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## PROXY VOTING POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Effective Date 12/15/2022

These policies and procedures (and the guidelines that follow) apply to the voting of proxies by Northern Trust Corporation affiliates (“Northern Trust”) for accounts over which Northern Trust has been granted proxy voting discretion.

# Table of Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Northern Trust Proxy Voting Policies and Procedures .....  | 1         |
| <b>SECTION 1. PROXY VOTING GUIDELINES .....</b>  | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>SECTION 2. PROXY COMMITTEE.....</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>SECTION 3. PROXY VOTING SERVICE.....</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>SECTION 4. APPLICATION OF PROXY GUIDELINES .....</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>SECTION 6. PROXY VOTING RECORDS; CLIENT DISCLOSURES .....</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>SECTION 7. ERISA ACCOUNTS .....</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>SECTION 8. MUTUAL FUNDS.....</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>SECTION 9. OTHER SPECIAL SITUATIONS .....</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
| <br>   |           |
| Northern Trust Proxy Voting Guidelines .....   | 6         |
| <b>I. The Board of Directors .....</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| A. Voting on Director Nominees in Uncontested Elections .....  | 6         |
| B. Director Independence .....   | 6         |
| C. Director Attendance .....   | 7         |
| Northern Trust will vote case by case on individual directors who attend fewer than 75 percent of board and board-committee meetings for two consecutive years. .... | 7         |
| D. Lead Independent Director.....  | 7         |
| E. Overboarding Issues .....   | 7         |
| F. Diversity .....   | 7         |
| G. Stock Ownership Requirements .....  | 7         |
| H. Board Evaluation and Refreshment.....   | 8         |
| I. Director and Officer Indemnification and Liability Protection.....  | 8         |
| <b>II. Proxy Contests .....</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| A. Voting for Director Nominees in Contested Elections.....  | 8         |
| <b>III. Auditors.....</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| A. Ratifying Auditors.....   | 9         |
| <b>IV. Proxy Contest Defenses .....</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| A. Board Structure: Staggered vs. Annual Elections .....   | 9         |
| B. Shareholder Ability to Remove Directors .....   | 9         |
| C. Cumulative Voting .....   | 10        |
| D. Majority Voting .....   | 10        |
| E. Shareholder Ability to Call Special Meetings .....  | 11        |
| F. Shareholder Ability to Act by Written Consent.....  | 11        |
| G. Shareholder Ability to Alter the Size of the Board .....  | 11        |
| <b>V. Tender Offer Defenses .....</b>  | <b>11</b> |
| A. Poison Pills.....   | 11        |
| B. Fair Price Provisions .....   | 11        |
| C. Greenmail.....  | 11        |
| D. Supermajority Shareholder Vote Requirement to Amend the Charter or Bylaws.....  | 12        |
| <b>VI. Miscellaneous Governance Provisions .....</b>   | <b>12</b> |
| A. Confidential Voting.....  | 12        |
| B. Bundled Proposals.....  | 12        |
| C. Shareholder Advisory Committees .....   | 12        |
| D. Board of Directors Failure to Respond to Certain Majority Approved Shareholder Proposals .....  | 12        |
| E. Board of Directors Failure to Adequately Respond to Rejected Board Compensation Proposals..   | 13        |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| F. Compensation Committee Failure to Adequately Address Pay for Performance .....   | 13        |
| G. ESG Failures .....   | 13        |
| H. Succession Policies .....  | 13        |
| I. Proxy Access .....   | 13        |
| J. Other Business.....  | 13        |
| <b>VII. Capital Structure .....</b>   | <b>14</b> |
| A. Common Stock Authorization.....  | 14        |
| B. Stock Distributions: Splits and Dividends.....   | 14        |
| Northern Trust generally allows for management discretion on matters related to stock distributions, such as stock splits and stock dividends. .... | 14        |
| C. Unequal Voting Rights.....   | 14        |
| D. Reverse Stock Splits.....  | 14        |
| E. Blank Check Preferred Authorization .....  | 14        |
| F. Shareholder Proposals Regarding Blank Check Preferred Stock.....   | 14        |
| G. Adjust Par Value of Common Stock .....   | 14        |
| H. Preemptive Rights .....  | 15        |
| I. Debt Restructurings .....  | 15        |
| J. Share Repurchase Programs .....  | 15        |
| <b>VIII. Executive and Director Compensation .....</b>  | <b>15</b> |
| A. Equity-Based and Other Incentive Plans.....  | 15        |
| B. OBRA-Related Compensation Proposals.....   | 16        |
| C. Proposals Concerning Executive and Director Pay .....  | 16        |
| D. Golden and Tin Parachutes .....  | 16        |
| E. Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) and Other Broad-Based Employee Stock Plans.....   | 16        |
| F. 401(k) Employee Benefit Plans .....  | 17        |
| <b>IX. State of Incorporation .....</b>   | <b>17</b> |
| A. Voting on State Takeover Statutes .....  | 17        |
| B. Voting on Reincorporation Proposals .....  | 17        |
| <b>X. Mergers and Corporate Restructurings.....</b>   | <b>17</b> |
| A. Mergers and Acquisitions .....   | 17        |
| B. Corporate Restructuring .....  | 17        |
| C. Spin-offs.....   | 17        |
| D. Asset Sales .....  | 18        |
| F. Appraisal Rights .....   | 18        |
| G. Changing Corporate Name.....   | 18        |
| H. Adjourn Meeting .....  | 18        |
| <b>XI. Mutual Funds.....</b>  | <b>18</b> |
| A. Election of Trustees .....   | 18        |
| B. Investment Advisory Agreement.....   | 18        |
| C. Fundamental Investment Restrictions .....  | 18        |
| D. Distribution Agreements .....  | 18        |
| <b>XII. Environmental and Social Issues .....</b>   | <b>19</b> |
| A. Environment.....   | 19        |
| B. Diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity .....   | 19        |
| C. Consumer and Product Safety .....  | 20        |
| D. Supply Chain Management.....   | 20        |
| E. Animal Welfare .....   | 20        |
| F. Political and Charitable Contributions.....  | 20        |

