

C++26 Needs To Go Back



A C++ Alliance brief for the National Bodies of ISO/IEC JTC1/SC22

To the National Bodies of JTC1/SC22:

The C++ Alliance asks you to send C++26 back. Vote No on the DIS ballot, with technical comments, as the Directives unconditionally provide. The authority to approve this draft, defer it, or return it for revision belongs to you alone. The Contracts feature reached the draft without the rigorous technical evaluation that a permanent addition to the language demands.

The process bypassed technical review. Contracts advanced on a schedule that compressed review. The path foreclosed the field-experience step the committee has required of comparable safety features. Fundamental design questions reversed repeatedly - changes a mature proposal would have settled before reaching the draft. None of this broke a rule. That is why it cannot be caught from inside. A process built to produce consensus on time will produce it, whether or not the design beneath has been audited. The working group cannot distinguish social consensus from technical judgment in its own record. You can.

You are the last line of defense. The ISO system placed the final review outside the working group for a reason. The participants closest to a proposal are the least able to check it. At the ballot, one country holds one vote - the one stage where the size of a delegation counts for nothing. After your vote, no other reviewer stands between the draft and publication. You have seldom needed that defense, and your restraint was appropriate. For three decades the committee was small enough, papers arrived with time to read them, and outcomes stayed provisional until the ballot. Those conditions no longer hold. More than one National Body filed formal opposition to this feature at the Committee Draft - a first in over a decade. National Bodies have returned working group output before, in other ISO committees, and the system never treated that as extraordinary. You are not going first. You are joining.

Deferral is the conservative act. Approve, and you lock the feature's defects into an international standard - and into the ABI every implementation in your country depends on - permanently. Defer, and you give it the evaluation it skipped, at the cost of one cycle. The work does not stop: published papers (P4317, P4324) already offer paths forward. A ballot exercised once, on the merits, does more than correct a single draft. It ensures that everyone knows your mirror committee will review the draft before it publishes. To ratify a process you could not review risks your standing. To exercise your oversight is how you build it.

Respectfully,

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