



# Proxy Voting Guidelines

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## Table of Contents

<b>I.</b>	<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Board of Directors and Corporate Governance</b> .....	<b>1</b>
A.	Election of Directors .....	1
B.	Contested Director Elections .....	2
C.	Cumulative Voting Rights .....	2
D.	Classified Boards .....	3
E.	Independent Chairperson .....	3
F.	Majority Voting in Director Elections .....	3
G.	Proxy Access .....	3
H.	Indemnification of Directors and Officers .....	4
<b>III.</b>	<b>Compensation</b> .....	<b>4</b>
A.	Equity Compensation Plans .....	4
B.	Employee Stock Purchase Plans .....	5
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Advisory Vote on Executive Compensation (Say on Pay) and Frequency of Say on Pay Vote</b> ..	<b>6</b>
A.	Compensation Committee .....	6
B.	Executive Severance Agreements .....	7
<b>V.</b>	<b>Environmental and Social Issues</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Anti-Takeover Provisions and Shareholders Rights Plans</b> .....	<b>8</b>
A.	Shareholders Rights Plans ("poison pills") .....	8
B.	Shareholder Ability to Call a Special Meeting .....	9
C.	Shareholder Ability to Act by Written Consent .....	9
D.	Supermajority Shareholder Vote Requirement .....	9
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Anti-Takeover Provisions and Director Elections</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>Capital Structure and Incorporation</b> .....	<b>10</b>
A.	Increases in Common Stock .....	10
B.	Multi-Class Share Structures .....	11
C.	Incorporation or Reincorporation in another State or Country .....	11
<b>IX.</b>	<b>Shares of Fidelity Funds, ETFs, or other non-Fidelity Mutual Funds and ETFs</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>X.</b>	<b>Foreign Markets</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>XI.</b>	<b>Avoiding Conflicts of Interest</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>XII.</b>	<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>12</b>

## **I. Introduction**

These guidelines are intended to help Fidelity's customers and the companies in which Fidelity invests understand how Fidelity votes proxies to further the values that have sustained Fidelity for over 70 years. In particular, these guidelines are animated by two fundamental principles: 1) putting first the long-term interests of our customers and fund shareholders; and 2) investing in companies that share our approach to creating value over the long-term. Fidelity generally adheres to these guidelines in voting proxies and our [Stewardship Principles](#) serve as the foundation for these guidelines. Our evaluation of proxies reflects information from many sources, including management or shareholders of a company presenting a proposal and proxy voting advisory firms. Fidelity maintains the flexibility to vote individual proxies based on our assessment of each situation.

In evaluating proxies, we recognize that companies can conduct themselves in ways that have important environmental and social consequences. While Fidelity always remains focused on maximizing long-term shareholder value, we also consider potential environmental, social and governance (ESG) impacts that we believe are material to individual companies and investing funds' investment objectives and strategies.

Fidelity will vote on proposals not specifically addressed by these guidelines based on an evaluation of a proposal's likelihood to enhance the long-term economic returns or profitability of the company or to maximize long-term shareholder value. Fidelity will not be influenced by business relationships or outside perspectives that may conflict with the interests of the funds and their shareholders.

## **II. Board of Directors and Corporate Governance**

Directors of public companies play a critical role in ensuring that a company and its management team serve the interests of its shareholders. Fidelity believes that through proxy voting, it can help ensure accountability of management teams and boards of directors, align management and shareholder interests, and monitor and assess the degree of transparency and disclosure with respect to executive compensation and board actions affecting shareholders' rights. The following general guidelines are intended to reflect these proxy voting principles.

### **A. Election of Directors**

Fidelity will generally support director nominees in elections where all directors are unopposed (uncontested elections), except where a director clearly appears to have failed to exercise reasonable judgment or otherwise failed to sufficiently protect the interests of shareholders.

Fidelity generally will oppose the election of directors if, by way of example:

1. The director attended fewer than 75% of the total number of meetings of the board and its committees on which the director served during the company's prior fiscal year, absent extenuating circumstances.
2. Inside or affiliated directors serve on boards that are not composed of a majority of independent directors.
3. The company made a commitment to modify a proposal or practice to conform to these guidelines, and failed to act on that commitment.
4. For reasons described below under the sections entitled Compensation and Anti-Takeover Provisions and Director Elections.

