

## Warranty Four

**Warranty Four states: “That all important decisions should be reached by discussion, vote, and wherever possible, by substantial unanimity.”**

**Warranty Four** is concerned with making decisions – by discussion, vote and substantial unanimity – **whenever possible.**

**(From Concepts)** – This can be our safeguard (protection) against the hasty or overbearing authority of a simple majority (close vote); it also takes notice of the rights and the frequent wisdom of minorities, however small.

This principle guarantees that all-important matters should be extensively debated – time permitting – and minority voices – however few – should be heard. And such debate should continue until a heavy majority can support every critical decision.

**Simple majority lacks authority and confidence.**

**Limitations and or exceptions to substantial unanimity: We cannot allow a minority to block a vitally needed service. Majority can vote to terminate debate (Call the Question).**

**(From '85 Conference Report): Warranty Four creates an opportunity for God to work through the majority vote and also be heard through “frequent wisdom of the minorities.”**

Even decisions made according to this concept can go wrong. And in this case it has been noted and witnessed that some decisions that are made at the end of a meeting when many have already left early; are tired and not inclined to discuss or debate the issues before them. **(This happens at all levels).**

**What constitutes “substantial unanimity?”** Majority is defined as “more than half of the total.” Can a wise decision be made based on a vote of 51 – for and 49 – against? Or 55 – for and 45 – against? What can be done in these cases?

**What is the difference between a simple majority and a major majority?**

**What is a vote by plurality?**

**(From Terry W., Area 50 Delegate, 1993 Conf. Presentation on the General Warranties) “...No wonder it takes so long and requires such lengthy deliberations to effect any changes in our Fellowship. All the alcoholics that I know have lots of ideas and opinions and all want their point of view expressed. Just try to get a group of alcoholics to agree on a matter of importance in a very limited time, and you’ll find rebellion in the ranks. This Warranty is our guarantee (our saving grace) that all voices will be heard, and even the minority opinion will be given audience. Even further, this principle assures that all who wish to participate are given the opportunity to do so, and decisions are made by an informed group conscience. As a guard against the hasty or impulsive feeling of an aroused majority, substantial unanimity further strengthens our unity, de-emphasizing the “I” and emphasizing the “We.”**

Respectfully submitted,

Vaughn H., past delegate-panel 51, area 60