

**Proposed Amendment to the  
Proposed Draft Rule on Public Statements or Comments**

**MOTION:**

In paragraph #5(ii), to delete the words “without any description of any position or office they may hold, such as Minister of the Word and Sacrament also known as Teaching Elder and Pastor or Ruling Elder of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and”

With that deletion, the paragraph would read:

"5. Nothing contained within this section of the Standing Rules shall affect, limit or infringe on any of the following rights and privileges:

. . .

ii. The right of any individual member of the Presbytery or any congregation within the Presbytery to take any public stance or position; provide personal input or comment on any public issue; write or publish any type of public comment, statement or paper on behalf of that particular member individually or the making of any public oral statement, comment or testimony on any subject before any public or political body or other public manner by that member, without any suggestion that such opinion or comments reflect the position of their congregation or the Presbytery as a whole."

**RATIONALE:**

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, Ruling Elders, and Deacons vow at our ordinations to “work for the reconciliation of the world” (W-4.0404(f)) and "try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ" (W-4.0404(i)). We do so, "in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and . . . continually guided by our confessions." We also do so "governed by our church's polity" (W-4.0404(e)), which includes "the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world." (F-1.0304)

Hence, it is an integral part of Reformed polity that we be able to speak out as persons in ordered ministry. It is what we have always done. It is, in fact, part of our overall job. Any rule that would restrict this ability -- effectively muzzling the voice of Presbyterian religious leaders in the public square -- would go against our polity, and against nearly five centuries of our Reformed witness.

-- The Rev. Roger Scott Powers, Pastor, St. Andrew Presbyterian Church,  
-- The Rev. Kenneth Cuthbertson, Parish Associate, Las Placitas Presbyterian Church