



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR FIXED ANNUITIES

Educate. Advocate. Integrate.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Chuck DiVencenzo

NAFA President & CEO

Direct 414.332.9306, ext. 0

cjd@nafa.com

NAFA Ushers in 2026 Board of Directors

Leaders Aim to Protect Industry and Increase Trust in Annuities as a Vital Retirement Planning Tool

WASHINGTON (Jan. 13, 2026) — The general membership of NAFA, the National Association for Fixed Annuities, approved the slate of candidates presented for its 2026 board of directors at the association's annual meeting held recently in Savannah, Ga. Nominations were received from the membership at large, and candidates were vetted by the current board before being proposed during the association's 17th annual Annuity Distribution Summit.

By unanimous decision, three new members were elected to join current board leadership in developing and executing a strategic plan underpinned by NAFA's mission to advocate, educate and integrate across independent distribution, as well as institutional channels. This will include examining a variety of challenges such as regulatory pressures, an aging workforce, technology adoption and the complexity of an ever-expanding product marketplace. The board will work closely with NAFA staff, the association's volunteer committees and the membership at large to turn these challenges into opportunities, strengthening perception and understanding of the unique value proposition of fixed and fixed indexed annuities. The expertise and experience of these leaders will be integral to the industry's efforts to help everyday Americans navigate the path to retirement security more seamlessly.

Newly appointed board members include Emily Kresowik of American Life, Mike Miller of Advisors Excel and Nicohle Schluender of American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company. Jason Gould of Carlton Fields, Matt Johnson of Knighthead Life and Luke Loewen of Gradient Annuity Brokerage were elected to serve a second term.

Andrew Payne of CreativeOne will assume the role of chairman of the board of directors, taking over for immediate past chair David Wolfe of Advisors Excel. Eric Taylor of Corebridge Financial will roll up to vice chair and Dan Acker of SILAC Insurance Company to secretary, while Emily Cramer of Simplicity Group was elected to join the executive operating committee as its newly appointed treasurer.

"The one constant on today's horizon is change. From market fluctuations to emerging technologies to competing financial priorities, the industry and consumers alike are being forced

-more-

to learn, grow and adapt at an incredible pace. NAFA is well positioned to ensure our members and financial professionals across the country capitalize on the benefits of annuities in helping retirement savers address critical gaps in their plans for the future," said Chuck DiVencenzo, NAFA president and CEO. "At the end of 2025, Congress began reintroducing pieces of legislation focused on making it easier to accumulate retirement savings and turn those funds into income for life. Our board's passion for this business and commitment to helping others will be invaluable in our quest to champion bipartisan, commonsense retirement reform and increase public trust in annuities as a vital tool in the retirement planning toolbox. I look forward to seeing all that we can accomplish together."

Newly elected members join a board roster that currently includes: Bryce Biklen of North American Company for Life & Health, Jay Brown of Delaware Life Marketing, Tom Bumbolow of American Life & Security Corp., Jill Esser of Magellan Financial, Paul Garofoli of The Standard, Sarah Garrity of BlackRock, Jamie Kosharek of Global Atlantic Financial Group, Paul Kruth of W&S Financial Group Distributors, Inc., Branislav Nikolic of The Index Standard, Brian Peterson of AmeriLife, Ann Raible of Nationwide, Rocky Robbins of Brokers International and Mike Tripses of Annuia Profectus.

On behalf of the NAFA staff, board and membership at large, DiVencenzo recognized the contributions of exiting board members Jeff Barnes of EquiTrust, Tad Fifer of AmeriLife, Jason Krohnke of American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company, Ryan Lex of Talcott Financial Group and Kevin Mechtle of North American Company for Life & Health. These individuals received commemorative plaques and pens in gratitude for sharing their time and talent.

###

About NAFA

NAFA, the National Association for Fixed Annuities, is the premier trade association exclusively dedicated to fixed annuities. Our mission is to promote the awareness and understanding of fixed annuities. We educate annuity salespeople, regulators, legislators, journalists, and industry personnel about the value of fixed annuities and their benefits to consumers. NAFA's membership represents every aspect of the fixed annuity marketplace covering fixed annuities sold by independent agents, advisors and brokers. NAFA was founded in 1998. For more information, visit www.nafa.com.