

*AMERICAN BAPTIST MINISTERS COUNCIL*  
MINISTERS COUNCIL OF THE GREATER BAY AREA

*STATEMENT REGARDING THE ABC NATIONAL MINISTERS  
COUNCIL SENATE BY-LAW CHANGE*

The mission statement of the Ministers Council of the Greater Bay Area speaks to the diversity of views represented by our Council members.

*Our Mission Statement*

To fulfill the Gospel mission, the American Baptist Ministers Council of the Greater Bay Area gathers as an inclusive community of persons in Christian ministry for support, nurture and accountability.

*Our Position on the Proposed By-Law Amendment*

We strongly encourage a "NO" vote from the Senate for the following reasons:

1. The proposed By-Law change is not in keeping with the mission of Ministers Council of the Greater Bay Area.
2. The By-Law change does not respect the autonomy of local minister's councils to elect a Senator who they feel would best represent the interests and concerns of their members.
3. According to its mission statement, the ABC Ministers Council is an "organization of ordained, commissioned and lay Christian leaders within the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.". In the ABC/USA ordination comes through the local church. The power and authority to ordain resides with the local church which is an autonomous body. The ABC Ministers Council is a representative body of those called by the local churches. Consequently, it is not within the authority of the ABC Ministers Council to bar any representative who has been duly ordained by the local church and appointed by the local minister councils. The proposed By-Law change violates the authority and autonomy of the local church to ordain those who they have determined are called by God.