

March 23, 2021

Francis S. Blake
Delta Air Lines, Inc.
1030 Delta Blvd
Atlanta, GA 30320

Via email to: nonmgmt.directors@delta.com

Dear Francis S. Blake:

In light of the news that Delta Air Lines, Inc. (Delta) has been a contributor to state legislators in Georgia attempting to impose sweeping voting restrictions,¹ we are requesting disclosure of whether and how you will be updating Delta's political spending policies to forswear future corporate political donations to legislators that back such measures.

As State Treasurers or as elected and appointed fiduciaries and trustees of public funds and retirement savings with assets under management of approximately \$1 trillion, we are concerned with the erosion of political stability in the United States. A functioning democracy is foundational to a stable economy and sustainable long-term value creation, and we believe that the events of January 6, 2021 add greater urgency to concerns and expectations regarding corporate political spending and lobbying transparency and practices.

This March, the Georgia Senate passed a bill that would eliminate no-excuse absentee voting, and the House passed a bill that would limit weekend early voting, increase ID requirements for absentee voting and restrict ballot drop boxes. According to analysis from the nonpartisan nonprofit Brennan Center for Justice, these proposed restrictions would disproportionately harm Black voters,² adding another chapter to a long history of voter disenfranchisement efforts in the state.³

We are further concerned with the substantial reputational risks Delta faces through its political spending policies and practices.⁴ Delta has donated \$41,600 to the Georgia legislators behind this voter disenfranchisement effort through its corporate PAC since 2018, and further

¹ <https://popular.info/p/georgia>

²

<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/georgias-proposed-voting-restrictions-will-harm-black-voters-most>,

³

<https://www.ajc.com/news/state--regional-govt--politics/voter-purge-begs-question-what-the-matter-with-georgia/YAFvuk3Bu95kJIMaDiDFqJ/>

⁴

<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/03/14/georgia-activists-pressure-big-corporations-to-oppose-voting-restrictions.html>

supported these legislators through donations to the Georgia House Republican Trust and the Georgia Republican Senatorial Committee, which in turn supported these legislators. In the wake of the murder of George Floyd last year, Delta made a public statement affirming its view that Black Lives Matter; actions that Delta takes that contradict this stated position create substantial risks and raise concerns about the adequacy of your governance and oversight of these issues. Alienating a significant portion of the company's employees and consumer base by supporting elected officials driving a policy effort that would lead to mass disenfranchisement of voters of color is not a sound or sustainable business strategy.

Delta publicly stated that, "ensuring an election system that promotes broad voter participation, equal access to the polls, and fair, secure elections processes are critical to voter confidence and creates an environment that ensures everyone's vote is counted."⁵ However, such statements alone are unlikely to mitigate the harm of voter disenfranchisement legislation or the reputational risks to the company arising from these contradictions between Delta's stated positions and its political spending practices.

As Chair of the Corporate Governance Committee of the Delta board, you are the director responsible for ensuring oversight of our company's policy influence activities. Therefore, we ask of you:

- 1) What actions will you be taking to mitigate the reputational risks to Delta that have emerged as a result of these contradictions between Delta's stated positions and the impact of its policy influence activities?
- 2) Will you be updating your political spending policies to forswear donations to elected officials who vote for voter disenfranchisement efforts?

The onus is now on the Board to comprehensively reassess Delta's corporate-directed political spending policies, practices and risks. Given our concerns about the risks for Delta detailed in this correspondence and our fiduciary responsibility to plan participants, we are requesting a response to our questions without delay. Should you wish to discuss the steps you are taking with us, please contact Renaye Manley (renaye.manley@seiu.org) or Lisa Lindsley (lisa@majorityact.org).

We look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

Deborah B. Goldberg

*Massachusetts State Treasurer and Receiver General

⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/03/15/georgia-voting-business/>



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***All funds listed for identification purposes only.**

cc: Ed Bastian, CEO

Joanne Smith, Executive Vice President

Heather Wingate, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs