Catholic Policy

An Overview of Glass Lewis’ Catholic Thematic Voting Policy

January 2023

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About Glass Lewis

Glass Lewis is the world’s choice for governance solutions. We enable institutional investors and publicly listed companies to make informed decisions based on research and data. We cover 30,000+ meetings each year, across approximately 100 global markets. Our team has been providing in-depth analysis of companies since 2003, relying solely on publicly available information to inform its policies, research, and voting recommendations.

Our customers include the majority of the world’s largest pension plans, mutual funds, and asset managers, collectively managing over $40 trillion in assets. We have teams located across the United States, Europe, and Asia-Pacific giving us global reach with a local perspective on the important governance issues.

Investors around the world depend on Glass Lewis’ Viewpoint platform to manage their proxy voting, policy implementation, recordkeeping, and reporting. Our industry leading Proxy Paper product provides comprehensive environmental, social, and governance research and voting recommendations weeks ahead of voting deadlines. Public companies can also use our innovative Report Feedback Statement to deliver their opinion on our proxy research directly to the voting decision makers at every investor client in time for voting decisions to be made or changed.

The research team engages extensively with public companies, investors, regulators, and other industry stakeholders to gain relevant context into the realities surrounding companies, sectors, and the market in general. This enables us to provide the most comprehensive and pragmatic insights to our customers.

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Summary of Changes for 2023

Board Diversity

The Catholic Policy has strengthened its policy concerning gender diversity on boards. The policy has been updated to provide that, if less than 30% of the board is female, the Catholic Policy will vote against the entire nominating committee. Previously, the Catholic Policy would vote against male members of the nominating committee in instances where companies did not have at least 20% gender diversity.

The Catholic Policy has also been updated to vote against the members of the nominating and governance committee when companies receive a “Poor” score in Glass Lewis’ Diversity Disclosure Assessment. This policy will apply to constituents of the Russell 1000. The Diversity Disclosure Assessment is an analysis of companies’ proxy statement disclosure relating to board diversity, skills and the director nomination process. This assessment reflects how a company’s proxy statement presents: (i) the board’s current percentage of racial/ethnic diversity; (ii) whether the board’s definition of diversity explicitly includes gender and/or race/ethnicity; (iii) whether the board has adopted a policy requiring women and minorities to be included in the initial pool of candidates when selecting new director nominees (“Rooney Rule”); and (iv) board skills disclosure.

Sustainability Disclosure

The Catholic Policy has been updated to include specific consideration for companies’ disclosure of environmental and social matters. For large-cap companies in most major indices, the Catholic Policy will vote against the chair of the board when companies have not provided sufficient sustainability disclosure. For all other companies, the Catholic Policy will vote against the chair of the board when they have not produced reporting that is aligned with SASB or if they have not responded to the CDP’s climate survey. In both instances, if the chair of the board is also the company’s CEO, the Catholic Policy will vote against the chair of the audit committee.

Climate Risk

The Catholic Policy has been updated to include specific consideration for companies’ policies concerning climate change. The Catholic Policy will vote against the chair of the board in instances where companies have not established any forward-looking GHG emissions reduction targets. If the chair of the board is also the company’s CEO, the Catholic Policy will vote against the chair of the audit committee.

Stakeholder Considerations

In order to drive long-term shareholder value, companies require a social license to operate. A lack of consideration for stakeholders can present legal, regulatory, and reputational risks. With this view, the Catholic Policy will vote against the chair of the board in instances where companies who are not signatories or participants in the United Nations Global Compact (“UNGC”) or that have not adopted a human rights policy that is aligned with the standards set forth by the International Labour Organization (“ILO”) or the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (“UDHR”).
For U.S. companies listed in the S&P 500 index, the Catholic Policy will also evaluate whether companies have provided sufficient disclosure concerning their workforce diversity. In instances where these companies have not disclosed their full EEO-1 reports, the Catholic Policy will vote against the nominating and governance chair.

**Linking Compensation to Environmental and Social Criteria**

The Catholic Policy evaluates if, and to what extent, a company has provided a link between compensation and environmental and social criteria. The policy has been enhanced to provide that, in most markets, should a company not provide any environmental or social considerations in its remuneration scheme, the Catholic Policy will vote against the proposed plan. Previously, Catholic Policy would only vote against these plans on the basis that they did not include environmental or social considerations in the event that there was a clear link between a company’s pay and its performance.

**Say on Climate**

The Catholic Policy has been updated to reflect its approach to management proposals asking shareholders to approve climate transition plans (“Say on Climate”) as well as shareholder proposals requesting that companies adopt such a vote. The Catholic Policy will broadly support shareholder proposals requesting that companies adopt a Say on Climate vote. When companies have placed a management proposal on the ballot asking for approval of companies’ climate transition strategies, the Catholic Policy will closely evaluate each of these policies to determine if the company has provided sufficient disclosure concerning the boards’ role setting corporate strategy in the context of the Say on Climate vote as well as disclosure on how the board intends to interpret the vote results and its engagement with shareholders on the issue. In addition, the Catholic Policy will evaluate the company’s disclosure in the context of its unique operations and risk profile. As a part of this evaluation, the Catholic Policy will determine if sufficient disclosure has been made concerning a company’s capital allocations and expenditures in the context of its strategy and will also evaluate any stated net zero ambitions or targets. If either of these are absent, the Catholic Policy will generally vote against management Say on Climate proposals.
Introduction

Glass Lewis recognizes that Catholic and other religious institutions are concerned not only with economic returns but with the overall social impact of the companies in which they invest.¹ To this end, Glass Lewis has created the thematic Catholic Policy Guidelines, which is based largely on the principles set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (www.usccb.org), and that is directly relevant to the unique fiduciary responsibilities of religious investors.

The Catholic Policy was designed for religious investor clients or as a supplemental voting policy for funds designed for religious institutions. This policy is also ideal for investors who would like to vote in a stakeholder-focused and progressive manner.

Implementation of the Catholic Policy may vary market-to-market in accordance with regulatory requirements, corporate governance best practices, and other relevant standards in individual markets.

Election of Directors

Board of Directors

Boards are established in order to represent shareholders and protect their interests. Glass Lewis seeks boards that have a record for protecting shareholders and delivering value over the medium- and long-term. For boards that wish to protect and enhance the interests of shareholders they must have sufficient levels of independence (the percentage varies by local market practice and regulations), boast a record of positive performance, have directors with diverse backgrounds, and appoint new directors that have a depth of relevant experience.

