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STOCKHOLDERS WANT A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CORPORATE POLITICAL SPENDING

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A significant majority of Americans who are invested in the stock market support reform efforts that would require increased transparency and accountability related to the political spending of publicly traded corporations. The finding comes from a survey conducted by Mason-Dixon Polling & Strategy between July 22 and August 2, 2024.

Nationwide, 87% believe that public corporations should be required to have a code of conduct to assess and govern their political spending. Similarly, 91% want procedures adopted that would ensure that corporate political contributions are lawfully spent and are consistent with public policies that benefit the company in which they are financially invested.

Stockholders also feel that a code of conduct would improve a company's political spending decisions (67%) and give them more confidence in their investment (79%). They also believe corporations need to consider the impact of their political spending on broader society (77%).

The desire for more transparency is also driven by the fact that 84% of stockholders say that the companies they are invested in either do not have a code of conduct or

are not aware if one exists. A notable level of skepticism regarding corporate political spending practices is indicated by the fact that only 60% of stockholders feel corporations have a stake in a healthy democracy.

However, an overwhelming majority of stockholders indicated that when it comes to reforms designed to increased transparency and accountability, they will put their money where their mouth is. If given the opportunity to vote for political spending reforms of the companies in which they hold stock, 83% nationwide say they would cast a "Yes" proxy, in support of adopting them.

Additionally, 67% say mutual fund and other equity managers should vote their corporate proxies to support resolutions that require increased disclosure and board accountability for political spending.

HOW THE POLL WAS CONDUCTED

A total of 800 adults were interviewed nationwide by telephone. All indicated they currently have money invested in common stock, mutual funds or other investments like an IRA, 401K, education fund or pension plan that is at least partly invested in stocks or mutual funds.

Those interviewed were randomly selected from a nationwide adult consumer list that included both land-lines and mobile phones. Quotas were assigned in order to reflect adult population by state.

The margin for error, according to standards customarily used by statisticians, is no more than ± 3.5 percentage points. This means that there is a 95 percent probability that the "true" figure would fall within that range if all stockholders were surveyed.

The poll was commissioned by the Zicklin Center for Governance and Business Ethics at The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and the Center for Political Accountability.