

1 **OVERTURE 73** from TE Cody Hooper (to CCB, OC, AC, CDM, MNA, MTW, RUF)  
2 “Amend *RAO* 4-9 to Require 2/3 Majority to Elect Stated Clerk and Coordinators after  
3 3 Consecutive Years of Service”  
4

5 **Whereas**, the General Assembly has erected several program Committees to accomplish its  
6 aims and goals, and  
7

8 **Whereas**, these Committees have grown significantly in recent decades and exert significant  
9 influence over the direction of the Presbyterian Church in America as it seeks to fulfill  
10 its stated mission, and  
11

12 **Whereas**, the men who fill these roles receive substantial salaries, with some receiving a total  
13 compensation package exceeding \$300,000 (cf. the President of the United States who  
14 receives an annual salary of \$400,000 to run the entire Executive Branch of the US  
15 government), and  
16

17 **Whereas**, we are called to steward well the monetary gifts of Christ’s precious sheep with the  
18 utmost integrity, and  
19

20 **Whereas**, while exercising oversight, concerns and controversy may arise which call into  
21 question the suitability of the person leading the administrative or program  
22 Committees, and  
23

24 **Whereas**, *BCO* 14-1 clearly shows that the Committees work for the General Assembly and  
25 are under the oversight of the General Assembly, and  
26

27 **Whereas**, this sacred trust calls presbyters to give serious and solemn reflection upon the  
28 success of these committees and of the men who lead them, and  
29

30 **Whereas**, *RAO* 4-9 requires the General Assembly to elect the Stated Clerk and the  
31 Coordinators of the program Committees annually, and  
32

33 **Whereas**, such an election does not presuppose a *de facto* lifetime appointment until the Clerk  
34 or Coordinator goes to be with the Lord, resigns, or retires, and  
35

36 **Whereas**, *BCO* 20-5, which encourages the majority to consider the prudence of prosecuting  
37 a call if a strong minority exists in the case of congregational elections, provides a  
38 helpful analogy and paradigm for the election of the Clerk and Coordinators, and  
39

40 **Whereas**, in times of controversy, it will serve the interest of the Church’s peace for the Stated  
41 Clerk and permanent Committee Coordinators to receive a clear sense of the  
42 Assembly’s approbation in their election,  
43  
44

1 **Therefore, be it resolved** that *RAO* 4-9 is amended as follows (underlining for additions;  
2 ~~striketrough~~ for deletions):  
3

4 The four program Committees shall nominate annually a coordinator for election by  
5 the General Assembly. The Administrative Committee shall nominate annually a  
6 Stated Clerk for election by the General Assembly. If a nominee to the position of  
7 Stated Clerk or coordinator of a program Committee has served three consecutive  
8 years in the position for which he was nominated, then his nomination shall require a  
9 two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting in the General Assembly to secure  
10 election for each successive year. If the nominee has not been examined by the  
11 Theological Examining Committee, such an examination must take place prior to the  
12 election when it is a first time employment. A new coordinator shall assume office at  
13 the end of the Assembly meeting, or at such time thereafter as designated by the  
14 General Assembly.  
15

16 **Rationale:**  
17

18 Several strains of the rationale for this overture are embedded in the “whereas” clauses above.  
19 However, this section will give a brief explanation.  
20

21 First, it would be imprudent to raise the vote threshold for every election without exception.  
22 While this new threshold is unlikely to create frequent turnover in the permanent Committees,  
23 it does make it more likely. However, switching Coordinators or Stated Clerks every year  
24 would be a train wreck waiting to happen for many reasons which won’t be enumerated here.  
25 This says nothing of the fact that it may take some time for a new Coordinator or Stated Clerk  
26 to get his “sea legs” under him. Thus, a delayed increase of the vote threshold taking effect  
27 after serving for three consecutive years seems most prudent.  
28

29 While some may claim this to be an arbitrary number, this timing is derived, at least in part,  
30 by way of analogy to the circumstances governing the Chief Executive of the United States—  
31 the President. Every four years, at least when an incumbent runs, the American electorate  
32 decides whether to continue with the status quo or to install a new executive officer. Certainly,  
33 if swapping such a position in the fourth year does not undo our civil government and its  
34 ability to function, then neither will our permanent Committees be derailed if such a change  
35 occurred under the proposed amendment above.  
36

37 Secondly, though more could be said, we must recognize that if the man who fills any of the  
38 positions affected by this amendment is a man of eminent qualification who has demonstrated  
39 the requisite leadership and competency, then a two-thirds (2/3) vote will be relatively easy  
40 to secure.  
41

42 However, in the case that serious questions arise about the suitability of the Stated Clerk or a  
43 program Committee Coordinator, this overture would be beneficial in two ways. If a nominee  
44 “under fire” as it were nevertheless succeeded in achieving the two-thirds threshold, this

1 higher threshold would mitigate unrest and provide a vote of confidence of sorts by,  
2 necessarily, reducing the “strength” of the minority.

3

4 However, if the nominee for serious concerns fails to achieve the new threshold, then it would  
5 provide a means to transition to another nominee that is better suited to receive the approbation  
6 of the General Assembly. In either case, it is hoped that such a change will serve to promote  
7 the peace and purity of Christ’s Church as we engage our shared mission together.

8

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10 *Rejected by the Presbytery of the Ascension at its stated meeting, January 31, 2026*

11 *Attested by RE Frederick R. Neikirk, Stated Clerk*

12 *Sent to General Assembly by TE Cody Hooper under RAO 11-10.*