



County Employees Retirement System
Investment Proxy Voting Policy
Approved: March 16, 2022

The County Employees Retirement System (CERS) Board of Trustees (Board) appoints an Investment Committee with full authority to act for the Board in the acquisition, sale and management of the securities and funds of the Retirement Systems. The Board also authorizes the Investment Committee or designee, custodian, investment manager or agent to execute stock proxies for the Board. Said delegate(s) shall maintain detailed records of its performance of its duty and provide such records to the Board as may be requested by the Board from time to time.

This position paper is hereby adopted by the Investment Committee to provide a set of guidelines to be followed in order to execute proxies. The following statement reflects the general policy that shall be applied as proxy issues are considered:

To support management if management's position appears reasonable, is not detrimental to the long term equity ownership of the corporation and reflects consideration of the impact of societal values and attitudes on the long-term liability of the corporation and is in the best interest of the plan participants.

The following paragraphs shall be applied when considering the more specific proxy issues that are likely to be encountered on a more routine basis.

A. Routine Business or Financial Matters

Election of Directors

FOR

In a majority of instances, election of directors is a routine voting issue. Unless there is a proxy fight for seats on the Board, CERS will usually vote in favor of the Management-proposed slate of directors.

Appointment of Auditors

FOR

The selection of independent accountants to audit the company's financial records is a routine business matter and in most instances is submitted to shareholders for public relations reasons. Since the accounting firm selected to do the audit has no effect on the investment value of the company's securities, CERS will support Management's recommendation.

Increase Authorized Common Stock

FOR *

CERS will support an increase in authorized common stock needed to implement a stock split when coupled with intent to immediately effect the split, or aid in a restructuring or acquisition or provide a sufficient number of shares for employee savings plans, stock option or executive compensation plans.

A satisfactory explanation for a company's plans for the stock must be disclosed in the proxy statement.

- * CERS will oppose increases in authorized common stock if we suspect that the shares are to be used to implement a poison pill or another form of anti-takeover device, or if the issuance of new shares could excessively dilute the value of the outstanding shares upon issuance.

Changes in Board Structure

FOR *

Companies may propose various provisions related to the structure of the Board of Directors. These provisions may include changing the way Board vacancies are filled, directors are nominated or the number of directors. These provisions may include Majority Vote Director Elections and the Separation of the CEO and Chairman of Board. These proposals may be proposed amendments to the Charter or by-laws and need to be reviewed by the shareholders prior to voting. In most instances these proposals are not controversial nor an anti-takeover device. Therefore, CERS generally votes in favor of the proposal.

- * However, CERS is opposed to cumulative voting for members of the Board and attempts to limit term of Board of Directors based on tenure or age.

B. Non-Routine Business or Financial Matters

Considering Non-Financial Effects of a Merger Proposal

AGAINST

CERS will oppose proposals that require the Board of Directors to consider what impact a merger would have on certain groups other than a company's shareholders, such as employees, consumers, business partners, and the communities in which the company is located. We expect that a company's Board of Directors will act in the best interest of its shareholders at all times.

Director Liability and Indemnification

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The Investment Committee believes that proposals concerning Liability and Indemnification, which limit the personal liability of directors for breaches of fiduciary duty of care and provisions for payment of expenses incurred by officials, directors and other representatives who become defendants in lawsuits, should be evaluated on a case by case basis with reasonable measures supported and extreme measures opposed.

Executive Compensation

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Executive compensation can take various forms but should provide adequate compensation and incentives to management consistent with the long term interests of the shareholders of the company.

- * Management should have some assurance that they will not, in the event of a takeover, be terminated without motive and compensation. However, CERS is concerned that some compensation agreements provide excessive compensation in the event of a takeover. CERS does not oppose agreements which provide executives with a reasonable period of compensation after termination; however, they will oppose compensation plans which are excessive.

Stock Splits

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CERS will vote in favor of a proposal to split the company's stock if there is an immediate intent to effect the split.

Employment Relations

FOR *

The Board of Directors and Corporate Management have the responsibility for harmonious labor relations. This responsibility also includes conducting labor negotiations within the appropriate laws of the jurisdiction.

- * Where efficient operation of the corporation requires plant closings or relocations, the corporation should give as much notice as possible and assist its employees in relocating or in seeking other employment. Resolutions of shareholders which seek to impose requirements on management in this regard will not be supported automatically. Support will be contingent upon whether or not managers can demonstrate that efforts have been made to retain good employment relations subject to the constraints encountered in the particular circumstances.

C. Anti-Takeover Issues

Blank Check Preferred Stock

AGAINST

A Blank Check Preferred Stock proposal is one that authorizes the issuance of certain preferred stock at some future point in time and allows the Board of Directors to establish voting, dividend, conversion, and other rights at the time of issuance. While Blank Check Preferred Stock can provide a corporation with the flexibility needed to meet changing financial conditions, it also may be used as the vehicle for implementing a poison pill defense, or it may be placed in friendly hands to help block a takeover bid. CERS' concern is that once this stock has been authorized, shareholders have no further power to determine how or when it will be allocated.

Classified Boards

AGAINST

A Classified Board is typically divided into three separate classes, each class to hold office for a term of two or three years. Only a portion of the Board of Directors can be elected or replaced each year. Since this type of proposal has fundamental anti-takeover implications, CERS opposes the adoption of Classified Boards.

Fair Price Provisions

AGAINST

A Fair Price provision in the company's charter or by-laws is designed to assure that, if the Corporation is acquired under a plan not agreed to by the Board of Directors, each shareholder's securities will be purchased at the same price. In most instances the provision requires that any tender offer made by a third party be made to all shareholders at the same price.