## **Northern Trust Proxy Voting Policies and Procedures**

These policies and procedures (and the guidelines that follow) apply to the voting of proxies by Northern Trust Corporation affiliates (“Northern Trust”) for accounts over which Northern Trust has been granted proxy voting discretion.

### **SECTION 1. PROXY VOTING GUIDELINES**

The fundamental precept followed by Northern Trust in voting proxies is to ensure that the manner in which shares are voted is in the best interest of clients/beneficiaries and the value of the investment. As used in these policies and procedures the term “clients/beneficiaries” means any person or entity having the legal or beneficial ownership interest, as the case may be, in a trust, custody or investment management account over which Northern Trust has discretionary voting authority.

Absent special circumstances of the types described in these policies and procedures, Northern Trust will generally exercise its proxy voting discretion in accordance with the guidelines set forth below. In situations where the application of Northern Trust’s guidelines would be inappropriate for particular proxy issues of non-U.S. companies due to local market standards, customs and best practices, Northern Trust will instruct its Proxy Voting Service (defined below in Section 3) to provide a vote recommendation based on the Proxy Voting Service’s relevant global guidelines. Examples of such issues include “poison pill” defenses, which are allowed to be approved by a company’s board of directors without shareholder approval in a number of countries, and definitions of director independence, which vary significantly from country to country.

The foregoing domestic and global proxy voting guidelines are collectively referred to in these policies and procedures as the “Proxy Guidelines”.

### **SECTION 2. PROXY COMMITTEE**

Northern Trust’s Proxy Committee has responsibility for the content, interpretation and application of the Proxy Guidelines. Membership of the Proxy Committee consists of a group of senior Northern Trust investment and compliance officers. Meetings of the Proxy Committee may be called by the Chairperson or, in his or her absence, by any two committee members. Meetings may be conducted in person or telephonically. A majority of committee members present (in person or by proxy) will constitute a quorum for the transacting of business at any meeting. The approval of proxy votes or changes to these policies and procedures or the Proxy Guidelines may be made by majority vote of those present (in person or by proxy) at a meeting called for that purpose. Alternatively, the Committee may approve proxy votes or changes to these policies and procedures or the Proxy Guidelines by a majority vote communicated telephonically (without a meeting) or electronically, provided that any action so approved is properly documented and reflected in minutes of the next meeting of the Committee.



### **SECTION 3. PROXY VOTING SERVICE**

Northern Trust has delegated to an independent third party proxy voting service (“Proxy Voting Service”), the responsibility to review proxy proposals and to make voting recommendations to the Proxy Committee in a manner consistent with the Proxy Guidelines. For proxy proposals that under the Proxy Guidelines are to be voted on a case by case basis, Northern Trust provides supplementary instructions to the Proxy Voting Service to guide it in making vote recommendations. Northern Trust has instructed the Proxy Voting Service not to exercise any discretion in making vote recommendations and to seek guidance whenever it encounters situations that are either not covered by the Proxy Guidelines or where application of the Proxy Guidelines is unclear. In the event that the Proxy Voting Service does not or will not provide recommendations with respect to proxy proposals for securities over which Northern Trust or its affiliates have voting discretion, the relevant proxy analyst at Northern Trust responsible for the issuer or its business sector shall be responsible for reviewing the proxy proposal and making a voting recommendation to the Proxy Committee consistent with the Proxy Guidelines.

The Proxy Committee will review the Proxy Voting Service on an annual basis. In connection with that review, it will assess: (1) the Proxy Voting Service’s capacity and competency in analyzing proxy issues; (2) the adequacy of the Proxy Voting Service’s staffing and personnel; (3) whether the Proxy Voting Service has robust policies and procedures that enable it to make proxy voting recommendations based on current and accurate information; and (4) the Proxy Voting Service’s ability to identify and address any real or potential conflicts of interests that exist or may have existed between the firm and its employees and the voting recommendations it made to Northern Trust. The Proxy Committee will also regularly monitor the Proxy Voting Service by requesting information from the Proxy Service to determine whether any real or potential conflicts of interest exist as a result of changes to the firm’s business or internal policies. The Proxy Voting Service will also be required to proactively communicate any (i) business changes or (ii) changes and updates to the firm’s policies and procedures that could impact the adequacy and quality of the proxy voting services or the firm’s ability to effectively manage conflicts.

### **SECTION 4. APPLICATION OF PROXY GUIDELINES**

It is intended that the Proxy Guidelines will be applied with a measure of flexibility. Accordingly, except as otherwise provided in these policies and procedures, the Proxy Committee may vote proxies contrary to the recommendations of the Proxy Voting Service, or, in the circumstances described in Section 3 above, a Northern Trust proxy analyst, if it determines such action to be in the best interests of Northern Trust clients/beneficiaries. In the exercise of such discretion the Proxy Committee may take into account a wide array of factors relating to the matter under consideration, the nature of the proposal, and the company involved. As a result, a proxy may be voted in one manner in the case of one company and in a different manner in the case of another where, for example, the past history of the company, the character and integrity of its management, the role of outside directors, and the company’s record of producing performance for investors justifies a high degree of confidence in the company and the effect of the proposal on the value of the investment. Similarly, poor past performance, uncertainties about



management and future directions, and other factors may lead to a conclusion that particular proposals present unacceptable investment risks and should not be supported. In addition, the proposals should be evaluated in context. For example, a particular proposal may be acceptable standing alone, but objectionable when part of an existing or proposed package, such as where the effect may be to entrench management. Special circumstances may also justify casting different votes for different clients/beneficiaries with respect to the same proxy vote.

The Proxy Committee will document the rationale for any proxy voted contrary to the recommendation of the Proxy Voting Service or, in the circumstances described in Section 3 above, a Northern Trust proxy analyst.

## **SECTION 5. MATERIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Northern Trust has sought to address proxy related conflicts of interest in various ways, including the establishment, composition and authority of the Proxy Committee, and the delegation of primary responsibility for proxy review and vote recommendation functions to the Proxy Voting Service. For these reasons, the potential for conflicts of interest in the voting of proxies generally arises only where the Proxy Committee is considering the possibility of voting in a manner contrary to a vote recommendation received from the Proxy Voting Service or where the Proxy Voting Service has not provided a vote recommendation. In these situations, the Proxy Committee will need to determine whether a material conflict of interest exists. For example, a material conflict of interest could arise when a proxy relates to the following non-exclusive types of issues:

- Securities issued by Northern Trust Corporation or its affiliates.
- Matters in which Northern Trust has a direct financial interest (such as shareholder approval of a change in mutual fund advisory fees where Northern Trust is the fund advisor).
- Instances where Northern Trust, its board members, executive officers, and/or others maintain relationships with the issuers of securities, proponents of shareholder proposals, participants in proxy contests, corporate directors or candidates for directorships.
- Instances where an attempt has been made to directly or indirectly influence the voting recommendation that is made.

Where the Proxy Committee determines that it is subject to a material conflict of interest, it may resolve the conflict in any of the following ways, which may vary, consistent with its duty of loyalty and care, depending on the facts and circumstances of each situation and the requirements of applicable law:

- Following the vote recommendation of an independent fiduciary appointed for that purpose;
- Voting pursuant to client direction;
- Abstaining; or



- Voting pursuant to a “mirror voting” arrangement (under which shares are voted in the same manner and proportion as some or all of the other shares not voted by the Proxy Committee).

## **SECTION 6. PROXY VOTING RECORDS; CLIENT DISCLOSURES**

Northern Trust will maintain the following records relating to proxy votes cast under these policies and procedures:

- A copy of these policies and procedures.
- A copy of each proxy statement Northern Trust receives regarding client securities.
- A record of each vote cast by Northern Trust on behalf of a client.
- A copy of any document created by the Proxy Committee that was material to making a decision how to vote proxies on behalf of a client or that memorialized the basis for that decision.
- A copy of each written client request for information on how Northern Trust voted proxies on behalf of the client, and a copy of any written response by Northern Trust to any (written or oral) client request for information on how Northern Trust voted proxies on behalf of the requesting client.

The foregoing records will be retained for such period of time as is required to comply with applicable laws and regulations. Northern Trust may rely on one or more third parties to make and retain the records referred to in items B. and C. above.

The Proxy Committee will cause copies of the foregoing records, as they relate to particular clients, to be provided to those clients upon request. It is generally the policy of Northern Trust not to disclose its proxy voting records to third parties, except as may be required by applicable laws and regulations.

## **SECTION 7. ERISA ACCOUNTS**

Plans governed by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended (“ERISA”), are to be administered consistent with the terms of the governing plan documents and applicable provisions of ERISA. In cases where sole proxy voting discretion rests with Northern Trust, the foregoing policies and procedures will be followed, subject to the fiduciary responsibility standards of ERISA. These standards generally require fiduciaries to act prudently and to discharge their duties solely in the interests of participants and beneficiaries. The Department of Labor has indicated that the voting decisions of ERISA fiduciaries must generally focus on the course that would most likely increase the value of the stock being voted.

The documents governing ERISA individual account plans may set forth various procedures for voting “employer securities” held by the plan. Where authority over the investment of plan assets is granted to plan participants, many individual account plans provide that proxies for employer



securities will be voted in accordance with directions received from plan participants as to shares allocated to their plan accounts. In some cases, the governing plan documents may further provide that unallocated shares and/or allocated shares for which no participant directions are received will be voted in accordance with a proportional voting method in which such shares are voted proportionately in the same manner as are allocated shares for which directions from participants have been received. Consistent with Labor Department positions, it is the policy of Northern Trust to follow the provisions of a plan's governing documents in the voting of employer securities unless it determines that to do so would breach its fiduciary duties under ERISA.

## **SECTION 8. MUTUAL FUNDS**

Proxies of registered management investment companies will be voted subject to any applicable investment restrictions of the fund and, to the extent applicable, in accordance with any resolutions or other instructions approved by authorized persons of the fund.

