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## SENATE BILL 5107

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State of Washington

55th Legislature

1997 Regular Session

By Senators Roach and Johnson

Read first time 01/15/97. Referred to Committee on Law & Justice.

- 1 AN ACT Relating to consent provisions under the Washington business
- 2 corporation act; and amending RCW 23B.02.020, 23B.07.040, and
- 3 23B.19.040.
- 4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:
- 5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 23B.02.020 and 1996 c 155 s 5 are each amended to read 6 as follows:
- 7 (1) The articles of incorporation must set forth:
- 8 (a) A corporate name for the corporation that satisfies the 9 requirements of RCW 23B.04.010;
- 10 (b) The number of shares the corporation is authorized to issue in accordance with RCW 23B.06.010 and 23B.06.020;
- 12 (c) The street address of the corporation's initial registered
- 13 office and the name of its initial registered agent at that office in
- 14 accordance with RCW 23B.05.010; and
- 15 (d) The name and address of each incorporator in accordance with
- 16 RCW 23B.02.010.
- 17 (2) The articles of incorporation or bylaws must either specify the
- 18 number of directors or specify the process by which the number of

p. 1 SB 5107

- 1 directors will be fixed, unless the articles of incorporation dispense 2 with a board of directors pursuant to RCW 23B.08.010.
- 3 (3) Unless its articles of incorporation provide otherwise, a 4 corporation is governed by the following provisions:
- 5 (a) The board of directors may adopt bylaws to be effective only in 6 an emergency as provided by RCW 23B.02.070;
- 7 (b) A corporation has the purpose of engaging in any lawful 8 business under RCW 23B.03.010;
- 9 (c) A corporation has perpetual existence and succession in its 10 corporate name under RCW 23B.03.020;
- 11 (d) A corporation has the same powers as an individual to do all 12 things necessary or convenient to carry out its business and affairs, 13 including itemized powers under RCW 23B.03.020;
- (e) All shares are of one class and one series, have unlimited voting rights, and are entitled to receive the net assets of the corporation upon dissolution under RCW 23B.06.010 and 23B.06.020;
- (f) If more than one class of shares is authorized, all shares of a class must have preferences, limitations, and relative rights identical to those of other shares of the same class under RCW 23B.06.010;
- 21 (g) If the board of directors is authorized to designate the number 22 of shares in a series, the board may, after the issuance of shares in 23 that series, reduce the number of authorized shares of that series 24 under RCW 23B.06.020;
- 25 (h) The board of directors must authorize any issuance of shares 26 under RCW 23B.06.210;
- 27 (i) Shares may be issued pro rata and without consideration to 28 shareholders under RCW 23B.06.230;
- (j) Shares of one class or series may not be issued as a share dividend with respect to another class or series, unless there are no outstanding shares of the class or series to be issued, or a majority of votes entitled to be cast by such class or series approve as provided in RCW 23B.06.230;
- (k) A corporation may issue rights, options, or warrants for the purchase of shares of the corporation under RCW 23B.06.240;
- 36 (1) A shareholder has, and may waive, a preemptive right to acquire 37 the corporation's unissued shares as provided in RCW 23B.06.300;
- 38 (m) Shares of a corporation acquired by it may be reissued under 39 RCW 23B.06.310;

