

PRESBYTERY OF WEST VIRGINIA

POLICY ON OVERTURES TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND REQUESTS FOR CONCURRENCES FROM OTHER PRESBYTERIES

Periodically, the Presbytery of West Virginia is asked to consider issues known as overtures to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). An overture is an item of business that has been approved by a presbytery or a synod that requests the General Assembly to take a particular action or approve or endorse a particular statement or resolution. Overtures to the General Assembly are governed by time frames established by the Office of the General Assembly. Groups considering origination or concurrence should consult with the General Presbyter, the Stated Clerk or the General Assembly website to determine the applicable time frames.

There are two paths by which the Presbytery of West Virginia may be called upon to take a position on a specific overture.

An overture may arise from the Session of a congregation within this presbytery or from a committee of this presbytery. An individual who wishes to originate an overture shall seek approval of the matter from the session of his or her congregation.

Overtures may arise from other presbyteries or synods. In order for an overture to be considered at the denomination's General Assembly, it must receive a concurrence from at least one other presbytery or synod.

In order to determine whether the Presbytery of West Virginia believes that it is the will of the Holy Spirit for it to submit an overture to the General Assembly or to concur with another group's overture, the following procedure will be used:

A. Procedures to be used when a Session or Committee wishes to Originate an Overture

1. Any session or committee of the presbytery wishing to present an overture to the Presbytery of West Virginia for consideration shall notify the Stated Clerk of the presbytery of its intent. Said notice shall include the specific wording of the proposed overture and the rationale behind the proposal. Overtures shall be received by the State Clerk no later than thirty (30) days prior to a regularly scheduled meeting of the presbytery.
2. The Stated Clerk shall notify the Moderator-Elect of the Presbytery, who shall invite each standing committee of the presbytery to appoint a representative to an ad hoc committee for consideration of overtures and concurrences. The committee may meet in person or by conference call. Meeting notices shall include the wording and rationale for each proposed overture to be considered. .
3. The ad hoc committee shall prepare a summary of the proposed overture to be presented to the presbytery at its next meeting. The summary shall not take a position for or against the proposed overture, but shall include information regarding the reasoning behind the proposed overture, any arguments for or opposing the overture, any financial ramifications, Biblical support, or any other information that would be helpful to commissioners to the presbytery in determining how to vote on the proposal.
4. The wording of the proposed overture, along with the summary of the ad hoc committee, shall be placed in the packet provided in advance to the commissioners for the meeting of the presbytery, and the matter shall be put up for a vote at the next presbytery meeting after the summary is completed.

5. The presbytery may vote to approve the transmittal of the proposed overture to the General Assembly, may vote not to send the overture to the General Assembly, or may vote to amend the proposed overture before transmittal to the General Assembly.

B. Procedure to be used when a Synod or Presbytery Requests Concurrence on an Overture

1. This procedure is slightly different, in that there are usually large numbers of overtures submitted to the General Assembly. Lengthy consideration of all of these matters would likely be overly time-consuming.
2. Other presbyteries or synods may specifically request that PWV concur with an overture that they have originated.
3. Sometimes a session or committee within our presbytery will seek presbytery's concurrence on an overture that is felt to be particularly important to the life and ministry of this presbytery.
4. The Stated Clerk shall provide a link on the Presbytery of West Virginia website to the overtures filed with the General Assembly, and the Stated Clerk shall notify the clerks of sessions within the presbytery, pastoral leaders and the chairs of standing committees of the existence of this link.
5. The Moderator-Elect of the presbytery shall be notified of that link and shall generally review the overtures filed with the General Assembly to determine if any involve issues that he or she believes are important to the life and ministry of this presbytery.
6. If the Moderator-Elect believes that the presbytery should consider making a concurrence to an overture from another body, or if a session or committee of the presbytery requests that the presbytery make a concurrence, or if a specific request for concurrence is received from another presbytery or synod, the Moderator-Elect shall invite each standing committee of the presbytery to appoint a representative to an ad hoc committee for consideration of overtures and concurrences. The committee may meet in person or by conference call. Meeting notices shall include the wording and rationale for each proposed overture to be considered.
7. The ad hoc committee shall prepare a summary of the proposed concurrence to be presented to the presbytery at its next meeting. The summary shall not take a position for or against the proposed concurrence, but shall include information regarding the reasoning behind the proposed overture, any arguments opposing the overture, any financial ramifications, Biblical support, or any other information that would be helpful to commissioners to the presbytery in determining how to vote on whether to concur with the overture.
8. The wording of the proposed overture, along with the summary of the ad hoc committee, shall be placed in the packet provided in advance to the commissioners for the meeting of the presbytery, and the matter shall be put up for a vote at the next presbytery meeting after the summary is completed.
9. The presbytery may vote to concur with the overture, may vote not to concur, but it may not amend another body's overture.