

The Law of Order

A Resource on Parliamentary Procedure & the Law

Common Voting Terms

abstention	to not vote at all Bonus Tip: Except in public bodies, a presiding officer should not ask members to identify whether they are abstaining from a vote.
ballot vote	a written, secret vote on a slip of paper; allowed only when required by the bylaws or ordered by a majority vote
counted vote	a method of vote verification whereby each vote is individually tallied; occurs on the chair's initiative alone or via passage of a motion by majority vote; one member cannot demand it
division of assembly	a method of vote verification demanded by one member, whereby an inconclusive voice vote or show of hands vote is retaken as a rising vote; the demand is made by calling out, "Division!"; not a method by which one member can demand a counted vote
general/unanimous consent	a vote taken informally on noncontroversial matters Bonus Tip: To take a vote using this method, say, "If there is no objection, we will...". If any member objects, simply put the motion to a more formal vote by saying, "All those in favor of, say, 'aye.' All those opposed, say, 'no.'"
majority	more than half of the members in good standing that are both present <i>and</i> voting Bonus Tip: This is the default definition of "majority" if used without qualification in an organization's governing documents.
majority of a quorum	more than half of the number of members needed for a quorum
majority of the entire membership	more than half of all the members in good standing, regardless of whether they are present
majority of the members present	more than half of the members in good standing that are present at a meeting
plurality	the largest number of votes among three or more candidates or proposals; not necessarily a majority

The Law of Order

A Resource on Parliamentary Procedure & the Law

Common Voting Terms, *cont'd*

proxy	a “power of attorney” given by one member to another member to vote in his place
unanimous	every member present casts the same vote on a motion Bonus Tip: This is the weakest type of vote because it allows one disagreeable member to control the entire group. Use judiciously.
vote by acclamation	a declaration by the chair that a member nominated for an office is elected; no vote is taken Bonus Tip: Use only when only one person is nominated for an office and the bylaws do not require a ballot vote.

Bradley is a regional law firm with a global perspective. Our firm has more than 500 attorneys serving established regional, national and international companies, emerging businesses and individuals. Our nine offices—strategically located in Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and the District of Columbia—provide an extensive geographic base from which to best accommodate our clients. Recognized across the country, our attorneys serve as national, regional, and statewide counsel for clients across many industries. Clients rely on us for innovative legal services that reflect a deep understanding of their business objectives.

For more information, please visit lawoforderblog.com
or contact **Sarah E. Merkle**, 205.521.8380, smerkle@bradley.com