

OVERTURE 17 from Pacific Northwest Presbytery (to CCB, AC, OC)
“Revise *RAO* 9-3 to Clarify Funding for Ad Interim Committees”
[Note: Revised by addition of reference to AC.]

Be it resolved, that *RAO* 9-3 be amended by deleting the current paragraph and replacing with a new paragraph as follows (strike-through for deletion and underlining for new paragraph):

~~*RAO* 9-3. Only two (2) ad interim study committees may be appointed or continued in any given year, (with no committee continuing with undesignated Administrative Committee funding beyond the third year of its inception and no more than two [2] committees existing in any one [1] year), and any additional committees would have to be approved by a two thirds vote of commissioners, with financing provided from outside the Administrative Committee budget.~~

Proposed replacement paragraph:

~~*RAO* 9-3. The General Assembly may appoint or continue any number of ad interim committees. However, no committee may be funded with undesignated AC funding after its third year, and only two committees may be funded with undesignated AC funding in any given year.~~

RAO 9-3. Only two (2) ad interim committees may be appointed or continued in any given year, unless additional ones are approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Assembly.

Funds for ad interim committees will ordinarily be administered by the Administrative Committee, with contributions to the AC being designated for a particular ad interim committee. Any motion to task the Administrative Committee with the funding of an ad interim committee through undesignated giving would require the approval of a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Assembly as an amendment to the AC budget (per *RAO* 4-11).

Any overture proposing an ad interim committee should ordinarily include a plan for how sufficient, designated funds for the ad interim committee will be raised. Funding should not be the burden primarily of the members of the ad interim committee or the AC, but of those requesting the ad interim committee. Permanent Committees and Agencies of the PCA may grant monies toward the funding of an ad interim committee.

Rationale:

1. The *Rules of Assembly Operations* rightfully privilege the GA's Administrative Committee in annually presenting budgets for GA consideration. At the same time, the *RAO* also allows for changes to AC recommendations.

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RAO 4-11....Budgets of permanent Committees and Agencies that are agreed upon by the Administrative Committee may be changed only by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly commissioners present and voting at the time the budget is submitted for adoption....The requirement of a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly applies only to changes not recommended by the Administrative Committee, initiated on the floor of the Assembly.

Thus, if an Overture seeks to have GA partially fund an Ad Interim or Study Committee from *inside* the AC budget, it can only happen if (1) the AC recommends adding the funding to an increased AC budget if the GA creates the Ad Interim Committee, or (2) a two-thirds GA majority votes to increase the AC budget. But no Rule needs to be suspended to do so because *RAO 4-11* already provides the procedure.

2. Alleviate Confusion: Despite the provisions in *RAO 4-11*, there are some differing interpretations of *RAO 9-3*. One contends that our Rules require *every* ad interim committee to *only* be funded from outside the AC budget. Another holds that our Rules only require this in two instances: (1) for any committee in its fourth year, or (2) for a third

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committee at any time. We understand *RAO* 9-3 in the second sense. And while we believe the wording proposed by the Overture says the same thing as the current *RAO* 9-3, the proposed language is clearer and should help resolve the interpretive confusion.

3. In 2019, Pacific NW Presbytery filed Overture 7 proposing a Study Committee on Abuse. The 47th GA approved the Overture, as amended. Below is Part 4 from the original Overture.

Overture 7, Part 4: Committee budget shall be \$15,000. *This expense shall be included in the Administrative Committee budget.* Presbyteries, churches, and individuals are highly encouraged to contribute funds to the AC, designated for this work. (The Pacific NW Presbytery has approved \$1,000 to that end.)¹ [Emphasis added. [M47GA](#), p. 596.]

Prior to the GA, the 2019 AC reported Recommendation 5:

That, in the event the Assembly, upon recommendation of the Overtures Committee, answers Overtures 7, 10, 13, 20, 26, 31, 38, 43, and 47 in the affirmative, approving the establishment of an ad interim committee on the study of Domestic Violence, the budget of such committee be \$25,000, *to be provided solely by designated gifts to the AC.* ([M47GA](#), p. 184. Emphasis added.)

