

# **PROPOSED Conflict of Interest Policy and Matrix**

February 26, 2022

Conflict of Interest Workgroup

Our Presbyterian polity is built on a foundation of underlying trust. Our Book of Order states:

## G-1.0102 The Fellowship of the Congregation

The polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) presupposes the fellowship of women, men, and children united in covenant relationship with one another and with God through Jesus Christ. The organization rests on the fellowship and is not designed to work without trust and love.

Individuals elected by the Presbytery to serve on the committees, commissions or other elected entities of the presbytery are members of congregations within the presbytery's bounds. Presbytery staff are appointed to serve as resource persons for the commission. For purposes of this policy, elected members and appointed staff resource persons are referred to collectively as "members."

In their election or appointment, the presbytery affirms its expectation and trust that each member will follow their conscience and act in accordance with scripture, the Book of Order, and their best discernment of the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is understood that issues may arise in deliberations that grow from an individual minister of the Word and Sacrament commission member's ministry, from within the congregation where a commission member ruling elder holds membership, or where a member minister of the Word and Sacrament not holding an installed position in a local congregation may be affiliated.

Standards of Ethical Conduct for Mid-Kentucky Presbytery instruct all persons called to ministry within Mid-Kentucky Presbytery "to conduct all matters so that . . . conflict of interest and exploitation are avoided." (Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky Standards of Ethical Conduct, paragraph 2c.)

A conflict of interest exists when a person in a decision-making process has an interest, direct or indirect, that could reasonably be expected to compromise their judgment, decisions, or actions. Any concern regarding a conflict of interest may be directed to the moderator of the group to which they are involved or to the presbytery stated clerk.

Conflicts of interest within deliberations are inevitable. The matrix that follows provides a policy for elected and appointed leaders and members when determining whether it is appropriate for a particular member of the group to participate in its deliberations. This matrix is not intended to be all-inclusive but addresses common scenarios in group deliberations. Nothing in this matrix precludes a group member from seeking the group's guidance and assistance regarding difficulties and challenges within their own congregation or call. The presbytery commission, committee or other group may, at its discretion invite its members affiliated with congregations under discussion to participate in conversation, without vote, when their input is deemed important to the group's deliberations. Any member may absent themselves from discussion and from vote on any issue wherein they believe a conflict of interest exists for themselves or for a member of their family.

All members have equal vote in group decisions.

Circumstance	The commission member:
Member or their family have financial interest in the issue being considered.	May not be present for discussion or for the vote.
Member or their family are employed by or have employment interest (whether paid or unpaid) in the congregation/individual being discussed.	May not be present for discussion or for the vote.
Member is a non-member affiliate of the congregation being discussed.	May not be present for discussion or for the vote.
Member is a member of the congregation being discussed.	May not be present for discussion or for the vote.
Member with one of the acknowledged conflicts listed above has been invited by the group to share their perspective, when their input is deemed important to the group's deliberations.	Beyond sharing their perspective as invited, the member may not be present for discussion or for the vote.

Definitions:

**Family:** Spouse, children, siblings, parents, in-laws, grandparents, and grandchildren.

**Affiliate:** A person who participates in the congregation's worship and work but is unable, due to membership in the presbytery, to become a member.

Commission member: Ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament elected to serve on the commission and Presbytery staff who resource the commission.