## **SECTION 9. OTHER SPECIAL SITUATIONS**

Proxies of funds or accounts that specify the use of proxy guidelines other than the Proxy Guidelines will be voted in accordance with these other guidelines. Northern Trust may choose not to vote proxies in certain situations or for certain accounts either where it deems the cost of doing so to be prohibitive or where the exercise of voting rights could restrict the ability of an account's portfolio manager to freely trade the security in question. For example, in accordance with local law or business practices, many foreign companies prevent the sales of shares that have been voted for a certain period beginning prior to the shareholder meeting and ending on the day following the meeting ("share blocking"). Due to these restrictions, Northern Trust must balance the benefits to its clients of voting proxies against the potentially serious portfolio management consequences of a reduced flexibility to sell the underlying shares at the most advantageous time. For companies in countries with share blocking periods, the disadvantage of being unable to sell the stock regardless of changing conditions generally outweighs the advantages of voting at the shareholder meeting for routine items. Accordingly, Northern Trust will not vote those proxies in the absence of an unusual, significant vote. Various accounts over which Northern Trust has proxy voting discretion participate in securities lending programs administered by Northern Trust or a third party. Because title to loaned securities passes to the borrower, Northern Trust will be unable to vote any security that is out on loan to a borrower on a proxy record date. If Northern Trust has investment discretion, however, it reserves the right of the portfolio manager to instruct the lending agent to terminate a loan in situations where Northern Trust believes the benefits of voting the security outweigh the costs of terminating the loan, consistent with the terms and conditions of Northern Trust's procedures for recall of securities out on loan. In such instances, Northern Trust shall recall the shares on loan on a best efforts basis.



## **Northern Trust Proxy Voting Guidelines**

### **I. The Board of Directors**

#### **A. Voting on Director Nominees in Uncontested Elections**

Northern Trust generally votes for director nominees in uncontested elections absent countervailing factors such as a lack of director independence (see below), chronic, unjustified absenteeism, concerns regarding the inattentiveness of the nominee, including the number of public company boards on which the nominee sits, and if the nominee sits on an audit, compensation or risk committee, concerns regarding the actions taken by such committees.

#### **B. Director Independence**

For any situations not already covered by a rule or regulation, Northern Trust will generally vote for shareholder proposals requesting that the board of a company be comprised of a majority of independent directors and will generally vote against shareholder proposals requesting that the board of a company be comprised of a supermajority of independent directors. Northern Trust generally votes for shareholder proposals that request that the board audit, compensation and/or nominating committees include independent directors exclusively and withholds votes for the election of non-independent directors serving on an audit, compensation or nominating committee or board.

Northern Trust generally leaves the choice of chairman to the board's discretion as Northern Trust's support for proposals that principal committees consist exclusively of independent directors and that the board be comprised of a majority of independent directors provides sufficient checks and balances. However, Northern Trust will vote case by case on whether to support shareholder resolutions seeking the separation of chairman and CEO in circumstances where shareholder interests may be better served by having an independent chair. Such circumstances may include, during periods of organizational re-structuring, during periods of sustained under performance relative to peers, during a period of leadership transition, or where concerns arise as to the sufficiency of independence the board has from management.

Northern Trust generally supports the listing standards or local market practice on non-executive director independence. Northern Trust may apply a stricter standard for director independence at companies that exhibit poor governance practices. A non-executive director in these instances would not be considered independent if he or she:

- Has been an employee of the company within the last five years;
- Has, or has had within the last three years, a material business relationship with the company;
- Is a company founder;
- Represents a significant shareholder; or
- Has close family ties with any of the company's advisers, directors, or senior employees.



### C. Director Attendance

Northern Trust will vote case by case on individual directors who attend fewer than 75 percent of board and board-committee meetings for two consecutive years.

### D. Lead Independent Director

Northern Trust generally votes for shareholder proposals in support of the appointment of a lead independent director.

Northern Trust expects the role of the lead independent director to be set out within the board's governance charter, with clearly defined powers that should include at minimum the ability to:

- serve as a liaison between the company's independent directors and the CEO;
- lead the annual evaluation of the CEO's performance and the annual evaluation of the independent board of directors;
- be available for consultation and direct communication with major stockholders, if they so request;
- approve meeting agendas for the board and the nature of information sent to the board;
- call a special meeting of the board or a special executive session of the independent directors; and
- add items to the agenda of any regular or special meeting of the board deemed necessary or advisable.

### E. Overboarding Issues

Northern Trust generally votes against a director nominee if it is a CEO who sits on more than two public boards or a non-CEO who sits on more than four public boards.

### F. Diversity

Companies benefit from a wide diversity of perspectives and backgrounds on their boards. The board should reflect the diversity of the workforce and society, ensuring that a variety of viewpoints are represented in corporate decision-making. Northern Trust believes that an effective board should be comprised of directors with a mix of skills and experience to ensure the Board has the necessary tools to perform its oversight function effectively; this includes diversity of background, experience, age, race, gender, ethnicity, and culture. Northern Trust may vote against one or more directors where we have concerns relating to the composition and diversity of the board.

### G. Stock Ownership Requirements

Northern Trust generally votes against shareholder proposals requiring directors to own a minimum amount of company stock in order to qualify as a director, or to remain on the board.