Board Composition

The Catholic Policy examines a variety of elements to the board when voting on director elections. In terms of the directors, the policy looks at each individual on the board and explores their relationship with the company, the company’s executives and with other board members. This is to ensure and determine whether a director has an existing relationship with the company that are likely to impact any decision processes of that board member.

The biographical information provided by the company on the individual director is essential for investors to understand the background and skills of the directors of the board. This information should be provided in the company’s documents well in advance of the shareholder meeting, in order to give shareholders sufficient time to analyze the information. In cases where the company fails to disclose the names or backgrounds of director nominees, the Catholic Policy may vote against or abstain from voting on the directors’ elections.

The Catholic Policy will vote in favor of governance structures that will drive positive performance and enhance shareholder value. The most crucial test of a board’s commitment to the company and to its shareholders is the performance of the board and its members. The performance of directors in their capacity as board members and as executives of the company, when applicable, and in their roles at other companies where they serve is critical to this evaluation.

Directors are formed into three categories based on an examination of the type of relationship they have with the company. The table below includes a breakdown of how Glass Lewis classifies these director relationships with the company.
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<th>Insider</th>
<th>Affiliate</th>
<th>Independent</th>
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<td>&gt; Someone who serves as a director and as an employee of the Company</td>
<td>&gt; A director who has a material financial, familial or other relationship with the company, or its executives, but is NOT an employee of the company</td>
<td>&gt; No material financial, familial or other current relationships with the company, it’s executives or other board members except for service</td>
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<td>&gt; May also include executive chairs (who act as an employee of the company or is paid as an employee of the company)</td>
<td>&gt; A director who owns or controls, directly or indirectly 20% or more of the company’s voting stock (except where local regulations or best practices set a different threshold).</td>
<td>&gt; A director who owns, directly or indirectly less than 10% of the company’s voting stock (local regulations and best practices may set a different threshold)</td>
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<td>&gt; A director who has been employed by the company within the past 5 calendar years</td>
<td>&gt; A director who has not been employed by the company for a minimum of 5 calendar years</td>
<td>&gt; A director who is not involved in any Related Party Transactions (RPT) with the company (most common RPT’s - Consulting, Legal, and Accounting/Advisory services)</td>
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<td>&gt; A director who performs material consulting, legal, advisory, accounting or other professional services for the company</td>
<td>&gt; A director who is involved in an &quot;Interlocking Directorship&quot;</td>
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Common other reasons the Catholic Policy will vote against a director:

(i) A director who attends less than 75% of the board and applicable committee meetings.
(ii) A director who is also the CEO of a company where a serious restatement has occurred after the CEO certified the pre-restatement financial statements.
(iii) An affiliated director when the board is not sufficiently independent in accordance with market best practice standards.
(iv) An affiliate or insider on any of the key committees (audit, compensation, nominating) or an affiliate or insider on any of the key committees and there is insufficient independence on that committee, both of the above can vary in accordance with the markets best practice standards.

The following conflicts of interests may hinder a director’s performance and may result in a vote against:

(i) A director who presently sits on an excessive number of public company boards (see the relevant market guidelines for confirmation of the excessive amount).
(ii) Director, or a director whose immediate family member, or the firm at which the director is employed, provides material professional services to the company at any time during the past five years.
(iii) Director, or a director whose immediate family member, engages in airplane, real estate or other similar deals, including perquisite type grants from the company.
(iv) Director with an interlocking directorship.
(v) All board members who served at a time when a poison pill with a term of longer than one year was adopted without shareholder approval within the prior twelve months.
(vi) A director who has received two against recommendations from Glass Lewis for identical reasons within the prior year at different companies.
Board Independence

A board composed of at least two-thirds independent is most effective in protecting shareholders’ interests. Generally, the Catholic Policy will vote against responsible directors if the board is less than two-thirds independent, however, this is also dependent on the market best practice standards.

Board Committee Composition

It is best practice to have independent directors serving on the audit, compensation, nominating and governance committees. As such, the Catholic Policy will support boards with this structure and encourage change when this is not the case. However, board committee independence thresholds may vary depending on the market.

Board Diversity, Tenure and Refreshment

The Catholic Policy acknowledges the importance of ensuring that the board is comprised of directors who have a diversity of skills, backgrounds, thoughts, and experiences. As such, having diverse boards benefits companies greatly by encompassing an array of different perspectives and insights. The Catholic Policy may vote against the chair of the nominating committee when the board has failed to address the lack of diverse skills, and experience of the board members or when it fails to meet legal requirements or relevant market best practice standards, and when the company has not disclosed any explanation or plan regarding its approach to board diversity.

In terms of board tenure and refreshment, the Catholic Policy strongly supports routine director evaluations, including independent external reviews, and periodic board refreshment in order to enable the company to maintain a fresh set of ideas and business strategies in an ever-changing world and market. Having directors with diverse experiences and skills can strengthen the position of a company within the market. Therefore, the Catholic Policy promotes refreshment within boards, as a lack of refreshment can lead to poor company performance. Thus, the Catholic Policy may consider voting against directors with a lengthy tenure (e.g. over 12 years) when we identify significant performance or governance concerns indicating that a fresh perspective would be beneficial and there is no evidence of any plans of future board refreshment.

In addition, the Catholic Policy promotes board gender diversity by voting against members of the nominating and governance committee if the board does not have at least 30% female representation. For markets with a higher diversity threshold, such as many European markets, the Catholic Policy will apply the higher standard and follow Glass Lewis’ recommendations on the basis of diversity should the company fail to meet market norms or standards.

The Catholic Policy conducts a further level of analysis for U.S. companies included in the Russel 1000 index. For these companies, the Catholic Policy will vote against members of the nominating and governance committee when they receive a “Poor” score in Glass Lewis’ Diversity Disclosure Assessment. The Diversity Disclosure Assessment is an analysis of companies’ proxy statement disclosure relating to board diversity, skills and the director nomination process. This assessment reflects how a company’s proxy statement presents: (i) the board’s current percentage of racial/ethnic diversity; (ii) whether the board’s definition of diversity explicitly includes gender and/or race/ethnicity; (iii) whether the board has adopted a policy requiring women and
minorities to be included in the initial pool of candidates when selecting new director nominees ("Rooney Rule"); and (iv) board skills disclosure.

### Board Size

Although there is not a universally acceptable optimum board size, boards should have a minimum of five directors to ensure sufficient diversity in decision making and to enable the establishment of key committees with independent directors. Further, boards should not be composed of more than 20 directors as the board may suffer as a result of too many voices to be heard and have difficulty reaching consensus on issues with this number of members. As a result, the Catholic Policy will generally vote against the chair of the nominating committee at a board with fewer than five directors or more than 20 directors.

