



1 **Whereas**, our confession’s instruction that “there are some circumstances concerning ...  
2 government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be  
3 ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence” (WCF 1.6) includes the wisdom  
4 and prudence of background checks; and  
5

6 **Whereas**, our confession does not require submission to unlawful or unbiblical standards  
7 (WCF 23.4) nor thereby require the government’s involvement in the business of the  
8 church (WCF 23.3); and  
9

10 **Whereas**, presbyteries and sessions of the PCA are called to order and conduct all trials and  
11 examinations of candidates for church office utilizing their own discretion and wisdom  
12 due to the authority and right of their office (BCO 13, 21, and 24);  
13

14 **Therefore, be it resolved** that *BCO* 13-6 be amended by the addition of a second paragraph:  
15

16 **13-6. . . .**

17 A Presbytery shall order and review a background check on each candidate,  
18 administered under the specific rules and policies of the Presbytery, as part of its  
19 examination of the candidate’s Christian experience (if seeking admission from  
20 another Presbytery in the Presbyterian Church in America) or acquaintance with  
21 experiential religion (if seeking admission from other denominations [see *BCO* 21-  
22 4.c.(1)(a)]. The candidate shall be permitted to address the content of the  
23 background check.  
24

25 **Be it further resolved** that *BCO* 21-4.c.(1) be amended by adding a final unnumbered  
26 paragraph to the subsection:  
27

28 **21-4.c.(1) . . .**

29 A Presbytery shall order and review a background check on each candidate,  
30 administered under the specific rules and policies of the Presbytery, as part of its  
31 examination of a candidate’s experiential religion (*BCO* 21-4.c.(1)(a)). The  
32 candidate shall be permitted to address the content of the background check.  
33

34 So that the unnumbered paragraphs will read

35 “A Presbytery may accept a seminary degree which includes study in the original  
36 languages in lieu of an oral examination in the original languages.  
37

38 A Presbytery shall order and review a background check on each candidate,  
39 administered under the specific rules and policies of the Presbytery, as part of its  
40 examination of a candidate’s experiential religion (*BCO* 21-4.c.(1)(a)). The  
41 candidate shall be permitted to address the content of the background check.”  
42

43 **Be it further resolved** that *BCO* 24-1 be amended by inserting a second unnumbered  
44 paragraph after subsection e and before the unnumbered paragraph that begins  
45 “Notwithstanding the above...”

1 **24-1.e. . . .**

2 A Session shall order and review a background check on each candidate,  
3 administered under the specific rules and policies of the Session, as part of its  
4 examination of a candidate's Christian experience (BCO 24-1.a.). The candidate  
5 shall be permitted to address the content of the background check.

6  
7 **Be it further resolved** that Presbyteries and Sessions are hereby encouraged to adopt policies  
8 for conducting mandatory background checks on every candidate for office.

9  
10 *Adopted by Warrior Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 23, 2024.*

11 *Attested by /s/ TE Michael Perry, stated clerk*

## Attachment

### Sample Policies for Presbyteries and Sessions

The following is an example of a policy that could be adopted or amended by a Presbytery to adhere with local laws and regulations:

Prior to any candidate coming before the Presbytery for examination for ordination or transfer of credentials, the [insert committee name] Committee shall order a background check on the candidate ordinarily at the cost of the Presbytery. The report of the background check shall only be received by the Committee in executive session. The candidate shall be furnished with a copy of the background check and given the opportunity to respond to any content in the background check. The Committee shall report to the Presbytery (1) that it has received the report of the background check, and no concerns were raised; (2) that it has received the report of the background check, and potential concerns were satisfactorily explained by the candidate without reflecting negatively on his *BCO* 13-6 or 21-4.c.(1)(a) examination; or (3) that it has received the report of the background check, and potential concerns should be weighed by the Presbytery in the candidate's *BCO* 13-6 or 21-4.c.(1)(a) examination. Any details of possible concerns found in the background check may be disclosed only to the Presbytery and/or the Session of the church calling the candidate when in executive session. Such details may be disclosed outside the Committee only at the Committee's discretion or upon the request of the Presbytery or Session properly seeking the information.

The following is an example of a policy that could be adopted by a Session:

Prior to any candidate coming before the Session for examination for the office of Ruling Elder or Deacon, the Session shall order a background check on the candidate at the cost of the Session. The report of the background check shall only be received by the Session in executive session. The candidate shall be furnished with a copy of the background check and given the opportunity to respond to any content in the background check. Information learned should ordinarily only be considered as part of the Session's examination of the candidate's personal character under *BCO* 24-1.a. and should not ordinarily be disclosed to the congregation.