

# Can we reach Consensus On what is Consensus?

How we work

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# Definition of Consensus

*General agreement* from the ***Latin*** *consens* (agreement)

From several dictionaries:

*a generally accepted opinion or decision among a group of people*

*the judgment arrived at by most of those concerned*

*group solidarity in sentiment and belief*

Some definitions include *unanimity*

# Consensus within Ecma Rules

## From Ecma Rules

6.2.3 Voting on any matter shall be by simple majority of Ecma TC members. Each Ecma member has only one vote.

6.2.4 It is recommended that in the course of its ordinary work the TC should not use voting unless it is impossible to make progress without a vote.

6.2.18 Any member of a TC has the right to ask for a minority report, which they shall provide, to be included into the semi-annual report.

# TC39 Consensus

*Our terminology*

*Do we have consensus?*

*Is there explicit support for stage X?*

*Anyone block consensus?*

*I withhold consensus.*

***“I withhold consensus” === Veto***

**“Any man more right than his neighbors  
constitutes a majority of one already”**

**- Henry David Thoreau**

# Issues with Our Current Consensus Process

*These are my observations*

- Typically used by a small minority of TC39 members.
  - Often long time participants.
  - Who tend to be more vocal.
  - With the appearance of unequal authority within committee.
- Usually stops discussion of ideas for that meeting AND future meetings.
- Can discourage newer members.
- Counter to committee working relationship and cohesion

*To be clear, I am not advocating  
we approve more proposals or  
reduce the rigor when deciding  
what's in our standards.*



# Options

*Requires our current consensus process to change*

- A. Maintain the current decision process - *One person can veto any proposal.*
- B. Increase number of consensus withholders required - **More than 1 required.**
- C. Voting - Every proposal subject to a majority vote - **51%, 66%, 75%, 80%...**
- D. General Consensus - **Move forward if there is no or minimal dissent.  
Stop if there is significant concerns.**

# Discussion