

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON  
*HEALTH ISSUES*

11

*PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)  
216TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2004)*

[The full text of the items referred to this committee may be found in the Reports to the General Assembly under tab 11.]

*Vice Moderator: Leigh Morris*

There are recommendations contained in this report that will be moved as part of a consent agenda. Such items are marked with an asterisk (“\*”) and are so indicated in the Table of Contents below.

There are recommendations contained in this report that have financial implications and are indicated with a “\$” sign next to the item. The details of the financial implication are provided with the item in the context of the report, and are so indicated in the Table of Contents below.

**Table of Contents**

Item 11-01 ..... p. 4 \$	Item 11-05 ..... p. 3
Item 11-02 ..... p. 1 \$	Item 11-06 ..... p. 4
Item 11-03 ..... p. 3	Item 11-07 ..... p. 4
Item 11-04 ..... p. 4 \$	

**The Assembly Committee on Health Issues recommends that the 216th General Assembly (2004) approve the following recommendations:**

**Abortion**

**\$ Item 11-02. On Urging Churches to Affirm in Their Ministries the Protection of Babies in the Womb Who are Viable—From the Presbyterian of Charlotte. +ACSWP +ACWC**

**In response to Item 11-02, that the 216th General Assembly (2004) approve the following:**

**“Reaffirm the 215th General Assembly (2003) ‘Statement on Post Viability and Late-Term Abortion’ with amendment: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through with brackets; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline and with brackets.]**

**“We affirm the statement of the 214th General Assembly (2002) on post-viability and late-term abortion with the following revisions:**

**June 30, 2004, 12:46 AM**

**“The church has a responsibility to provide public witness and to offer guidance, counsel, and support to those who make or interpret laws and public policies about abortion and problem pregnancies. Pastors have a duty to counsel with and pray for those who face decisions about problem pregnancies. Congregations have a duty to pray for and support those who face these choices, to offer support for women and families to help make unwanted pregnancies less likely to occur, and to provide practical support for those facing the birth of a child with medical anomalies, birth after rape or incest, or those who face health, economic, or other stresses.**

**“The church also affirms the value of children and the importance of nurturing, protecting, and advocating their well-being. The church, therefore, appreciates the challenge each woman and family face when issues of personal well-being arise in the later stages of a pregnancy.**

**“ ‘In life and death, we belong to God.’ Life is a gift from God. We may not know exactly when human life begins, and have but an imperfect understanding of God as the giver of life and of our own human existence, yet we recognize that life is precious to God, and we should preserve and protect it. We derive our understanding of human life from Scripture and the Reformed Tradition in light of science, human experience, and reason guided by the Holy Spirit. Because we are made in the image of God, human beings are moral agents, endowed by the Creator with the capacity to make choices. Our Reformed Tradition recognizes that people do not always make moral choices, and forgiveness is central to our faith. In the Reformed Tradition, we affirm that God is the only Lord of conscience—not the state or the church. As a community, the church challenges the faithful to exercise their moral agency responsibly.**

**“When an individual woman faces the decision whether to terminate a pregnancy, the issue is intensely personal, and may manifest itself in ways that do not reflect public rhetoric, or do not fit neatly into medical, legal, or policy guidelines. Humans are empowered by the spirit prayerfully to make significant moral choices, including the choice to continue or end a pregnancy. Human choices should not be made in a moral vacuum, but must be based on Scripture, faith, and Christian ethics. For any choice, we are accountable to God; however, even when we err, God offers to forgive us. ~~[While t]~~ [T]he ending of a pregnancy after the point of fetal viability is a matter of grave moral concern to us all ~~[it may be undertaken only in the rarest of circumstances and after prayer and/or pastoral care and counsel, when necessary to save the life of the woman, to preserve the woman’s health in circumstances of a serious risk to the woman’s health, to avoid fetal suffering as a result of untreatable life-threatening medical anomalies, or in cases of incest or rape. When it is deemed necessary to end a pregnancy to protect the mother’s life or health in the later months of pregnancy when the baby may be able to live outside the womb, a procedure should be considered which gives both the mother and the child the opportunity to live.]~~ [We affirm the protection of viable babies in the womb. In cases where problems develop late in the pregnancy, we urge our members to support the live delivery of the baby. In the interest of protecting the life and health of both the mother and the baby, late-term abortion should be considered only if the physical life or mental health of the mother is at serious risk and no alternative means of delivering the baby alive is available. Furthermore, we urge our members to provide pastoral and tangible support to women in problem pregnancies, seeking ways that the church can intervene to mitigate the problems in a pregnancy or**

late-term abortion. We affirm adoption as a provision for women who deliver children they are not able to care for and ask our members to assist in seeking loving, adoptive families.]”

Vote: 35/29/0

[Financial Implications: \$7,000 (2004) (Per Capita: GAC)]

**Item 11-03. On Clarity of Late-Term Pregnancy—From the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler.  
+ACSWP +ACWC**

That the recommendation be answered by the action taken on Item 11-02 of this report.

Vote: 54/8/0

#### Other

**Item 11-05. On Opposing the Change in Requirements of Emission from Smoke Stack Industries—From the Presbytery of Savannah. +ACSWP**

That the recommendation be approved with amendment: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through with brackets; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline and with brackets.]

“1. Declare our opposition to the change in requirements of emission from smoke stack industries[, changes instituted by the Environmental Protection Agency on August 27, 2003, in the New Source Review permitting requirements for emissions from power plants and manufacturing facilities]. ‘The new rules would allow thousands of older power plants, oil refineries, and industrial units to make extensive upgrades without having to install new antipollution devices’ (*New York Times*, August 22, 2003, by Katherine Q. Seeley).

