



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

THE SPEAKER

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Ms S Gwarube, MP
Chief Whip: Democratic Alliance
Parliament of the RSA
CAPEW TOWN
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Dear Ms Gwarube,

REQUEST FOR MANUAL VOTING PROCEDURE TO BE IMPLEMENTED DURING THE CONSIDERATION OF THE SECTION 89 INDEPENDENT PANEL REPORT INTO PHALA PHALA ON 6 DECEMBER 2022

Your letter, dated 30 November 2022, on the above subject, bears reference.

As you correctly note, the Rules of the National Assembly permit the Speaker to determine the voting procedure in the event a division is requested on an item of business before the Assembly. Any such decision is informed by practical and other considerations. Owing to the prevailing circumstances where most members log onto the proceeding from a virtual platform, the voting system whereby the whips are asked to record the total votes from the respective parties has been in use for over two years since the pandemic. Whereas the system is by no means ideal, it is efficient and allows individual members. Most importantly, and in keeping with their constitutional prerogative, any member of the House is given the opportunity to voice out a vote different from that registered by their party position, should they so wish. This is always the case when the current voting procedure is in use.

A vote by roll-call entails the names of members being called individually, and their votes recorded. While this is certainly preferable, the procedure poses significant risks and challenges, especially in regard to votes from the virtual platform. By its nature the procedure does drag on for a long time. The last time this voting procedure was used, the voting itself took approximately one and a half hours to complete. The inherent risk in this is that once the doors are locked,

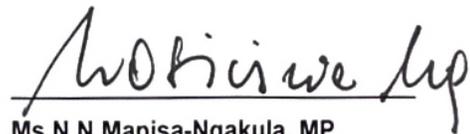
members whose online connection may have dropped before their names are called up to vote cannot be readmitted, and consequently may not be able to register their vote.

Another is the fact that some members may not be able to use their video feed due to bandwidth / connectivity challenges, and this was considered to put the integrity of their vote to question. These challenges were evident when the system was last employed on 30 March 2022, and these concerns also created some amount of disorder in the House at the time.

While I concur with the principles you articulate in your correspondence, in light of current circumstances and the practical difficulties raised above I am of the view that a vote by roll-call may give rise to avoidable procedural complications. Given the prominence of the item in question, procedural challenges must be avoided if possible. I do believe that your request does raise the urgency of finalizing the development of the electronic voting system.

For the reasons articulated above, I am not able to grant the request for a vote by roll-call.

Yours sincerely,



Ms N N Mapisa-Nqakula, MP

Speaker of the National Assembly

Date: 04 Dec. 2022