

On financial support for or against abortion

Resolved, that the presbytery of _____ overtures the 217th General Assembly (2006) to direct its offices and entities immediately to cease funding of any group that supports or advocates either for or against abortion and instead encourage PC(USA) congregations and members to voluntarily support organizations and ministries that best reflect the convictions of those individuals and congregations; and that the General Assembly Council report to the 218th General Assembly the steps taken to effect this overture.

Rationale

Current General Assembly policy encourages acceptance of all points of view about abortion as a moral decision: “The Presbyterian Church (USA) encourages an atmosphere of open debate and mutual respect for a variety of opinions concerning the issues related to problem pregnancies and abortion.” (“Problem Pregnancies and Abortion” (1992), p. 10.) and “We also urge the General Assembly Council and the presbyteries to affirm procedures by which particular churches may be assured that their mission funds will not be used in violation of conscience on this issue.” (policy, p. 16.)

Churches and individuals in our denomination are divided on the morality of abortion. Some support a “pro-life” position, some a “pro-choice” position. Church policy acknowledges that. Churches and individuals in our denomination should be free, under our current abortion policy, to support the views and organizations that best reflect their convictions.

The General Assembly should not presume to use the mission and/or percapita funds of Presbyterians to promote either side of this division in our church, but should take care to provide for freedom and exercise of conscience on the matter.

This overture allows for support either for or against abortion as our local churches and individuals are led. It encourages the discussion that our church policy calls for. It honors all views. It places the decisions at the lowest governing body level of our denomination. It is not coercive; rather, it offers Presbyterians assurance that they may contribute to the General Assembly without the burden of having their consciences violated.