### Classified Boards

The Catholic Policy favors the repeal of staggered boards in favor of the annual election of directors. Staggered boards are generally less accountable to shareholders than annually elected directors to the board. In addition, the annual election of directors encourages board members to focus on protecting the interests of shareholders. Further to this, if shareholders are unsatisfied with board members the annual election of directors allows them to voice these concerns.

### Controlled Companies

The Catholic Policy allows certain exceptions to the independence standards at controlled companies. The board’s main function is to protect shareholder interests, however, when an individual, entity, or group own more than 50% of the voting shares, the interests of majority shareholders are the interests of that entity or individual. As a result, the Catholic Policy does not apply the usual two-thirds independence threshold on controlled companies instead it includes the following guidelines:

1. As long as insiders and/or affiliates are connected to the controlling entity, the Catholic Policy will accept the presence of non-independent board members.
2. The compensation, nominating, and governance committees do not need to consist solely of independent directors. However, the compensation committee should not have any insider members, but affiliates are accepted.
3. The board does not need an independent chair or an independent lead or presiding director.
4. The audit committee should consist solely of independent directors, regardless of the controlled status of the company.

### Significant Shareholders

Significant shareholders are either an individual or an entity which holds between 20-50% of a company’s voting power, and the Catholic Policy provides that shareholders should be allowed proportional representation on the board and in committees (excluding the audit committee) based on their percentage of ownership.
Performance

Board members' performance and their actions in regard to performance of the board is an essential element to understanding the board's commitment to the company and to shareholders. The Catholic Policy will look at the performance of individuals as directors and executives of the company and of other companies where they have served. Often a director's past conduct is indicative of future conduct and performance.

The Catholic Policy will typically vote against directors who have served on boards or as executives of companies with records of poor performance, inadequate risk oversight, excessive compensation, audit or accounting-related issues, and other actions or indicators of mismanagement. However, the Catholic Policy will also reevaluate the directors based on factors such as the length of time that has passed since the incident, the director's role, and the severity of the issue.

Environmental and Social Oversight and Performance

The Catholic Policy considers the oversight afforded to environmental and social issues. The Catholic Policy looks to ensure that companies maintain appropriate board-level oversight of material risks to their operations, including those that are environmental and social in nature. When it is clear that these risks have not been properly managed or mitigated, the Catholic Policy may vote against members of the board who are responsible for the oversight of environmental and social risks. In the absence of explicit board oversight of environmental and social issues, the Catholic Policy may vote against members of the audit committee. In making these determinations, the Catholic Policy will take into account the situation at hand, its effect on shareholder value, as well as any corrective action or other response made by the company.

Climate Risk

Given the importance of companies' mitigation and management of climate-related risks, the Catholic Policy includes specific consideration for companies' policies concerning climate change. The Catholic Policy will vote against the chair of the board in instances where companies have not established any forward-looking GHG emissions reduction targets. If the chair of the board is also the company's CEO, the Catholic Policy will vote against the chair of the audit committee.

Sustainability Disclosure

Given the importance of companies mitigation and management of environmental and social risks, the Catholic Policy includes specific consideration for companies' disclosure of these matters. For large-cap companies in most major indices, the Catholic Policy will vote against the chair of the board when companies have not provided sufficient sustainability disclosure. For all other companies, the Catholic Policy will vote against the chair of the board when they have not produced reporting that is aligned with SASB or if they have not

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2 Pope Francis, Laudato si’, no. 25.
3 “Promote responsible investments in social and environmental sectors, for example by evaluating progressive disinvestment from the fossil-fuel sector” (Interdicasterial Working Group of the Holy See on Integral Ecology, Journeying Towards Care for Our Common Home: Five Years After Laudato Si’, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2020, p.179.)
responded to the CDP’s climate survey. In both instances, if the chair of the board is also the company’s CEO, the Catholic Policy will vote against the chair of the audit committee.

**Stakeholder Considerations**

In order to drive long-term shareholder value, companies require a social license to operate. A lack of consideration for stakeholders can present legal, regulatory, and reputational risks. With this view, the Catholic Policy will vote against the chair of the board in instances where companies who are not signatories or participants in the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) or that have not adopted a human rights policy that is aligned with the standards set forth by the International Labour Organization (ILO) or the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR). When applying this policy, if the chair of the board is also the company’s CEO, the Catholic Policy will vote against the chair of the audit committee.

For U.S. companies listed in the S&P 500 index, the Catholic Policy will also evaluate whether companies have provided sufficient disclosure concerning their workforce diversity. In instances where these companies have not disclosed their full EEO-1 reports, the Catholic Policy will vote against the nominating and governance committee chair.

**Review of Risk Management Controls**

The Catholic Policy evaluates the risk management function of a public company on a case-by-case basis. Companies, particularly financial firms, should have a dedicated risk committee, or a committee on the board in charge of risk oversight, as well as a chief risk officer who reports directly to that committee, not to the CEO or another executive of the company. When analyzing the risk management practices of public companies the Catholic Policy takes note of any significant losses or write-downs on financial assets and/or structured transactions. In cases where a company has disclosed a sizable loss or write-down, and where the company’s board-level risk committee’s poor oversight contributed to the loss, the Catholic Policy will recommend that shareholders vote against such committee members on that basis. In addition, in cases where a company maintains a significant level of financial risk exposure but fails to disclose any explicit form of board-level risk oversight (committee or otherwise), the Catholic Policy may vote against the chair of the board on that basis.

**Slate Elections**

In some countries, in particular Italy, companies elect their board members as a slate, whereby shareholders are unable to vote on the election of an individual director, but rather are limited to voting for or against the board as a whole. The Catholic Policy will generally support the slate if no major governance or board-related concerns have been raised in the analysis, and the slate appears to support and protect the best interests of all shareholders.

**Board Responsiveness**

Any time 20% or more of shareholders vote contrary to the recommendation of management on compensation or director elections proposals, the board should, depending on the issue, demonstrate some level of

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4 See https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles.
responsiveness to address the concerns of shareholders. While the 20% threshold alone will not automatically generate a negative vote from the Catholic Policy on a future proposal (e.g., to vote against a director nominee, against a remuneration proposal, etc.), it will be a contributing factor to a vote against management’s recommendation in the event we determine that the board did not respond appropriately.

