

Overtures

Guidelines

from *Rules of Assembly Operations (RAO)*, Article XI

An overture ordinarily is the request of a presbytery for action by the General Assembly upon a specific matter. (RAO 11-4)

No overture will be considered by the General Assembly until it first has been presented to a presbytery. If approved by the presbytery, it will come before the Assembly as the overture of that court. An overture requested by a ruling elder commissioner to presbytery, a teaching elder, or a session, but rejected by the presbytery, may be presented to the Assembly, provided the overture includes as an attachment a copy of the relevant extract from the minutes of the meeting at which presbytery rejected the overture or correspondence from presbytery's Stated Clerk confirming presbytery's rejection of the overture. Such an overture must be the same overture as that presented to and rejected by the presbytery. (RAO 11-10)

Format Template

Overture from the _____ Presbytery

Whereas, ... [text of the preamble clauses]; and

Whereas, ... [text of the last preamble clause];

Therefore, be it resolved that the 52nd General Assembly... [state the action to be taken];

Be it further resolved that [state any additional action to be taken].

Adopted by the _____ Presbytery at its stated meeting, [date]

Attested by RE/TE [name], Stated Clerk

If the overture proposes an amendment to the *BCO* or the *RAO*, the form should be as follows:

Overture from the _____ Presbytery

Whereas, ... [text of the preamble clauses]; and

Whereas, ... [text of the last preamble clause];

Therefore, be it resolved that the 52nd General Assembly amend [the passage to be amended] as follows (~~strikethrough~~ for deletions, underlining for additions).

[the provision with amendments noted by strikethrough and underlining]

So that the amended passage would read:

[the final form of the provision as it would read if the overture passes with no strikethroughs or underlining]

Be it further resolved that [state any additional action to be taken].

Adopted by the _____ Presbytery at its stated meeting, [date]

Attested by RE/TE [name], Stated Clerk

Deadlines

90 Days before General Assembly to be included in the *Commissioner Handbook* (RAO 11-7)

60 Days before General Assembly for all overtures requiring reference to the Committee on Constitutional Business—that is, proposing amendments to the *BCO* or *RAO* (RAO 11-6)

31 Days before General Assembly for all other overtures (RAO 11-8)

No overtures received by the Stated Clerk less than one month prior to the opening of the meeting of the General Assembly shall be referred to or considered by the General Assembly convening in that year. An overture proposed by a commissioner to the General Assembly during its proceedings shall be treated as new business (cf. 13-1, 13-2). (RAO 11-9)

Referrals

RAO 11-5 All overtures shall be published in the *Commissioner Handbook* with reference for consideration indicated. The Stated Clerk shall refer overtures as follows. The Stated Clerk's referral shall be final unless redirected by a vote of the General Assembly.

- a. All overtures requesting amendment of the Book of Church Order or the Rules of Assembly Operations shall be referred to the Committee on Constitutional Business for its advice to the relevant Committee(s) as listed below.
- b. All overtures proposing amendment to the Constitution shall be referred to the Overtures Committee. The Stated Clerk may also refer such overtures to other Committees of Commissioners, other permanent Committees or Agencies, or other ad interim or special committees for advice only to the Overtures Committee.
- c. All overtures proposing amendment to the Rules of Assembly Operations having to do with the nature or responsibilities of a permanent Committee or Agency shall be referred to the Overtures Committee and to the permanent Committee(s) or Agency(ies) that would be impacted by the proposed change. In such cases the permanent Committee(s) or Agency(ies) and the relevant Committee(s) of Commissioners shall be given the opportunity to meet with the Overtures Committee to share their proposed response(s). Such opportunity shall occur at a mutually convenient time or at the beginning of the Overtures Committee's Tuesday afternoon session. The General Assembly shall act on the overture on the basis of the recommendation of the Overtures Committee, recognizing that the members of the permanent Committee(s) or Agency(ies) and the relevant Committee(s) of Commissioners will be able to enter into floor debate on that recommendation.
- d. Any other overture having to do with the nature or responsibilities of a permanent Committee or Agency shall be referred by the Stated Clerk to the appropriate permanent Committee or Agency, ad interim committee, or special committee.
- e. All overtures concerning presbytery boundaries or the formation of a new presbytery shall be referred by the Stated Clerk to the permanent Committee on Mission to North America.
- f. All other overtures shall be referred by the Stated Clerk to the Overtures Committee.

Study Committees & Memorials

RAO 11-11 All communications or overtures which propose or request that General Assembly appoint a study committee for any purpose shall contain as a part of the request or proposal a statement of the maximum amount to be budgeted for the study committee (see 9-2).

RAO 11-12 No communication or overture shall be received that seeks to memorialize someone