



American Concrete Institute

BALLOTING EXAMPLES

Assume you are Chairing a technical committee with 33 voting members. The following examples illustrate some common situations that occur during balloting of a committee document.

Example 1—Letter ballot item passing

A member agrees to revise a section of your committee's document. You have received the draft between meetings and want to distribute it to the committee for comments. The most effective way to ensure members read the section is to ballot it, so you send out a letter ballot. After the 30-day ballot period, 24 ballots are returned. There are 20 affirmative votes, 2 negative votes, and 2 abstentions. As more than 1/2 of the voting members voted affirmatively and the affirmative votes were more than twice the negative votes cast (2/3 rule), the ballot has passed pending resolution of the two negative votes.

Example 2—Letter ballot item not passing, Scenario 1

Another committee member agrees to revise a chapter of your committee's document. You send this out for letter ballot. After the 30-day ballot period, 22 ballots are returned. There are 16 affirmative votes, 4 negative votes, and 2 abstentions. The ballot item fails because it does not meet the 1/2 rule—at least 17 of the eligible voters needed to vote affirmatively. To avoid this situation, as the canvassing date approached, you could have contacted members who had not yet voted and requested that they vote.

You have a few ways to proceed. As there are 11 members who didn't vote, you can extend the balloting period in the hope that a few more members will return votes. You can look at the negative votes, and determine if a negative voter has misinterpreted the revisions. You may be able to persuade this negative voter to withdraw their negative vote. You may also be able to persuade a voter who abstained to change his/her vote to an affirmative. Additionally, one of the negative votes may be unrelated to the revisions, and you may decide to issue a letter ballot to find the negative unrelated to the ballot item.

Another strategy is to consider revising the chapter in response to the negative votes. If one of the negative voters is very convincing, you may decide to issue another letter ballot to accept the proposed changes before your next meeting. Because there are only four negative votes, it is probably worthwhile to resolve the negative votes, rather than ask a committee member to begin the process of revising the chapter again.

Example 3—Letter ballot item not passing, Scenario 2

Another committee member agrees to revise a chapter to your committee's document. You send this out for letter ballot. After the 30-day ballot period, 30 ballots are returned. There are 17 affirmative votes, 10 negative votes, and 3 abstentions. The ballot item meets the 1/2 rule, but fails because it does not meet the 2/3 rule. The affirmative votes are not twice the negative votes cast.

Again, there are a few ways to proceed. Consider the reasons for the 10 negative votes. It may be prudent to put this draft aside, redraft the chapter, and send out the revised draft for a letter ballot. If the ballot only failed by 1 vote, and if the reasons for the negatives are not indicating fundamental problems, you may want to try to persuade a negative voter or abstainer to change their vote to affirmative (Example 2), and then try to resolve the remaining negative votes at the next meeting.

Example 4—Resolving negative votes at a meeting, Scenario 1

On another letter ballot item, 22 ballots are returned. There are 16 affirmative votes, 4 negative votes, and 2 abstentions. The ballot initially fails because it does not meet the 1/2 rule. However, the changes suggested by three negative voters are very convincing.

Your next committee meeting has 18 voting members present. As no one moves to find the negative votes unrelated or nonpersuasive, you accept a motion to adopt the change suggested in the first negative vote. The committee unanimously agrees with this change and with the next two also. Those three votes are now recorded as affirmatives (note that if the committee wasn't unanimous on making the change, the vote couldn't be changed from negative to affirmative), bringing the total to 19 affirmative votes, 1 negative vote, and 2 abstentions. The original letter ballot now passes by satisfying both the 1/2 rule and the 2/3 rule.

The remaining negative vote is found nonpersuasive by a 16-to-2 vote, thus satisfying both the 40% rule and the 2/3 rule. This concludes committee action on this item.

Example 5—Resolving negative votes at a meeting, Scenario 2

On a letter ballot, there are 28 affirmative votes, 1 negative vote (Smith), and 0 abstentions. The ballot passes, but the negative vote must be resolved.

Your next committee meeting has 18 voting members present. There is no motion to find this negative unrelated or nonpersuasive, so you accept a motion to adopt Smith's recommended change. After the motion is made and seconded, it is obvious during the discussion that the majority of members agree with Smith's change. The vote count to adopt Smith's change is 17 affirmative and 1 negative (Jones). Jones realizes that her point of view will not prevail, however, and she informs the committee that a further vote to find her nonpersuasive is not needed. Jones' request not to continue with the formal resolution of her negative is noted in the minutes, and this concludes committee action on this item.

Example 6—Resolving negative votes by letter ballot

On the letter ballot for revising a chapter, there are 28 affirmative votes, 1 negative vote, and 0 abstentions. The ballot passes, but the negative vote must be resolved.

Your next committee meeting is several months away, and there is a timing issue with getting this new information published, so you decide to letter ballot your committee in an attempt to resolve the lone negative vote.

You send out a single-item letter ballot, providing a reason for the committee to find the negative vote nonpersuasive. After the 30-day ballot period, 22 ballots are returned. There are 16 affirmative votes, 4 negative votes, and 2 abstentions. The ballot item fails because it does not meet the 1/2 rule—at least 17 of the eligible voters needed to vote affirmatively.

You decide to extend the balloting period by 10 days, hoping that more voters will return ballots, and this extension is communicated to all members. After the additional 10-day period, there are 23 affirmative votes, 5 negative votes, and 2 abstentions. The item to find the negative vote nonpersuasive has now passed, and the revision of the chapter is finished.