

**ARTICLE XII**  
**PUBLIC WITNESS STATEMENTS;**  
**EXISTING AMERICAN BAPTIST POLICY STATEMENTS AND RESOLUTIONS**

**Section 1. Public Witness Statements.** Public Witness Statements represent the spiritual discernment of the congregations of ABCUSA as they seek to educate, activate, and advocate the teachings of Jesus Christ. Public Witness Statements may be proposed by any of the covenanting partners of ABCUSA and adopted by Cooperating Churches in a process of congregational referendum. The Board of General Ministries, through the Office of the General Secretary, will be responsible for conducting the vote and publishing the results.

A referendum concerning a Public Witness Statement is initiated whenever the General Secretary receives either (A) notice that at least seventy-five percent (75%) of Covenanting Partners voting on the matter support such an initiative, provided that at least one-third (1/3) of the Covenanting Partners have participated in such vote, or (B) a petition supporting the initiative is subscribed to by at least ten percent (10%) of the Cooperating Churches (without weighting), including at least one Cooperating Church from each Region.

Adoption of a properly initiated Public Witness Statement requires the affirmative vote of at least seventy-five percent (75%) of Cooperating Churches voting on the matter (weighted in proportion to the number of Delegates each may send to a Biennial meeting), provided that at least fifty percent (50%) of all Cooperating Churches (without weighting), including at least one Cooperating Church from each Region, must participate for the vote to be valid.

Public Witness Statements will not be binding on regions or Cooperating Churches unless adopted in separate action by that Region or Cooperating Church. The process and procedure for amending, reaffirming, or rescinding American Baptist Public Witness Statements will be the same as for adoption.

**Section 2. Existing American Baptist Policy Statements and Resolutions.** Until 2011, the ABCUSA General Board had the authority to adopt American Baptist Policy Statements and Resolutions. Such Policy Statements and Resolutions adopted before 2011 remain in effect unless rescinded. No new Policy Statements or Resolutions may be adopted under current Bylaws. An American Baptist Policy Statement or Resolution declared the basic position of ABCUSA on particular issues of general concern. These Policy Statements and Resolutions have not been, nor will they be, binding on Regions or Cooperating Churches unless adopted in separate action by that Region or Cooperating Church.

Any Covenant Partner may initiate a process by which existing Policy Statements and Resolutions can be amended, reaffirmed, or rescinded providing that seventy-five percent (75%) of the Covenant Partners voting on the matter are in agreement. Sixty percent (60%) of Covenant Partners must participate for the vote to be valid. Seventy-five percent (75%) of Cooperating Churches voting on the matter (weighted in proportion to the number of eligible Delegates for a Biennial meeting) must agree to amend, reaffirm or rescind existing Policy Statements and Resolutions. Fifty percent (50%) of all Cooperating Churches (without weighting) must participate for a vote to be valid. The Board of General Ministries, through the General Secretary's office, will be responsible for conducting the vote and publishing the results.