- 1 (n) The board may authorize and the corporation may make 2 distributions not prohibited by statute under RCW 23B.06.400;
- 3 (o) The preferential rights upon dissolution of certain 4 shareholders will be considered a liability for purposes of determining 5 the validity of a distribution under RCW 23B.06.400;
- 6 (p) Action may be taken by shareholders by unanimous written
  7 consent of all shareholders entitled to vote on the action, unless the
  8 approval of a lesser number of shareholders is permitted as provided in
  9 RCW 23B.07.040;
- 10 (q) Unless this title requires otherwise, the corporation is 11 required to give notice only to shareholders entitled to vote at a 12 meeting and the notice for an annual meeting need not include the 13 purpose for which the meeting is called under RCW 23B.07.050;
- ((\(\frac{(q)}{q}\))) (r) A corporation that is a public company shall hold a special meeting of shareholders if the holders of at least ten percent of the votes entitled to be cast on any issue proposed to be considered at the meeting demand a meeting under RCW 23B.07.020;
- $((\frac{r}{r}))$  (s) Subject to statutory exceptions, each outstanding share, regardless of class, is entitled to one vote on each matter voted on at a shareholders' meeting under RCW 23B.07.210;
- $((\frac{(s)}{s}))$  (t) A majority of the votes entitled to be cast on a matter 22 by a voting group constitutes a quorum, unless the title provides otherwise under RCW 23B.07.250 and 23B.07.270;
- ((\(\frac{(t)}{t}\))) (u) Action on a matter, other than election of directors, by a voting group is approved if the votes cast within the voting group favoring the action exceed the votes cast opposing the action, unless this title requires a greater number of affirmative votes under RCW 23B.07.250;
- $((\frac{(u)}{v}))$  (v) All shares of one or more classes or series that are entitled to vote will be counted together collectively on any matter at a meeting of shareholders under RCW 23B.07.260;
- 32  $((\frac{v}{v}))$  <u>(w)</u> Directors are elected by cumulative voting under RCW 33 23B.07.280;
- (((w))) <u>(x)</u> Directors are elected by a plurality of votes cast by shares entitled to vote under RCW 23B.07.280;
- 36  $((\frac{x}{x}))$  (y) A corporation must have a board of directors under RCW 37 23B.08.010;

p. 3 SB 5107

- 1  $((\frac{y}))$  (z) All corporate powers must be exercised by or under the 2 authority of, and the business and affairs of the corporation managed 3 under the direction of, its board of directors under RCW 23B.08.010;
- 4  $((\frac{z}{z}))$  (aa) The shareholders may remove one or more directors with 5 or without cause under RCW 23B.08.080;
- 6 ((\(\frac{(aa)}{aa}\))) (bb) A vacancy on the board of directors may be filled by
  7 the shareholders or the board of directors under RCW 23B.08.100;
- 8 ((<del>(bb)</del>)) <u>(cc)</u> A corporation shall indemnify a director who was 9 wholly successful in the defense of any proceeding to which the 10 director was a party because the director is or was a director of the 11 corporation against reasonable expenses incurred by the director in 12 connection with the proceeding under RCW 23B.08.520;
- ((<del>(cc)</del>)) <u>(dd)</u> A director of a corporation who is a party to a proceeding may apply for indemnification of reasonable expenses incurred by the director in connection with the proceeding to the court conducting the proceeding or to another court of competent jurisdiction under RCW 23B.08.540;
- ((\(\frac{(dd)}{)}\)) (ee) An officer of the corporation who is not a director is entitled to mandatory indemnification under RCW 23B.08.520, and is entitled to apply for court-ordered indemnification under RCW 23B.08.540, in each case to the same extent as a director under RCW 23B.08.570;
- ((<del>(ee)</del>)) <u>(ff)</u> The corporation may indemnify and advance expenses to an officer, employee, or agent of the corporation who is not a director to the same extent as to a director under RCW 23B.08.570;
- ((<del>ff)</del>)) (gg) A corporation may indemnify and advance expenses to an officer, employee, or agent who is not a director to the extent, consistent with law, that may be provided by its articles of incorporation, bylaws, general or specific action of its board of directors, or contract under RCW 23B.08.570;
- ((<del>gg)</del>)) (<u>hh)</u> A corporation's board of directors may adopt certain amendments to the corporation's articles of incorporation without shareholder action under RCW 23B.10.020;
- ((\(\frac{(hh}{)}\)) (ii) Unless ((\frac{the}{)}) this title or the board of directors requires a greater vote or a vote by voting groups, an amendment to the corporation's articles of incorporation must be approved by each voting group entitled to vote on the proposed amendment by two-thirds, or, in the case of a public company, a majority, of all the votes entitled to be cast by that voting group under RCW 23B.10.030;