## **B. Contested Director Elections**

On occasion, directors are forced to compete for election against outside director nominees (contested elections). Fidelity believes that strong management creates long-term shareholder value. As a result, Fidelity generally will vote in support of management of companies in which the funds' assets are invested. Fidelity will vote its proxy on a case-by-case basis in a contested election, taking into consideration a number of factors, amongst others:

1. Management's track record and strategic plan for enhancing shareholder value;
2. The long-term performance of the company compared to its industry peers; and
3. The qualifications of the shareholder's and management's nominees.

Fidelity will vote for the outcome it believes has the best prospects for maximizing shareholder value over the long-term.

## **C. Cumulative Voting Rights**

Under cumulative voting, each shareholder may exercise the number of votes equal to the number of shares owned multiplied by the number of directors up for election. Shareholders may cast all of their votes for a single nominee (or multiple nominees in varying amounts). With regular (non-cumulative) voting, by contrast, shareholders cannot allocate more than one vote per share to any one director nominee. Fidelity believes that cumulative voting can be detrimental to the overall strength of a board. Generally, therefore, Fidelity will oppose the introduction of, and support the elimination of, cumulative voting rights.

#### **D. Classified Boards**

A classified board is one that elects only a percentage of its members each year (usually one-third of directors are elected to serve a three-year term). This means that at each annual meeting only a subset of directors is up for re-election. Fidelity believes that, in general, classified boards are not as accountable to shareholders as declassified boards. For this and other reasons, Fidelity generally will oppose a board's adoption of a classified board structure and support declassification of existing boards.

#### **E. Independent Chairperson**

In general, Fidelity believes that boards should have a process and criteria for selecting the board chair, and will oppose shareholder proposals calling for, or recommending the appointment of, a non-executive or independent chairperson. If, however, based on particular facts and circumstances, Fidelity believes that appointment of a non-executive or independent chairperson appears likely to further the interests of shareholders and promote effective oversight of management by the board of directors, Fidelity will consider voting to support a proposal for an independent chairperson under such circumstances.

#### **F. Majority Voting in Director Elections**

In general, Fidelity supports proposals calling for directors to be elected by a majority of votes cast if the proposal permits election by a plurality in the case of contested elections (where, for example, there are more nominees than board seats). Fidelity may oppose a majority voting shareholder proposal where a company's board has adopted a policy requiring the resignation of an incumbent director who fails to receive the support of a majority of the votes cast in an uncontested election.

#### **G. Proxy Access**

Proxy access proposals generally require a company to amend its by-laws to allow a qualifying shareholder or group of shareholders to nominate directors on a company's proxy ballot. Fidelity believes that certain safeguards as to ownership threshold and duration of ownership are important to assure that proxy access is not misused by those without a significant economic interest in the company or those driven by short term goals. Fidelity will evaluate proxy access proposals on a case-by-case basis, but generally will support proposals that include ownership of at least 3% (5% in the case of small-cap companies) of the company's shares outstanding for at least three years; limit the number of directors that eligible shareholders may nominate to 20% of the board; and limit to 20 the number of shareholders that may form a nominating group.

## **H. Indemnification of Directors and Officers**

In many instances there are sound reasons to indemnify officers and directors, so that they may perform their duties without the distraction of unwarranted litigation or other legal process. Fidelity generally supports charter and by-law amendments expanding the indemnification of officers or directors, or limiting their liability for breaches of care unless Fidelity is dissatisfied with their performance or the proposal is accompanied by anti-takeover provisions (see Anti-Takeover Provisions and Shareholders Rights Plans below).

## **III. Compensation**

Incentive compensation plans can be complicated and many factors are considered when evaluating such plans. Fidelity evaluates such plans based on protecting shareholder interests and our historical knowledge of the company and its management.

### **A. Equity Compensation Plans**

Fidelity encourages the use of reasonably designed equity compensation plans that align the interest of management with those of shareholders by providing officers and employees with incentives to increase long-term shareholder value. Fidelity considers whether such plans are too dilutive to existing shareholders because dilution reduces the voting power or economic interest of existing shareholders as a result of an increase in shares available for distribution to employees in lieu of cash compensation. Fidelity will generally oppose equity compensation plans or amendments to authorize additional shares under such plans if:

1. The company grants stock options and equity awards in a given year at a rate higher than a benchmark rate ("burn rate") considered appropriate by Fidelity and there were no circumstances specific to the company or the compensation plans that leads Fidelity to conclude that the rate of awards is otherwise acceptable.
2. The plan includes an evergreen provision, which is a feature that provides for an automatic increase in the shares available for grant under an equity compensation plan on a regular basis.
3. The plan provides for the acceleration of vesting of equity compensation even though an actual change in control may not occur.

