

State of Vermont House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

Joint House Resolution

H.R. 6

House resolution relating to the electronic recording of votes

Offered by: Representative Kimbell of Woodstock

Whereas, the House of Representatives, due to the State of Emergency first declared in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, temporarily amended its rules to allow votes of the House to be taken electronically, and

Whereas, the Office of Legislative Information Technology, working in conjunction with the Speaker, the Chief of the Capitol Police, the House Clerk, and the Sergeant at Arms, was able to create and administer electronic voting in a manner that met the highest security levels, identifying and verifying each member voting, and

Whereas, the system that was used recorded the Yeas and Nays of the members voting, though the recording of how a member voted was limited to the times that an alphabetically called roll call was administered, and

Whereas, increasing the transparency of the votes cast by elected Representatives creates greater accountability to the voters who elected them, strengthening our democratic principles, and

Whereas, the current rules for roll call votes take considerable amounts of time that could be better utilized in other ways, and

Whereas, it is the House's position that except for procedural or other minor votes agreed to be taken by voice vote or its electronic equivalent, all votes cast using the electronic voting system adopted by the House should record the Representatives' votes by Yeas and Nays and this record should be made public, now therefore be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives: That this legislative body amends the Rules and Orders of the House of Representatives as follows:

RULES AND ORDERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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II. Of Sessions of the House

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9. If a quorum is not present within fifteen minutes after the time to which the House was adjourned or whenever a ~~roll call or a division~~ the electronic voting system of the House discloses no quorum present and voting, the presiding officer or those present may send the Sergeant at Arms or other officer after the absentees to compel their attendance, or may adjourn.

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III. Of Members

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14. Subject to the provisions of Rules 73, ~~74~~ and 75, it shall be the duty of a member to vote upon all questions decided by a ~~roll call vote~~ votes made in the electronic voting system, voice vote, ~~division of the House~~ or ballot.

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IV. Of Officers

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19. The Clerk shall prepare the Journal and cause it to be printed. The Journal shall record the proceedings of the House, except when acting in Committee of the Whole, including the titles of bills, proposed amendments, the names of the members, and the votes ~~which that they give~~ that they give on every question decided by ~~roll call~~ votes cast on the electronic voting system as set forth in Rule 69, and such other matters as may be pertinent. The Journal shall not be read except at the direction of the House.

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XI. Of Voting

69. ~~The alphabetical roll call shall be called upon any question if demanded by one member and sustained by at least four other members~~ All votes shall be cast on the electronic voting system by the Yeas and Nays, except for procedural votes or other minor votes that are agreed to be cast in the manner of a voice vote or its electronic equivalent; provided, however, that such a vote shall be cast on the electronic voting system by the Yeas and Nays if demanded by one member. All votes cast on the electronic voting system by the Yeas and Nays shall be public and shall be printed in the Journal.

70. Explanations of votes cast on the electronic voting system by the Yeas and Nays will be allowed only after the ~~roll call~~ casting of votes is complete and immediately before the result thereof is announced. Explanations shall be submitted immediately to the Clerk in writing. It is generally recommended that vote explanations should be infrequent and brief.

71. ~~A division of the House shall be had upon order of the Speaker or upon demand of one member. If the vote be taken by division, a voting member who is unable to stand need not rise to express his or her vote but shall indicate the vote in some other manner. [Repealed.]~~

72. ~~No member or other person may remain by the Clerk's desk when the roll is being called. [Repealed.]~~

73. When a vote is taken, every member present shall vote unless excused by the House; but no member may be compelled to vote who was absent when the question was stated from the Chair.

74. ~~At the conclusion of the call of the roll, the alphabetical roll of the absentees will be called and, subject to Rule 73, members who were absent when their names were first called and who are now present shall then vote. Members not present when their names were called the second time shall not be permitted to vote, except by leave of the House. Members shall not be permitted to change their votes after the results of a vote have been announced, except by leave of the House.~~

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