

December 31, 2023

Annual Report

Deutsche DWS Variable Series II

DWS CROCI[®] U.S. VIP



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This report must be preceded or accompanied by a prospectus. To obtain an additional prospectus or summary prospectus, if available, call (800) 728-3337 or your financial representative. We advise you to consider the Fund's objectives, risks, charges and expenses carefully before investing. The summary prospectus and prospectus contain this and other important information about the Fund. Please read the prospectus carefully before you invest.

Stocks may decline in value. The Fund will be managed using the CROCI® Investment Process which is based on portfolio management's belief that, over time, stocks which display more favorable financial metrics (for example, the CROCI® Economic P/E Ratio) as generated by this process may outperform stocks which display less favorable metrics. This premise may not prove to be correct and prospective investors should evaluate this assumption prior to investing in the Fund. The Fund may lend securities to approved institutions. Please read the prospectus for details.

War, terrorism, sanctions, economic uncertainty, trade disputes, public health crises, natural disasters, climate change and related geopolitical events have led and, in the future, may lead to significant disruptions in U.S. and world economies and markets, which may lead to increased market volatility and may have significant adverse effects on the Fund and its investments.

The brand DWS represents DWS Group GmbH & Co. KGaA and any of its subsidiaries such as DWS Distributors, Inc. which offers investment products or DWS Investment Management Americas, Inc. and RREEF America L.L.C. which offer advisory services.

DWS Distributors, Inc., 222 South Riverside Plaza, Chicago, IL 60606, (800) 621-1148

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Performance Summary

December 31, 2023 (Unaudited)

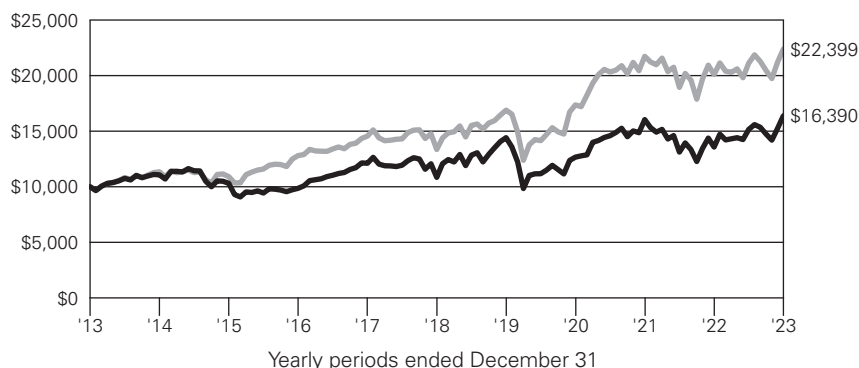
Fund performance shown is historical, assumes reinvestment of all dividend and capital gain distributions, and does not guarantee future results. Investment return and principal value fluctuate with changing market conditions so that, when redeemed, shares may be worth more or less than their original cost. Current performance may be lower or higher than the performance data quoted. Please contact your participating insurance company for the Fund's most recent month-end performance. Performance does not reflect charges and fees ("contract charges") associated with the separate account that invests in the Fund or any variable life insurance policy or variable annuity contract for which the Fund is an investment option. These charges and fees will reduce returns. While all share classes have the same underlying portfolio, their performance will differ.

The gross expense ratios of the Fund, as stated in the fee table of each prospectus dated May 1, 2023 are 0.79% and 1.12% for Class A and Class B shares, respectively, and may differ from the expense ratios disclosed in the Financial Highlights tables in this report.

Generally accepted accounting principles require adjustments to be made to the net assets of the Fund at period end for financial reporting purposes only, and as such, the total return based on the unadjusted net asset value per share may differ from the total return reported in the financial highlights.

Growth of an Assumed \$10,000 Investment

■ DWS CROCI® U.S. VIP – Class A
 ■ Russell 1000® Value Index†



Russell 1000® Value Index is an unmanaged market capitalization-weighted index of value-oriented stocks of the largest U.S. domiciled companies that are included in the Russell 1000 Index. Value-oriented stocks tend to have lower price-to-book ratios and lower forecasted growth values. Russell 1000® Index is an unmanaged price-only index of the 1,000 largest capitalized companies that are domiciled in the U.S. and whose common stocks are traded.

Index returns do not reflect any fees or expenses and it is not possible to invest directly into an index.

Prior to May 1, 2017, the Fund operated with a different investment strategy. Prior to October 3, 2016, the Fund had a team that operated with a different investment strategy. Performance would have been different if the Fund's current strategy had been in effect.

Comparative Results

DWS CROCI® U.S. VIP		1-Year	3-Year	5-Year	10-Year
Class A	Growth of \$10,000	\$12,076	\$12,943	\$15,116	\$16,390
	Average annual total return	20.76%	8.98%	8.61%	5.06%
Russell 1000® Value Index	Growth of \$10,000	\$11,146	\$12,899	\$16,779	\$22,399
	Average annual total return	11.46%	8.86%	10.91%	8.40%

DWS CROCI® U.S. VIP		1-Year	3-Year	5-Year	10-Year
Class B	Growth of \$10,000	\$12,037	\$12,817	\$14,873	\$15,891
	Average annual total return	20.37%	8.63%	8.26%	4.74%
Russell 1000® Value Index	Growth of \$10,000	\$11,146	\$12,899	\$16,779	\$22,399
	Average annual total return	11.46%	8.86%	10.91%	8.40%

The growth of \$10,000 is cumulative.

Management Summary

December 31, 2023 (Unaudited)

The Fund returned 20.76% (Class A shares, unadjusted for contract charges) in 2023 and strongly outperformed the 11.46% return of its benchmark, the Russell 1000[®] Value Index.

U.S. equities produced a strong gain in 2023. Investors were encouraged by economic data and corporate earnings results that exceeded the depressed expectations in place at the beginning of the year. In addition, the U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) slowed the pace of its interest rate increases as inflation waned. Late in the year, market participants began to anticipate that the Fed would start to cut rates in 2024. This favorable shift caused equities to move sharply higher in November and December, propelling the index near an all-time high by year-end.

This methodology worked well in 2023 by helping us identify opportunities in the information technology, communication services, and consumer discretionary sectors. Our resulting overweights in these categories contributed to performance, as did stock selection. In technology, we benefited from holdings in the mega-cap stocks Microsoft Corp.* and Apple, Inc. We also held positions in a wide range of semiconductor companies that outperformed, including QUALCOMM, Inc. and KLA Corp. An overweight in Alphabet, Inc. (parent of Google), which joined Apple and Microsoft among the mega-cap leaders in 2023, helped performance in communication services. In consumer discretionary, the largest contribution came from the homebuilding stock D.R. Horton, Inc. Rising mortgage rates led to a shortage of existing homes coming to the market, prompting buyers to turn to new construction.