As a general framework, the evaluation of board responsiveness involves a review of the publicly available disclosures released following the date of the company’s last annual meeting up through the publication date of the most current Proxy Paper.

Separation of the Roles of CEO and Chair

The separation of the positions of CEO and chair creates a better and more independent governance structure than a combined CEO/chair position. The role of executives is to manage the business based on the course charted by the board. Executives should be in the position of reporting and answering to the board for their performance in achieving their goals as set out by the board. This would become more complicated if they too held the position of chair as it would be difficult for them to fulfil the duty of being both the overseer and policy setter when they, the CEO/chair control both the agenda and boardroom.

The Catholic Policy views an independent chair as better able to oversee the executives of the company and set a pro-shareholder agenda without the management conflicts that a CEO and other executive insiders often face. Such oversight and concern for shareholders allows for a more proactive and effective board of directors that is better able to look out for the interests of shareholders.

Furthermore, it is the board’s responsibility to select a chief executive to best serve the company and its shareholders and to replace this person when his or her duties have not been appropriately fulfilled. Such a replacement becomes more difficult and happens less frequently when the chief executive is also in the position of overseeing the board.

However, even considering the above, the Catholic Policy will not vote against CEOs who also chair the board. The Catholic Policy will support separating the positions of CEO and chair whenever the question is posed in a proxy, as in the long-term it is in the best interests of the company.

In the absence of an independent chair, the Catholic Policy will support the appointment of a presiding or lead independent director with authority to set the agenda for the meeting and to lead sessions. In the case where the company has neither an independent chair nor independent lead director, the Catholic Policy may vote against the chair of the governance committee.

Governance Following an IPO or Spin-off

Companies that have recently completed an initial public offering (IPO), or spin-off should be given adequate time to fully adjust and comply with marketplace listing requirements and meet basic corporate governance standards. The Catholic Policy generally allows the company a one-year period following the IPO to comply with these requirements and as such refrains from voting based on governance standards (e.g., board independence, committee membership and structure, meeting attendance, etc.).

However, there are some cases that warrant shareholder action against the board of a company that have completed an IPO or spin-off in the past year. The Catholic Policy will evaluate the terms of applicable governing
documents when determining the recommendations and whether the shareholders rights will be severely restricted. In order to come to a conclusion the following points will be considered:

1. The adoption of anti-takeover provisions such as a poison pill or classified board;
2. Supermajority vote requirements to amend governing documents;
3. The presence of exclusive forum or fee-shifting provisions;
4. Whether shareholders can call special meetings or act by written consent;
5. The voting standard provided for the election of directors;
6. The ability of shareholders to remove directors without cause;
7. The presence of evergreen provisions in the company’s equity compensation arrangements; and
8. The presence of a dual-class share structure which does not afford common shareholders voting power that is aligned with their economic interest.

Anti-takeover provisions can negatively impact future shareholders who (except for electing to buy or sell the stock) are unable to weigh in on matters that might negatively impact their ownership interest. In cases where the anti-takeover provision was adopted prior to the IPO, the Catholic Policy may against the members of the board who served when it was adopted if the board:

(i) Did not also commit to submit the anti-takeover provision to a shareholder vote at the company’s next shareholder meeting following the IPO; or
(ii) Did not provide a sound rationale or sunset provision for adopting the anti-takeover provision.
Financial Reporting

Accounts and Reports
Excluding situations where there are concerns surrounding the integrity of the statements/reports, the Catholic Policy will generally vote for Accounts and Reports proposals.

Where the required documents have not been published at the time that the vote is cast, the Catholic Policy will abstain from voting on this proposal.

Income Allocation (Distribution of Dividends)
The Catholic Policy will generally vote for proposals concerning companies’ distribution of dividends. However, particular scrutiny will be given to cases where the company’s dividend payout ratio is exceptionally low or excessively high relative to its peers, and where the company has not provided a satisfactory explanation for this disparity.

Appointment of Auditors and Authority to Set Fees
The role of the auditor is crucial in protecting shareholder value. Like directors, auditors should be free from conflicts of interest and should assiduously avoid situations that require them to make choices between their own interests and the interests of the shareholders.

The Catholic Policy will generally support management’s recommendation for the selection of an auditor, as well as the board’s authority to fix auditor fees. However, there are a number of exceptions to this policy, and the Catholic Policy will vote against the appointment of the auditor and/or the authorization of the board to set auditor fees in the following scenarios:

- The independence of an incumbent auditor or the integrity of the audit has been compromised.
- There have been any recent restatements or late filings by the company and responsibility for such can be attributed to the auditor (e.g., a restatement due to a reporting error).
- The company has aggressive accounting policies.
- The company has poor disclosure or lack of transparency in financial statements.
- There are other relationships, or issues of concern, with the auditor that might suggest a conflict of interest.
- The company is changing auditors as a result of a disagreement between the company and the auditor on a matter of accounting principles or practices, financial statement disclosure, or auditing scope or procedures.

The Catholic Policy also examines the amount and nature of any non-audit work conducted by the auditor and will vote against auditors when there is concern about the auditor’s performance or where the prior auditor was dismissed following a disagreement with management. The Catholic policy will vote against auditor ratification where the amount of non-audit work performed by the auditor is in excess of 25% of the aggregate fees paid to the auditor. The Catholic policy supports auditor rotation and will support auditor rotation proposals.
Compensation

Compensation Reports and Compensation Policies

Depending on the market, Compensation Report and Policy vote proposals may be either advisory or binding, e.g. in the UK a non-binding Compensation Report based upon the most recent fiscal year is voted upon annually, and a forward-looking Compensation Policy will be subject to a binding vote every three years.

In all markets company filings are evaluated closely to determine how well information pertinent to Compensation practices has been disclosed, the extent to which overall compensation is tied to performance, which performance metrics have been employed, as well as how the company’s remuneration practices compare to that of its peers.

The Catholic Policy will vote against the approval of the Compensation Report or Policy in the following scenarios:

- There is a significant disconnect between pay and performance;
- Performance goals and metrics are inappropriate or insufficiently challenging;
- There is a lack of disclosure regarding performance metrics as well as a lack of clarity surrounding the implementation of these metrics.
- Short-term (e.g., generally less than three year) performance measurement is weighted excessively in incentive plans;
- Excessive discretion is afforded to, or exercised by, management or the Compensation Committee to deviate from defined performance metrics and goals in determining awards;
- Ex gratia or other non-contractual payments have been made and the reasoning for this is inadequate.
- Guaranteed bonuses are established;
- Egregious or excessive bonuses, equity awards or severance payments have been granted;
- Excessive increases (e.g. over 10%) in fixed payments, such as salary or pension entitlements, that are not adequately justified
- Where there is an absence of structural safeguarding mechanisms such as clawback and malus policies included in the Incentive plan.

