

March 23, 2021

Jon A. Boscia
Southern Company
30 Ivan Allen Jr. Blvd. NW
Atlanta, GA 30308

Via email to: shareholderservices@southernco.com

Dear Jon A. Boscia:

In light of the news that Southern Company 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 Southern Company'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 Southern Company faces through its political spending policies and practices.⁴ Southern Company has donated \$38,700 to the Georgia legislators behind this voter disenfranchisement effort through its corporate PAC

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/>

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

since 2018, and further supported these legislators through donations to the Republican State Leadership Committee, which in turn supported these legislators. In the wake of the murder of George Floyd last year, Southern Company made a public statement affirming its view that Black Lives Matter; actions that Southern Company 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.

As Chair of the Nominating, Governance and Corporate Responsibility Committee of the Southern Company board, you are the director responsible for ensuring responsible 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 Southern Company that have emerged as a result of these contradictions between Southern Company'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 Southern Company's corporate-directed political spending policies, practices and risks. Given our concerns about the risks for Southern Company 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

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*California Public Employees Retirement System

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*Nevada State Treasurer



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Maine State Treasurer

(as sole trustee of state trust funds)

Sharon Hendricks

*California State Teachers' Retirement System, CalSTRS

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

cc: Tom Fanning, CEO

Chris Womack, EVP and President of External Affairs