

## **PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING OVERTURES**

According to the General Assembly's Standing Rules, in order for an overture to be considered, it must meet several criteria.

- It must be approved by a presbytery or a synod;
- It must request the General Assembly to take a particular action or approve or endorse a particular statement or resolution;
- It must follow a particular format;
- It should not duplicate another overture;
- It must be timely submitted.

### **Format:**

General Assembly overtures consist of two sections: Recommendations and Rationale.

Overtures should be drafted according to the following form: "The Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_ overtures the 220<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2012) of the PC(USA) to [state the specific action the General Assembly is asked to take]." A rationale should be appended, stating the reasons for submitting the overture.

Rationale sections should be as concise as possible. Commissioners are swamped with reading, and longer rationales are less likely to be considered. Rationale sections provide background information only, and are not part of the final action.

### **Who May Submit an Overture:**

According to Roberts' Rules, any commissioner may propose any action to a deliberative body. However, it is strongly recommended that overtures that are initiated by a mission team be approved and submitted by the appropriate Mission Priority Leadership Team. Overtures that are initiated by a work group should be approved and submitted by the Presbytery Coordinating Commission. Sessions and Governance Structures (i.e., COM, CPM, etc.) may submit an overture directly to the presbytery assembly.

### **Stated Clerk Review Prior to Presbytery Consideration:**

In order for an overture to be considered, it should be submitted to the stated clerk about six weeks prior to the presbytery meeting. This review allows the stated clerk to be sure that the overture is properly formatted, to conduct the background check required by the GA rules, and to publish the overture in the call papers. You can assist the stated clerk by checking to see if a similar overture has been passed or otherwise considered by a past GA.

### **Timely Submission:**

Certain deadlines must be met for an overture to be considered. The deadlines are firm. Late overtures will be returned to the presbytery. **Note:** The deadlines for concurring with an overture are identical to those for submitting an overture, so that even a late concurrence will not be accepted by the GA.

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The deadlines are:

- 120 days: for overtures requesting an amendment or interpretation of the Book of Order.
- 60 days: for overtures having financial implications. (Note – most overtures involve some sort of financial impact, even if slight, and the GA takes this very seriously.)
- 45 days: for all other overtures.
- 30 days: for consultation with any affected GA entity.

In order to meet the GA deadlines, the following presbytery deadlines must be met:

GA Deadline	GA Date	Presbytery Meeting Date	Submission to Clerk
		September 20, 2011	August 20, 2011
		November 19, 2011	October 19, 2011
120 days	March 20, 2012	February 21, 2012	January 9, 2012
60 days	May 1, 2012	April 24, 2012	March 6, 2012
45 days	May 16, 2012		
30 days	May 31, 2012		

Overtures cannot be considered after the April, 2012 presbytery meeting..

### **If the Overture Passes:**

If the presbytery adopts the proposed overture, the stated clerk will transmit the overture to the Office of the General Assembly.

Each presbytery submitting an overture may name an overture advocate. The advocate must be able to attend the General Assembly and the meeting of the proper GA committee. GA commissioners should not be overture advocates, since the role of advocate will likely interfere with the commissioner's own assigned committee duties.

If an overture is proposed by a work group or mission team, that work group or mission team will ordinarily choose the overture advocate. If the Presbytery Coordinating Commission moderator or the applicable MPLT moderator objects to the named advocate then a new advocate should be selected or the nomination should be submitted to the full Coordinating Commission/MPLT for a vote. If there is no objection, the stated clerk will inform the GA of the selected advocate. When an overture is proposed by one or more sessions, the session(s) will choose the advocate.

If the presbytery assembly approves your proposed overture, notify the stated clerk of your recommended overture advocate ASAP so that information can be provided to the OGA. Several weeks before the GA begins, the OGA will contact the overture advocates about orientation and other related issues.

Any request for funds to support the overture advocate should be submitted to the stated clerk. The amount of funds available to support overture advocates will be determined by the presbytery assembly prior to the GA.