#### H. Board Evaluation and Refreshment

The board needs to ensure that it is positioned to change and evolve with the needs of the company. Boards should, on at least an annual basis, formally evaluate the CEO, the board as a whole, and individual directors. Evaluation of the board as a whole should consider the balance of skills, experience, independence, and knowledge of the company on the board relative to the company's long-term strategic plan. Evaluation of the board should also consider the board's diversity, including gender, how the board works together as a unit, and other factors relevant to its effectiveness. Individual evaluation should aim to show whether each director continues to contribute effectively and to demonstrate commitment to the role.

We expect the board to disclose in its annual report or proxy statement how performance evaluation of the board, its committees and its individual directors has been conducted. Northern Trust may vote against the independent chair, lead independent director or presiding director in circumstances where the board appears to lack mechanisms to promote accountability and oversight, coupled with sustained poor performance relative to peers.

Northern Trust does not consider mandatory retirement age caps or term limits to be appropriate in circumstances where shareholder interests may be better served by a longer-serving non-executive director remaining on the board. For example during periods of organizational restructuring or CEO/Chairman transition where constructive challenge from a longer serving non-executive director may be beneficial in the context of overall board composition and experience.

Northern Trust will generally vote against shareholder proposals to impose age and term limits unless the company is found to have poor board refreshment and director succession practices. Northern Trust will scrutinize boards that have a preponderance of non-executive directors with excessive long-tenures to ensure that new perspectives are being added to the board and that the board remains sufficiently independent from management.

#### I. Director and Officer Indemnification and Liability Protection

Proposals concerning director and officer indemnification and liability protection are evaluated on a case by case basis. Northern Trust generally votes for proposals providing indemnification protection to officers and directors, and for proposals limiting the liability of officers and directors for monetary damages, provided such proposals do not appear to conflict with applicable law and cover only future actions.

### **II. Proxy Contests**

#### A. Voting for Director Nominees in Contested Elections

Votes in a contested election of directors are evaluated on a case by case basis, considering the following factors:

- Long-term financial performance of the target company relative to its industry;



- Management's track record;
- Background to the proxy contest;
- Qualifications of director nominees (both slates);
- Evaluation of what each side is offering shareholders as well as the likelihood that the proposed objectives and goals can be met;
- Stock ownership positions; and
- Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) performance.

#### **B. Reimburse Proxy Solicitation Expenses**

Decisions to provide full reimbursement for dissidents waging a proxy contest are made on a case by case basis. Northern Trust will generally support such proposals in cases where (i) Northern Trust votes in favor of the dissidents, and (ii) the proposal is voted on the same proxy as the dissident slate and, as such, is specifically related to the contested proxy at issue.

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals allowing shareholders to elect replacements and fill vacancies.

### **III. Auditors**

#### **A. Ratifying Auditors**

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals to ratify auditors, unless: an auditor has a financial interest in or association with the company, and is therefore not independent; or there is reason to believe that the independent auditor has rendered an opinion which is neither accurate nor indicative of the company's financial position.

Northern Trust generally vote against auditor ratification and incumbent members of the Audit Committee if non-audit fees are excessive in relation to audit-related fees without adequate explanation.

Northern Trust generally votes against shareholder proposals that seek to restrict management's ability to utilize selected auditors, subject to the qualifications set forth above.

### **IV. Proxy Contest Defenses**

#### **A. Board Structure: Staggered vs. Annual Elections**

Northern Trust generally votes against proposals to classify the board and for proposals to repeal classified boards and to elect all directors annually.

#### **B. Shareholder Ability to Remove Directors**

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals that provide that directors may be removed only for cause.



Northern Trust generally votes for proposals allowing shareholders to elect replacements and fill vacancies.

#### C. Cumulative Voting

Northern Trust generally votes against proposals to eliminate cumulative voting, unless such proposals are intended to effectuate a majority voting policy.

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals to institute cumulative voting, unless the company has previously adopted a majority voting policy, or a majority voting shareholder proposal, consistent with Northern Trust's majority voting guidelines, is on the ballot at the same time as the cumulative voting proposal, in which case Northern Trust generally votes against such cumulative voting proposals.

#### D. Majority Voting

In analyzing shareholder proposals calling for directors in uncontested elections to be elected by an affirmative majority of votes cast, Northern Trust focuses on whether or not the company has adopted a written majority voting (or majority withhold) policy that provides for a meaningful alternative to affirmative majority voting.

In cases where companies have not adopted a written majority voting (or majority withhold) policy, Northern Trust generally votes for shareholder majority voting proposals.

In cases where companies have adopted a written majority voting (or majority withhold) policy, Northern Trust generally votes against shareholder majority voting proposals, provided that the policy is set forth in the company's annual proxy statement and either:

- Requires nominees who receive majority withhold votes to tender their resignation to the board;
- Sets forth a clear and reasonable timetable for decision-making regarding the nominee's status; and
- Does not contain any specific infirmities that would render it an ineffective alternative to an affirmative majority voting standard or otherwise provides a meaningful alternative to affirmative majority voting.

In determining the adequacy of a company's majority voting (or majority withhold) policy, Northern Trust may also consider, without limitation, any factors set forth in the policy that are to be taken into account by the board in considering a nominee's resignation and the range of actions open to the board in responding to the resignation (e.g., acceptance of the resignation, maintaining the director but curing the underlying causes of the withheld votes, etc.).



#### E. Shareholder Ability to Call Special Meetings

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals to restrict or prohibit shareholder ability to call special meetings, but may vote against such proposals and in favor of shareholder proposals to allow shareholders to call special meetings, taking into consideration the minimum ownership requirement called for in the resolution, existing shareholder rights mechanisms (e.g., proxy access, right to act by written consent, dual-class stock provisions and voting rights, quorum requirements on certain provisions, ability to amend bylaw and charter agreements, etc.), and the company's overall record of responsiveness to shareholder concerns.

