, and from them, the relevant
27 Committees of Commissioners, have the expertise necessary to speak to the impact
28 of a proposed change to the *RAO* that touches on the nature or responsibilities of the
29 permanent Committee(s) or Agency(ies); and
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31 **Whereas**, the Overtures Committee has the authority to perfect proposed amendments in
32 ways that are not available to Committees of Commissioners; and
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34 **Whereas**, any minority of the Overtures Committee (*RAO* 15-6.s) has the right to bring a
35 minority report, encompassing a different answer to the overture, to the Assembly,
36 which minority report can allow for floor debate on the substance of a proposal in a
37 way that is not available for a recommendation coming from a Committee of
38 Commissioners; and
39

40 **Whereas**, the members of the Overtures Committee should hear from affected committees
41 or agencies before finalizing recommendations on *RAO* changes that impact those
42 committees or agencies; and
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44 **Whereas**, the members of the permanent Committees and Agencies, the Committees of
45 Commissioners, and the staff of the permanent Committees and Agencies may speak

1 on the floor of General Assembly, and thus can express agreement or disagreement
2 with any recommendation from the Overtures Committee, including presenting
3 argumentation that the recommendation of the Overtures Committee not be adopted
4 (*RAO* 15-8.e); and
5

6 **Whereas**, having recommendations from multiple committees may lead to incompatible
7 recommendations, as well as debate as to which Committee's recommendation is to
8 take precedence, as was seen at the 50th General Assembly.
9

10 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the Presbytery of the Ascension hereby overtures the 51st
11 General Assembly to amend *RAO* 11-5 by deleting the entirety of the current *RAO*
12 11-5 and replacing it with the following:
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- 14 **11-5.** All overtures shall be published in the *Commissioner Handbook* with reference for
15 consideration indicated. The Stated Clerk shall refer overtures as follows. The Stated
16 Clerk's referral shall be final unless redirected by a vote of the General Assembly.
17 a. All overtures requesting amendment of the *Book of Church Order* or the *Rules of*
18 *Assembly Operations* shall be referred to the Committee on Constitutional
19 Business for its advice to the relevant Committee(s) as listed below.
20 b. All overtures proposing amendment to the Constitution shall be referred to the
21 Overtures Committee. The Stated Clerk may also refer such overtures to
22 other Committees of Commissioners, other permanent Committees or
23 Agencies, or other ad interim or special committees for advice only to the
24 Overtures Committee.
25 c. All overtures proposing amendment to the *Rules of Assembly Operations* having to
26 do with the nature or responsibilities of a permanent Committee or Agency
27 shall be referred to the Overtures Committee and to the permanent
28 Committee(s) or Agency(ies) that would be impacted by the proposed
29 change. In such cases the permanent Committee(s) or Agency(ies) and the
30 relevant Committee(s) of Commissioners shall be given the opportunity to
31 meet with the Overtures Committee to share their proposed response(s).
32 Such opportunity shall occur at a mutually convenient time or at the
33 beginning of the Overtures Committee's Tuesday afternoon session. The
34 General Assembly shall act on the overture on the basis of the
35 recommendation of the Overtures Committee, recognizing that the members
36 of the permanent Committee(s) or Agency(ies) and the relevant Committee(s)
37 of Commissioners will be able to enter into floor debate on that
38 recommendation.
39 d. Any other overture having to do with the nature or responsibilities of a permanent
40 Committee or Agency shall be referred by the Stated Clerk to the appropriate
41 permanent Committee or Agency, ad interim committee, or special
42 committee.
43 e. All overtures concerning presbytery boundaries or the formation of a new
44 presbytery shall be referred by the Stated Clerk to the permanent Committee
45 on Mission to North America.

1 f. All other overtures shall be referred by the Stated Clerk to the Overtures
2 Committee.

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4 *Adopted by the Presbytery of the Ascension at its stated meeting of November 4, 2023.*

5 *Attested by /s/ RE Frederick Neikirk, Stated Clerk*

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