

Rules of Procedure Regarding Voting in Parliament

September 22, 2020

Matters in parliamentary democracy are generally decided by voting. In parliamentary parlance this is called 'Division', i.e., **dividing the House to decide a matter by majority vote**. Every matter requiring the decision of the House is decided by means of a **question put by the Chairman on a motion made by a Member**. After the motion has been moved, the Chairman formally proposes or places the motion for consideration of the House. At the end of the debate on the motion, he puts the motion for the decision of the House.

Methods of Division

The Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Rajya Sabha provide for four methods of voting in Rajya Sabha. By two methods, the votes are not recorded and through the remaining two, the votes are recorded as a permanent record.

▪ **Voice Vote**

. On the conclusion of a debate, the Chairman puts the question before the House and invites those who are **in favour of the motion to say "Aye" and those against the motion to say "No"**.

. Then the Chairman says: "I think the Ayes or the Noes, (as the case may be) have it". If the opinion of the Chairman as to the decision is not challenged he says twice: "The Ayes or the Noes, (as the case may be) have it" and the question before the House is determined accordingly.

. **Votes are not recorded and the Chairman does not announce the numbers of "Ayes" and "Noes"**.

▪ **Division by Count**

. If the opinion of the Chairman as to the **decision of a question is challenged**, he may, **if he thinks fit**, ask the members who are for "Aye" and those for "No" respectively to **rise in their places and, on a count being taken**, he may declare the determination of the House. In this case also, the **names of the voters are not recorded**.

. If a member wants to challenge the opinion of the Chairman as to the decision on a question, he must do so immediately after the Chairman expresses the view, "I think the Noes/Ayes have it" and before he declares the result.

. The Rules provide for two different methods of division – one by operating an automatic vote recorder and the other by going into lobbies.

▪ **Division With the Aid of Automatic Voice Recorder**

. Each member is assigned a fixed seat. Each seat is provided with an **integrated microphone and voting console containing four buttons – 'P' for Present, 'A' for Ayes, 'O' for Abstain and 'N' for Noes**.

. The equipment can be used for:

Ordinary division or open voting in which case the names of members voting for or against a question are recorded.

Secret voting or closed voting in which case only the number and not the names of members voting for or against a question is recorded.

Quorum or automatic counting of the members present in the House.

▪ **Division by Going Into Lobbies**

. If the Chairman decides that the votes shall be recorded by the members going into the lobbies, he may direct the **'Ayes' to go into the right lobby and the 'Noes' into the left lobby**.