#### F. Shareholder Ability to Act by Written Consent

Northern Trust generally votes against shareholder proposals allowing shareholders to take action by written consent. Northern Trust will review on a case by case basis management proposals allowing shareholders to take action by written consent.

#### G. Shareholder Ability to Alter the Size of the Board

Northern Trust generally votes against proposals limiting management's ability to alter the size of the board.

### **V. Tender Offer Defenses**

#### A. Poison Pills

Northern Trust generally votes for shareholder proposals that ask a company to submit its poison pill for shareholder ratification.

Northern Trust will review on a case by case basis management proposals to ratify a poison pill.

#### B. Fair Price Provisions

Northern Trust will review votes on a case by case on fair price proposals, taking into consideration whether the shareholder vote requirement embedded in the provision is no more than a majority of disinterested shares.

Northern Trust generally votes for shareholder proposals to lower the shareholder vote requirement in existing fair price provisions.

#### C. Greenmail

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals to adopt anti-greenmail charter or bylaw amendments or otherwise restrict a company's ability to make greenmail payments.

Northern Trust votes anti-greenmail proposals on a case by case basis when they are bundled with other charter or bylaw amendments.



**D. Supermajority Shareholder Vote Requirement to Amend the Charter or Bylaws**

Northern Trust generally votes against management proposals to require a supermajority shareholder vote to approve charter and bylaw amendments.

Northern Trust generally votes for shareholder proposals to lower supermajority shareholder vote requirements for charter and bylaw amendments.

**E. Supermajority Shareholder Vote Requirement to Approve Mergers**

Northern Trust generally votes against management proposals to require a supermajority shareholder vote to approve mergers and other significant business combinations, while taking into account ownership structure, quorum requirements, and vote requirements.

Northern Trust generally votes for shareholder proposals to lower supermajority shareholder vote requirements for mergers and other significant business combinations, while taking into account ownership structure, quorum requirements, and vote requirements.

**VI. Miscellaneous Governance Provisions**

**A. Confidential Voting**

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals requiring confidential voting and independent vote tabulators.

**B. Bundled Proposals**

Northern Trust votes on a case by case basis bundled or "conditioned" proxy proposals. In the case of items that are conditioned upon each other, we examine the benefits and costs of the packaged items. In instances when the joint effect of the conditioned items is not in shareholders' best interests, we vote against the proposals. If the combined effect is positive, we support such proposals.

**C. Shareholder Advisory Committees**

Northern Trust votes on a case by case basis, proposals to establish a shareholder advisory committee.

**D. Board of Directors Failure to Respond to Certain Majority Approved Shareholder Proposals**

Northern Trust votes on a case by case basis on whether to withhold votes from certain directors in the event the board of directors has failed to adequately respond to a majority approved shareholder proposal. Northern Trust will generally not withhold votes from directors in cases where Northern Trust previously voted against the majority approved shareholder proposal. In cases where Northern Trust previously voted in favor of the majority approved shareholder proposal, it will first determine whether it is appropriate under the circumstances to withhold votes from any directors, and if it determines that such action is appropriate it will then determine



the director or directors from which votes should be withheld. Factors that will be taken into consideration include the documented response of the board, if any, concerning its action or inaction relating to the relevant shareholder proposal, whether particular board members served on a committee that was responsible for determining a response to the shareholder proposal, the importance of retaining particular directors or groups of directors to protect shareholder value, and such other factors as Northern Trust may deem appropriate.

**E. Board of Directors Failure to Adequately Respond to Rejected Board Compensation Proposals**

Northern Trust votes on a case by case basis on whether to withhold votes from certain directors in the event the board of directors has not adequately responded to situations in which board proposals for approval of executive compensation have failed to receive majority shareholder approval.

**F. Compensation Committee Failure to Adequately Address Pay for Performance**

Northern Trust votes on a case by case basis on whether to withhold votes from the certain directors of the compensation committee during a period in which executive compensation appears excessive relative to performance and peers.

**G. ESG Failures**

Northern Trust votes on a case by case basis on whether to withhold from certain directors due to material failures of governance, stewardship, risk oversight or fiduciary responsibilities at the company, including failure to adequately guard against or manage ESG risks.

**H. Succession Policies**

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals seeking disclosure on a CEO succession planning policy, considering the scope of the request and the company's existing disclosure on its current CEO succession planning process.

**I. Proxy Access**

Northern Trust votes on a case by case basis on proxy access proposals. Northern Trust will consider a number of factors, including the company's performance, the performance of the company's board, the ownership thresholds and holding duration contained in the resolution and the proportion of directors that shareholders may nominate each year.

**J. Other Business**

Northern Trust opposes Other Business proposals where shareholders do not have the opportunity to review and understand the details of the proposal.



## **VII. Capital Structure**

### **A. Common Stock Authorization**

Northern Trust votes on a case by case basis, proposals to increase the number of shares of common stock authorized for issue.

### **B. Stock Distributions: Splits and Dividends**

Northern Trust generally allows for management discretion on matters related to stock distributions, such as stock splits and stock dividends.