Linking Compensation to Environmental and Social Issues

On top of Glass Lewis’ robust evaluation of companies’ compensation plans, the Catholic Policy will evaluate if, and to what extent, a company has provided a link between compensation and environmental and social criteria. In most markets, should a company not provide any environmental or social considerations in its remuneration scheme, the Catholic Policy will vote against the proposed plan. The Catholic Policy will also support shareholder resolutions requesting the inclusion of sustainability metrics in executive compensation plans.
Long-Term Incentive Plans

The Catholic Policy recognizes the value of equity-based incentive programs. When used appropriately, they provide a means of linking an employee’s pay to a company’s performance, thereby aligning their interests with those of shareholders. In addition, equity-based compensation is an effective way to attract, retain and motivate key employees.

In order to allow for meaningful shareholder review, incentive programs should generally include:

(i) specific and appropriate performance goals;
(ii) a maximum award pool; and
(iii) a maximum award amount per employee.

In addition, the payments made should be reasonable relative to the performance of the business and total compensation paid to those included under the plan should be in line with compensation paid by the company’s peers.

Performance-Based Equity Compensation

The Catholic Policy supports performance-based equity compensation plans for senior executives; where it is warranted by both their performance, and that of the company. While it is unnecessary to base equity-based compensation for all employees to company performance, placing such limitations on grants to senior executives is considered advisable (although in specific scenarios equity-based compensation granted to senior executives without performance criteria is acceptable under Glass Lewis guidelines, such as in the case of moderate incentive grants made in an initial offer of employment). While it is not uncommon for a board to state that tying equity compensation to performance goals may hinder them in attracting, and retaining, talented executives, the Catholic Policy takes the stance that performance-based compensation aids in aligning executive interests to that of shareholders, and as such will support the company in achieving its objectives.

The Catholic policy will consider voting against stock-related plans that: do not require grants to be performance-based (such as premium priced options or indexed options); have dilution greater than 10%; contain evergreen provisions; allow for options to be granted with an exercise price below fair market value; maintain an excessive burn rate; provide loans to executives; include a reload feature; or do not include a mandatory holding period for executives. Further, for restricted stock plans, the Catholic policy will consider voting against the plan if the grants are time-based without any performance criteria. The Catholic Policy will support the use of performance measurements in stock and cash plans (so-called 162(m) plans), and will support the increased implementation of performance standards; conversely the Catholic Policy will vote against proposals seeking to remove or lower performance standards.

Director Compensation

The Catholic Policy supports non-employee directors receiving an appropriate form, and level, of compensation for the time and effort they spend serving on the board and its committees; and director fees being at a level that allows a company to retain and attract qualified individuals. The Catholic Policy compares the cost of director compensation to that of peer companies with similar market capitalizations in the same country so that compensation plans may be evaluated thoroughly, and a fair vote outcome reached.
Retirement Benefits for Directors

The Catholic Policy will typically vote against the granting of retirement benefits to non-executive directors. Such extended payments can impair the objectivity and independence of these board members. Initial, and annual fees should be of a level that provides appropriate compensation to directors throughout their service to the company.

Limits on Executive Compensation

As a general rule, shareholders should not seek to micromanage executive compensation programs. Such matters should be left to the board’s compensation committee. The election of directors, and specifically those who sit on the compensation committee, is viewed as an appropriate mechanism for shareholders to express their support, or disapproval, of board policy on this issue. Further, companies whose pay-for-performance is in line with their peers should be granted the flexibility to compensate their executives in a manner that drives sustainable growth. However, the Catholic Policy favors performance-based compensation as an effective means of motivating executives to act in the best interests of shareholders. Performance-based compensation may be limited if a chief executive’s pay is capped at a low level rather than flexibly tied to the performance of the company.
Governance Structure

Amendments to Articles of Association

The Catholic Policy will evaluate proposed amendments to a company’s articles of association on a case-by-case basis. The Catholic Policy is generally opposed to bundling several amendments under a single proposal as it prevents shareholders from evaluating each amendment on its own merits. In cases where it is a bundled amendment, the Catholic Policy will evaluate each amendment individually and only support the proposal if, in the aggregate, the amendments are in the best interests of shareholders.

Anti-Takeover Measures

Multi-Class Share Structure

The Catholic Policy views multi-class share structures as not in the best interests of shareholders and instead is in favor of one vote per share. This structure operates as a safeguard for common shareholders by ensuring that those who hold a significant minority of shares are still able to weigh in on issues set forth by the board. The economic stake of each shareholder should match their voting power and that no small group of shareholders, family or otherwise, should have differing voting rights from those of all other shareholders.

The Catholic Policy considers a multi-class share structure as having the potential to negatively impact the overall corporate governance of a company. Companies should have share class structures that protect the interests of non-controlling shareholders as well as any controlling entity. Therefore, the Catholic Policy will generally vote in favor of recapitalization proposals to eliminate multi-class share structures. Similarly, the Catholic Policy will typically vote against proposals to adopt a new class of common stock.

Cumulative Voting

When voting on cumulative voting proposals, the Catholic Policy will factor in the independence of the board and the company’s governance structure. Cumulative voting is often found on ballots at companies where independence is lacking and where the appropriate balances favoring the interests of shareholders are not in place. However, cumulative voting increases the ability of minority shareholders to elect a director by allowing shareholders to cast as many shares of stock they own multiplied by the number of directors to be elected. Cumulative voting allows shareholders to cast all their votes for one single nominee, or a smaller number of nominees than up for election, thereby raising the likelihood of electing one or more of their preferred nominees to the board. Accordingly, cumulative voting generally acts as a safeguard for shareholders by ensuring that those who hold a significant minority of shares can elect a candidate of their choosing to the board. As a result, the Catholic Policy will typically vote in favor proposals concerning cumulative voting.

In the case, where the company has adopted a true majority vote standard (i.e., where a director must receive a majority of votes cast to be elected, as opposed to a modified policy indicated by a resignation policy only), the Catholic Policy will vote against cumulative voting proposals due to the incompatibility of the two election methods. For companies, that have not adopted the true majority vote standard but have some form of majority voting, the Catholic Policy will also recommend voting against cumulative voting proposals if the company has also not adopted anti-takeover provisions and has been responsive to shareholders.
In instances where a company has not adopted majority voting standards and is facing both an election on the adoption of majority voting and a proposal to adopt cumulative voting, the Catholic Policy will support only the majority voting proposal.

