

CHAPTER 191

(Senate Bill 556)

AN ACT concerning

Corporations – Objecting Stockholders – Right to Fair Value of Stock

FOR the purpose of altering the circumstances under which a stockholder of a Maryland corporation who objects to certain transactions may demand and receive the fair value of the stockholder's stock; authorizing a stockholder to demand the fair value of stock listed on a national securities exchange under certain circumstances; repealing obsolete references to certain securities quotations systems; altering the definition of "beneficial owner" under the Maryland Business Combination Act to exclude, under certain circumstances, a person that holds a revocable proxy from a stockholder; defining certain terms; making certain stylistic and conforming changes; and generally relating to rights of objecting stockholders.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Corporations and Associations
Section 3–201, 3–202(c), and 3–601(d)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2007 Replacement Volume)

BY adding to
Article – Corporations and Associations
Section 3–202(d) and (e)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2007 Replacement Volume)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – Corporations and Associations
Section 3–601(a)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2007 Replacement Volume)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Corporations and Associations

3–201.

(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(B) "AFFILIATE" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 3-601 OF THIS TITLE.

(C) "ASSOCIATE" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 3-601 OF THIS TITLE.

(D) "BENEFICIAL OWNER", WHEN USED WITH RESPECT TO ANY VOTING STOCK, MEANS A PERSON THAT:

(1) INDIVIDUALLY OR WITH ANY OF ITS AFFILIATES OR ASSOCIATES, BENEFICIALLY OWNS VOTING STOCK, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY;

(2) INDIVIDUALLY OR WITH ANY OF ITS AFFILIATES OR ASSOCIATES, HAS:

(I) THE RIGHT TO ACQUIRE VOTING STOCK (WHETHER THE RIGHT IS EXERCISABLE IMMEDIATELY OR WITHIN 60 DAYS AFTER THE DATE ON WHICH BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP IS DETERMINED), IN ACCORDANCE WITH ANY AGREEMENT, ARRANGEMENT, OR UNDERSTANDING, ON THE EXERCISE OF CONVERSION RIGHTS, EXCHANGE RIGHTS, WARRANTS, OR OPTIONS, OR OTHERWISE; OR

(II) EXCEPT SOLELY BY VIRTUE OF A REVOCABLE PROXY, THE RIGHT TO VOTE VOTING STOCK IN ACCORDANCE WITH ANY AGREEMENT, ARRANGEMENT, OR UNDERSTANDING; OR

(3) EXCEPT SOLELY BY VIRTUE OF A REVOCABLE PROXY, HAS ANY AGREEMENT, ARRANGEMENT, OR UNDERSTANDING FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACQUIRING, HOLDING, VOTING, OR DISPOSING OF VOTING STOCK WITH ANY OTHER PERSON THAT BENEFICIALLY OWNS, OR THE AFFILIATES OR ASSOCIATES OF WHICH BENEFICIALLY OWN, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, THE VOTING STOCK.

(E) "EXECUTIVE OFFICER" MEANS A CORPORATION'S PRESIDENT, ANY VICE PRESIDENT IN CHARGE OF A PRINCIPAL BUSINESS UNIT, DIVISION, OR FUNCTION, SUCH AS SALES, ADMINISTRATION, OR FINANCE, ANY OTHER PERSON WHO PERFORMS A POLICY MAKING FUNCTION FOR THE CORPORATION, OR ANY EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF A SUBSIDIARY OF THE CORPORATION WHO PERFORMS A POLICY MAKING FUNCTION FOR THE CORPORATION.

[(a)] (F) (1) [In this subsection,] "SUCCESSOR", except [as provided in subsection (b) of this section, "successor"] WHEN USED WITH RESPECT TO A SHARE EXCHANGE, includes a corporation which amends its charter in a way which alters

the contract rights, as expressly set forth in the charter, of any outstanding stock, unless the right to do so is reserved by the charter of the corporation.

[(b)] (2) [When] **“SUCCESSOR”, WHEN** used with [reference] **RESPECT** to a share exchange, [“successor”] means the corporation the stock of which was acquired in the share exchange.

(G) **“VOTING STOCK” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 3-601 OF THIS TITLE.**

3-202.

(c) Unless the transaction is governed by § 3-602 of this title or is exempted by § 3-603(b) of this title, a stockholder may not demand the fair value of the stockholder’s stock and is bound by the terms of the transaction if:

(1) [The] **EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION, ANY SHARES OF THE CLASS OR SERIES OF THE** stock [is] **ARE** listed on a national securities exchange[, is designated as a national market system security on an interdealer quotation system by the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc., or is designated for trading on the NASDAQ Small Cap Market]:

(i) With respect to a merger under § 3-106 of this title of a 90 percent or more owned subsidiary with or into its parent corporation, on the date notice is given or waived under § 3-106 of this title; or

(ii) With respect to any other transaction, on the record date for determining stockholders entitled to vote on the transaction objected to;

(2) The stock is that of the successor in a merger, unless:

(i) The merger alters the contract rights of the stock as expressly set forth in the charter, and the charter does not reserve the right to do so; or

(ii) The stock is to be changed or converted in whole or in part in the merger into something other than either stock in the successor or cash, scrip, or other rights or interests arising out of provisions for the treatment of fractional shares of stock in the successor;

(3) The stock is not entitled, other than solely because of § 3-106 of this title, to be voted on the transaction or the stockholder did not own the shares of stock on the record date for determining stockholders entitled to vote on the transaction;

(4) The charter provides that the holders of the stock are not entitled to exercise the rights of an objecting stockholder under this subtitle; or

(5) The stock is that of an open-end investment company registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission under the Investment Company Act of 1940 and the value placed on the stock in the transaction is its net asset value.