### **C. Unequal Voting Rights**

Northern Trust believes that voting rights should align with the shareholders' economic interests in the company. As such, Northern Trust will generally vote against multi class exchange offers and multi class recapitalizations. If a company has a pre-existing multi class voting structure with superior voting rights, Northern Trust expects the company to develop and implement a sunset provision. If no sunset provision is disclosed, Northern Trust may vote against the relevant committee member.

### **D. Reverse Stock Splits**

Northern Trust generally votes for management proposals to implement a reverse stock split, provided that the reverse split does not result in an increase of authorized but unissued shares of more than 100% after giving effect to the shares needed for the reverse split.

### **E. Blank Check Preferred Authorization**

Absent special circumstances (e.g., actions taken in the context of a hostile takeover attempt) indicating an abusive purpose, Northern Trust generally votes against proposals that would authorize the creation of new classes of preferred stock with unspecified voting, conversion, dividend and distribution, and other rights, stock unless the voting, conversion, dividend and distribution, and other rights are specified and the voting rights are limited to one vote per share.

### **F. Shareholder Proposals Regarding Blank Check Preferred Stock**

Northern Trust generally votes for shareholder proposals requiring blank check preferred stock placements to be submitted for shareholder ratification unless the shares are to be issued for the purpose of raising capital or making acquisitions.

### **G. Adjust Par Value of Common Stock**

Northern Trust generally votes for management proposals to reduce the par value of common stock, while taking into account accompanying corporate governance concerns.



## H. Preemptive Rights

Northern Trust reviews on a case by case basis, proposals to create or abolish preemptive rights. In evaluating proposals on preemptive rights, we look at the size of a company and the characteristics of its shareholder base. We generally oppose preemptive rights for publicly-held companies with a broad stockholder base.

## I. Debt Restructurings

Northern Trust reviews on a case by case basis, proposals to increase common and/or preferred shares and to issue shares as part of a debt restructuring plan. We consider the following issues:

- *Dilution* -- How much will ownership interest of existing shareholders be reduced, and how extreme will dilution to any future earnings be?
- *Change in Control* -- Will the transaction result in a change in control of the company?
- *Bankruptcy* -- Is the threat of bankruptcy, which would result in severe losses in shareholder value, the main factor driving the debt restructuring?

Generally, we approve proposals that facilitate debt restructurings unless there are clear signs of self-dealing or other abuses.

## J. Share Repurchase Programs

Northern Trust generally votes for management proposals to institute open-market share repurchase plans in which all shareholders may participate on equal terms.

# **VIII. Executive and Director Compensation**

## A. Equity-Based and Other Incentive Plans

Northern Trust believes that equity-based awards should align the economic interests of management, directors and employees with those of shareholders and votes case by case taking into account all relevant material facts and circumstances, including the total estimated cost of the company's equity plan relative to its peers. Northern Trust will generally oppose new plans, or amendments to an existing plan, where:

- The company's three year average burn rate exceeds 2% and exceeds an amount that is one standard deviation in excess of its GICS industry mean (segmented by Russell 3000 and non-Russell 3000 companies). A company that exceeds both the foregoing three year average burn rates amounts can avoid a negative vote if it commits in a public filing to maintain a burn rate over the next three fiscal years that is no higher than one standard deviation in excess of its industry mean as calculated at the time of the proposal.
- The absolute change in ownership interest would be significantly reduced, and dilution would have a negative impact to future earnings;
- The company has repriced underwater stock options during the past three years; or



- The exercise price is less than 100% of fair market value at the time of grant.

#### B. OBRA-Related Compensation Proposals

Northern Trust generally votes for the approval and amendment of plans for the purposes of complying with the provisions of Section 162(m) of OBRA.

#### C. Proposals Concerning Executive and Director Pay

Northern Trust generally votes for shareholder proposals that request a company to adopt an annual advisory vote on executive compensation.

Northern Trust votes on a case by case basis on shareholder advisory votes concerning the compensation of named executive officers, taking into account pay structure in relation to firm performance, problematic governance practices, and the company's overall transparency and level of responsiveness to shareholder concerns. Northern Trust may, where appropriate, utilize a proprietary compensation scorecard model, in addition to company disclosures and outside research to arrive at a final decision. The scorecard considers factors including, but not limited to, profitability measures, overall pay of the top executive, company size, and historic performance.

Northern Trust will generally vote for an annual frequency of advisory votes on executive compensation unless the company provides a compelling rationale or unique circumstances.

Northern Trust generally votes on a case by case basis all other shareholder proposals that seek additional disclosure of executive and director pay information.

Northern Trust votes on a case by case basis all other shareholder proposals that seek to limit executive and director pay.

#### D. Golden and Tin Parachutes

Northern Trust generally votes for shareholder proposals to have golden and tin parachutes submitted for shareholder ratification.

Northern Trust votes on a case by case basis on shareholder advisory votes concerning the severance packages of named executive officers, taking into account the features of the package and the accompanying restructuring proposal.

#### E. Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) and Other Broad-Based Employee Stock Plans

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals to approve an ESOP or other broad-based employee stock purchase or ownership plan, or to increase authorized shares for such existing plans, except in cases when the number of shares allocated to such plans is "excessive" (i.e., generally greater than ten percent (10%) of outstanding shares).



#### F. 401(k) Employee Benefit Plans

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals to implement a 401(k) savings plan for employees.

