



## FACT SHEET

### The new hybrid voting process

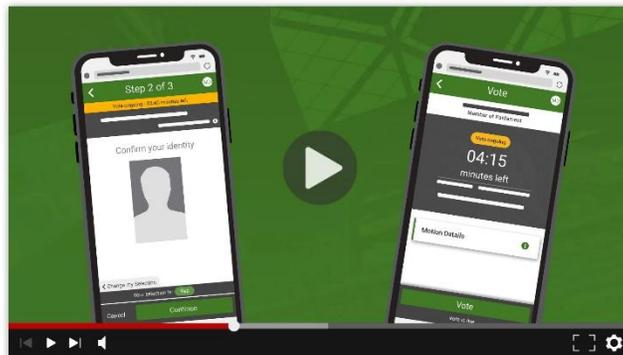
On January 25, 2021, a [motion](#) was adopted by the House of Commons extending hybrid proceedings.

Prior to this, on September 23, 2020, a [motion](#) had been adopted by the House that allowed Members to participate in House proceedings either in person or by videoconference and that tasked the House Administration with preparing an electronic voting system.

As required by the January 25, 2021, motion, two simulations took place in February and all Members were invited to attend. The first simulation took place on February 1 and, following that simulation, the Whips agreed to certain changes to the proposed process for this new approach to hybrid votes. The changes were successfully tested during the second simulation on February 16 and were later encapsulated in a [motion](#) adopted by the House on February 22, 2021. Based on the results of the simulations, the House Leaders of the recognized parties informed the Speaker that they were satisfied that the electronic voting system was ready to be implemented.

As of February 26 and until June 23, 2021, Members can vote by:

- standing in the Chamber to indicate their vote;
- submitting their vote through the electronic voting system; or
- in the event of technical issues, submitting their vote by videoconference using the “Raise Hand” feature.



[Watch this video for an overview of the hybrid voting process](#)

## **Technology**

House of Commons hybrid proceedings provide for simultaneous interpretation, closed captioning, streaming and broadcasting. The new electronic voting system has been integrated in the technology already in place to support hybrid proceedings.

In order to vote electronically, Members must be in Canada and enrolled in the electronic voting system.

## **Cybersecurity**

Cybersecurity is an integral part of any technology-based solution offered by the House of Commons.

The Administration maintains close working relations with other legislatures, as well as with national and international security partners and leaders in the technology industry, to ensure that all appropriate security measures and protocols are in place.

The House of Commons engaged Canada's national security partners to provide advice and guidance on the proposed information architecture for this solution. These partners also reviewed the solution to ensure that it meets or surpasses all essential and recommended security criteria.

## **Identity confirmation**

In addition to the many IT security access controls and authentication steps that the House of Commons already has in place, every time Members participate in a vote using the electronic voting system they are required to take a live picture of themselves to confirm their identity. The authenticated photos are sent through the system and available for the Whips to consult.

If the system's automated security controls detect a significant discrepancy between the live picture that was taken and the Member's photograph taken as part of the enrollment process, the Member will be prompted to take a second picture.

After two failed attempts, the system will notify the Member that their identity could not be confirmed. The non-authenticated photo is then sent through the system for consultation by the Whips. These vote records are marked to inform the Whips that the system was unable to confirm the identity of the Member. Any instance of a non-authenticated picture, where the identity of the Member voting is not clearly established, may give rise to a point of order from a House Officer and require the Member in question to confirm their identity before the end of the vote.

## **Procedural considerations**

### **Notification of a vote**

When the House is ready to proceed to a vote, the Speaker will say, "Call in the Members."

The division bells will ring as usual in the Parliamentary Precinct; a countdown clock will appear on the Chamber proceedings broadcast and in the remote voting system when Members are logged in. Members will also receive notification of the vote through multiple channels, including their personal parliamentary email address.

## Voting process

After the division bells have rung for the required time and the Government and Opposition Whips have signalled their readiness to proceed, the Speaker will read the motion to be voted on. Two activities will then start almost simultaneously:

### In the Chamber

- For Members present in the Chamber, the vote will be carried out in the usual way. The Speaker will first call for those **in favour** of the motion, then those **opposed**. As is the normal practice, Members are to stand, when required, to indicate their vote.

### Virtually

- As the names of those in the Chamber start to be called, Members participating virtually will see a countdown clock in the voting system, as well as the motion on which the House is voting. Members can tap **Motion Details** to see the motion's subject, sponsor and full text. To cast their vote through the electronic voting system, Members must tap the **Vote** button and

#### 1. Indicate "Yea," "Nay" or "Abstain" and confirm their selection



After selecting "Yea," "Nay" or "Abstain," Members can either tap **Continue** to proceed to the next step (see 2 and 3 below) or tap **Cancel** to return to the main page.

**About abstentions:** Abstentions are neither recorded nor included in a vote's official tally. Selecting "Abstain" is the electronic equivalent of remaining seated in the Chamber when the Speaker calls for all those in favour of or opposed to the motion to rise.

#### 2. Confirm their identity



Every time a Member casts their vote, they must take a live picture of themselves through the system (with their mobile device's camera).