Our stock selection process also contributed to performance in the energy, financials, and industrials sectors. On the other hand, a few holdings in healthcare stood out as detractors in the period. Bristol-Myers Squibb Co.* was a notable laggard due to weaker-than-expected growth and concerns about its pipeline of new drugs. Another healthcare stock, Pfizer, Inc.,* also hurt results. The stock lagged considerably on slowing COVID-19 vaccine sales, muted enthusiasm about its pipeline, and its lack of success in the market for weight loss drugs. Merck & Co, Inc. and Gilead Sciences, Inc. also detracted from Fund performance in the sector. On the positive side, the strong showing for our positions in Vertex Pharmaceuticals, Inc., and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. made up for much of the shortfall and helped our holdings finish in line with the larger healthcare sector.

Although the U.S. market produced a robust headline return in 2023, much of the gain was the result of sizable outperformance for a very narrow group of companies. On the other hand, many segments of the market delivered only muted total returns. We would also note that the least expensive quintile of stocks is trading near a historical discount to the broader market, indicating the wide dispersion of performance over the past year. Not least, many of the macroeconomic headwinds that caused investors to gravitate to the handful of mega-cap technology stocks — particularly high inflation and rising rates — appear to be abating. We believe these factors create fertile conditions for bottom-up investors to continue adding value through individual stock selection in the year ahead.

Di Kumble, CFA, Senior Portfolio Manager Equity
John Moody, Portfolio Manager Equity
Portfolio Managers

The views expressed reflect those of the portfolio management team only through the end of the period of the report as stated on the cover. The management team's views are subject to change at any time based on market and other conditions and should not be construed as a recommendation. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Current and future portfolio holdings are subject to risk.

Terms to Know

The **Russell 1000 Value Index** is an unmanaged market capitalization-weighted index of value-oriented stocks of the largest U.S. domiciled companies that are included in the Russell 1000® Index. Value-oriented stocks tend to have lower price-to-book ratios and lower forecasted growth values. Russell 1000 Index is an unmanaged price-only index of the 1,000 largest capitalized companies that are domiciled in the U.S. and whose common stocks are traded.

Index returns do not reflect any fees or expenses and it is not possible to invest directly into an index.

Stock selection refers to the performance of the Fund's holdings in a given sector relative to the sector as a whole.

Contribution and **detraction** incorporate both an investment's total return and its weighting in the Fund.

Overweight means that a fund holds a higher weighting in a given sector or security than its benchmark index. **Underweight** means that a fund holds a lower weighting.

* Not held at December 31, 2023.

Portfolio Summary

(Unaudited)

Asset Allocation (As a % of Investment Portfolio)	12/31/23	12/31/22
Common Stocks	99%	99%
Cash Equivalents	1%	1%
	100%	100%

Sector Diversification (As a % of Investment Portfolio excluding Cash Equivalents)	12/31/23	12/31/22
Information Technology	24%	28%
Health Care	22%	23%
Communication Services	14%	8%
Financials	11%	11%
Consumer Discretionary	10%	10%
Industrials	6%	5%
Energy	6%	5%
Materials	4%	6%
Consumer Staples	3%	4%
	100%	100%

Portfolio holdings and characteristics are subject to change.

For more complete details about the Fund's investment portfolio, see page 7.

Following the Fund's fiscal first and third quarter-end, a complete portfolio holdings listing is posted on [dws.com](https://www.dws.com) and is available free of charge by contacting your financial intermediary or, if you are a direct investor, by calling (800) 728-3337. In addition, the portfolio holdings listing is filed with the SEC on the Fund's Form N-PORT and will be available on the SEC's Web site at [sec.gov](https://www.sec.gov). Additional portfolio holdings for the Fund are also posted on [dws.com](https://www.dws.com) from time to time. Please see the Fund's current prospectus for more information.

Investment Portfolio

as of December 31, 2023

	Shares	Value (\$)		Shares	Value (\$)
Common Stocks 99.3%					
Communication Services 13.8%					
Entertainment 1.6%					
Warner Bros Discovery, Inc.*	186,564	2,123,098			
Interactive Media & Services 8.2%					
Alphabet, Inc. "A"*	45,048	6,292,755			
Meta Platforms, Inc. "A"*	13,280	4,700,589			
		10,993,344			
Media 3.2%					
Comcast Corp. "A"	7,485	328,217			
Fox Corp. "A"	131,126	3,890,509			
		4,218,726			
Wireless Telecommunication Services 0.8%					
T-Mobile U.S., Inc.	6,868	1,101,146			
Consumer Discretionary 10.2%					
Hotels, Restaurants & Leisure 1.7%					
Boyd Gaming Corp.	36,110	2,260,847			
Household Durables 5.2%					
D.R. Horton, Inc.	41,470	6,302,611			
Garmin Ltd.	4,724	607,223			
		6,909,834			
Specialty Retail 2.6%					
AutoNation, Inc.*	9,538	1,432,417			
Best Buy Co., Inc.	4,585	358,914			
Lowe's Companies, Inc.	4,357	969,650			
Signet Jewelers Ltd.	6,767	725,828			
		3,486,809			
Textiles, Apparel & Luxury Goods 0.7%					
Tapestry, Inc.	26,444	973,404			
Consumer Staples 3.4%					
Beverages 0.5%					
Molson Coors Beverage Co. "B"	10,352	633,646			
Consumer Staples Distribution & Retail 0.7%					
Kroger Co.	20,848	952,962			
Food Products 1.2%					
Archer-Daniels-Midland Co.	10,469	756,071			
Conagra Brands, Inc.	31,034	889,434			
		1,645,505			
Tobacco 1.0%					
Altria Group, Inc.	32,752	1,321,216			
Energy 5.7%					
Oil, Gas & Consumable Fuels 5.7%					
Coterra Energy, Inc.	36,775	938,498			
Exxon Mobil Corp.	15,539	1,553,589			
Marathon Petroleum Corp.	11,958	1,774,089			
Phillips 66	3,780	503,269			
Pioneer Natural Resources Co.	8,685	1,953,083			
Valero Energy Corp.	6,543	850,590			
					7,573,118
Financials 11.2%					
Banks 2.9%					
JPMorgan Chase & Co.	19,819	3,371,212			
Wells Fargo & Co.	9,097	447,754			
					3,818,966
Capital Markets 1.2%					
State Street Corp.	20,585	1,594,514			
Consumer Finance 7.1%					
Capital One Financial Corp.	18,537	2,430,572			
Discover Financial Services	40,661	4,570,296			
Synchrony Financial	66,224	2,529,095			
					9,529,963
Health Care 21.8%					
Biotechnology 8.5%					
AbbVie, Inc.	6,776	1,050,077			
Amgen, Inc.	1,454	418,781			
Gilead Sciences, Inc.	45,216	3,662,948			
Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc.*	4,087	3,589,571			
Vertex Pharmaceuticals, Inc.*	6,457	2,627,289			
					11,348,666
Health Care Equipment & Supplies 2.9%					
Edwards Lifesciences Corp.*	7,555	576,069			
Hologic, Inc.*	20,022	1,430,572			
Medtronic PLC	22,311	1,837,980			
					3,844,621
Health Care Providers & Services 0.9%					
HCA Healthcare, Inc.	1,253	339,162			
Laboratory Corp. of America Holdings	4,078	926,888			
					1,266,050
Pharmaceuticals 9.5%					
Johnson & Johnson	28,650	4,490,601			
Merck & Co., Inc.	61,387	6,692,411			
Viatis, Inc.	137,834	1,492,742			
					12,675,754
Industrials 6.0%					
Electrical Equipment 0.3%					
Acuity Brands, Inc.	2,016	412,937			
Machinery 4.1%					
Cummins, Inc.	5,998	1,436,941			
Deere & Co.	1,829	731,362			
PACCAR, Inc.	34,094	3,329,279			
					5,497,582

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

	Shares	Value (\$)		Shares	Value (\$)
Professional Services 1.2%			Technology Hardware, Storage & Peripherals 7.6%		
ManpowerGroup, Inc.	4,292	341,085	Apple, Inc.	20,987	4,040,627
Robert Half, Inc.	8,332	732,550	Dell Technologies, Inc. "C"	13,611	1,041,241
SS&C Technologies Holdings, Inc.	9,673	591,117	Hewlett Packard Enterprise Co.	302,323	5,133,445
		1,664,752			10,215,313
Trading Companies & Distributors 0.4%			Materials 3.5%		
Ferguson PLC	2,521	486,730	Chemicals 0.2%		
			LyondellBasell Industries NV "A"	3,288	312,623
Information Technology 23.7%			Construction Materials 1.0%		
Communications Equipment 2.6%			CRH PLC	18,409	1,273,167
Cisco Systems, Inc.	69,305	3,501,289	Metals & Mining 2.3%		
Electronic Equipment, Instruments & Components 1.2%			Nucor Corp.	17,684	3,077,723
Sanmina Corp.*	30,175	1,550,090			
IT Services 2.4%			Total Common Stocks (Cost \$112,830,750)		132,735,019
Cognizant Technology Solutions Corp. "A"	42,401	3,202,547			
Semiconductors & Semiconductor Equipment 9.9%			Cash Equivalents 0.6%		
Applied Materials, Inc.	11,833	1,917,775	DWS Central Cash Management Government Fund, 5.38% (a)		
Broadcom, Inc.	581	648,541	(Cost \$748,795)	748,795	748,795
KLA Corp.	2,841	1,651,473			
Lam Research Corp.	942	737,831			
Microchip Technology, Inc.	18,616	1,678,791			
NXP Semiconductors NV	3,818	876,918			
ON Semiconductor Corp.*	15,987	1,335,394			
QUALCOMM, Inc.	21,276	3,077,148			
Skyworks Solutions, Inc.	11,957	1,344,206			
		13,268,077			
				% of Net Assets	Value (\$)
			Total Investment Portfolio (Cost \$113,579,545)	99.9	133,483,814
			Other Assets and Liabilities, Net	0.1	123,385
			Net Assets	100.0	133,607,199

A summary of the Fund's transactions with affiliated investments during the year ended December 31, 2023 are as follows:

Value (\$)	Purchases	Sales	Net Realized	Net Change in	Income (\$)	Capital Gain	Number	Value (\$)
at 12/31/2022	Cost (\$)	Proceeds (\$)	Gain/(Loss) (\$)	Unrealized Appreciation (Depreciation) (\$)		Distributions (\$)	of Shares at 12/31/2023	at 12/31/2023
Securities Lending Collateral 0.0%								
DWS Government & Agency Securities Portfolio "DWS Government Cash Institutional Shares", 5.27% (a) (b)								
—	0 (c)	—	—	—	2,105	—	—	—
Cash Equivalents 0.6%								
DWS Central Cash Management Government Fund, 5.38% (a)								
1,132,870	8,000,585	8,384,660	—	—	46,245	—	748,795	748,795
1,132,870	8,000,585	8,384,660	—	—	48,350	—	748,795	748,795

* Non-income producing security.

- (a) Affiliated fund managed by DWS Investment Management Americas, Inc. The rate shown is the annualized seven-day yield at period end.
- (b) Represents cash collateral held in connection with securities lending. Income earned by the Fund is net of borrower rebates.
- (c) Represents the net increase (purchase cost) or decrease (sales proceeds) in the amount invested in cash collateral for the year ended December 31, 2023.

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

Fair Value Measurements

Various inputs are used in determining the value of the Fund's investments. These inputs are summarized in three broad levels. Level 1 includes quoted prices in active markets for identical securities. Level 2 includes other significant observable inputs (including quoted prices for similar securities, interest rates, prepayment speeds and credit risk). Level 3 includes significant unobservable inputs (including the Fund's own assumptions in determining the fair value of investments). The level assigned to the securities valuations may not be an indication of the risk or liquidity associated with investing in those securities.

The following is a summary of the inputs used as of December 31, 2023 in valuing the Fund's investments. For information on the Fund's policy regarding the valuation of investments, please refer to the Security Valuation section of Note A in the accompanying Notes to Financial Statements.

Assets	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Common Stocks (a)	\$ 132,735,019	\$ —	\$ —	\$ 132,735,019
Short-Term Investments	748,795	—	—	748,795
Total	\$ 133,483,814	\$ —	\$ —	\$ 133,483,814

(a) See Investment Portfolio for additional detailed categorizations.

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

as of December 31, 2023

Assets	
Investments in non-affiliated securities, at value (cost \$112,830,750)	\$ 132,735,019
Investment in DWS Central Cash Management Government Fund (cost \$748,795)	748,795
Receivable for Fund shares sold	78
Dividends receivable	308,112
Interest receivable	4,112
Other assets	3,036
Total assets	133,799,152
Liabilities	
Payable for Fund shares redeemed	42,670
Accrued management fee	59,725
Accrued Trustees' fees	2,330
Other accrued expenses and payables	87,228
Total liabilities	191,953
Net assets, at value	\$ 133,607,199
Net Assets Consist of	
Distributable earnings (loss)	18,996,860
Paid-in capital	114,610,339
Net assets, at value	\$ 133,607,199
Net Asset Value	
Class A	
Net Asset Value , offering and redemption price per share (\$130,971,909 ÷ 8,399,063 outstanding shares of beneficial interest, no par value, unlimited number of shares authorized)	\$ 15.59
Class B	
Net Asset Value , offering and redemption price per share (\$2,635,290 ÷ 168,337 outstanding shares of beneficial interest, no par value, unlimited number of shares authorized)	\$ 15.65

Statement of Operations

for the year ended December 31, 2023

Investment Income	
Income:	
Dividends (net of foreign taxes withheld of \$1,196)	\$ 2,914,533
Income distributions — DWS Central Cash Management Government Fund	46,245
Securities lending income, net of borrower rebates	2,105
Total income	2,962,883
Expenses:	
Management fee	749,924
Administration fee	121,238
Services to shareholders	1,052
Record keeping fee (Class B)	1,758
Distribution service fee (Class B)	6,517
Custodian fee	2,615
Audit fee	50,161
Legal fees	14,689
Tax fees	7,206
Reports to shareholders	23,550
Trustees' fees and expenses	6,291
Other	7,157
Total expenses before expense reductions	992,158
Expense reductions	(130,297)
Total expenses after expense reductions	861,861
Net investment income	2,101,022
Realized and Unrealized Gain (Loss)	
Net realized gain (loss) from investments	(1,384,818)
Change in net unrealized appreciation (depreciation) on investments	23,072,209
Net gain (loss)	21,687,391
Net increase (decrease) in net assets resulting from operations	\$23,788,413

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

Statements of Changes in Net Assets

Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	Years Ended December 31,	
	2023	2022
Operations:		
Net investment income	\$ 2,101,022	\$ 2,130,475
Net realized gain (loss)	(1,384,818)	(1,438,266)
Change in net unrealized appreciation (depreciation)	23,072,209	(23,764,440)
Net increase (decrease) in net assets resulting from operations	23,788,413	(23,072,231)
Distributions to shareholders:		
Class A	(2,083,297)	(4,211,106)
Class B	(36,527)	(84,944)
Total distributions	(2,119,824)	(4,296,050)
Fund share transactions:		
Class A		
Proceeds from shares sold	1,654,934	2,424,947
Reinvestment of distributions	2,083,297	4,211,106
Payments for shares redeemed	(10,456,836)	(12,164,638)
Net increase (decrease) in net assets from Class A share transactions	(6,718,605)	(5,528,585)
Class B		
Proceeds from shares sold	52,175	160,562
Reinvestment of distributions	36,527	84,944
Payments for shares redeemed	(363,486)	(429,240)
Net increase (decrease) in net assets from Class B share transactions	(274,784)	(183,734)
Increase (decrease) in net assets	14,675,200	(33,080,600)
Net assets at beginning of period	118,931,999	152,012,599
Net assets at end of period	\$133,607,199	\$118,931,999
Other Information		
Class A		
Shares outstanding at beginning of period	8,866,757	9,269,906
Shares sold	117,364	175,252
Shares issued to shareholders in reinvestment of distributions	154,777	301,655
Shares redeemed	(739,835)	(880,056)
Net increase (decrease) in Class A shares	(467,694)	(403,149)
Shares outstanding at end of period	8,399,063	8,866,757
Class B		
Shares outstanding at beginning of period	186,623	201,242
Shares sold	3,815	10,442
Shares issued to shareholders in reinvestment of distributions	2,698	6,050
Shares redeemed	(24,799)	(31,111)
Net increase (decrease) in Class B shares	(18,286)	(14,619)
Shares outstanding at end of period	168,337	186,623

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

Financial Highlights

DWS CROCI® U.S. VIP — Class A

	Years Ended December 31,				
	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Selected Per Share Data					
Net asset value, beginning of period	\$13.14	\$16.05	\$12.92	\$16.12	\$13.46
<i>Income (loss) from investment operations:</i>					
Net investment income ^a	.24	.23	.24	.28	.31
Net realized and unrealized gain (loss)	2.45	(2.68)	3.17	(2.47)	3.92
Total from investment operations	2.69	(2.45)	3.41	(2.19)	4.23
<i>Less distributions from:</i>					
Net investment income	(.24)	(.25)	(.28)	(.31)	(.30)
Net realized gains	—	(.21)	—	(.70)	(1.27)
Total distributions	(.24)	(.46)	(.28)	(1.01)	(1.57)
Net asset value, end of period	\$15.59	\$13.14	\$16.05	\$12.92	\$16.12
Total Return (%) ^b	20.76	(15.40)	26.69	(12.16)	32.95
Ratios to Average Net Assets and Supplemental Data					
Net assets, end of period (\$ millions)	131	116	149	130	153
Ratio of expenses before expense reductions (%) ^c	.79	.79	.78	.84	.84
Ratio of expenses after expense reductions (%) ^c	.68	.65	.71	.69	.70
Ratio of net investment income (%)	1.69	1.66	1.62	2.28	2.13
Portfolio turnover rate (%)	60	60	99	122	111

^a Based on average shares outstanding during the period.

^b Total return would have been lower had certain expenses not been reduced.

^c Expense ratio does not reflect charges and fees associated with the separate account that invests in the Fund or any variable life insurance policy or variable annuity contract for which the Fund is an investment option.

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

DWS CROCI® U.S. VIP — Class B

	Years Ended December 31,				
	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Selected Per Share Data					
Net asset value, beginning of period	\$13.19	\$16.11	\$12.97	\$16.17	\$13.50
<i>Income (loss) from investment operations:</i>					
Net investment income ^a	.19	.19	.19	.24	.27
Net realized and unrealized gain (loss)	2.47	(2.69)	3.19	(2.47)	3.92
Total from investment operations	2.66	(2.50)	3.38	(2.23)	4.19
<i>Less distributions from:</i>					
Net investment income	(.20)	(.21)	(.24)	(.27)	(.25)
Net realized gains	—	(.21)	—	(.70)	(1.27)
Total distributions	(.20)	(.42)	(.24)	(.97)	(1.52)
Net asset value, end of period	\$15.65	\$13.19	\$16.11	\$12.97	\$16.17
Total Return (%) ^b	20.37	(15.67)	26.27	(12.41)	32.49
Ratios to Average Net Assets and Supplemental Data					
Net assets, end of period (\$ millions)	3	2	3	3	4
Ratio of expenses before expense reductions (%) ^c	1.12	1.12	1.10	1.16	1.16
Ratio of expenses after expense reductions (%) ^c	1.00	.97	1.02	1.00	1.02
Ratio of net investment income (%)	1.38	1.33	1.33	1.96	1.82
Portfolio turnover rate (%)	60	60	99	122	111

^a Based on average shares outstanding during the period.

^b Total return would have been lower had certain expenses not been reduced.

^c Expense ratio does not reflect charges and fees associated with the separate account that invests in the Fund or any variable life insurance policy or variable annuity contract for which the Fund is an investment option.

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

Notes to Financial Statements

A. Organization and Significant Accounting Policies

DWS CROCI® U.S. VIP (the “Fund”) is a diversified series of Deutsche DWS Variable Series II (the “Trust”), which is registered under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (the “1940 Act”), as an open-end management investment company organized as a Massachusetts business trust.

Multiple Classes of Shares of Beneficial Interest. The Fund offers two classes of shares (Class A shares and Class B shares). Class B shares are subject to Rule 12b-1 distribution fees under the 1940 Act and recordkeeping fees equal to an annual rate of up to 0.25% and of up to 0.15%, respectively, of the average daily net assets of the Class B shares of the Fund. Class A shares are not subject to such fees.

Investment income, realized and unrealized gains and losses, and certain fund-level expenses and expense reductions, if any, are borne pro rata on the basis of relative net assets by the holders of all classes of shares, except that each class bears certain expenses unique to that class (including the applicable 12b-1 distribution fees and recordkeeping fees). Differences in class-level expenses may result in payment of different per share dividends by class. All shares have equal rights with respect to voting subject to class-specific arrangements.

The Fund’s financial statements are prepared in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (“U.S. GAAP”) which require the use of management estimates. Actual results could differ from those estimates. The Fund qualifies as an investment company under Topic 946 of Accounting Standards Codification of U.S. GAAP. The policies described below are followed consistently by the Fund in the preparation of its financial statements.

Security Valuation. Investments are stated at value determined as of the close of regular trading on the New York Stock Exchange on each day the exchange is open for trading.

The Fund’s Board has designated DWS Investment Management Americas, Inc. (the “Advisor”) as the valuation designee for the Fund pursuant to Rule 2a-5 under the 1940 Act. The Advisor’s Pricing Committee (the “Pricing Committee”) typically values securities using readily available market quotations or prices supplied by independent pricing services (which are considered fair values under Rule 2a-5). The Advisor has adopted fair valuation procedures that provide methodologies for fair valuing securities.

Various inputs are used in determining the value of the Fund’s investments. These inputs are summarized in three broad levels. Level 1 includes quoted prices in active markets for identical securities. Level 2 includes other significant observable inputs (including quoted prices for similar securities, interest rates, prepayment speeds and credit risk). Level 3 includes significant unobservable inputs (including the Fund’s own assumptions in determining the fair value of investments). The level assigned to the securities valuations may not be an indication of the risk or liquidity associated with investing in those securities.

Equity securities are valued at the most recent sale price or official closing price reported on the exchange (U.S. or foreign) or over-the-counter market on which they trade. Securities for which no sales are reported are valued at the calculated mean between the most recent bid and asked quotations on the relevant market or, if a mean cannot be determined, at the most recent bid quotation. Equity securities are generally categorized as Level 1.

Investments in open-end investment companies are valued at their net asset value each business day and are categorized as Level 1.

Securities and other assets for which market quotations are not readily available or for which the above valuation procedures are deemed not to reflect fair value are valued in a manner that is intended to reflect their fair value as determined in accordance with procedures approved by the Pricing Committee and are generally categorized as Level 3. In accordance with the Fund’s valuation procedures, factors considered in determining value may include, but are not limited to, the type of the security; the size of the holding; the initial cost of the security; the existence of any contractual restrictions on the security’s disposition; the price and extent of public trading in similar securities of the issuer or of comparable companies; quotations or evaluated prices from broker-dealers and/or pricing services; information obtained from the issuer, analysts, and/or the appropriate stock exchange (for exchange-traded securities); an analysis of the company’s or issuer’s financial statements; an evaluation of the forces that influence the issuer and the market(s) in which the security is purchased and sold; and with respect to debt securities, the maturity, coupon, creditworthiness, currency denomination and the movement of the market in which the security is normally traded. The value determined under these procedures may differ from published values for the same securities.

Disclosure about the classification of fair value measurements is included in a table following the Fund's Investment Portfolio.

Foreign Currency Translations. The books and records of the Fund are maintained in U.S. dollars. Investment securities and other assets and liabilities denominated in a foreign currency are translated into U.S. dollars at the prevailing exchange rates at period end. Purchases and sales of investment securities, income and expenses are translated into U.S. dollars at the prevailing exchange rates on the respective dates of the transactions.

Net realized and unrealized gains and losses on foreign currency transactions represent net gains and losses between trade and settlement dates on securities transactions, the acquisition and disposition of foreign currencies, and the difference between the amount of net investment income accrued and the U.S. dollar amount actually received. The portion of both realized and unrealized gains and losses on investments that results from fluctuations in foreign currency exchange rates is not separately disclosed but is included with net realized and unrealized gain/appreciation and loss/depreciation on investments.

Securities Lending. Deutsche Bank AG, as securities lending agent, lends securities of the Fund to certain financial institutions under the terms of its securities lending agreement. During the term of the loans, the Fund continues to receive interest and dividends generated by the securities and to participate in any changes in their market value. The Fund requires the borrowers of the securities to maintain collateral with the Fund consisting of either cash or liquid, unencumbered assets having a value at least equal to the value of the securities loaned. When the collateral falls below specified amounts, the securities lending agent will use its best efforts to obtain additional collateral on the next business day to meet required amounts under the securities lending agreement. During the year ended December 31, 2023, the Fund invested the cash collateral, if any, into a joint trading account in DWS Government & Agency Securities Portfolio, an affiliated money market fund managed by DWS Investment Management Americas, Inc. DWS Investment Management Americas, Inc. receives a management/administration fee (0.11% annualized effective rate as of December 31, 2023) on the cash collateral invested in DWS Government & Agency Securities Portfolio. The Fund receives compensation for lending its securities either in the form of fees or by earning interest on invested cash collateral net of borrower rebates and fees paid to a securities lending agent. Either the Fund or the borrower may terminate the loan at any time, and the borrower, after notice, is required to return borrowed securities within a standard time period. There may be risks of delay and costs in recovery of securities or even loss of rights in the collateral should the borrower of the securities fail financially. If the Fund is not able to recover securities lent, the Fund may sell the collateral and purchase a replacement investment in the market, incurring the risk that the value of the replacement security is greater than the value of the collateral. The Fund is also subject to all investment risks associated with the reinvestment of any cash collateral received, including, but not limited to, interest rate, credit and liquidity risk associated with such investments.

As of December 31, 2023, the Fund had no securities on loan.

Federal Income Taxes. The Fund is treated as a separate taxpayer as provided for in the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"). It is the Fund's policy to comply with the requirements of the Code, which are applicable to regulated investment companies, and to distribute all of its taxable income to the separate accounts of the Participating Insurance Companies which hold its shares.

At December 31, 2023, the Fund had net tax basis capital loss carryforwards of \$2,779,707 of short-term losses, which may be applied against realized net taxable capital gains indefinitely.

The Fund has reviewed the tax positions for the open tax years as of December 31, 2023 and has determined that no provision for income tax and/or uncertain tax positions is required in the Fund's financial statements. The Fund's federal tax returns for the prior three fiscal years remain open subject to examination by the Internal Revenue Service.

Distribution of Income and Gains. Distributions from net investment income of the Fund, if any, are declared and distributed to shareholders annually. Net realized gains from investment transactions, in excess of available capital loss carryforwards, would be taxable to the Fund if not distributed, and, therefore, will be distributed to shareholders at least annually. The Fund may also make additional distributions for tax purposes if necessary.

The timing and characterization of certain income and capital gain distributions are determined annually in accordance with federal tax regulations which may differ from accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. These differences primarily relate to certain securities sold at a loss. As a result, net investment income (loss) and net realized gain (loss) on investment transactions for a reporting period

may differ significantly from distributions during such period. Accordingly, the Fund may periodically make reclassifications among certain of its capital accounts without impacting the net asset value of the Fund. At December 31, 2023, the Fund's components of distributable earnings (accumulated losses) on a net tax basis were as follows:

Undistributed ordinary income*	\$ 2,051,213
Capital loss carryforwards	\$ (2,779,707)
Net unrealized appreciation (depreciation) on investments	\$ 19,725,354

At December 31, 2023, the aggregate cost of investments for federal income tax purposes was \$113,758,460. The net unrealized appreciation for all investments based on tax cost was \$19,725,354. This consisted of aggregate gross unrealized appreciation for all investments for which there was an excess of value over tax cost of \$20,679,496 and aggregate gross unrealized depreciation for all investments for which there was an excess of tax cost over value of \$954,142.

In addition, the tax character of distributions paid to shareholders by the Fund is summarized as follows:

	Years Ended December 31,	
	2023	2022
Distributions from ordinary income*	\$ 2,119,824	\$ 2,878,028
Distributions from long-term capital gains	\$ —	\$ 1,418,022

* For tax purposes, short-term capital gain distributions are considered ordinary income distributions.

Expenses. Expenses of the Trust arising in connection with a specific fund are allocated to that fund. Other Trust expenses which cannot be directly attributed to a fund are apportioned among the funds in the Trust based upon the relative net assets or other appropriate measures.

Contingencies. In the normal course of business, the Fund may enter into contracts with service providers that contain general indemnification clauses. The Fund's maximum exposure under these arrangements is unknown, as this would involve future claims that may be made against the Fund that have not yet been made. However, based on experience, the Fund expects the risk of loss to be remote.

Other. Investment transactions are accounted for on a trade date plus one basis for daily net asset value calculations. However, for financial reporting purposes, investment transactions are reported on trade date. Interest income is recorded on the accrual basis. Dividend income is recorded on the ex-dividend date net of foreign withholding taxes. Realized gains and losses from investment transactions are recorded on an identified cost basis. Proceeds from litigation payments, if any, are included in net realized gain (loss) from investments.

B. Purchases and Sales of Securities

During the year ended December 31, 2023, purchases and sales of investment securities (excluding short-term investments) aggregated \$74,210,112 and \$81,018,998, respectively.

C. Related Parties

Management Agreement. Under the Investment Management Agreement with DWS Investment Management Americas, Inc. ("DIMA" or the "Advisor"), an indirect, wholly owned subsidiary of DWS Group GmbH & Co. KGaA ("DWS Group"), the Advisor directs the investments of the Fund in accordance with its investment objectives, policies and restrictions. The Advisor determines the securities, instruments and other contracts relating to investments to be purchased, sold or entered into by the Fund.

Under the Investment Management Agreement with the Advisor, the Fund pays a monthly management fee based on the average daily net assets of the Fund, computed and accrued daily and payable monthly, at the following annual rates:

First \$250 million of the Fund's average daily net assets	.600%
Next \$750 million of such net assets	.575%
Next \$1.5 billion of such net assets	.550%
Next \$2.5 billion of such net assets	.525%
Next \$2.5 billion of such net assets	.500%
Next \$2.5 billion of such net assets	.475%
Next \$2.5 billion of such net assets	.450%
Over \$12.5 billion of such net assets	.425%

Accordingly, for the year ended December 31, 2023, the fee pursuant to the Investment Management Agreement was equivalent to an annual rate (exclusive of any applicable waivers/reimbursements) of 0.60% of the Fund's average daily net assets.

For the period from January 1, 2023 through April 30, 2023, the Advisor had contractually agreed to waive its fees and/or reimburse certain operating expenses of the Fund to the extent necessary to maintain the total annual operating expenses (excluding certain expenses such as extraordinary expenses, taxes, brokerage, interest expense and acquired fund fees and expenses) of each class as follows:

Class A	.65%
Class B	.97%

For the period from May 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023, the Advisor had contractually agreed to waive its fees and/or reimburse certain operating expenses of the Fund to the extent necessary to maintain the total annual operating expenses (excluding certain expenses such as extraordinary expenses, taxes, brokerage, interest expense and acquired fund fees and expenses) of each class as follows:

Class A	.71%
Class B	1.02%

Effective October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024, the Advisor has contractually agreed to waive its fees and/or reimburse certain operating expenses of the Fund to the extent necessary to maintain the total annual operating expenses (excluding certain expenses such as extraordinary expenses, taxes, brokerage, interest expense and acquired fund fees and expenses) of each class as follows:

Class A	.68%
Class B	1.00%

For the year ended December 31, 2023, fees waived and/or expenses reimbursed for each class are as follows:

Class A	\$ 127,230
Class B	3,067
	\$ 130,297

Administration Fee. Pursuant to an Administrative Services Agreement, DIMA provides most administrative services to the Fund. For all services provided under the Administrative Services Agreement, the Fund pays the Advisor an annual fee ("Administration Fee") of 0.097% of the Fund's average daily net assets, computed and accrued daily and payable monthly. For the year ended December 31, 2023, the Administration Fee was \$121,238, of which \$10,762 is unpaid.

Service Provider Fees. DWS Service Company ("DSC"), an affiliate of the Advisor, is the transfer agent, dividend-paying agent and shareholder service agent for the Fund. Pursuant to a sub-transfer agency agreement between DSC and SS&C GIDS, Inc. ("SS&C"), DSC has delegated certain transfer agent, dividend-paying agent and shareholder service agent functions to SS&C. DSC compensates SS&C out of the

shareholder servicing fee it receives from the Fund. For the year ended December 31, 2023, the amounts charged to the Fund by DSC were as follows:

Services to Shareholders	Total Aggregated	Unpaid at December 31, 2023
Class A	\$ 510	\$ 85
Class B	318	55
	\$ 828	\$ 140

Distribution Service Agreement. Under the Fund’s Class B 12b-1 plan, DWS Distributors, Inc. (“DDI”) received a fee (“Distribution Service Fee”) of up to 0.25% of average daily net assets of Class B shares. For the year ended December 31, 2023, the Distribution Service Fee aggregated \$6,517, of which \$565 is unpaid.

Other Service Fees. Under an agreement with the Fund, DIMA is compensated for providing regulatory filing services to the Fund. For the year ended December 31, 2023, the amount charged to the Fund by DIMA included in the Statement of Operations under “Reports to shareholders” aggregated \$1,145, of which \$623 is unpaid.

Trustees’ Fees and Expenses. The Fund paid retainer fees to each Trustee not affiliated with the Advisor, plus specified amounts to the Board Chairperson and to each committee Chairperson.

