You Can Vote Multiple Times, But Only Your Last Vote Counts

The company that is coordinating the ABF ratification vote, BallotPoint, received an inquiry from an ABF member who said he was able to vote multiple times. Below is information from BallotPoint to address the member's concerns.

As indicated in the Voting Notice, you may recast your vote at any time during the voting period, but only your last vote will be counted. Why is recasting a vote permitted? In a contract-vote situation, members may wish to change their votes based on new information learned during the voting period.

This situation is no different than in a mail-ballot, where you can request a "duplicate ballot." And exactly as in a mail-ballot, only the last vote received (based on a postmark or similar in a mail-ballot, or the when-you-cast-your-vote time in a BallotPoint election) will be counted. One difference: In a mail-ballot, votes that are not counted are left unopened but exist until all the voting materials and records for that election are physically destroyed, which is at least a year but potentially much longer; in our system, a previous vote is completely replaced by the new vote when a recast occurs, so only the last vote ever exists within the system. There is no possibility that replaced votes can be improperly counted or opened after the election.

Here's how it works for this ABF vote:

- When you cast your vote, it is received by the BallotPoint server, which encrypts it (twice, in fact). This is analogous to the mail-ballot situation where you place your marked ballot in a "secrecy envelope." The encrypted vote is then stored in the BallotPoint system, alongside a unique ID. Including that ID is analogous to you writing your name on the ballot-return envelope which you send back in a mail-ballot.

- When you recast, your previous, encrypted vote is replaced by your new, encrypted vote. The system is programmed to overwrite the previous vote with the new vote, so that only one vote per voter is present in the system. The vote to replace is identified by the unique ID mentioned above.

- So, only your last vote you cast is ever stored in the BallotPoint system, and it is the one that gets decrypted and counted at the tally. Please note that the unique IDs are stripped before any decryption occurs, so the confidentialty of your vote is protected.

Regarding confirmation numbers: These exist only to let you know that your vote was successfully encrypted and stored in the BallotPoint system. If you do not receive a confirmation number during the voting process, then your vote has not been stored yet. If you recast, you will get a new confirmation number.