#### 3. Submit their vote



After a Member's picture has been captured, the screen will display a **Submit Vote button**, along with the Member's voting intention. The Member must then tap **Submit Vote** to register their vote.

## Vote tally

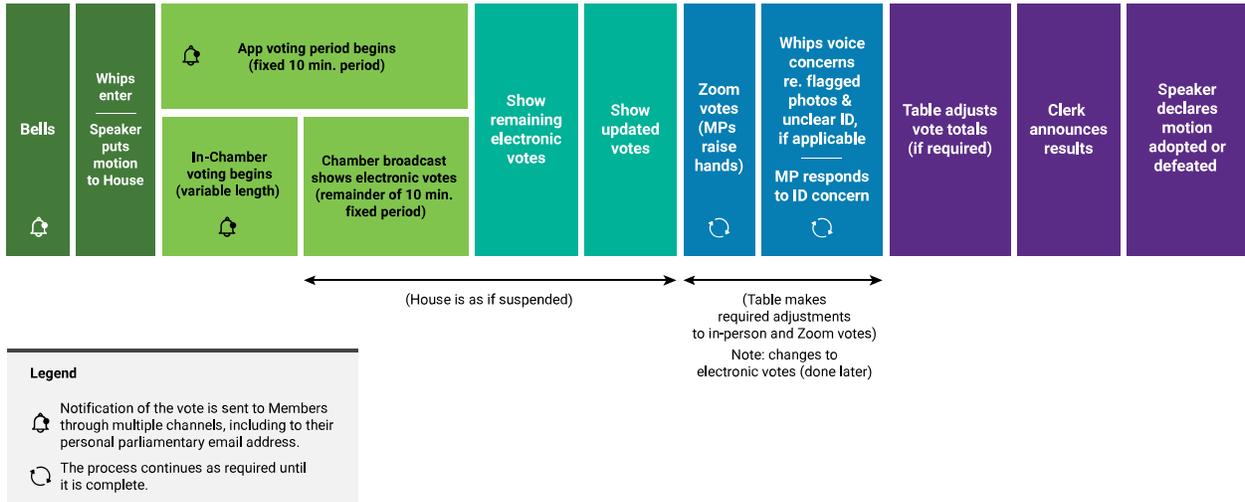
- The Whips of all recognized parties will have access to an electronic dashboard that indicates which Members are connected to the system, who submits a vote, and what that vote is (“Yea,” “Nay” or “Abstain”). The dashboard also shows the Whips the photos submitted through the system and any technical issues reported to the IT Support team.
- The Speaker will then provide an opportunity for Members participating virtually and whose votes have not yet been recorded due to technical difficulties to use the **Raise Hand** function. Those Members will be recognized by the Speaker so that they may indicate their voting intention.
- Following this, for photos where the identity is not confirmed by the system, a House Officer from a recognized party may indicate to the Speaker if the picture of a Member does not allow them to confirm the Member’s visual identity. The Speaker will then ask that Member to confirm their vote. A Member who is unable to confirm their identity before the end of the vote will not have their vote recorded.
- Once all the votes have been counted by the Table Officers, the Clerk will report the results to the Speaker, who will then declare the motion carried or defeated. The results will be reported in the *Journals* and other sources in the usual fashion.

## Resubmitting a vote using the electronic voting system

When using the electronic voting system, Members receive a confirmation of their voting intention. The system makes it possible for Members to change their vote if required. To change their vote in the system, a Member must repeat all three steps required for casting a vote: indicate and confirm “Yea,” “Nay” or “Abstain”; validate their identity by taking a photo; and submit their vote.

However, votes may only be changed in the system **before the end of the set voting period**, and each subsequent vote a Member casts on a given motion will nullify the one before. Therefore, the last vote cast at the time the voting period expires will be recorded and counted in the official tally. No additional time will be given. Should a Member wish to change their vote following the close of a voting period, the unanimous consent of the House is required for them to do so.

## Visual overview of the hybrid voting process



## Technical difficulties

A technical support team is available to assist Members before, during and after a vote.

In the event of a technical issue with the electronic voting system during a vote, Members may log in to the virtual House sitting and, immediately following the close of the 10-minute voting period, the Speaker will recognize Members with technical difficulties who wish to record their vote. The voting period concludes once the Clerk announces the results to the House.

At the end of the voting period, the votes cast by Members who experienced technical difficulties will be confirmed and included in the tally reported to the Speaker.

## Broadcast of the voting process



Votes cast remotely by Members are recorded through the voting system and included in the Chamber broadcast once the in-person voting is complete.

In addition, the public has access to the [live vote Web page](#) that provides a near real-time view of the votes recorded both in the House and via the voting

system. This information is only available during the voting period.

After the House adjourns, the official results of the vote are published in the [Journals](#) (official record of the decisions and other transactions of the House), as well as on ourcommons.ca in the “[Votes](#)” section.

The vote numbers are announced in the Chamber after the full voting process is complete.

**For updates, please follow [@HoCChamber](#) and [@HoCSpeaker](#).**

**For more information:**

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