

A Reuters Profile of John Chevedden, With Slideshow

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Calling him an “economy-class activist,” a Reuters [article](#) unveils some of the mystery surrounding retail activist John Chevedden, well known to many as the most prolific sponsor of shareholder proposals. He dominates that scene, with 58 proposals in proxy statements in 2013, obtaining on average 41% of the votes. Chevedden, now age 67, is called a “persistent provocateur who buys a handful of shares and agitates on a shoestring” in comparison to Carl Ichan or Dan Loeb.

Chevedden grew up and was educated in California, and he often personally attends shareholder meetings at companies in the area rather than send a proxy. The slideshow shows a series of pictures of Chevedden taking the L.A. subway to the Dreamworks’ annual meeting. He filed his first shareholder proposal in 1994 at GM regarding employment practices, which was excluded on personal grievance grounds after GM cited his discrimination complaint against Hughes Aircraft, a part of GM, after being laid off from that company three years earlier. He followed up with an independent chair proposal targeting GM in 1995 that won 15% of the vote.

Chevedden “guesstimates” that over the years his shareholder proposals have added \$100 million in shareholder value, and expresses disappointment when executives disagree with his resolutions or “shun him at shareholder meetings.” He owns shares in about 100 companies and claims to focus on proposals that “seem[s] to be good policy and seem[s] to get votes,” often teaming up with other retail investors like his father, and William Steiner and his son Kenneth, based in New York.

Jim McRitchie at [corpgov.net](#), who has partnered with Chevedden as well, compares him to Rosa Parks and encourages shareholders to support Chevedden’s proposals as a “trusted brand.”

If you have any questions regarding the matters covered in this publication, please reach out to any of the lawyers listed below or your usual Davis Polk contact.

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