The Company used the following methods and assumptions in estimating the fair value of its financial instruments as well as the general classification of such financial instruments pursuant to the above fair value hierarchy:

Fixed Maturities
At each valuation date, the Company uses various valuation techniques to estimate the fair value of its fixed maturities portfolio. The primary method for valuing the Company's securities is through independent third-party valuation service providers. For positions where valuations are not available from independent third-party valuation service providers, the Company utilizes broker quotes and internal pricing methods to determine fair values. The Company obtains a single non-binding price quote from a broker familiar with the security who, similar to the Company's valuation service providers, may consider transactions or activity in similar securities, as applicable, among other information. The brokers providing price quotes are generally from the brokerage divisions of leading financial institutions with market making, underwriting and distribution expertise regarding the security subject to valuation. The evaluation and prioritization of these valuation sources is systematic and predetermined resulting in a single quote or price for each financial instrument. The following describes the techniques generally used to determine the fair value of the Company's fixed maturities by asset class:

U.S. Government and Agency Securities
U.S. government and agency securities consist primarily of bonds issued by the U.S. Treasury and mortgage pass-through agencies such as the Federal Home Loan Bank, the Federal National Mortgage Association and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation. As the fair values of the Company's U.S. Treasury securities are based on active markets and unadjusted market prices, they are classified within Level 1. The fair value of U.S. government agency securities is generally determined using observable market inputs that include quoted prices for identical or similar assets in markets that are not active, benchmark yields, reported trades, bids, offers and credit spreads. Accordingly, the fair value of U.S. government agency securities is primarily classified within Level 2.

Mortgage-Backed Securities
The Company's portfolio of residential and commercial MBS is originated by both agencies and non-agencies, the majority of which are pass-through securities issued by U.S. government agencies. The fair value of MBS is generally determined using observable market inputs that include quoted prices for identical or similar assets in markets that are not active, benchmark yields, contractual cash flows, prepayment speeds, collateral performance and credit spreads. Accordingly, the fair value of MBS is primarily classified within Level 2.

Asset-Backed Securities
ABS include mostly investment-grade bonds backed by pools of loans with a variety of underlying collateral, including automobile loan receivables, credit card receivables, and collateralized loan obligation securities originated by a variety of financial institutions. The fair value of ABS is generally determined using observable market inputs that include quoted prices for identical or similar assets in markets that are not active, benchmark yields, contractual cash flows, prepayment speeds, collateral performance and credit spreads. Accordingly, the fair value of ABS is primarily classified within Level 2.

Municipal Securities
The Company's municipal portfolio is comprised of bonds issued by U.S. domiciled state and municipal entities. The fair value of municipal securities is generally determined using observable market inputs that include quoted prices for identical or similar assets in markets that are not active, benchmark yields, binding broker quotes, issuer ratings, reported trades and credit spreads. Accordingly, the fair value of municipal securities is primarily classified within Level 2.

Corporate Debt and Other Securities
Corporate debt securities consist primarily of investment-grade debt of a wide variety of corporate issuers and industries. The fair value of corporate and other securities is generally determined using observable market inputs that include quoted prices for identical or similar assets in markets that are not active, benchmark yields, new issuances, issuer ratings, reported trades of identical or comparable securities, bids, offers and credit spreads. Accordingly, the fair value of corporate and other securities is primarily classified within Level 2. In the event third-party vendor valuation is not available, prices are determined using non-binding price quotes from a broker familiar with the security. In this instance, the valuation inputs are generally unobservable and the fair value is classified within Level 3.

Foreign Government Securities
Foreign government securities include bonds issued or guaranteed by foreign governments. The fair value of foreign government securities is generally determined using observable market inputs that include quoted prices for identical or similar assets in markets that are not active, benchmark yields, binding broker quotes, issuer ratings, reported trades of identical or comparable securities and credit spreads. Accordingly, the fair value of foreign government securities is primarily classified within Level 2. In the event third-party vendor valuation is not available, prices are determined using non-binding price quotes from a broker familiar with the security. In this instance, the valuation inputs are generally unobservable and the fair value is classified within Level 3.

Equity Securities

Equity securities include common and preferred stocks. Common stocks with fair values based on quoted market prices in active markets are classified within Level 1. Common stocks with fair values determined using observable market inputs that include quoted prices for identical or similar assets in markets that are not active are classified within Level 2. The fair value of preferred stock is generally determined using observable market inputs that include quoted prices for identical or similar assets in markets that are not active. Accordingly, the fair value of preferred stock is primarily classified within Level 2.

Short-Term Investments

The fair value of short-term investments is generally determined using observable market inputs that include quoted prices for identical or similar assets in markets that are not active, benchmark yields, new issuances, issuer ratings, reported trades of identical or comparable securities, bids, offers and credit spreads. Accordingly, the fair value of short-term investments is primarily classified within Level 2 of the fair value hierarchy.

Other Investments

Other investments include primarily foreign cash deposits, equity investments in privately held businesses and limited partnerships where the Company has elected the fair value option. Cash deposits are primarily valued using quoted prices for similar instruments in active markets; these assets are categorized within Level 2 of the fair value hierarchy. Equity investments in privately held businesses are valued using internal management estimates; they are categorized within Level 3 of the hierarchy. Loans, limited partnership and other equity method investments, which represent the remainder of the other investment balance on the accompanying consolidated balance sheet are not subject to these disclosures and therefore are excluded from the table in this note.

Other Assets and Other Liabilities

Other assets primarily consist of fixed maturities, short-term investments, and equity securities of captive companies sponsored by the Company. These assets are measured based on the methodology for individual securities as discussed above.

Additionally, other assets and other liabilities classified within Level 2 and Level 3 represent the Company's derivatives which can be exchange-traded or traded over-the-counter ("OTC"). OTC derivatives are valued using market transactions and other market evidence whenever possible, including market-based inputs to models, model calibration to market clearing transactions, broker or dealer quotations or alternative pricing sources with reasonable levels of price transparency. When models are used, the selection of a particular model to value an OTC derivative depends on the contractual terms of, and specific risks inherent in the instrument, as well as the availability of pricing information in the market. The Company generally uses similar models to value similar instruments. Valuation models require a variety of inputs, including contractual terms, market prices and rates, yield curves, credit curves, measures of volatility, prepayment rates and correlations of such inputs. For OTC derivatives that trade in liquid markets, such as generic forwards, swaps and options, model inputs can generally be corroborated by observable market data by correlation or other means, and model selection does not involve significant management judgment.

Life Insurance Obligations

Life insurance obligations include certain variable annuity contracts that provide guaranteed minimum income benefits. These benefits are accounted for as embedded derivatives and are bifurcated from the host contract and carried at fair value. The fair value of these embedded derivatives is computed on a recurring basis using assumptions predominately classified as Level 3 (significant unobservable) inputs. While some inputs are observable in the market, such as risk free rates, volatility and historical equity returns, the underlying future policyholder behavior inputs are highly unobservable. The significant policyholder behavior assumptions include lapse and the underlying annuitization rate.