### **IX. State of Incorporation**

#### A. Voting on State Takeover Statutes

Northern Trust votes on a case by case basis proposals to opt in or out of state takeover statutes (including control share acquisition statutes, control share cash-out statutes, freezeout provisions, fair price provisions, shareholder laws, poison pill endorsements, severance pay and labor contract provisions, anti-greenmail provisions, and disgorgement provisions).

#### B. Voting on Reincorporation Proposals

Proposals to change a company's state of incorporation are examined on a case by case basis.

### **X. Mergers and Corporate Restructurings**

#### A. Mergers and Acquisitions

Votes on mergers and acquisitions are considered on a case by case basis, taking into account at least the following:

- Anticipated financial and operating benefits;
- Offer price (cost vs. premium);
- Prospects of the combined companies;
- How the deal was negotiated; and
- ESG governance and their impact.

Northern Trust generally votes on a case by case basis in cases where, in connection with a merger or acquisition seeking shareholder approval, a separate shareholder vote is required to approve any agreements or understandings regarding compensation disclosed pursuant to Item 402(t) of Regulation S-K (golden parachute arrangements).

#### B. Corporate Restructuring

Votes on corporate restructuring proposals, including minority squeezeouts, leveraged buyouts, spin-offs, liquidations, and asset sales are considered on a case by case basis.

#### C. Spin-offs

Votes on spin-offs are considered on a case by case basis depending on the tax and regulatory advantages, planned use of sale proceeds, market focus, and managerial incentives.



#### D. Asset Sales

Votes on asset sales are made on a case by case basis after considering the impact on the balance sheet/working capital, value received for the asset, and potential elimination of diseconomies.

#### E. Liquidations

Votes on liquidations are made on a case by case basis after reviewing management's efforts to pursue other alternatives, appraisal value of assets, and the compensation plan for executives managing the liquidation.

#### F. Appraisal Rights

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals to restore, or provide shareholders with, rights of appraisal.

#### G. Changing Corporate Name

Northern Trust generally votes for changing the corporate name.

#### H. Adjourn Meeting

Northern Trust generally supports adjournment proposals that accompany mergers proposals also being supported. Otherwise, Northern Trust will vote against such proposals.

### **XI. Mutual Funds**

#### A. Election of Trustees

Votes on trustee nominees are evaluated on a case by case basis.

#### B. Investment Advisory Agreement

Votes on investment advisory agreements are evaluated on a case by case basis.

#### C. Fundamental Investment Restrictions

Votes on amendments to a fund's fundamental investment restrictions are evaluated on a case by case basis.

#### D. Distribution Agreements

Votes on distribution agreements are evaluated on a case by case basis.



## **XII. Environmental and Social Issues**

### **A. Environment**

Northern Trust upholds environmental stewardship and recognizes that we all are stakeholders in the future of our global environment. Environmental factors increasingly represent significant operational risks and costs to business. At Northern Trust, our primary objective as an asset manager is to create long-term value for our clients. As a major global investor, Northern Trust has interest in how shareholder value is affected by a company's management and impact on the natural and social environment, and recognizes that a well-developed environmental and social management system can enhance shareholder value in the long-term. We generally encourage reporting that is not unduly costly or burdensome and which does not place the company at a competitive disadvantage, but which provides meaningful information to enable shareholders to evaluate the impact of the company's environmental policies and practices on its financial performance.

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals requesting increased disclosure regarding the environmental impact of a company's operations and products and initiatives to curtail these risks, unless sufficient information has been disclosed to shareholders or is otherwise publicly available.

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals requesting the issuance of corporate sustainability reports, as well as disclosure, where relevant, concerning the emission of greenhouse gasses and the use of fracturing in connection with the extraction of natural gasses.

Northern Trust votes case by case for proposals requesting the adoption of GHG reduction goals from products and operations.

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals requesting the issuance of reports by a company detailing its energy efficiency plans.

### **B. Diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity**

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals advocating the elimination of workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals requesting that a company take reasonable steps to ensure that women and minority candidates are in the pool from which board nominees are chosen or that request that women and minority candidates are routinely sought as part of every board search the company undertakes.

Northern Trust votes case by case on proposals requesting the issuance of a diversity report, including summary description of policies and programs oriented toward increasing diversity or requests to disclose a comprehensive breakdown of workforce by race and gender.



### C. Consumer and Product Safety

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals that request a report or assessment of the safety of a company's operations and a company's products and services and efforts to promote their safe use.

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals requesting increased disclosure of a company's policies and procedures for managing and mitigating risks related to cyber security and data privacy.

### D. Supply Chain Management

Northern Trust votes case by case for proposals requesting increased disclosure on a company's supply chain policies and processes and its management of related risks.

### E. Animal Welfare

Northern Trust generally votes for proposals requesting increased disclosure or reporting regarding animal treatment issues that may impact a company's operations and products, especially in relation to food production, unless sufficient information on that topic has already been disclosed to shareholders or is otherwise publicly available.

### F. Political and Charitable Contributions

Northern Trust will generally vote for proposals to publish a company's political or lobbying contributions, taking into consideration recent, significant controversies, fines or litigation regarding the company's political contributions or trade association spending.

Northern Trust generally votes against shareholder proposals to eliminate, direct, or otherwise restrict charitable contributions.

In other social and environmental issues, Northern Trust generally supports the position of a company's board of directors when voting on shareholder initiated social and environmental proposals. Although Northern Trust acknowledges that the economic and social considerations underlying such proposals are often closely intertwined, we believe that in most cases the management group and elected directors are best positioned to make corporate decisions on these proposals.

