

# Robert's Rules of Order: Voting on a Motion

## TYPES OF VOTES

### By Voice

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 legal votes cast) - (4 blank votes cast) + (10 illegal votes cast) = 81 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.

### Generally speaking, a 2/3 vote is required for adoption of any motion which:

- Suspends or modifies a rule of order already adopted.
- Prevents the introduction of a question to consideration.
- Closes, limits, or extends the limits of debate.
- Closes nominations or the polls
- Takes away membership or office.