As to stock option plans, considerations include the following:

1. Pricing: We believe that options should be priced at 100% of fair market value on the date they are granted. We generally oppose options priced at a discount to the market, although the price may be as low as 85% of fair market value if the discount is expressly granted in lieu of salary or cash bonus.
2. Re-pricing: An “out-of-the-money” (or underwater) option has an exercise price that is higher than the current price of the stock. We generally oppose the re-pricing of underwater options because it is not consistent with a policy of offering options as a form of long-term compensation. Fidelity also generally opposes a stock option plan if the board or compensation committee has re-priced options outstanding in the past two years without shareholder approval.

Fidelity generally will support a management proposal to exchange, re-price or tender for cash, outstanding options if the proposed exchange, re-pricing, or tender offer is consistent with the interests of shareholders, taking into account a variety of factors such as:

1. Whether the proposal excludes senior management and directors;
2. Whether the exchange or re-pricing proposal is value neutral to shareholders based upon an acceptable pricing model;
3. The company's relative performance compared to other companies within the relevant industry or industries;
4. Economic and other conditions affecting the relevant industry or industries in which the company competes; and
5. Any other facts or circumstances relevant to determining whether an exchange or re-pricing proposal is consistent with the interests of shareholders.

## **B. Employee Stock Purchase Plans**

These plans are designed to allow employees to purchase company stock at a discounted price and receive favorable tax treatment when the stock is sold. Fidelity generally will support employee stock purchase plans if the minimum stock purchase price is equal to or greater than 85% (or at least 75% in the case of non-U.S. companies where a lower minimum stock purchase price is equal to the prevailing “best practices” in that market) of the stock's fair market value and the plan constitutes a reasonable effort to encourage broad based participation in the company's stock.

#### **IV. Advisory Vote on Executive Compensation (Say on Pay) and Frequency of Say on Pay Vote**

Current law requires companies to allow shareholders to cast non-binding votes on the compensation for named executive officers, as well as the frequency of such votes. Fidelity generally will support proposals to ratify executive compensation unless the compensation appears misaligned with shareholder interests or is otherwise problematic, taking into account:

- The actions taken by the board or compensation committee in the previous year, including whether the company re-priced or exchanged outstanding stock options without shareholder approval; adopted or extended a golden parachute without shareholder approval; or adequately addressed concerns communicated by Fidelity in the process of discussing executive compensation;
- The alignment of executive compensation and company performance relative to peers; and
- The structure of the compensation program, including factors such as whether incentive plan metrics are appropriate, rigorous and transparent; whether the long-term element of the compensation program is evaluated over at least a three-year period; the sensitivity of pay to below median performance; the amount and nature of non-performance-based compensation; the justification and rationale behind paying discretionary bonuses; the use of stock ownership guidelines and amount of executive stock ownership; and how well elements of compensation are disclosed.

When presented with a frequency of Say on Pay vote, Fidelity generally will support holding an annual advisory vote on Say on Pay.

##### **A. Compensation Committee**

Directors serving on the compensation committee of the Board have a special responsibility to ensure that management is appropriately compensated and that compensation, among other things, fairly reflects the performance of the company. Fidelity believes that compensation should align with company performance as measured by key business metrics. Compensation policies should align the interests of executives with those of shareholders. Further, the compensation program should be disclosed in a transparent and timely manner.

Fidelity will oppose the election of directors on the compensation committees if:

1. The company has not adequately addressed concerns communicated by Fidelity in the process of discussing executive compensation.
2. Within the last year, and without shareholder approval, a company's board of directors or compensation committee has either:
  - a) Re-priced outstanding options, exchanged outstanding options for equity, or tendered cash for outstanding options; or
  - b) Adopted or extended a golden parachute.

## **B. Executive Severance Agreements**

Executive severance compensation and benefit arrangements resulting from a termination following a change in control are known as “golden parachutes.” Fidelity generally will oppose proposals to ratify golden parachutes where the arrangement includes an excise tax gross-up provision; single trigger for cash incentives; or may result in a lump sum payment of cash and acceleration of equity that may total more than three times annual compensation (salary and bonus) in the event of a termination following a change in control.