**Fair Price Provision**

Fair price provisions, which are rare, require that certain minimum price and procedural requirements to be observed by any party that acquires more than a specified percentage of a corporation’s common stock. The intention of this provision is to protect minority shareholder value when an acquirer seeks to accomplish a merger or other transaction which would eliminate or change the rights of the shareholder. Fair price provisions sometimes protecting the rights of shareholders in a takeover situation. However, more often than not they act as an impediment to takeovers, potentially limiting gains to shareholders from a variety of transactions that could potentially increase share price. As a result, the Catholic Policy will generally vote to fair price provisions.

**Supermajority Vote Requirements**

The Catholic Policy favors a simple majority voting structure except where a supermajority voting requirement is explicitly intended to protect the rights of minority shareholders in a controlled company. In the case of non-controlled companies, supermajority vote requirements act as impediments to shareholder action on ballot items that are critical to their interests. For example, supermajority vote requirements can strongly limit the voice of shareholders in making decisions on critical matters such as the selling of the business. Supermajority vote requirements can also allow small groups of shareholders to overrule and dictate the will of the majority of shareholders. Thus, having a simple majority is appropriate for protecting the rights of all shareholders.

**Poison Pills (Shareholder Rights Plan)**

The Catholic Policy will generally oppose companies’ adoption of poison pills, as they can reduce management accountability by substantially limiting opportunities for corporate takeovers. As a result, rights plans can prevent shareholders from receiving a buy-out premium for their stock. While boards should be given wide latitude in directing the activities of the company and charting the company’s course, on an issue such as this where the link between the financial interests of shareholders and their right to consider and accept buyout offers is so substantial, shareholders should be allowed to vote on whether or not they support such a plan’s implementation. In certain limited circumstances, the Catholic Policy will support a limited poison pill to accomplish a particular objective, such as the closing of an important merger, or a pill that contains what we believe to be a reasonable ‘qualifying offer’ clause. The Catholic Policy will also vote against poison pills which have a pill trigger less than 20% or contain a “dead hand” provision. The Catholic policy will vote against poison pills that have a permitted bid period of less than 30 days; that are not subject to shareholder approval and subsequent renewal; and are longer than three years.
Increase in Authorized Shares

Adequate capital stock is important to a company’s operation. When analyzing a request for additional shares, the Catholic Policy will typically review four common reasons why a company may need additional capital stock:

1. **Stock Split**
   - Three Metrics:
     - (a) Historical stock pre-split price (if any)
     - (b) Current price relative to the company’s most common trading price over the past 52 weeks
     - (c) Some absolute limits on stock price (that will either make the split appropriate or would produce an unreasonable price)

2. **Shareholder Defenses**
   - Additional authorized shares could be used to bolster takeover defenses such as a poison pill. The proxy filings often discuss the usefulness of additional shares in defending against a hostile takeover.

3. **Financing for Acquisitions**
   - Examine whether the company has a history of using stock for acquisitions and attempts to determine what levels of stock have generally been required to accomplish such transactions.

4. **Financing for Operations**
   - Review the company’s cash position and its ability to secure financing through borrowing or other means.

The Catholic Policy will generally support proposals when a company could reasonably use the requested shares for financing, stock splits and stock dividends, as having adequate shares to allow management to make quick decisions and effectively operate the business is critical. The Catholic Policy favors that, when a company is undertaking significant transactions, management will justify its use of additional shares rather than providing a blank check in the form of large pools of unallocated shares available for any purpose.

Generally, the Catholic Policy will support proposals to increase authorized shares up to 100% of the number of shares currently authorized unless, after the increase the company would be left with less than 30% of its authorized shares outstanding. In markets where such authorities typically also authorize the board to issue new shares without separate shareholder approval, the Catholic Policy applies the policy described below on the issuance of shares.

**Issuance of Shares**

The issuance of additional shares generally dilutes existing shareholders in most circumstances. Further, the availability of additional shares, where the board has discretion to implement a poison pill, can often serve as a deterrent to interested suitors. In cases where a company has not detailed a plan for use of the proposed shares, or where the number of shares far exceeds those needed to accomplish a detailed plan, the Catholic Policy will typically vote against the authorization of additional shares. In the case of a private placement, the Catholic Policy will also factor in whether the company is offering a discount to its share price.
Generally, the Catholic Policy will support proposals to authorize the board to issue shares (with pre-emptive rights) when the requested increase is equal to or less than the current issued share capital. The authority of these shares should not exceed five years unless that is the market best practice. In accordance with the different market practices, the specific thresholds for share issuance can vary. And, as a result, the Catholic Policy will vote on these proposals on a case-by-case basis.

The Catholic Policy will also generally support proposals to suspend pre-emption rights for a maximum of 5-20% of the issued ordinary share capital of the company, depending on best practice in the country in which the company is located. This authority should not exceed five years, or less for some countries.

**Repurchase of Shares**

The Catholic Policy typically supports proposals to repurchase shares when the plan includes the following provisions:

- (i) A maximum number of shares which may be purchased (typically not more than 10-15% of the issued share capital); and
- (ii) A maximum price which may be paid for each share (as a percentage of the market price).

**Reincorporation**

A company is in the best position to determine the appropriate jurisdiction of incorporation. The Catholic Policy will factor in several elements when a management proposal to reincorporate the company is put to vote. These elements include reviewing the relevant financial benefits, generally related to incorporate tax treatment, as well as changes in corporate governance provisions, especially those related to shareholder rights, resulting from the change in domicile. In cases where the financial benefits are too small to be meaningful and there is a decrease in shareholder rights, the Catholic Policy will vote against the transaction.

**Tax Havens**

The Catholic Policy evaluates a company’s potential exposure to risks related to a company’s tax haven policies on an as-needed basis and will support shareholder proposals requesting that companies report on the risks associated with their use of tax havens or that request that companies adopt policies to discontinue operations or withdraw from tax havens. The Catholic Policy will also vote against reincorporation proposals when companies have proposed to redomicile in known tax havens.

**Advance Notice Requirements**

Typically, the Catholic Policy will recommend vote against provisions that would require advance notice of shareholder proposals or of director nominees. Advance notice requirements typically range between three to six months prior to the annual meeting. These requirements often make it impossible for a shareholder who misses the deadline to present a shareholder proposal or director nominee that may be in the best interests of the company. Shareholders should be able to review and vote on all proposals and director nominees and are able to vote against proposals that appear with little prior notice. Therefore, by setting advance notice requirements it limits the opportunity for shareholders to raise issues that may arise after the window closes.
Transaction of Other Business

In general, the Catholic Policy will vote against proposals that put the transaction of other business items proposal up for vote at an annual or special meeting, as granting unfettered discretion is unwise.

Anti-Greenmail Provisions

The Catholic Policy will support proposals to adopt a provision preventing the payment of greenmail, which would serve to prevent companies from buying back company stock at significant premiums from a certain shareholder. The anti-greenmail provision helps to protect the company as it requires that a majority of shareholders other than the majority shareholder approve the buyback, thus, eliminating cases where a majority shareholder could attempt to charge a board a large premium for the shares.

Virtual-Only Shareholder Meetings

A growing number of companies have elected to hold shareholder meetings by virtual means only. The Catholic Policy supports companies allowing a virtual option alongside an in-person meeting, so long as the shareholder interests are not compromised. Without proper controls, conducting a virtual-only meeting of shareholders could eliminate or significantly limit the rights of shareholders to confront, and ask management on any concerns they may have. When companies decide to only hold virtual-only meetings, the Catholic Policy will examine the level of disclosure provided by the company on the virtual meeting procedures and base the voting outcome on that level of disclosure.
Mergers, Acquisitions & Contested Meetings

For merger and acquisition proposals, the Catholic Policy undertakes a thorough examination of all elements of the transactions and determine the transaction’s likelihood of maximizing shareholder return. In order to make a voting recommendation, the Catholic Policy will examine the process conducted, the specific parties and individuals involved in negotiating an agreement, as well as the economic and governance terms of the proposal.

In the case of contested merger situations, or board proxy fights, the Catholic Policy will evaluate the plan presented by the dissident party and how, if elected, it plans to enhance or protect shareholder value. The Catholic Policy will also consider any concerns presented by the board, including any plans for improving the performance of the company, when making the ultimate recommendation.
Shareholder Proposals

The Catholic Policy has a strong emphasis on enhancing companies’ social responsibility efforts, including those that promote environmental stewardship and improved stakeholder relations. Accordingly, the Catholic Policy is broadly supportive of environmental and social shareholder proposals aimed at enhancing a company’s policies and performance with respect to such issues, while also ensuring consideration for certain issues that are of particular interest to Catholic and other religious investors. The Catholic Policy will also vote in a manner that promotes enhanced disclosure and board accountability. In extraordinary cases when companies have failed to adequately mitigate risks stemming from environmental or social practices, the Catholic Policy may vote against:

(i) ratification of board and/or management acts;
(ii) approving a company’s accounts and reports and/or;
(iii) relevant directors.

Environmental Proposals

The Catholic Policy will generally support proposals regarding the environment, in particular, those seeking improved sustainability reporting and disclosure about company practices which impact the environment. The Catholic Policy will vote in favor of increased disclosure of a company’s environmental risk through company-specific disclosure as well as compliance with international environmental conventions and adherence to environmental principles. Similarly, the Catholic Policy will support proposals requesting companies develop greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, comprehensive recycling programs, and other proactive means to mitigate a company’s environmental footprint.

The Catholic Policy will also vote for proposals seeking that companies provide certain disclosures or adopt certain policies related to mitigating their climate change-related risks. For example, the Catholic Policy will support proposals requesting that companies disclose information concerning their scenario analyses or that request the company provide disclosure in line with certain reporting recommendations, such as those promulgated by the Financial Stability Board’s Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). Further, the Catholic Policy will support proposals requesting that a company consider energy efficiency and renewable energy sources in its project development and overall business strategy.

The Catholic Policy will evaluate a company’s impact on the environment, in addition to the regulatory risk a company may face by not adopting environmentally responsible policies. Further, the Catholic Policy will consider voting against directors for not appropriately overseeing environmental risk.

Say on Climate

Shareholder Proposals

Beginning in 2021, companies began placing management proposals on their ballots that ask shareholders to vote on their climate transition plans, or a Say on Climate vote. The Catholic Policy will generally recommend in favor of shareholder proposals requesting that companies adopt a Say on Climate vote.
Management Proposals

When evaluating management-sponsored votes seeking approval of climate transition plans the Catholic Policy looks to the board to provide information concerning the governance of the Say on Climate vote. Specifically, the Catholic Policy evaluates whether companies provide sufficient disclosure concerning the board’s role in setting strategy in light of this vote, and how the board intends to interpret the vote results for the proposal. In instances where disclosure concerning the governance of the Say on Climate vote is not present, the Catholic Policy will either abstain, or, depending on the quality of the plan presented, will vote against the proposal.

The Catholic Policy also looks to companies to clearly articulate their climate plans in a distinct and easily understandable document, which, as a best practice, should generally be aligned with the recommendations of the TCFD. In this disclosure, it is important that companies clearly explain their goals, how their GHG emissions targets support achievement of broader goals (i.e. net zero emissions goals), and any foreseeable obstacles that could hinder their progress on these initiatives.

When evaluating these proposals, the Catholic Policy will take into account a variety of factors, including: (i) the request of the resolution (e.g., whether companies are asking shareholders to approve its disclosure or its strategy); (ii) the board’s role in overseeing the company’s climate strategy; (iii) the company’s industry and size; (iv) whether the company’s GHG emissions targets and the disclosure of these targets appear reasonable in light of its operations and risk profile; and (iv) where the company is on its climate reporting journey (e.g., whether the company has been reporting and engaging with shareholders on climate risk for a number of years or if this is a relatively new initiative). In addition, the Catholic Policy will determine if sufficient disclosure has been made concerning a company’s capital allocations and expenditures in the context of its strategy and will also evaluate any stated net zero ambitions or targets. If either of these are absent, the Catholic Policy will generally vote against management Say on Climate proposals.

