

- Added explanations on the potential downsides of private voting based on delegate discussions observed on Telegram. Credit to [@Immutablelawyer](#), [@coinflip](#), [@sid\\_aret](#), and [@thedejavanshmehta](#) for these additional perspectives. Thank you as well as those who have commented thus far on this post [@JoJo](#), [@jameskbh](#), [@EzR3aL](#), and [@Bob-Rossi](#). This has led us to update the voting options to include using Shielded Voting for elections only.
- Linked a 2-month shielded voting [trial](#) in Aave DAO in the Background section.
- Updated the voting options to be: The DAO should default to using Shielded Voting For All Votes / For Elections Only / Against / Abstain

## Abstract

This proposal aims to kickstart a conversation around the adoption of Shutter's shielded voting as a default for Snapshot temperature checks. Shielded voting encrypts votes during the voting period and decrypts them only after the vote closes, mitigating bandwagon effects, voter apathy, and last-minute strategic voting. A Snapshot vote to gauge the DAO's sentiment will be posted on Thursday, August 8th

. Please note, this is an actual temperature check, just to gauge the DAO's opinion on the subject.

## Background

Shutter's shielded voting differs slightly from a traditional [secret ballot](#) where voter's identity and selection are kept anonymous. In this case, votes are encrypted during the voting period and are decrypted only after the vote closes. Put more simply, during the voting process, a voter's position is private, and after the vote, positions are made public. You can see who voted, but not their choice or the total VP per option, until the poll has closed (to clarify any confusion please see the demo linked below). Shutter's shielded voting on Snapshot has been live for over 2 years now and additional details about the implementation can be found on their [blog](#). A live demo of shielded voting can be found on [Snapshot](#).

Other DAOs have run experiments with shielded voting in the past. Results from a 2-month trial period in Aave DAO can be found [here](#). It is important to note that the majority of Aave DAO's proposals are related to protocols parameters, which require more specific knowledge sets on risk & economics. Therefore, it's not immediately clear how directly the results from Aave DAO can be compared to Arbitrum DAO.

## Rationale

In the 19th century, most western democracies transitioned from public to private voting methods in elections primarily to reduce voter coercion. While voter coercion is not a widespread issue in the onchain governance space, public votes are susceptible to a few other negative phenomena:

- Bandwagon Effect:

Voters without a strong opinion tend to go with the current majority opinion. With shielded voting, no one can see how the vote is progressing, thus preventing delegates from being persuaded simply by popular choice.

- Voter Apathy:

On the flipside, when those in a minority opinion see that their vote no longer impacts the results of either an election or decisions, they may choose not to vote at all. This can be due to feelings that their vote doesn't matter or that strategically it is not worth the social capital to publicly dissent against the majority.

- 11th Hour Voting:

With public voting there is an inherent information mismatch, as the last voter has much more available information to act on than the first voter. Currently, there is a strong incentive to wait until the last possible minute to vote. In some instances this is benevolent behavior as large delegates may not want to indirectly create a bandwagon effect, but other times it can be seen as borderline misbehavior when a late vote is used to strategically create an outcome.

To clarify, we are not arguing that Arbitrum DAO is currently suffering from these effects, but they are each possible with the current public system. There are also downsides to private voting that we'd like to highlight:

- Overall participation may go down if smaller delegates feel like their positions are no longer impactful, as public voting gives those delegates a chance to strongly voice their opinions by voting early.
- Politically savvy parties who have the ability or connections to coordinate now have an even bigger advantage.
- Those who choose to publicly signal their positions gain an advantage over a silent opposition, as some delegate may hold a firm position on silence until the vote concludes.

- Delegates that know how the votes are falling due to backdoor channels can potentially then use residual votes strategically. With public voting methods, this is something that most everyone can do with less effort and connections.

In general though, Shutter's shielded voting allows Arbitrum DAO to remain consistent with practice in liberal democracies that votes taken by elected officials (delegates in this case) are publicized so that citizens can judge voting records. Since it addresses many of the aforementioned concerns with public voting methods, Entropy felt it was a worthwhile conversation to bring to the DAO.

## Specifications

Given there are some advantages in certain scenarios to private votes for temperature checks, Entropy Advisors is kickstarting this conversation by posing the following question:

Should Arbitrum DAO default to using shielded voting for Snapshot votes?

There will be 4 Voting Choices:

- For all Snapshot Votes
- For Elections Only
- Against
- Abstain

It is our recommendation that proposal authors still be granted the ability to include reasoning for if a vote should be public instead of shielded. If properly justified, we see no reason to force all Snapshot votes to be shielded (at the DAO's discretion).

## Timeline

A Snapshot poll will be posted on August 8th

to gauge the DAO's overall sentiment and allow for ample conversation beforehand.

Additional proposals to follow will include temperature checks for COI policy, delegate code of conduct, and other ideas to improve the DAO's operational processes. If the vote passes, shielded voting will be incorporated along with the other aforementioned ideas that pass a temp check into a larger proposal. This proposal will look to codify all of the DAO's new processes into a socially enforceable proposal. After a trial period of the more grandiose unified proposal around DAO Operations, we hope to eventually implement the ideas that have worked best into the Constitution.

It is important to note, that delegates are already free to post shielded votes. In the case that shielded voting is favored by the DAO, more shielded votes are encouraged while this larger proposal is being worked on.

## Cost

There is no cost to the DAO as shielded voting is already available to all DAOs on Snapshot.