## **V. Environmental and Social Issues**

Grounded in our [Stewardship Principles](#), these guidelines outline our views on corporate governance. As part of our efforts to maximize long-term shareholder value, we incorporate environmental and social issues into our evaluation of a company, particularly if we believe an issue is material to that company and the investing fund’s investment objective and strategies.

Fidelity generally considers management’s recommendation and current practice when voting on shareholder proposals concerning environmental or social issues because it generally believes that management and the board are in the best position to determine how to address these matters. Fidelity, however, also believes that transparency is critical to sound corporate governance. Therefore, Fidelity may support shareholder proposals that request additional disclosures from companies regarding environmental or social issues, including where it believes that the proposed disclosures could provide meaningful information to the investment management process without unduly burdening the company. This means that Fidelity may support shareholder proposals calling for reports on sustainability, renewable energy, and environmental impact issues. Fidelity also may support proposals on issues in other areas, including but not limited to equal employment, board diversity and workforce diversity.



## **VI. Anti-Takeover Provisions and Shareholders Rights Plans**

Fidelity generally will oppose a proposal to adopt an anti-takeover provision.

Anti-takeover provisions include:

- classified boards;
- "blank check" preferred stock (whose terms and conditions may be expressly determined by the company's board, for example, with differential voting rights);
- golden parachutes;
- supermajority provisions (that require a large majority (generally between 67-90%) of shareholders to approve corporate changes as compared to a majority provision that simply requires more than 50% of shareholders to approve those changes);
- poison pills;
- restricting the right to call special meetings;
- provisions restricting the right of shareholders to set board size; and
- any other provision that eliminates or limits shareholder rights.

### **A. Shareholders Rights Plans ("poison pills")**

Poison pills allow shareholders opposed to a takeover offer to purchase stock at discounted prices under certain circumstances and effectively give boards veto power over any takeover offer. While there are advantages and disadvantages to poison pills, they can be detrimental to the creation of shareholder value and can help entrench management by deterring acquisition offers not favored by the board, but that may, in fact, be beneficial to shareholders.

Fidelity generally will support a proposal to adopt or extend a poison pill if the proposal:

1. Includes a condition in the charter or plan that specifies an expiration date (sunset provision) of no greater than five years;
2. Is integral to a business strategy that is expected to result in greater value for the shareholders;
3. Requires shareholder approval to be reinstated upon expiration or if amended;

4. Contains a mechanism to allow shareholders to consider a bona fide takeover offer for all outstanding shares without triggering the poison pill; and
5. Allows the Fidelity funds to hold an aggregate position of up to 20% of a company's total voting securities, where permissible.

Fidelity generally also will support a proposal that is crafted only for the purpose of protecting a specific tax benefit if it also believes the proposal is likely to enhance long-term economic returns or maximize long-term shareholder value.

#### **B. Shareholder Ability to Call a Special Meeting**

Fidelity generally will support shareholder proposals regarding shareholders' right to call special meetings if the threshold required to call the special meeting is no less than 25% of the outstanding stock.

#### **C. Shareholder Ability to Act by Written Consent**

Fidelity generally will support proposals regarding shareholders' right to act by written consent if the proposals include appropriate mechanisms for implementation. This means that proposals must include record date requests from at least 25% of the outstanding stockholders and consents must be solicited from all shareholders.

#### **D. Supermajority Shareholder Vote Requirement**

Fidelity generally will support proposals regarding supermajority provisions if Fidelity believes that the provisions protect minority shareholder interests in companies where there is a substantial or dominant shareholder.

### **VII. Anti-Takeover Provisions and Director Elections**

Fidelity will oppose the election of all directors or directors on responsible committees if the board adopted or extended an anti-takeover provision without shareholder approval.

Fidelity will consider supporting the election of directors with respect to poison pills if:

- All of the poison pill's features outlined under the Anti-Takeover Provisions and Shareholders Rights section above are met when a poison pill is adopted or extended.
- A board is willing to consider seeking shareholder ratification of, or adding the features outlined under the Anti-Takeover Provisions and Shareholders Rights Plans section above to, an existing poison pill. If, however, the company does not take appropriate action prior to the next annual shareholder meeting, Fidelity will oppose the election of all directors at that meeting.

- It determines that the poison pill was narrowly tailored to protect a specific tax benefit, and subject to an evaluation of its likelihood to enhance long-term economic returns or maximize long-term shareholder value.