(D) WITH RESPECT TO A MERGER, CONSOLIDATION, OR SHARE EXCHANGE, A STOCKHOLDER OF A MARYLAND CORPORATION WHO OTHERWISE WOULD BE BOUND BY THE TERMS OF THE TRANSACTION UNDER SUBSECTION (C)(1) OF THIS SECTION MAY DEMAND THE FAIR VALUE OF THE STOCKHOLDER'S STOCK IF:

(1) IN THE TRANSACTION, STOCK OF THE CORPORATION IS REQUIRED TO BE CONVERTED INTO OR EXCHANGED FOR ANYTHING OF VALUE EXCEPT:

(I) STOCK OF THE CORPORATION SURVIVING OR RESULTING FROM THE MERGER, CONSOLIDATION, OR SHARE EXCHANGE, STOCK OF ANY OTHER CORPORATION, OR DEPOSITARY RECEIPTS FOR ANY STOCK DESCRIBED IN THIS ITEM;

(II) CASH IN LIEU OF FRACTIONAL SHARES OF STOCK OR FRACTIONAL DEPOSITARY RECEIPTS DESCRIBED IN ITEM (I) OF THIS ITEM; OR

(III) ANY COMBINATION OF THE STOCK, DEPOSITARY RECEIPTS, AND CASH IN LIEU OF FRACTIONAL SHARES OR FRACTIONAL DEPOSITARY RECEIPTS DESCRIBED IN ITEMS (I) AND (II) OF THIS ITEM;

(2) THE DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION WERE THE BENEFICIAL OWNERS, IN THE AGGREGATE, OF 5 PERCENT OR MORE OF THE OUTSTANDING VOTING STOCK OF THE CORPORATION AT ANY TIME WITHIN THE 1-YEAR PERIOD ENDING ON:

(I) THE DAY THE STOCKHOLDERS VOTED ON THE TRANSACTION OBJECTED TO; OR

(II) WITH RESPECT TO A MERGER UNDER § 3-106 OF THIS TITLE, THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE MERGER; AND

(3) UNLESS THE STOCK IS HELD IN ACCORDANCE WITH A COMPENSATORY PLAN OR ARRANGEMENT APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION AND THE TREATMENT OF THE STOCK IN THE TRANSACTION IS APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE

CORPORATION, ANY STOCK HELD BY PERSONS DESCRIBED IN ITEM (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, AS PART OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRANSACTION AND WITHIN THE 1-YEAR PERIOD DESCRIBED IN ITEM (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, WILL BE OR WAS CONVERTED INTO OR EXCHANGED FOR STOCK OF A PERSON, OR AN AFFILIATE OF A PERSON, WHO IS A PARTY TO THE TRANSACTION ON TERMS THAT ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO ALL HOLDERS OF STOCK OF THE SAME CLASS OR SERIES.

(E) IF DIRECTORS OR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION ARE BENEFICIAL OWNERS OF STOCK IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 3-201(D)(2)(I) OF THIS SUBTITLE, THE STOCK IS CONSIDERED OUTSTANDING FOR PURPOSES OF DETERMINING BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP BY A PERSON UNDER SUBSECTION (D)(2) OF THIS SECTION.

3-601.

(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

(d) “Beneficial owner”, when used with respect to any voting stock, means a person **THAT**:

(1) [That, individually] **INDIVIDUALLY** or with any of its affiliates or associates, beneficially owns voting stock, directly or indirectly; [or]

(2) [That, individually] **INDIVIDUALLY** or with any of its affiliates or associates, has:

(i) The right to acquire voting stock (whether [such] **THE** right is exercisable immediately or only after the passage of time), [pursuant to] **IN ACCORDANCE WITH** any agreement, arrangement, or understanding [or upon], **ON** the exercise of conversion rights, exchange rights, [warrants] **WARRANTS**, or options, or otherwise; or

(ii) [The] **EXCEPT SOLELY BY VIRTUE OF A REVOCABLE PROXY, THE** right to vote voting stock [pursuant to] **IN ACCORDANCE WITH** any agreement, arrangement, or understanding; or

(3) [That] **EXCEPT SOLELY BY VIRTUE OF A REVOCABLE PROXY,** has any agreement, arrangement, or understanding for the purpose of acquiring, holding, voting, or disposing of voting stock with any other person that beneficially owns, or [whose] **THE** affiliates or associates **OF WHICH** beneficially own, directly or indirectly, [such shares of] **THE** voting stock.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2008.

Approved by the Governor, April 24, 2008.