- ((<del>(ii)</del>)) <u>(jj)</u> A corporation's board of directors may amend or 1 2 repeal the corporation's bylaws unless this title reserves this power 3 exclusively to the shareholders in whole or in part, or unless the 4 shareholders in amending or repealing a bylaw provide expressly that 5 the board of directors may not amend or repeal that bylaw under RCW 23B.10.200; 6
- 7  $((\frac{1}{1}))$ ) (kk) Unless this title or the board of directors require 8 a greater vote or a vote by voting groups, a plan of merger or share 9 exchange must be approved by each voting group entitled to vote on the 10 merger or share exchange by two-thirds of all the votes entitled to be cast by that voting group under RCW 23B.11.030; 11
- ((<del>(kk)</del>)) <u>(ll)</u> Approval by the shareholders of the sale, lease, 12 exchange, or other disposition of all, or substantially all, the 13 corporation's property in the usual and regular course of business is 14 not required under RCW 23B.12.010; 15
- 16  $((\frac{11}{1}))$  (mm) Approval by the shareholders of the mortgage, pledge, 17 dedication to the repayment of indebtedness, or other encumbrance of any or all of the corporation's property, whether or not in the usual 18 and regular course of business, is not required under RCW 23B.12.010;
- 19 20 ((<del>(mm)</del>)) <u>(nn)</u> Unless the board of directors requires a greater vote or a vote by voting groups, a sale, lease, exchange, or other 21 disposition of all or substantially all of the corporation's property, 22 23 other than in the usual and regular course of business, must be 24 approved by each voting group entitled to vote on such transaction by 25 two-thirds of all votes entitled to be cast by that voting group under 26 RCW 23B.12.020; and
- 27 ((<del>(nn)</del>)) <u>(oo)</u> Unless the board of directors requires a greater vote or a vote by voting groups, a proposal to dissolve must be approved by 28 each voting group entitled to vote on the dissolution by two-thirds of all votes entitled to be cast by that voting group under RCW 23B.14.020.

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- (4) Unless its articles of incorporation or its bylaws provide 32 otherwise, a corporation is governed by the following provisions: 33
- 34 (a) The board of directors may authorize the issuance of some or 35 all of the shares of any or all of the corporation's classes or series without certificates under RCW 23B.06.260; 36
- 37 (b) A corporation that is not a public company shall hold a special meeting of shareholders if the holders of at least ten percent of the 38

p. 5 SB 5107

- votes entitled to be cast on any issue proposed to be considered at the meeting demand a meeting under RCW 23B.07.020;
- 3 (c) A director need not be a resident of this state or a 4 shareholder of the corporation under RCW 23B.08.020;
- 5 (d) The board of directors may fix the compensation of directors 6 under RCW 23B.08.110;
- 7 (e) Members of the board of directors may participate in a meeting 8 of the board by any means of similar communication by which all 9 directors participating can hear each other during the meeting under 10 RCW 23B.08.200;
- (f) Action permitted or required by this title to be taken at a board of directors' meeting may be taken without a meeting if action is taken by all members of the board under RCW 23B.08.210;
- (g) Regular meetings of the board of directors may be held without notice of the date, time, place, or purpose of the meeting under RCW 23B.08.220;
- (h) Special meetings of the board of directors must be preceded by at least two days' notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting, and the notice need not describe the purpose of the special meeting under RCW 23B.08.220;
- 21 (i) A quorum of a board of directors consists of a majority of the 22 number of directors under RCW 23B.08.240;
- (j) If a quorum is present when a vote is taken, the affirmative vote of a majority of directors present is the act of the board of directors under RCW 23B.08.240;
- 26 (k) A board of directors may create one or more committees and 27 appoint members of the board of directors to serve on them under RCW 28 23B.08.250; and
- (1) Unless approved by the shareholders, a corporation may indemnify, or make advances to, a director for reasonable expenses incurred in the defense of any proceeding to which the director was a party because of being a director only to the extent such action is consistent with RCW 23B.08.500 through 23B.08.580.
- 34 (5) The articles of incorporation may contain the following 35 provisions:
- 36 (a) The names and addresses of the individuals who are to serve as 37 initial directors;
  - (b) The par value of any authorized shares or classes of shares;

