

ParliPro Notes for 09August2020

A **quorum** is the minimum number of **members** that must be present before a meeting can start. For a committee meeting a **quorum** is at least half the voting **members** of the committee. If there are 6 voting **members** of the committee, a **quorum** is 3. If there are **7** voting **members** of the committee, a **quorum** is 4.

Do abstentions count toward majority?

A "blank (or white) voter" has voted, although their vote may be considered a spoiled vote, depending on each legislation, while an abstaining voter hasn't voted. ... **Abstentions do not count** in tallying the vote negatively or positively; when members **abstain**, they are in effect attending only to contribute to a quorum.

"...the chair calls first for the affirmative vote, and all who wish to vote in favor of the motion so indicate in the manner specified; then he calls for the negative vote. The chair must always call for the negative vote; no matter how nearly unanimous the affirmative may appear... "

RONR (11th ed.), p. 45, ll. 1-6

"The chair should not call for abstentions in taking a vote, since the number of members who respond to such a call is meaningless. To "abstain" means not to vote at all, and a member who makes no response if "abstentions" are called for abstains just as much as one who responds to take effect (see also p. 407)."

RONR (11th ed.), p. 45, ll. 14-19

Remove instances of "2/3rd majority and replace with 2/3rds vote.
It should read "Two-thirds vote."

Describe "votes cast" and the calculating of a voting pool.

Start by Determining the Total Number of Votes Cast

Determining the total number of votes cast is important because that number becomes your baseline for calculating the number of votes needed for a [majority](#).

The following count as “votes cast”:

- ballots indicating a choice for an eligible candidate or option
- [illegal ballots](#)

The following do not count as “votes cast”:

- blank ballots
- ballots that don’t indicate a preference
- ballots cast by persons not entitled to vote

**Advice from Dr. John A. Cagle,
Parliamentarian of the Academic Senate
and Professor Emeritus of Communication
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Abstentions Outnumber the Voters

In California, the Board of Trustees for the California State University system got very concerned that you could have a situation in which a faculty tenure committee with, e.g., 13 members might have a meeting at which someone would get tenure with 1 person voting yes, none voting no, and 12 abstentions. That was true. The Board directed its collective bargaining negotiators to draw a hard line in the sand in the next round of contract negotiation to include a provision that no one would get tenure unless "more than half of all the members of the tenure board voted affirmatively for tenure." This provision was included in the next contract and we've had it ever since.