



Physicians Caring for Texans

## TMA Balloting Procedures

### TMA BYLAWS REFERENCE

#### 7.42 Balloting.

All elections shall be by secret ballot, and a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary to elect. When there are three or more nominees for a single position, the one receiving the least number of votes on each ballot shall be dropped until one of the said nominees receives a majority vote. When there is only one nomination, vote may be by acclamation.

When (1) two or more vacancies exist, and (2) there are three or more nominees, election procedures are as follows:

#### 7.421 First ballot.

All nominees shall be listed in a randomly determined sequence on a single ballot. Each elector shall have as many votes as there are positions to be filled, and each vote must be cast for a different nominee. No ballot shall be counted if it contains fewer or more than the number of votes to be cast, or if the ballot contains more than one vote for any nominee. Nominees who receive (1) a vote on a majority of the legal ballots cast and (2) the highest majorities shall be elected to the vacancies to be filled.

#### 7.422 Run-off ballot.

The house shall hold a run-off election to fill any vacancy that cannot be filled because of a tie vote.

#### 7.423 Subsequent ballots.

If all vacancies are not filled on the first ballot and three or more positions are still to be elected, the number of nominees on subsequent ballots shall be no more than twice the number of remaining vacancies less one. The nominees on subsequent ballots shall be determined by retaining those who received the greater number of votes on the preceding ballot and eliminating those nominees who received the fewest number of votes on the preceding ballot, except when there is a tie. When two or fewer positions are still to be elected, the number of nominees on subsequent ballots shall be no more than twice the number remaining vacancies, with the nominees determined as indicated in the preceding sentence. On any subsequent ballot, the electors shall cast as many votes as there are positions yet to be elected, and must cast each vote for a different nominee. In any subsequent ballot, if no nominee receives a majority, the nominee receiving the least number of votes shall be dropped. This procedure shall be repeated until all vacancies have been filled.

### ELECTRONIC VOTING

The preferred method of balloting used by the TMA House of Delegates (HOD) is an electronic audience response system (ARS). During credentialing on the second day of the Annual Session, each voting member is issued a voting unit. Each wireless, handheld unit has a unique identification code on the back.

Units are scanned during credentialing to allow for retrieval of the units should they not be returned at the close of house business.

Ballots and voting instructions for each election are projected onto two large screens at the front of the house meeting room. Should a ballot require amending, TMA technical staff will dim the screens while the changes are made. The speakers will notify members once it is time for the election to resume.

Using the keypad on the handheld voting unit, a delegate may change his or her vote as many times as necessary during the “active” period of a called vote. The active period is the time between the speaker of the house stating “Vote Now” and “Time.”

Under the supervision of the chief teller, TMA’s Associate Vice-President for Technology and Information Systems uses the ARS system software to capture each vote cast. The votes are then processed through a software application, which ensures their conformance with TMA Bylaws.

The chief teller provides the final election results to the speakers for reporting to the house.

A voting member may request the chief teller to validate his or her vote to ensure the wireless voting system has captured it accurately. This request must be made within one hour following adjournment of the house, after which the voting histories of individual house members are destroyed.

#### VOTING BY HAND OR PAPER BALLOT

If the speaker or vice speaker, or a member of the House of Delegates, requests a vote be tallied by ballot or hand, the chief teller is prepared with alternative vote collection tools. These include blank paper ballots and handheld tally-counter clicker devices.

Paper ballots ARE NOT provided to HOD voting members during credentialing. In the event the speaker or vice speaker requests an election using paper ballots, the chief teller will distribute blank paper ballots to voting members of the house.

The chief teller will call upon the Credentials Committee to assist with the distribution, collection, and counting of the paper ballots.

Delegates will follow the direction of the speaker or vice speaker as to the proper method for casting a valid paper election ballot. Upon the request of the speaker or vice speaker, the chief teller and the Credentials Committee will collect ballots and, with the support of four TMA staff, enter a predetermined location to count ballots.

The method for counting ballots is at the discretion of the chief teller, but it is suggested that ballots be divided into four counting groups, each comprising one delegate and one TMA staff member. One member of each counting group reads the name(s) of the candidate(s) selected on each ballot, and the other member tallies the votes. Once all counting groups have completed their tally, the ballots are passed to a second counting group to verify the votes in the same manner as the first counting group. If the vote totals are the same, the numbers from each counting group are provided to the chief teller for final documentation. If the vote counts do not match, the ballots are given to another counting group until the ballot count is verified.

The chief teller makes the final determination as to the validity of any ballot in question.

The chief teller uses the verified vote counts from each counting group to complete the final voting results document and hand-deliver this document to the speaker or vice speaker. The speaker or vice speaker will announce the results or the need for a subsequent run-off ballot.

TMA staff will keep all paper ballots until one hour following house adjournment, at which time the ballots will be disposed of properly.

#### TALLY SHEETS

For all contested elections, tally sheets will include: (1) the number of individuals voting, (2) the number of valid ballots (ballots cast in conformance with TMA Bylaws section 7.421), (3) the number of invalid ballots, and (4) the number of votes received by each candidate.

#### RECORD OF ELECTION RESULTS

The chief teller uses a tally sheet to record the election results. The results are given to the speakers, who announce the winners in each election. Any house member can view the election results, including candidate vote counts, by visiting the HOD staff table onsite at the house meeting once all elections have concluded, or by contacting their local county medical society executive. Members may also contact HOD staff following the meeting to be provided with a copy of the election results.