Fair pricing provisions attempt to limit the "two-tiered" pricing systems in which the interested party or would-be acquirer of the company initially offers a premium for a sufficient number of shares of the company to garner control. Thereafter, an offer at a much lower price is made to the remaining shareholders who have no choice at all but to accept the offer. The "two-tiered" approach is coercive in that it makes it easier for an outsider to gain control of a company because it provides an incentive to the shareholder to sell his shares immediately in order to receive the benefits of a higher price per share and avoid falling into the second tier, if the offer is successful. The coercive pressures associated with these offers have caused many states to adopt controlled share acquisition statutes which restrict this practice by law.

In theory this type of provision is acceptable standing alone, however, given the fact that the practice is in most aspects prohibited by law, and the fact that Fair Price Provisions are invariably linked with other

anti-takeover measures, such as supermajority voting requirements to approve certain transactions, CERS will vote against most Fair Price Provisions.

Limiting Shareholders' Right to Call Special Meetings

AGAINST

Companies contend that such limitations are necessary to prevent minority shareholders from taking control of the company's agenda. However, such limits also have anti-takeover implications such as preventing a shareholder who has acquired a significant stake in the company from forcing management to address the potential sale of the company. Additionally, a limitation on shareholder action makes it difficult for a large shareholder or group of shareholders to use this facility to force management to address issues that may be of urgent or utmost importance. Since, in most instances, state law prohibits shareholders from abusing or using this facility in certain manners, CERS sees no justifiable reason for management to eliminate this facility. CERS will oppose the elimination of this fundamental shareholder right.

Limiting Shareholders' Right to Act by Written Consent

AGAINST

Action by written consent enables a large shareholder or group of shareholders of a company to initiate and vote on corporate matters without having to wait until the date of the next annual meeting. CERS believes this is a fundamental shareholder right that is inherent in the concept of stock ownership and will oppose any proposals which may limit.

Supermajority Vote Requirements

AGAINST

A Supermajority Vote Requirement is a charter or by-law requirement that, when implemented, raises the percentage of shareholder votes needed to approve certain proposals such as mergers, changes of control, or proposals to amend or repeal a portion of the Articles of Incorporation.

Re-incorporation

AGAINST

For various reasons, a corporation may choose to reincorporate under the laws of a different state. Their reasoning may include taxation, the state's General Business Law and the level of corporate experience the state's court may have. However, in a majority of instances a re-incorporation proposal has its foundation in the corporation's desire to incorporate in another state in order to take advantage of that state's laws governing corporations and corporate control and the state courts' views in interpreting laws that make it more difficult for unsolicited takeovers to occur. In such cases, CERS will oppose proposals for reincorporation.

Issuance of Stock with Unequal Voting Rights

AGAINST

Proposals of this nature are generally anti-takeover schemes which result in unequal voting rights among different classes of shareholders. The most frequent proposal of this type is a dual class capitalization plan which establishes two classes of stock. As an incentive to encourage shareholders to approve plans designed to concentrate voting power in the hands of insiders, some plans give higher dividends to shareholders willing to exchange shares with superior voting rights for shares with inferior voting rights.

Unequal voting rights plans are designed to reduce the voting power of existing shareholders and concentrate a significant amount of voting power in the hands of management. In the majority of instances, they serve as an effective safeguard against hostile takeovers. For these reasons, CERS deems these plans unacceptable and in most instances will vote against these proposals.

Elimination of Preemptive Rights

AGAINST

Preemptive Rights allow the shareholders of the company to buy newly issued shares before they are offered to the public in order to retain their then current percentage of ownership as well as to avoid ownership dilution by the issuance of additional stock. CERS believes this is fundamental right of a shareholder and barring a compelling reason should not be eliminated by management. CERS will oppose management proposals requesting eliminating these rights and will support shareholder proposals which request the restoration of Preemptive Rights.

D. Corporate Governance Shareholder Proposals

Submit Company's Shareholder Rights Plan Shareholder Vote

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Most Shareholder Rights Plans (sometimes called poison pills) permit the shareholders of a target company involved in a hostile takeover to acquire shares of that company, the acquiring company, or both, at a substantial discount once a triggering event occurs. A triggering event is usually a hostile tender offer or the acquisition by an outside party of a certain percentage of the company's stock. Since most plans exclude the hostile bidder from the purchase, the effect in most instances, is to dilute the equity interest and the voting rights of the potential acquirer once the plan is triggered. Shareholder Rights Plans are designed to be so disadvantageous to potential acquirers that merely their existence could deter possible acquirers from making a hostile bid.

- * CERS will support shareholder proposals asking that the company submit their Shareholder Rights Plan to a shareholder vote. CERS will vote case-by-case on proposals to completely redeem Rights Plans.

Anti-Greenmail Proposal

FOR

Greenmail payments generally result when a potential hostile acquirer has accumulated a significant percentage of the company's stock and the company acquires the raider's stock at an aggregate price usually above the then current market value usually in exchange for an agreement that the raider would not attempt to acquire control within a certain number of years. The proposal that has been proposed most often to prevent greenmail is the adoption of charter amendments severely limiting the board's ability to acquire blocks of the company's stock in these situations and at above market prices. CERS will vote in favor of an anti-greenmail proposal standing alone provided the proposal has no other management initiated anti-takeover attributes.

E. Social and Policy Issues

We believe that most decisions of a policy nature, having either a direct or an indirect effect on the conduct of business and on corporate profitability should remain management responsibilities. As such, they should be subject only to their Board of Director's approval; therefore, we would support the position taken by management.

Signatories

As Adopted by the Investment Committee

Date: 4/1/22

Signature: 

Dr. Merl Hackbart
Chair, Investment Committee

As Adopted by the Board of Directors

Date: 03/16/2022

Signature: Betty A Pendergrass

Ms. Betty Pendergrass
Chair, Board of Trustees