

1 **OVERTURE 85** from the Northwest Georgia Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
2 “Add *BCO* 44 on Objections”
3

4 **Be it resolved** the 53rd General Assembly approve the following amendment to *Book of*
5 *Church Order (BCO)* Chapters 44 and 45 (underlining for additions; ~~strikethrough~~ for
6 deletions):
7

8 **CHAPTER 44**

9 ~~*(Vacated)*~~
10 *Objections*
11

12 44-1. Any teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder who did not have the right
13 to vote on an appeal or complaint (see *BCO* 39-2) and is not satisfied with the action
14 taken by the court, is entitled to have an objection recorded.

15 An objection shall be filed with the clerk of the lower court within thirty (30)
16 days following the meeting of the lower court or with the clerk of the General
17 Assembly before its adjournment.
18

19 44-2. An objection is a declaration by one or more members of a court, expressing a
20 different opinion from the decision of the court and may be accompanied with the
21 reasons on which it is founded.
22

23 44-3. If an objection be couched in temperate language, and be respectful to the
24 court, it shall be recorded; and the court may, if deemed necessary, put an answer to
25 the objection on the records along with it. Here the matter shall end, unless the parties
26 obtain permission to withdraw their objection absolutely, or for the sake of
27 amendment.
28

29 **CHAPTER 45**

30 ~~*Dissents, and Protests, and Objections*~~
31

32
33 **45-1.** Any member of a court who had a right to vote on a question, and is not satisfied
34 with the action taken by that court, is entitled to have a dissent or protest recorded.

35 None can join in a dissent or protest against an action of any court except those
36 who had a right to vote in the case.

37 ~~Any member who did not have the right to vote on an appeal or complaint (see~~
38 ~~*BCO* 39-2), and is not satisfied with the action taken by the court, is entitled to have~~
39 ~~an objection recorded.~~

40 A dissent, ~~or protest or objection~~ shall be filed with the clerk of the lower court
41 within thirty (30) days following the meeting of the lower court or with the clerk of
42 the General Assembly before its adjournment.
43

44 ~~45-4. An objection is a declaration by one or more members of a court who did not~~
45 ~~have the right to vote on an appeal or complaint, expressing a different opinion from~~

1 ~~the decision of the court and may be accompanied with the reasons on which it is~~
2 ~~founded.~~

3
4 ~~45-54.~~ If a dissent, or protest, ~~or objection~~ be couched in temperate language, and be
5 respectful to the court, it shall be recorded; and the court may, if deemed necessary,
6 put an answer to the dissent, or protest, ~~or objection~~ on the records along with it. Here
7 the matter shall end, unless the parties obtain permission to withdraw their dissent, or
8 protest, ~~or objection~~ absolutely, or for the sake of amendment.
9

10 **Rationale**

11 12 **1. Theoretical**

- 13 a. Though the current *BCO* places objections with dissents and protests, objections
14 have a fundamentally different requirement. Placing them in a separate chapter
15 recognizes this difference.
16 b. We should always highlight ways in which elders can give public voice to their
17 consciences, per Preliminary Principles 1 and 5.
18

19 **2. Practical**

- 20 a. Background: A member of a lower court may declare his objection to a higher court
21 when, in cases of appeal or complaint, he has lost the right to sit, deliberate, and
22 vote, because the appeal or complaint concerns the court of which he is a member
23 (*BCO* 39-2), e.g., a ruling elder before a Presbytery considering a
24 b. complaint against his Session or a member of the Standing Judicial Commission
25 (SJC) considering an appeal from his Presbytery.
26 c. Goal: Just as dissents and protests allow for elders to give voice to their
27 consciences and conclude the matter, so too objections should be encouraged in
28 the PCA for men to have an opportunity to speak into particular situations without
29 encumbering the courts of the church with more work that takes away from our
30 gospel endeavors.
31 d. Example: If a ruling elder loses his Complaint against his Session at Presbytery,
32 filing an objection may be the better way to satisfy his conscience than carrying
33 his Complaint to the SJC, especially if he wisely discerns that the SJC will uphold
34 Presbytery's decision.
35

36 **3. Organizational**

- 37 a. We have a chapter, *BCO* 44, which is conveniently vacant, and can receive this
38 action that is different from the other two.
39 b. Though we want to expand the practice of objections as a way of reducing the
40 judicial load on our courts, there is a limiting principle: An elder must be a member
41 of the court but be unable to vote due to *BCO* 39-2. So, in the case of a Presbytery
42 commission or the Standing Judicial Commission, no one outside the commission
43 can file an objection—only those on the commission who could not vote have a
44 right to do so.
45

Overture 85, Northwest Georgia Presbytery

1

2 *Adopted by the Northwest Georgia Presbytery at its 60th stated meeting, April 14, 2026*

3 *Attested by TE Robby Baxter, Stated Clerk*