## **VIII. Capital Structure and Incorporation**

These guidelines are designed to protect shareholders' value in the companies in which the Fidelity funds invest. To the extent a company's management is committed and incentivized to maximize shareholder value, Fidelity generally votes in favor of management proposals; Fidelity may vote contrary to management where a proposal is overly dilutive to shareholders and/or compromises shareholder value or other interests. The guidelines that follow are meant to protect shareholders in these respects.

### **A. Increases in Common Stock**

Fidelity may support reasonable increases in authorized shares for a specific purpose (a stock split or re-capitalization, for example). Fidelity generally will oppose a provision to increase a company's authorized common stock if such increase will result in a total number of authorized shares greater than three times the current number of outstanding and scheduled to be issued shares, including stock options.

In the case of real estate investment trusts (REITs), however, Fidelity will oppose a provision to increase the REIT's authorized common stock if the increase will result in a total number of authorized shares greater than five times the current number of outstanding and scheduled to be issued shares.

### **B. Multi-Class Share Structures**

Fidelity generally will support proposals to recapitalize multi-class share structures into structures that provide equal voting rights for all shareholders, and generally will oppose proposals to introduce or increase classes of stock with differential voting rights. However, Fidelity will evaluate all such proposals in the context of their likelihood to enhance long-term economic returns or maximize long-term shareholder value.

### **C. Incorporation or Reincorporation in another State or Country**

Fidelity generally will support management proposals calling for, or recommending that, a company reincorporate in another state or country if, on balance, the economic and corporate governance factors in the proposed jurisdiction appear reasonably likely to be better aligned with shareholder interests, taking into account the corporate laws of the current and proposed jurisdictions and any changes to the company's current and proposed governing

documents. Fidelity will consider supporting these shareholder proposals in limited cases if, based upon particular facts and circumstances, remaining incorporated in the current jurisdiction appears misaligned with shareholder interests.

**IX. Shares of Fidelity Funds, ETFs, or other non-Fidelity Mutual Funds and ETFs**

When a Fidelity fund invests in an underlying Fidelity fund with public shareholders, an exchange traded fund (ETF), or fund that is not affiliated, Fidelity will vote in the same proportion as all other voting shareholders of the underlying fund (this is known as "echo voting"). Fidelity may not vote if "echo voting" is not operationally practical or not permitted under applicable laws and regulations. For Fidelity fund investments in a Fidelity Series Fund, Fidelity generally will vote in a manner consistent with the recommendation of the Fidelity Series Fund's Board of Trustees on all proposals.

**X. Foreign Markets**

Many Fidelity funds invest in voting securities issued by companies that are domiciled outside the United States and are not listed on a U.S. securities exchange. Corporate governance standards, legal or regulatory requirements and disclosure practices in foreign countries can differ from those in the United States. When voting proxies relating to non-U.S. securities, Fidelity generally will evaluate proposals under these guidelines and where applicable and feasible, take into consideration differing laws, regulations and practices in the relevant foreign market in determining how to vote shares.

In certain non-U.S. jurisdictions, shareholders voting shares of a company may be restricted from trading the shares for a period of time around the shareholder meeting date. Because these trading restrictions can hinder portfolio management and could result in a loss of liquidity for a fund, Fidelity generally will not vote proxies in circumstances where such restrictions apply. In addition, certain non-U.S. jurisdictions require voting shareholders to disclose current share ownership on a fund-by-fund basis. When such disclosure requirements apply, Fidelity generally will not vote proxies in order to safeguard fund holdings information.

## **XI. Avoiding Conflicts of Interest**

Voting of shares is conducted in a manner consistent with the best interests of the Fidelity funds. In other words, securities of a company generally will be voted in a manner consistent with these guidelines and without regard to any other Fidelity companies' business relationships.

Fidelity takes its responsibility to vote shares in the best interests of the funds seriously and has implemented policies and procedures to address actual and potential conflicts of interest.

## **XII. Conclusion**

Since its founding more than 70 years ago, Fidelity has been driven by two fundamental values: 1) putting the long-term interests of our customers and fund shareholders first; and 2) investing in companies that share our approach to creating value over the long-term. With these fundamental principles as guideposts, the funds are managed to provide the greatest possible return to shareholders consistent with governing laws and the investment guidelines and objectives of each fund.

Fidelity believes that there is a strong correlation between sound corporate governance and enhancing shareholder value. Fidelity, through the implementation of these guidelines, puts this belief into action through consistent engagement with portfolio companies on matters contained in these guidelines, and, ultimately, through the exercise of voting rights by the funds.