

OVT-008 **On Adding G-3.0105c. to Permit a Presbytery to Abstain on Constitutional Changes—From the Presbytery of the Foothills.**

Source: Presbytery **Event:** 222nd General Assembly (2016)

Committee: No Assignment **Sponsor:** Foothills Presbytery

Topic: Unassigned **Type:** General Assembly Full Consideration

<http://pc-biz.org/Explorer.aspx?id=5294>

Recommendation

The Presbytery of the Foothills overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-3.0105 be amended by adding a new paragraph "c." to read as follows:

"c. A presbytery may register as 'Abstaining' when voting on General Assembly proposals recommending constitutional changes."

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is called to work for peace, unity, and purity, and its member congregations are committed to reducing any factors that obscure Christian unity.

Church unity depends solely on Jesus Christ and not an unlikely if not impossible unanimity on the range of particular and partisan issues we encounter in society and culture.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) continues to press votes on divisive issues that have disrupted the peace, unity, and purity of the church and diminished membership and mission momentum.

When abstaining on constitutional matters, a presbytery decision to abstain will not be recorded as a "no" vote. However, a majority of presbyteries will be required to vote "yes" for a constitutional amendment to pass.

A presbytery decision to register as abstaining may be accompanied by that presbytery's rationale for abstaining. The abstaining presbytery, for instance, may abstain from conviction that a vote to change the constitution at that time is inadvisable, divisive, and that further prayer, discussion, and discernment will benefit the church.