

Robert's Rules of Order: Voting on a Motion

TYPES OF VOTES

The Chair/President asks those in favor to say "aye", those opposed to say "no". Any member may move for an exact count.

By Roll Call:

Each member answers "yes" or "no" as his/her name is called. This method is used to record each person's vote.

By General Consent:

When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the Chair/President says, "if there is no objection..." The membership shows agreement by their silence, however, if one member says, "I object," the item must be put to a vote.

By Division or Rising:

Members raise their hands or stand. It does not require a count unless the Chair/President so desires.

The Chair/President may ask the members to go to different areas of the chamber, indicating a vote in favor or in opposition to a motion on the floor.

By Ballot:

Members write their vote on a slip of paper, this method is used when secrecy is desired.

MAJORITY VOTE

The basic requirement for adoption of a motion by its members, with a quorum, is a Majority Vote.

A majority is more than half of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote, after taking blank votes and abstentions into account.

Majority does not mean 51%.

Example: In a situation with 1000 votes, the majority = 501 votes (not 51% which = 510 votes).

The following is an example of Majority Vote:

The Chair/President instructs the members (at a meeting with a quorum) to vote by writing "yes" or "no" on a piece of paper. Of the members present, 100 were entitled to vote, but 15 did not cast

a ballot of any kind. Of the 85 votes cast: 75 were legal; 10 were illegal (the members wrote "maybe" or "do not know"); and 4 were turned in blank.

→ The majority is any number larger than one half of the total (Legal Votes Cast) - (Blank Votes Cast) + (Illegal Votes Cast).

→ So of the 85 votes cast by members entitled to vote in the above example:

$(75 \text{ legal votes cast}) - (4 \text{ blank votes cast}) + (10 \text{ illegal votes cast}) = 81 \text{ votes cast}$

→ One half of 81 votes = 40.5, since a majority is more than one half, the majority of votes would = 41

So for the motion to be carried, there would have to be at least 41 "yes" votes cast.

2/3 VOTE

Notice that it is not called a "2/3 Majority". A 2/3 vote is generally not taken as a voice vote, but rather as a standing count, or some other easily countable fashion. To calculate a 2/3 vote:

divide the number of votes by 3 and then multiply by 2. Example: 8 members present. 7 members voting, 1 abstention. Abstention vote are not counted. $7 \div 3 = 2$. $2 \times 2 = 4$. 4 is the number needed for majority passage of the motion.