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- 1 (c) Provisions not inconsistent with law related to the management 2 of the business and the regulation of the affairs of the corporation;
- 3 (d) Any provision that under this title is required or permitted to 4 be set forth in the bylaws;
- 5 (e) Provisions not inconsistent with law defining, limiting, and 6 regulating the powers of the corporation, its board of directors, and 7 shareholders;
- 8 (f) <u>Provisions authorizing shareholder action to be taken by</u>
  9 <u>written consent of less than all of the shareholders entitled to vote</u>
  10 <u>on the action, in accordance with RCW 23B.07.040;</u>
- 11 (g) If the articles of incorporation authorize dividing shares into 12 classes, the election of all or a specified number of directors may be 13 effected by the holders of one or more authorized classes of shares 14 under RCW 23B.08.040;
- 15  $((\frac{g}{g}))$  (h) The terms of directors may be staggered under RCW 16 23B.08.060;
- ((\(\frac{(+)}{(+)}\)) (i) Shares may be redeemable or convertible (i) at the option of the corporation, the shareholder, or another person, or upon the occurrence of a designated event; (ii) for cash, indebtedness, securities, or other property; or (iii) in a designated amount or in an amount determined in accordance with a designated formula or by reference to extrinsic data or events under RCW 23B.06.010; and
- $((\frac{(i)}{(j)}))$  (j) A director's personal liability to the corporation or its shareholders for monetary damages for conduct as a director may be eliminated or limited under RCW 23B.08.320.
- 26 (6) The articles of incorporation or the bylaws may contain the 27 following provisions:
- 28 (a) A restriction on the transfer or registration of transfer of 29 the corporation's shares under RCW 23B.06.270;
- 30 (b) Shareholders may participate in a meeting of shareholders by 31 any means of communication by which all persons participating in the 32 meeting can hear each other under RCW 23B.07.080;
- 33 (c) A quorum of the board of directors may consist of as few as 34 one-third of the number of directors under RCW 23B.08.240;
- 35 (d) If the corporation is registered as an investment company under 36 the investment company act of 1940, a provision limiting the 37 requirement to hold an annual meeting of shareholders as provided in 38 RCW 23B.07.010(2); and

p. 7 SB 5107

- (e) If the corporation is registered as an investment company under the investment company act of 1940, a provision establishing terms of directors which terms may be longer than one year as provided in RCW 4 23B.05.050.
- 5 (7) The articles of incorporation need not set forth any of the 6 corporate powers enumerated in this title.
- 7 **Sec. 2.** RCW 23B.07.040 and 1991 c 72 s 33 are each amended to read 8 as follows:
- 9 (1)(a) Action required or permitted by this title to be taken at a 10 shareholders' meeting may be taken without prior notice and without a 11 meeting or a vote if either:
- 12 <u>(i) The action is taken by all ((the))</u> shareholders entitled to 13 vote on the action; or
- 14 (ii) The action is taken by shareholders holding of record or 15 otherwise entitled to vote in the aggregate not less than the minimum number of votes that would be necessary to authorize or take such 16 action at a meeting at which all shares entitled to vote on the action 17 18 were present and voted, and at the time the action is taken the corporation is not a public company and is authorized to take such 19 action under this subsection (1)(a)(ii) by a general or limited 20 authorization contained in its articles of incorporation. 21
  - (b) The taking of action by shareholders without prior notice and without a meeting or vote must be evidenced by one or more written consents describing the action taken, signed by ((all the)) shareholders holding of record or otherwise entitled to vote ((on the)) in the aggregate not less than the minimum number of votes necessary in order to take such action by written consent under (a)(i) or (ii) of this subsection, and delivered to the corporation for inclusion in the minutes or filing with the corporate records.
- (2) If not otherwise fixed under RCW 23B.07.030 or 23B.07.070, the 30 record date for determining shareholders entitled to take action 31 without a meeting is the date on which the first shareholder ((signs 32 the)) consent is signed under subsection (1) of this section. Every 33 written consent shall bear the date of signature of each shareholder 34 who signs the consent. A written consent is not effective to take the 35 36 action referred to in the consent unless, within sixty days of the 37 earliest dated consent delivered to the corporation, written consents

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28 29 signed by a sufficient number of shareholders to take action are <u>delivered</u> to the corporation.

