

9(a)'s eligibility restrictions because of mixed funding or shared funding and sales to Qualified Plans, the Manager or General Accounts. Those Participating Insurance Companies are not expected to play any role in the management or administration of the Insurance Funds. Those individuals who participate in the management or administration of the Insurance Funds will remain the same regardless of which separate accounts, insurance companies, Qualified Plans or General Accounts use the Insurance Funds. Therefore, applying the monitoring requirements of section 9(a) because of investment by separate accounts of other Participating Insurance Companies would not serve any regulatory purpose. Furthermore, the increased monitoring costs would reduce the net rates of return realized by contract owners and Plan participants. Moreover, the relief requested should not be affected by the sale of shares of the Insurance Investment Companies to Qualified Plans, the Manager or General Accounts. The insulation of the Insurance Investment Companies from those individuals who are disqualified under the 1940 Act remains in place. Because Qualified Plans, the Manager and General Accounts are not investment companies and will not be deemed affiliates solely by virtue of their shareholdings, no additional relief is necessary.

10. Sections 13(a), 15(a), and 15(b) of the 1940 Act have been deemed by the Commission to require "pass-through" voting with respect to underlying fund shares held by a separate account. Rules 6e-2(b)(15)(iii) and 6e-3(T)(b)(15)(iii) under the 1940 Act provide partial exemptions from those sections to permit the insurance company to disregard the voting instructions of its contract owners in certain limited circumstances. Rules 6e-2(b)(15)(iii)(A) and 6e-3(T)(b)(15)(iii)(A)(1) under the 1940 Act provide that the insurance company may disregard the voting instructions of its contract owners in connection with the voting of shares of an underlying fund if such instructions would require such shares to be voted to cause such underlying funds to make (or refrain from making) certain investments that would result in changes in the subclassification or investment objectives of such underlying funds or to approve or disapprove any contract between an underlying fund and its investment manager, when required to do so by an insurance regulatory authority (subject to the provisions of paragraphs (b)(5)(i) and (b)(7)(ii)(A) of such rules). Rules 6e-2(b)(15)(iii)(B) and 6e-

3(T)(b)(15)(iii)(A)(2) under the 1940 Act provide that the insurance company may disregard contract owners' voting instructions if the contract owners initiate any change in such underlying fund's investment policies, principal underwriter, or any investment manager (provided that disregarding such voting instructions is reasonable and subject to the other provisions of paragraphs (b)(5)(ii) and (b)(7)(ii)(B) and (C) of rules 6e-2 and 6e-3(T)).

11. Rule 6e-2 recognizes that a variable life insurance contract is an insurance contract; it has important elements unique to insurance contracts; and it is subject to extensive state regulation of insurance. In adopting rule 6e-2(b)(15)(iii), the Commission expressly recognized that state insurance regulators have authority, pursuant to state insurance laws or regulations, to disapprove or require changes in investment policies, investment advisers, or principal underwriters. The Commission also expressly recognized that state insurance regulators have authority to require an insurer to draw from its general account to cover costs imposed upon the insurer by a change approved by contract owners over the insurer's objection. The Commission therefore deemed such exemptions necessary "to assure the solvency of the life insurer and performance of its contractual obligations by enabling an insurance regulatory authority or the life insurer to act when certain proposals reasonably could be expected to increase the risks undertaken by the life insurer." In this respect, flexible premium variable life insurance contracts are identical to scheduled premium variable life insurance contracts; therefore, rule 6e-3(T)'s corresponding provisions presumably were adopted in recognition of the same factors. State insurance regulators have much the same authority with respect to variable annuity separate accounts as they have with respect to variable life insurance separate accounts. Insurers generally assume both mortality and expense risks under variable annuity contracts. Therefore, variable annuity contracts pose some of the same kinds of risks to insurers as variable life insurance contracts. The Commission staff has not addressed the general issue of state insurance regulators' authority in the context of variable annuity contracts, and has not developed a single comprehensive exemptive rule for variable annuity contracts.

12. The Insurance Investment Companies' sale of shares to Qualified Plans, the Manager or General Accounts will not have any impact on the relief

requested herein in this regard. Shares of the Insurance Funds sold to Qualified Plans would be held by the trustees of such Plans. The exercise of voting rights by Qualified Plans, whether by the trustees, by participants, by beneficiaries, or by investment managers engaged by the Plans, does not present the type of issues respecting the disregard of voting rights that are presented by variable life separate accounts. With respect to the Qualified Plans, which are not registered as investment companies under the 1940 Act, there is no requirement to pass through voting rights to Plan participants. Similarly, the Manager and General Accounts are not subject to any pass-through voting requirements. Accordingly, unlike the case with insurance company separate accounts, the issue of the resolution of material irreconcilable conflicts with respect to voting is not present with Qualified Plans, the Manager or General Accounts.

13. Applicants assert that shared funding by unaffiliated insurance companies does not present any issues that do not already exist where a single insurance company is licensed to do business in several or all states. A particular state insurance regulatory body could require action that is inconsistent with the requirements of other states in which the insurance company offers its policies. The fact that different Participating Insurance Companies may be domiciled in different states does not create a significantly different or enlarged problem.

14. Applicants further assert that shared funding by unaffiliated Participating Insurance Companies is, in this respect, no different than the use of the same investment company as the funding vehicle for affiliated Participating Insurance Companies, which rules 6e-2(b)(15) and 6e-3(T)(b)(15) permit under various circumstances. Affiliated Participating Insurance Companies may be domiciled in different states and be subject to differing state law requirements. Affiliation does not reduce the potential, if any exists, for differences in state regulatory requirements. In any event, the conditions discussed below are designed to safeguard against and provide procedures for resolving any adverse effects that differences among state regulatory requirements may produce.

15. Applicants assert that the right under rules 6e-2(b)(15) and 6e-3(T)(b)(15) of an insurance company to disregard contract owners' voting instructions does not raise any issues different from those raised by the