Affiliated Cash Management Vehicles. The Fund may invest uninvested cash balances in DWS Central Cash Management Government Fund and DWS ESG Liquidity Fund, affiliated money market funds which are managed by the Advisor. Each affiliated money market fund is managed in accordance with Rule 2a-7 under the 1940 Act, which governs the quality, maturity, diversity and liquidity of instruments in which a money market fund may invest. DWS Central Cash Management Government Fund seeks to maintain a stable net asset value, and DWS ESG Liquidity Fund maintains a floating net asset value. The Fund indirectly bears its proportionate share of the expenses of each affiliated money market fund in which it invests. DWS Central Cash Management Government Fund does not pay the Advisor an investment management fee. To the extent that DWS ESG Liquidity Fund pays an investment management fee to the Advisor, the Advisor will waive an amount of the investment management fee payable to the Advisor by the Fund equal to the amount of the investment management fee payable on the Fund’s assets invested in DWS ESG Liquidity Fund.

Securities Lending Agent Fees. Deutsche Bank AG serves as securities lending agent for the Fund. For the year ended December 31, 2023, the Fund incurred securities lending agent fees to Deutsche Bank AG in the amount of \$158.

D. Ownership of the Fund

At December 31, 2023, one participating insurance company was owner of record of 10% or more of the total outstanding Class A shares of the Fund, owning 94%. Two participating insurance companies were owners of record of 10% or more of the total outstanding Class B shares of the Fund, each owning 56% and 14%, respectively.

E. Line of Credit

The Fund and other affiliated funds (the “Participants”) share in a \$375 million revolving credit facility provided by a syndication of banks. The Fund may borrow for temporary or emergency purposes, including the meeting of redemption requests that otherwise might require the untimely disposition of securities. The Participants are charged an annual commitment fee, which is allocated based on net assets, among each of the Participants. Interest is calculated at a daily fluctuating rate per annum equal to the sum of 0.10% plus the higher of the Federal Funds Effective Rate and the Overnight Bank Funding Rate, plus 1.25%. The Fund may borrow up to a maximum of 33 percent of its net assets under the agreement. The Fund had no outstanding loans at December 31, 2023.

Report of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm

To the Board of Trustees of Deutsche DWS Variable Series II and Shareholders of DWS CROCI® U.S. VIP:

Opinion on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying statement of assets and liabilities of DWS CROCI® U.S. VIP (the “Fund”) (one of the funds constituting Deutsche DWS Variable Series II) (the “Trust”), including the investment portfolio, as of December 31, 2023, and the related statement of operations for the year then ended, the statements of changes in net assets for each of the two years in the period then ended, the financial highlights for each of the five years in the period then ended and the related notes (collectively referred to as the “financial statements”). In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Fund (one of the funds constituting Deutsche DWS Variable Series II) at December 31, 2023, the results of its operations for the year then ended, the changes in its net assets for each of the two years in the period then ended and its financial highlights for each of the five years in the period then ended, in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles.

Basis for Opinion

These financial statements are the responsibility of the Trust’s management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the Fund’s financial statements based on our audits. We are a public accounting firm registered with the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (United States) (“PCAOB”) and are required to be independent with respect to the Trust in accordance with the U.S. federal securities laws and the applicable rules and regulations of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the PCAOB.

We conducted our audits in accordance with the standards of the PCAOB. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement, whether due to error or fraud. The Trust is not required to have, nor were we engaged to perform, an audit of the Trust’s internal control over financial reporting. As part of our audits, we are required to obtain an understanding of internal control over financial reporting, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Trust’s internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we express no such opinion.

Our audits included performing procedures to assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to error or fraud, and performing procedures that respond to those risks. Such procedures included examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. Our procedures included confirmation of securities owned as of December 31, 2023, by correspondence with the custodian, brokers, and others; when replies were not received from brokers and others, we performed other auditing procedures. Our audits also included evaluating the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

Ernst + Young LLP

We have served as the auditor of one or more investment companies in the DWS family of funds since at least 1979, but we are unable to determine the specific year.

Boston, Massachusetts
February 13, 2024

Other Information

(Unaudited)

Regulatory Update — Tailored Shareholder Report

Effective January 24, 2023, the SEC amended the rules for mutual fund and exchange-traded fund (“ETF”) annual and semi-annual shareholder reports. The amended rules apply to mutual funds and ETFs that are registered on Form N-1A (i.e., open-end funds) and implement a new streamlined disclosure framework requiring “concise and visually engaging” shareholder reports highlighting key information, including a simplified expense presentation, performance information, portfolio holdings and certain fund statistics. The amended rules seek to simplify shareholder reporting by consolidating investor friendly data in one report and moving other data to Form N-CSR, creating a layered disclosure framework. Certain information from the Fund’s current shareholder reports, including the Fund’s investment portfolio, financial statements and financial highlights, will move to Form N-CSR. This information must be available online, delivered free of charge upon request and filed on a semiannual basis on Form N-CSR. Notably, the amended rules will require mutual funds and ETFs to prepare separate individual shareholder reports for each fund share class. The amendments also include a revised definition of “appropriate broad-based securities market index” that will affect performance presentations in the new streamlined reports and mutual fund and ETF prospectuses. The amended rules and related form amendments have a compliance date of July 24, 2024. At this time, management is evaluating the impact of the amended rules and form amendments on the content of the Fund’s current shareholder reports.

Information About Your Fund's Expenses

(Unaudited)

As an investor of the Fund, you incur two types of costs: ongoing expenses and transaction costs. Ongoing expenses include management fees, distribution and service (12b-1) fees and other Fund expenses. Examples of transaction costs include contract charges, which are not shown in this section. The following tables are intended to help you understand your ongoing expenses (in dollars) of investing in the Fund and to help you compare these expenses with the ongoing expenses of investing in other mutual funds. In the most recent six-month period, the Fund limited these expenses; had it not done so, expenses would have been higher. The example in the table is based on an investment of \$1,000 invested at the beginning of the six-month period and held for the entire period (July 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023).

The tables illustrate your Fund's expenses in two ways:

- **Actual Fund Return.** This helps you estimate the actual dollar amount of ongoing expenses (but not transaction costs) paid on a \$1,000 investment in the Fund using the Fund's actual return during the period. To estimate the expenses you paid over the period, simply divide your account value by \$1,000 (for example, an \$8,600 account value divided by \$1,000 = 8.6), then multiply the result by the number in the "Expenses Paid per \$1,000" line under the share class you hold.
- **Hypothetical 5% Fund Return.** This helps you to compare your Fund's ongoing expenses (but not transaction costs) with those of other mutual funds using the Fund's actual expense ratio and a hypothetical rate of return of 5% per year before expenses. Examples using a 5% hypothetical fund return may be found in the shareholder reports of other mutual funds. The hypothetical account values and expenses may not be used to estimate the actual ending account balance or expenses you paid for the period.