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- (3) A shareholder may withdraw consent only by delivering a written 3 4 notice of withdrawal to the corporation prior to the time when ((all)) consents sufficient to authorize taking the action have been delivered 5 6 to the corporation.
- 7 (4) Action taken under this section is effective when ((all)) consents sufficient to authorize taking the action have been delivered to the corporation, unless the consent specifies a later effective
- (5) A consent signed under this section has the effect of a meeting 11 vote and may be described as such in any document, except that, if the 12 13 action requires the filing of a certificate under any other section of this title, the certificate so filed shall state, in lieu of any 14 15 statement required by that section concerning any vote of shareholders, 16 that written consent has been obtained in accordance with this section and that written notice to any nonconsenting shareholders has been 17 given as provided in this section. 18
  - (6) ((If this title requires that)) Notice of ((proposed)) the taking of action by shareholders without prior notice and without a meeting by less than unanimous written consent of all shareholders entitled to vote on the action shall be given to those shareholders entitled to vote on the action who have not consented in writing and, if this title would otherwise require that notice of a meeting of shareholders to consider the action be given to nonvoting shareholders ((and the action is to be taken by unanimous consent of the voting shareholders, the corporation must give its)), to all nonvoting shareholders ((written notice of the proposed action at least ten days before the action is taken)) of the corporation. The notice shall be given not later than ten days after the date on which consents sufficient to authorize taking the action have been delivered to the corporation and, in the case of action of a type that would constitute a significant business transaction under RCW 23B.19.020(15), not later than twenty days before the effective date of the action. The notice ((must)) shall be in writing and shall contain or be accompanied by the same material that, under this title, would have been required to be sent to <u>nonconsenting or</u> nonvoting shareholders in a notice of meeting at which the proposed action would have been submitted ((to such shareholders)) for shareholder action. If the action taken is of a

SB 5107 p. 9

- 1 type that would entitle shareholders to exercise dissenters' rights
- 2 under RCW 23B.13.020(1), then the notice must comply with RCW
- 3 23B.13.220(2), RCW 23B.13.210 shall not apply, and all shareholders who
- 4 have not signed the consent taking the action are entitled to receive
- 5 the notice, demand payment under RCW 23B.13.230, and assert other
- 6 <u>dissenters' rights as prescribed in chapter 23B.13 RCW.</u>
- 7 **Sec. 3.** RCW 23B.19.040 and 1996 c 155 s 3 are each amended to read 8 as follows:
- 9 (1)(a) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this
- 10 title, ((except under subsection (2) of this section and RCW
- 11 23B.19.030,)) a target corporation shall not ((engage in any
- 12 significant business transaction)) for a period of five years following
- 13 the acquiring person's share acquisition time engage in a significant
- 14 <u>business transaction unless it is exempted by RCW 23B.19.030 or unless</u>
- 15 the significant business transaction or the purchase of shares made by
- 16 the acquiring person is approved prior to the acquiring person's share
- 17 acquisition time by a majority of the members of the board of directors
- 18 of the target corporation.
- 19 (b) If a good faith proposal for a significant business transaction
- 20 is made in writing to the board of directors of the target corporation
- 21 prior to the significant business transaction or prior to the share
- 22 acquisition time, the board of directors shall respond in writing,
- 23 within thirty days or such shorter period, if any, as may be required
- 24 by the exchange act setting forth its reasons for its decision
- 25 regarding the proposal. If a good faith proposal to purchase shares is
- 26 made in writing to the board of directors of the target corporation,
- 27 the board of directors, unless it responds affirmatively in writing
- 28 within thirty days or a shorter period, if any, as may be required by
- 29 the exchange act shall be deemed to have disapproved such share
- 30 purchase.
- 31 (2) ((Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this
- 32 title, except under subsection (1) of this section and RCW 23B.19.030))
- 33 Except for a significant business transaction approved under subsection
- 34 (1) of this section or exempted by RCW 23B.19.030, in addition to any
- 35 other requirement, a target corporation shall not engage at any time in
- 36 any significant business transaction <u>described in RCW 23B.19.020(15)</u>
- 37 (a) or (e) with any acquiring person of such a corporation other than
- 38 a significant business transaction that <u>either</u> meets all of the

((following)) conditions of (a), (b), and (c) of this subsection or meets the conditions of (d) of this subsection:

- (a) The aggregate amount of the cash and the market value as of the consummation date of consideration other than cash to be received per share by holders of outstanding common shares of such a target corporation in a significant business transaction is at least equal to the higher of the following:
- (i) The highest per share price paid by such an acquiring person at time when the person was the beneficial owner, directly or indirectly, of five percent or more of the outstanding voting shares of a target corporation, for any shares of common shares of the same class or series acquired by it: (A) Within the five-year period immediately prior to the announcement date with respect to a significant business transaction; or (B) within the five-year period immediately prior to, or in, the transaction in which the acquiring person became an acquiring person, whichever is higher plus, in either case, interest compounded annually from the earliest date on which the highest per share acquisition price was paid through the consummation date at the rate for one-year United States treasury obligations from time to time in effect; less the aggregate amount of any cash dividends paid, and the market value of any dividends paid other than in cash, per share of common shares since the earliest date, up to the amount of the interest; and
  - (ii) The market value per share of common shares on the announcement date with respect to a significant business transaction or on the date of the acquiring person's share acquisition time, whichever is higher; plus interest compounded annually from such a date through the consummation date at the rate for one-year United States treasury obligations from time to time in effect; less the aggregate amount of any cash dividends paid, and the market value of any dividends paid other than in cash, per share of common shares since the date, up to the amount of the interest.
  - (b) The aggregate amount of the cash and the market value as of the consummation date of consideration other than cash to be received per share by holders of outstanding shares of any class or series of shares, other than common shares, of the target corporation is at least equal to the highest of the following, whether or not the acquiring person has previously acquired any shares of such a class or series of shares:

p. 11 SB 5107

- (i) The highest per share price paid by an acquiring person at a 1 2 time when the person was the beneficial owner, directly or indirectly, 3 of five percent or more of the outstanding voting shares of a resident 4 domestic corporation, for any shares of the same class or series of 5 shares acquired by it: (A) Within the five-year period immediately prior to the announcement date with respect to a significant business 6 7 transaction; or (B) within the five-year period immediately prior to, 8 or in, the transaction in which the acquiring person became an 9 acquiring person, whichever is higher; plus, in either case, interest 10 compounded annually from the earliest date on which the highest per share acquisition price was paid through the consummation date at the 11 12 rate for one-year United States treasury obligations from time to time 13 in effect; less the aggregate amount of any cash dividends paid, and the market value of any dividends paid other than in cash, per share of 14 15 the same class or series of shares since the earliest date, up to the 16 amount of the interest;
  - (ii) The highest preferential amount per share to which the holders of shares of the same class or series of shares are entitled in the event of any voluntary liquidation, dissolution, or winding up of the target corporation, plus the aggregate amount of any dividends declared or due as to which the holders are entitled prior to payment of dividends on some other class or series of shares, unless the aggregate amount of the dividends is included in the preferential amount; and
  - (iii) The market value per share of the same class or series of shares on the announcement date with respect to a significant business transaction or on the date of the acquiring person's share acquisition time, whichever is higher; plus interest compounded annually from such a date through the consummation date at the rate for one-year United States treasury obligations from time to time in effect; less the aggregate amount of any cash dividends paid and the market value of any dividends paid other than in cash, per share of the same class or series of shares since the date, up to the amount of the interest.
- (c) The consideration to be received by holders of a particular 33 class or series of outstanding shares, including common shares, of the target corporation in а significant business ((combination)) transaction is in cash or in the same form as the acquiring person has 36 37 used to acquire the largest number of shares of the same class or shares previously acquired by the person, 38 39 consideration shall be distributed promptly.

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34 35 (d) The significant business transaction is approved at an annual meeting of shareholders, or special meeting of shareholders called for such a purpose, no earlier than five years after the acquiring person's share acquisition time, by a majority of the votes entitled to be counted within each voting group entitled to vote separately on the transaction. The votes of all outstanding shares entitled to vote under this title or the articles of incorporation shall be entitled to be counted under this subsection except that the votes of shares as to which an acquiring person has beneficial ownership or voting control may not be counted to determine whether shareholders have approved a transaction for purposes of this subsection. The votes of shares as to which an acquiring person has beneficial ownership or voting control shall, however, be counted in determining whether a transaction is approved under other sections of this title and for purposes of determining a quorum.

(3) Subsection (2) of this section does not apply to a target corporation that on June 6, 1996, had a provision in its articles of incorporation, adopted under RCW 23B.17.020(3)(d), expressly electing not to be covered under RCW 23B.17.020, which is repealed by section 6, chapter 155, Laws of 1996.

21 (4) A significant business transaction that is made in violation of 22 subsection (1) or (2) of this section and that is not exempt under RCW 23 23B.19.030 is void.

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p. 13 SB 5107