Social Proposals

Human Rights and Labor Issues

The Catholic Policy will support proposals that serve to protect and/or increase the rights of workers as well as those proposals that serve to increase corporate responsibility. These proposals include those that would allow employees to choose between cash balance and traditional defined benefit pension plans, regarding the adoption of recognized labor standards, and concerning compliance with human rights conventions and workplace safety standards. In addition, the Catholic policy supports proposals for companies to adopt or comply with certain corporate codes of conduct relating to labor standards and the treatment of workers including those in developing countries and those working as contract workers or for suppliers. Further, proposals will be supported which seek to encourage the development of a high-performing workplace to ensure workers receive continual training, have employment security and have input into the strategic direction of the company as long as these initiatives are reasonable and do not unduly distract management. The Catholic Policy will support shareholder proposals to make life-sustaining drugs more available and affordable to low-

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5 Economic Justice for All, Introduction, no. 18.
income communities and nations and will also support proposals requesting more information about how drug pricing is considered and incorporated into companies’ business strategies.\(^8\)

The Catholic Policy supports proposals that seek increased disclosure and reporting on employee rights in the area of diversity in the workplace and commitment to providing equal opportunity for employees. The Catholic Policy will also support resolutions that seek to prevent discrimination based on, among other factors, ethnicity, gender, race, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, disability or national origin.\(^9\) Proposals calling for action in improving diversity through affirmative action programs will generally be supported, as will those that seek to promote corporate policies on equal pay and opportunities for women.\(^10\) In addition, the Catholic Policy will support proposals seeking to encourage increasing the appointment of women at the board and within companies’ executive leadership.

**Health and Safety**

The Catholic Policy supports shareholder proposals seeking to enhance the disclosure regarding the health and safety record of certain products and industries such as proposals calling for: the labeling of the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs); the elimination or reduction of toxic emissions and use of toxic chemicals in manufacturing; reporting on nuclear energy safety risks; reporting on efforts to reduce drug prices; reporting on corporate policy on drug reimportation.

Although many Catholic and other religious investors do have principled purchasing criterion that restrict investment in companies that produce tobacco, there are companies which have an indirect involvement in the industry. Accordingly, the Catholic Policy will support shareholder resolutions that ask companies to: spin off tobacco-related operations; eliminate tobacco advertising that appeal to minors, women or minorities; and other similar proposals.\(^11\)

**Fair Lending**

The Catholic Policy supports proposals calling for corporations to comply with fair lending laws and to implement fair lending practices in order to both maximize return and limit legal liability. Proposals calling for improved disclosure of a company’s lending activity so that shareholders will have a full view of potential risks to the company from its lending practices will also be supported.\(^12\)

**Governance Proposals**

The Catholic Policy supports increased shareholder participation and access to a company and its board of directors. Accordingly, the Catholic Policy will vote in favor of initiatives that seek to enhance shareholder rights, such as the introduction of majority voting to elect directors, the adoption and amendment of proxy access

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\(^8\) Pope Francis, Address to the Members of the “Banco Farmaceutico” Foundation, (19 September 2020).

\(^9\) See Guadium et spes, no. 29. To aid in defining discrimination, see also [https://www.eeoc.gov/discrimination-type](https://www.eeoc.gov/discrimination-type) insofar as this resource does not contradict the teaching of the Catholic Church.


\(^11\) Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2290.

\(^12\) This includes companies whose revenues derive from 10% or more of revenue from predatory lending. See [https://www.usccb.org/resources/backgrounder-predatory-banking-payday-lending](https://www.usccb.org/resources/backgrounder-predatory-banking-payday-lending).
bypolaws, the elimination/reduction of supermajority provisions, the declassification of the board, the submission of shareholder rights’ plans to a shareholder vote, and the principle of one share, one vote.

The Catholic Policy will also support proposals aimed at increasing the diversity of boards or management as well as those requesting additional information concerning workforce diversity and the adoption of more inclusive nondiscrimination policies. Further, the Catholic Policy will support enhanced oversight of environmental and social issues at the board level by supporting resolutions calling for the creation of an environmental or social committee and also will support on a case-by-case basis proposals requesting that the board adopt a subject-matter expert, such as one with deep knowledge and experience in human rights or climate change-related issues. The Catholic Policy will also generally vote for proposals seeking to increase disclosure of a company’s business ethics and code of conduct, as well as of its activities that relate to social welfare.

**Compensation Proposals**

The Catholic Policy recognizes that ESG performance factors should be an important component of the overall consideration of proper levels of executive performance and compensation. Therefore, the Catholic Policy generally votes in favor of proposals seeking to tie executive compensation to performance measures such as compliance with environmental regulations, health and safety regulations, nondiscrimination laws and compliance with international human rights standards. Furthermore, the Catholic Policy will generally support proposals that seek to evaluate overall director performance based on environmental and social criteria.

The Catholic Policy will support proposals seeking to prohibit or require more disclosure about stock hedging and pledging by executives. The Catholic Policy will also generally support proposals requesting that companies adopt executive stock retention policies and prohibiting the accelerated vesting of equity awards. Furthermore, the Catholic Policy will vote in favor of shareholder proposals to link pay with performance, to eliminate or require shareholder approval of golden coffins, and to clawback unearned bonuses. Finally, the Catholic Policy will support proposals requesting disclosure from companies regarding gender pay inequity and company initiatives to reduce the gap in compensation paid to women compared to men.

**Trojan Horse Proposals**

The Catholic Policy will carefully examine each proposal’s merits in order to ensure it seeks enhanced environmental disclosure and/or practices, and is not conversely aimed at limiting environmental or social disclosure or consideration. Accordingly, the Catholic Policy will not support such proposals, which are often referred to as “Trojan Horse” proposals.
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Corporate Website  |  www.glasslewis.com
Email              |  info@glasslewis.com
Social             |  @glasslewis  Glass, Lewis & Co.

Global Locations

**North America**

**United States**
- Headquarters
  - 255 California Street
  - Suite 1100
  - San Francisco, CA 94111
  - +1 415 678 4110
- New York, NY
  - +1 646 606 2345
- 2323 Grand Boulevard
  - Suite 1125
  - Kansas City, MO 64108
  - +1 816 945 4525

**Asia Pacific**

**Australia**
- CGI Glass Lewis
  - Suite 5.03, Level 5
  - 255 George Street
  - Sydney NSW 2000
  - +61 2 9299 9266

**Japan**
- Shinjuku Mitsui Building
  - 11th floor
  - 2-1-1, Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku,
  - Tokyo 163-0411, Japan

**Europe**

**Ireland**
- 15 Henry Street
  - Limerick V94 V9T4
  - +353 61 534 343

**United Kingdom**
- 80 Coleman Street
  - Suite 4.02
  - London EC2R 5BJ
  - +44 20 7653 8800

**France**
- Proxinvest
  - 6 Rue d’Uzès
  - 75002 Paris
  - +33 (0)1 45 51 50 43

**Germany**
- IVOX Glass Lewis
  - Kaiserallee 23a
  - 76133 Karlsruhe
  - +49 721 35 49622
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