

In Proxy Memo, Coca-Cola and PepsiCo Are Urged to Stay Out of Divisive Abortion Issue



Shareholders Asked to Oppose Proposals Filed by Pro-Abortion Activists

NEWS RELEASE BY NATIONAL LEGAL & POLICY CENTER

Falls Church, VA | April 13, 2023 09:16 AM Eastern Daylight Time

Following last year's *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, which overturned the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, advocates have continued their battle for unrestricted abortion access in a new forum: Corporate America.

Under the guise of two shareholder proposals that demand reports on "Impacts of Reproductive Healthcare Legislation" as the result of newly enacted state laws that limit or ban abortions, activists seek to bully **The Coca-Cola Company** and **PepsiCo Inc.** into advocacy for their own policies on the controversial political issue, and for the companies to steer their campaign contributions accordingly.

In responses filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission this month, National Legal and Policy Center argue why shareholders of the two multinational soft drink makers should *oppose* the resolutions sponsored by the radical pro-abortion proponents. NLPC's reports to the SEC can be viewed at the following links: **Coca-Cola** and **PepsiCo**.

As NLPC's filings explain, the proponents of the two shareholder proposals cite biased research, selective data, slanted opinion polls, and preconceived outcomes to make their cases. For example, the sponsors assert that it will be more difficult for the companies to recruit women to their workforces in states where abortion limits or bans have been enacted into law. But the proponents stake their claim based on a "study" that one critic said suffered from "self-selection bias," using "an unrepresentative, highly biased sample and misleading questions."

The boards of directors for Coca-Cola and PepsiCo also ask shareholders to vote against the proposals on their respective proxy statements, but for reasons that don't address the misleading and even deceitful claims of the proponents. Coca-Cola, in its opposition, proudly points to its coverage of travel expenses for medical procedures that are "not available in-state." PepsiCo repeatedly emphasizes its "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion" policies that "improve the attraction, retention and advancement of women," which include "a robust and highly competitive set of flexible benefits" with "reproductive health" coverage.

“Although we wish their opposition was stronger, Coca-Cola and Pepsi are right to resist these thinly veiled attempts to push their companies to take a public stance on the divisive issue of abortion, which would undermine their fiduciary responsibility to *all* their shareholders,” said **Paul Chesser**, director of NLPC’s **Corporate Integrity Project**. “We hope the directors and company executives are finally starting to learn that capitulating to aggressive Leftist politics is a long-term loser for the bottom line.”

The so-called “Reproductive Healthcare” resolutions that NLPC opposes are Proposal No. 9 **on the Coca-Cola proxy statement**, and Proposal No. 7 on the **PepsiCo proxy statement**.

Founded in 1991, NLPC promotes ethics in public life and government accountability through research, investigation, education, and legal action.

###

For more information or to schedule an interview with Paul Chesser, contact Dan Rene at 202-329-8357 or **drene@nlpc.org**.

Please visit **<http://www.nlpc.org>**.

Contact Details

National Legal and Policy Center

Dan Rene

+1 202-329-8357

drene@nlpc.org

Company Website

<http://www.nlpc.org>

Tags

COKE

PEPSI

NATIONAL LEGAL AND POLICY CENTER

PAUL CHESSER

PETER FLAHERTY

ABORTION

SHAREHOLDER

PEPSICO

THE COCA-COLA COMPANY

DOBBS V. JACKSON WOMEN'S HEALTH ORGANIZATION

ROE V. WADE

SEC

CORPORATE INTEGRITY PROJECT