“2. Petition the president of the United States to draft rules that would further reduce tailpipe emissions by increasing the fuel efficiency of new [~~automobiles~~] [vehicles].

“3. Petition the major manufacturers of vehicles to accelerate the use of existing technologies that would increase fuel efficiency and to develop new technologies that would achieve further gains.]

“~~3.~~ [4.] Request the Stated Clerk to ~~communicate this action to the president of the United States and the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the appropriate members of Congress. The communication should include the impact that smoke stack and tailpipe emissions is having on the health of our most vulnerable population[s] and on our environment due to acid rain[, smog, increased ozone levels, and emissions of mercury and heavy metals].”~~

Vote: 54/6/4

**Commissioners' Resolution**

**Item 11-06. On Reaffirming Ethical Values of Fetal Tissue and Stem Cell Research.**

**That the recommendation be approved.**

**Vote: 46/11/4**

**Item 11-07. (Pulled from Consent Agenda). 2002 Referral: Item 13-08. *Overture 02-52. On Pastoral Resources for Women Who Have Experienced Abortion—from the Presbytery of Donegal. (Minutes, 2002, Part 1, pp. 70, 654)***

**That the response be approved with comment.**

**Comment: Committee approval only recognizes that the materials that have been prepared are in accordance with the directives of the original overture. The committee takes no action regarding the content of the brochure.**

**Vote: 56/4/1**

**Abortion**

**\$ Item 11-01. On Calling for the End of Abortion, and Inserting a Statement in the *Book of Order Regarding Abortion—From the Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley. \*ACC +ACSWP***

**That the recommendation be disapproved.**

**[Original Financial Implications: \$119,967 (2005); \$122,066 (2006) (Mission Budget—Unrestricted)]**

**[Committee Action: \$0 (2005); \$0 (2006)]**

**Vote: 56/4/1**

**Other**

**\$ Item 11-04. On Urging the FDA to Make Emergency Contraception Available Over the Counter--From the Presbytery of Baltimore. +ACWC**

**That the recommendation be disapproved.**

**[Original Financial Implications: \$11,150 (2005); \$7,160 (2006) (Per Capita—GAC)]**

**[Committee Action: \$0 (2005); \$0 (2006)]**

**Vote: 40/21/1**

[Note: Text is an addendum. Please add to 11 Assembly Committee on Health Issues as page 4.]

**\$ Item 11-01. On Calling for the End of Abortion, and Inserting a Statement in the *Book of Order* Regarding Abortion—From the Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley. \*ACC +ACSWP**

**That the recommendation be disapproved with comment.**

**Comment: In addition, we urge the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), in their mandated monitoring report to the 217th General Assembly (2006) on the implementation of the assemblies' policy on problem pregnancies, to include a survey of the ministries and educational resources seeking to implement the policies and to provide further encouragement and recommendations for additional ministries and resources as needed.**

**[Original Financial Implications: \$119,967 (2005); \$122,066 (2006) (Mission Budget—Unrestricted)]**

**[Committee Action: \$0 (2005); \$0 (2006)]**

**Vote: 56/4/1**

**§ Minority Report**  
**Assembly Committee on Health Issues**

Please refer to Item 11-02, on page 1, of the report of the Assembly Committee on Health Issues

In place of Item 11-02, we move the following:

That the Moderator and the Stated Clerk of the 216th General Assembly (2004) shall write a pastoral letter to the congregations on the issue of problem pregnancy. In order to provide pastoral and tangible support to women and families confronting problem pregnancies, their letter shall include a copy of the pamphlets published by the Women's Ministries program area, National Ministries Division, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) entitled:

- *When No Choice Is Easy: For the Pregnant Woman,*
- *When You Need the Wisdom of Solomon: Helping Others Face Problem Pregnancies,*
- *There Is Always a Father: Does the Father Have a Problem Too?,* and
- *When Pregnancy Involves Loss: Helping Others Face Problem Pregnancies.*

To be included with these excellent resources shall be the publication *Statement on Post-Viability and Late-Term Abortion*, approved by the 215th General Assembly (2003). The letter shall also affirm adoption as a provision for women who deliver children they are not able to care for, and ask our congregations to assist in seeking adoptive families within the household of faith.

It is hoped that the pastoral leadership expressed by our denomination on this sensitive issue will assist pastors and congregations and the people with whom they work.

[Financial Implication: \$3,700 (2004) (Per Capita: OGA)]

Richard W. Berry—San Diego Presbytery  
Kim L. Nelson—San Jose Presbytery  
Walter Johnson—San Francisco Presbytery  
Sean McNary—Stockton Presbytery  
Billy Massingill—Grace Presbytery  
Anna McIlwain—Sheppards & Lapsley Presbytery  
Sharon Christensen—Sante Fe Presbytery  
Judy Mitchell Rich—Northern Kansas Presbytery  
Richard Berry—San Diego Presbytery  
Mary Lynette Delbridge—Ecumenical Advisory Delegate  
Betsy Loxterman—Providence Presbytery  
Mary Lea Dutton—Washington Presbytery  
Roger Sandmeier—San Fernando Presbytery  
Laura Sentell—Pines Presbytery  
Christine Davies—Palisades Presbytery  
Laura Blank—Redstone Presbytery

Chip Sanders—Newton Presbytery  
Margaret Anne Fohl—Philadelphia Presbytery  
Randal Argall—Northern Plains Presbytery  
David Mauerman—Sacramento Presbytery  
Gloria Albrecht—Detroit Presbytery  
Anne Greer—Northumberland Presbytery  
Lita Simpson—Missouri Presbytery  
Jim Doosey—West Jersey Presbytery  
Don Stribling—Palo Duro Presbytery

In accordance with Standing Rule C.5.d., I affirm that the above positions expressed as recommendations for action by the assembly were presented to the whole committee during its consideration of the matter.