Also prior to the GA, the 2019 Committee on Constitutional Business reported this advice:

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 7 **is in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution. *RAO* 9-3 requires ad interim committees be established with "financing provided from outside the Administrative Committee budget." [[M47GA](#), p. 399. Emphasis original; underlining added. The CCB vote was 6-1-1.]

The AC's recommendation was in order, per *RAO* 4-11. But, we believe, the CCB's interpretation of *RAO* 9-3 was incorrect.

Eventually, the 2019 Overtures Committee recommended approval of Overture 7, but with the following amended version of the funding part: "The budget for the [Abuse] Study Committee shall be \$25,000 and *that funds be derived from gifts to the AC designated for that purpose.*" [Emphasis added. [M47GA](#), p. 91. See also pp. 79, 89,

¹ Pacific NW sent its promised contribution in July 2019.

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596.] The OC did not provide grounds for why it recommended amending this part of Overture 7, but it might have been due to the CCB opinion. Thus, our Presbytery believes the interpretation of *RAO 9-3* should be clarified.

4. Interpretation - The 2019 CCB seems to have interpreted the final eight-word clause of *RAO 9-3*, underlined above, to apply to *all* ad interim committees, rather than just committees in two particular scenarios. But that interpretation appears internally inconsistent. Applying the outside financing clause to *every* committee contradicts a stipulation made earlier in *RAO 9-3*, i.e., "no committee may *continue* with undesignated AC funding beyond the third year of its inception."

RAO 9-3 is a 64-word sentence that should be worded more clearly. Nonetheless, as currently written, the "outside financing" Rule *only* applies to two scenarios: (a) any committee in its fourth year, or (b) a third committee at any time. The table below depicts that understanding of the Rule.

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Ad Interim A	GA decides funding	GA decides		
Ad Interim B	GA decides funding	GA decides	GA decides	Outside financing only
Ad Interim C		Outside financing only	GA decides	GA decides

This interpretation is reinforced two paragraphs later, when *RAO 9-5* envisions a study committee might *sometimes* have *some* effect on the AC budgets.

RAO 9-5. All ad interim and study committees shall be considered by the GA for appointment or extension at the time during the GA docket of the AC Committee's report so that due consideration be given as to their priority and their effect on the budgets.

If every ad interim committee must — *per the Rules* — be entirely supported "with financing provided from outside the AC budget," then there is no reason for *RAO 9-5* because no ad interim committee would ever have any effect on the AC budget.

Our Presbytery's interpretation also seems to be the one held by the 2019 Administrative Committee and the 2019 AC Committee of Commissioners. Both *recommended* that the 47th GA stipulate only outside funding be used for the AIC on Abuse. But if *RAO 9-3* mandates outside funding in every case (i.e., if the 2019 CCB interpretation was correct) there would be no reason for the AC recommendations.

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AC Rec. #5 - That in the event the Assembly, upon recommendation of the Overtures Committee, answers Overtures 7, 10, 1, 20, 26, and/or 31 in the affirmative, approving the establishment of an ad interim committee on the Study of Domestic Violence, the budget of such committee be \$15,000, *to be provided solely by designated gifts to the AC*. [Emphasis added. [M47GA](#), p. 69 & 184.

5. This revision (or clarification) to *RAO 9-3* is important for future committees, because Assemblies should not expect members of ad interim and study committees to be fundraisers, nor should they be expected to forego reimbursement for expenses. To expect or imply otherwise could affect the Assembly's ability to recruit the most experienced and gifted members for these committees.
6. If someone believes *every* ad interim committees should *always* function exclusively with outside funding, they can ask their Presbytery to overture a change to *RAO 9-3*, and a deletion of *RAO 9-5*.

Proposed to the Pacific Northwest Presbytery at its stated meeting on January 24, 2020
Final version adopted by an Administrative Commission of Presbytery on April 8, 2020
Attested by /s/ TE Nathan Chambers, interim stated clerk