

OVT-006 On Amending Standing Rule B.2.b.to Add the Category “Presbyter Advisory Delegates”—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=5292>

Recommendation

The Presbytery of the Foothills overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to amend the Standing Rules of the General Assembly as follows:

1. Amend Standing Rule B.2.b. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“b. There shall be ~~four~~ five categories of advisory delegates: youth, theological student; missionary, ~~and~~ ecumenical, ~~and~~ executive presbyter. When the ratio of advisory delegates to commissioners exceeds one to three, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be authorized to make changes to the Standing Rules to create a ratio of less than one to three. The expenses of each of the first four advisory delegates shall be paid by the General Assembly (see Standing Rule I.3.) on the same basis as the expenses of commissioners (see Standing Rule B.2.f.(2) below for exception). The expenses for the executive presbyter advisory delegate shall be paid by the presbytery on the same basis as expenses for commissioners.”

2. Amend Standing Rule B.2. by adding a new paragraph “h.” to read as follows

“h. Presbyter Advisory Delegates

“For each General Assembly, 20 percent of the presbyteries may elect an executive presbyter advisory delegate (EPAD) who shall ordinarily be the presbytery executive (or person operating as the chief executive of the presbytery by any other title) to be an advisory delegate to the General Assembly. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall design a rotation system among the presbyteries to accomplish this.”

Rationale

Presbytery executives have a unique perspective, seeing intimately into the lives of congregations and closely into the life of the General Assembly at the same time.

This perspective gives them a view of the whole church in a way that few others have.

They care deeply about the life of the congregations and pastors they serve, and they care about the mission of the General Assembly as the whole Church ministers to the world.

The voice of presbytery executives has been systematically diminished for more than thirty years because they have no say at General Assembly meetings unless they are elected a commissioner. This might happen only once in an executive’s career because of the method commissioners are chosen. This important voice is effectively minimized at the assembly.

The voice of presbytery executives is very much needed at the assembly to keep the whole church in perspective and to prevent the assembly from seeming like an “other.”

Standing Rule B.2.c. would not be changed, so executive presbyter advisory delegates would have the same privileges as other advisory delegates. That is, they would serve on a committee with voice and vote and would have voice on the floor of the assembly.

Presbyteries would cover the expenses of executive presbyter advisory delegates, so financial implications to the assembly would not be a concern.