

Ovt 007

On Amending Standing Rule A.3. by Outlining a Procedure for Dealing with Overtures That Request Amendment to the Book of Order That Have Been Dealt with By One of Two Previous GAs—From the Presbytery of New Harmony.

The Presbytery of New Harmony overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to amend Section A.3 of the Standing Rules of the General Assembly by adding the provision set forth below as A.3 (b) and renumbering the remaining existing sections sequentially as A.3 c-f.

Should an overture require an amendment to the Constitution which proposes substantially the same action as that which was adopted by one of the two previous sessions of the General Assembly and subsequently failed to receive the necessary number of positive votes for enactment when transmitted to the Presbyteries, it shall not be considered as an item of business unless and until seventy five percent of the commissioners present and voting vote to do so.

Rationale

This amendment to the Standing Rules is intended to relieve the commissioners to each General Assembly of the burden of having to consider, debate and take action on proposed amendments to the Constitution which have been addressed by previous General Assemblies and voted down by the Presbyteries. It is similar in purpose and content to Rule A.8 (f) dealing with repetitious commissioners' resolutions.

Unlike that Rule which delegates the authority for the decision to just one individual, the Stated Clerk, this proposal would allow the commissioners themselves to make it an item of business, albeit by a super-majority. Because this addresses items of constitutional import and, therefore, necessarily entails submission to the presbyteries, the entire General Assembly should be empowered to address this threshold issue, but more than a simple majority vote should be required before mandating the repeated expenditure of time and resources on actions which have already been thoroughly vetted and rejected.