

ITEM 25 | DIVISION OF THE ASSEMBLY, AND MOTIONS RELATING TO METHODS OF VOTING, OR TO CLOSING OR REOPENING THE POLLS

A Division of the Assembly¹ may be called for, without obtaining the floor, at any time after the question has been put, even after the vote has been announced and another has the floor, provided the vote was taken viva voce, or by show of hands, and it is called for before another motion has been made. This call, or motion, is made by saying, "I call for a division," or "I doubt the vote," or simply by calling out, "Division." It does not require a second, and cannot be debated, or amended, or have any other subsidiary motion applied to it. As soon as a division is called for, the chair proceeds again to take the vote, this time by having the affirmative rise, and then when they are seated having the negative rise. While any member has the right to insist upon a rising vote, or a division, where there is any question as to the vote being a true expression of the will of the assembly, the chair should not permit this privilege to be abused to the annoyance of the assembly, by members constantly demanding a division where there is a full vote and no question as to which side is in the majority. It requires a majority vote to order the vote to be counted, or to be taken by yeas and nays (roll call) or by ballot. These motions are incidental to the question that is pending or has just been pending, and cannot be debated. When different methods are suggested they are usually treated not as amendments, but like filling blanks, the vote being taken first on the one taking the most time. In practice the method of taking a vote is generally agreed upon without the formality of a vote.

When the vote is taken by ballot during a meeting of the assembly, as soon as the chair thinks all have voted who wish to, he inquires if all have voted, and if there is no response he declares the polls closed, and the tellers proceed to count the vote. If a formal motion is made to close the polls it should not be recognized until all have presumably voted, and then it requires a two-thirds vote like motions to close debate or nominations. If members enter afterwards and it is desired to reopen the polls it can be done by a majority vote. None of these motions are debatable.

Footnotes

¹ See foot note, [9], for the rule of Congress.

