

COCO REPORT ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION,

COCO Report on Proposed Amendments

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

[Text to be deleted is shown with strike through; text to be added or inserted is shown in italic.]

The Committee on Church Order makes its recommendation but the Presbytery votes on the amendment itself, NOT the recommendation.

18-A. G-2.0401 Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons

~~Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee, provided that the committee shall consist of at least three active members of the congregation, and shall include at least one ruling elder who is currently serving on the session. Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee. The rule shall meet the following criteria: (1) the minimum size of the committee as specified in the rule shall be at least three persons; (2) at least one member of the committee shall be an elder currently serving on session; and (3) a majority of those persons on the committee who are eligible to vote shall consist of persons not currently serving on session.~~

COCO recommends a vote in the affirmative.

18-B. Renunciation of Jurisdiction.

18-B.1. On Amending G-2.0509:

~~“Whenever a former minister of the Word and Sacrament has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused, that former minister of the Word and Sacrament shall not be permitted to perform any work, paid or volunteer, in any congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) unless and until the person rejoins the church, comes forward and resubmits to the disciplinary process.~~

“No congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be permitted to employ, for pay or as a volunteer, a former minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder) who has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused. Any former minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder) who has renounced jurisdiction and later wants to be restored to office can be restored only through application to the presbytery in which he or she renounced jurisdiction for restoration to office, in which case the provisions of D-10.0401d and D-12.0200 shall apply.”

COCO recommends a vote in the affirmative.

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18-B.2. On Amending D-10.0401d

“For instances where a former minister of the Word and Sacrament comes forward in self-accusation to undergo a disciplinary process to regain permission to perform work under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (G-2.0509) *who renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case rejoins the church*, no time limit from the time of the commission of the alleged offense to the filing of charges shall apply. Charges based on all accusations that had been made by the time that the former minister of the Word and Sacrament had renounced jurisdiction may be brought regardless of the date on which any such offense is alleged to have occurred.”

COCO recommends a vote in the affirmative.

18-C. Officers - On Amending G-3.0104

“No congregation, session, presbytery, synod, or national office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), nor any individual acting on behalf of or in an official capacity for the above institutions, shall publicly endorse or oppose, or otherwise encourage or discourage others to vote for or against an individual running for public office.

COCO recommends a vote in the negative.

18-D. Membership of Presbytery - On Amending G-3.0306

“Every minister of the Word and Sacrament shall ordinarily be a member of the presbytery where his or her work is situated or of the presbytery where she or he resides. *The presbytery may grant a minister permission to engage in work validated ministry that is outside its geographic bounds or which is not under its jurisdiction, but no presbytery shall permit a minister to engage in work that is within the geographic bounds of another presbytery and which is properly within the responsibility of another presbytery without consent of that presbytery. Such permission shall be obtained from both presbyteries and shall be reviewed and renewed annually.*”

COCO recommends a vote in the affirmative.

18-E. Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor— On Amending G-3.0307

“Presbyteries shall be open at all times to communication regarding the life and ministry of their congregations. “Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to its ~~pastors, both~~ ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service (also called commissioned pastors (also known as commissioned ruling elders ~~as well as the~~ and certified Christian educators of the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, ~~pastors~~ *ministers of the*

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Word and Sacrament, commissioned pastors, and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient.”

COCO recommends a vote in the affirmative.

18-F. Welcoming to the Table—On Amending W-4.0202

“In cases where baptized children who have not yet begun to participate in the Lord’s Supper express a desire to receive the Sacrament, ~~the session should provide an occasion to welcome them~~ *they shall be welcomed to the table in public worship. Their introduction to the Lord’s Supper should include* and the session should ensure they receive ongoing instruction or formation in the meaning and mystery of the Sacraments

COCO recommends a vote in the affirmative.

18-G. Disciplinary Offense - On Amending D-2.0203b

b. An offense is any act or omission by a member or a person in an ordered ministry of the 16 hall D-2.0203b of the Form of Government be amended as follows? [Text to be deleted is shown “b. An offense is any act or omission by a member or a person in an ordered ministry of the church that is contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). *Sexual abuse as defined in Section D-10.0401c shall be considered contrary to the Scriptures or Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and therefore an offense for purposes of these rules.”*

COCO recommends a vote in the affirmative.

18-H. Time Limit 18-H.1. On Amending D-10.0401b

“b. For instances of sexual abuse of another person, the five-year time limit shall not apply. *There is also no time limit for charging that a person who knew or reasonably should have known of the reasonable risk of sexual abuse of another as defined in D-10.0401c(1) or (2) failed to take reasonable steps to minimize the risk.* Both charges may be brought regardless of the date on which an offense is alleged to have occurred.”

COCO recommends a vote in the affirmative

18-H.2. On Amending D-10.0401c(1)

“(1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone ~~over the age of eighteen years~~ without the ~~mental~~ capacity to consent; or”

COCO recommends a vote in the affirmative.