Please note that the expenses shown in these tables are meant to highlight your ongoing expenses only and do not reflect any transaction costs. The "Expenses Paid per \$1,000" line of the tables is useful in comparing ongoing expenses only and will not help you determine the relative total expense of owning different funds. If these transaction costs had been included, your costs would have been higher.

Expenses and Value of a \$1,000 Investment for the six months ended December 31, 2023

Actual Fund Return	Class A	Class B
Beginning Account Value 7/1/23	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Ending Account Value 12/31/23	\$ 1,081.10	\$ 1,079.30
Expenses Paid per \$1,000*	\$ 3.67	\$ 5.29

Hypothetical 5% Fund Return	Class A	Class B
Beginning Account Value 7/1/23	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Ending Account Value 12/31/23	\$ 1,021.68	\$ 1,020.11
Expenses Paid per \$1,000*	\$ 3.57	\$ 5.14

* Expenses are equal to the Fund's annualized expense ratio for each share class, multiplied by the average account value over the period, multiplied by 184 (the number of days in the most recent six-month period), then divided by 365.

Annualized Expense Ratios	Class A	Class B
Deutsche DWS Variable Series II — DWS CROCI® U.S. VIP	.70%	1.01%

For more information, please refer to the Fund's prospectus.

These tables do not reflect charges and fees ("contract charges") associated with the separate account that invests in the Fund or any variable life insurance policy or variable annuity contract for which the Fund is an investment option.

For an analysis of the fees associated with an investment in the Fund or similar funds, please refer to the current and hypothetical expense calculators for Variable Insurance Products which can be found at dws.com/calculators.

Tax Information

(Unaudited)

For corporate shareholders, 100% of the ordinary dividends (i.e., income dividends plus short-term capital gains) paid during the Fund's fiscal year ended December 31, 2023, qualified for the dividends received deduction.

Please consult a tax advisor if you have questions about federal or state income tax laws, or on how to prepare your tax returns. If you have specific questions about your account, please contact your insurance provider.

Proxy Voting

The Trust's policies and procedures for voting proxies for portfolio securities and information about how the Trust voted proxies related to its portfolio securities during the most recent 12-month period ended June 30 are available on our Web site — dws.com/en-us/resources/proxy-voting — or on the SEC's Web site — sec.gov. To obtain a written copy of the Trust's policies and procedures without charge, upon request, call us toll free at (800) 728-3337.

Advisory Agreement Board Considerations and Fee Evaluation

The Board of Trustees (hereinafter referred to as the “Board” or “Trustees”) approved the renewal of DWS CROCI® U.S. VIP’s (the “Fund”) investment management agreement (the “Agreement”) with DWS Investment Management Americas, Inc. (“DIMA”) in September 2023.

In terms of the process that the Board followed prior to approving the Agreement, shareholders should know that:

- During the entire process, all of the Fund’s Trustees were independent of DIMA and its affiliates (the “Independent Trustees”).
- The Board met frequently during the past year to discuss fund matters and dedicated a substantial amount of time to contract review matters. Over the course of several months, the Board reviewed extensive materials received from DIMA, independent third parties and independent counsel. These materials included an analysis of the Fund’s performance, fees and expenses, profitability, economies of scale, and fall-out benefits from a fee consultant retained by the Fund’s Independent Trustees (the “Fee Consultant”).
- The Board also received extensive information throughout the year regarding performance of the Fund.
- The Independent Trustees regularly met privately with counsel to discuss contract review and other matters. In addition, the Independent Trustees were advised by the Fee Consultant as part of their review of the Fund’s contractual arrangements and considered a comprehensive report prepared by the Fee Consultant in connection with their deliberations.
- In connection with reviewing the Agreement, the Board also reviewed the terms of the Fund’s Rule 12b-1 plan, distribution agreement, administrative services agreement, transfer agency agreement and other material service agreements.

In connection with the contract review process, the Board considered the factors discussed below, among others. The Board also considered that DIMA and its predecessors have managed the Fund since its inception, and the Board believes that a long-term relationship with a capable, conscientious advisor is in the best interests of the Fund. The Board considered, generally, that shareholders chose to invest or remain invested in the Fund knowing that DIMA managed the Fund. DIMA is part of DWS Group GmbH & Co. KGaA (“DWS Group”). DWS Group is a global asset management business that offers a wide range of investing expertise and resources, including research capabilities in many countries throughout the world. DWS Group is majority-owned by Deutsche Bank AG, with approximately 20% of its shares publicly traded.

As part of the contract review process, the Board carefully considered the fees and expenses of each DWS fund overseen by the Board in light of the fund’s performance. In many cases, this led to the negotiation and implementation of expense caps.

While shareholders may focus primarily on fund performance and fees, the Fund’s Board considers these and many other factors, including the quality and integrity of DIMA’s personnel and administrative support services provided by DIMA, such as back-office operations, fund valuations, and compliance policies and procedures.

Nature, Quality and Extent of Services. The Board considered the terms of the Agreement, including the scope of advisory services provided under the Agreement. The Board noted that, under the Agreement, DIMA provides portfolio management services to the Fund and that, pursuant to a separate administrative services agreement, DIMA provides administrative services to the Fund. The Board considered the experience and skills of senior management and investment personnel and the resources made available to such personnel. The Board also considered the risks to DIMA in sponsoring or managing the Fund, including financial, operational and reputational risks, the potential economic impact to DIMA from such risks and DIMA’s approach to addressing such risks. The Board reviewed the Fund’s performance over short-term and long-term periods and compared those returns to various agreed-upon performance measures, including market index(es) and a peer universe compiled using information supplied by Morningstar Direct (“Morningstar”), an independent fund data service. The Board also noted that it has put into place a process of identifying “Funds in Review” (e.g., funds performing poorly relative to a peer universe), and receives additional reporting from DIMA regarding such funds and, where appropriate, DIMA’s plans to address underperformance. The Board believes this process is an effective manner of identifying and addressing underperforming funds. Based on the information provided, the Board noted that, for the one-, three- and five-year periods ended December 31, 2022, the Fund’s performance (Class A shares) was in the 4th quartile of the applicable Morningstar universe (the 1st quartile being the best performers and the 4th quartile being the worst performers). The Board also observed that the Fund has underperformed its benchmark in the

one-, three- and five-year periods ended December 31, 2022. The Board noted the disappointing investment performance of the Fund in recent periods and continued to discuss with senior management of DIMA the factors contributing to such underperformance and actions being taken to improve performance. The Board observed that the Fund had experienced improved relative performance during the first eight months of 2023. The Board recognized the efforts by DIMA in recent years to enhance its investment platform and improve long-term performance across the DWS fund complex.

Fees and Expenses. The Board considered the Fund's investment management fee schedule, operating expenses and total expense ratios, and comparative information provided by Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc. ("Broadridge") and the Fee Consultant regarding investment management fee rates paid to other investment advisors by similar funds (1st quartile being the most favorable and 4th quartile being the least favorable). With respect to management fees paid to other investment advisors by similar funds, the Board noted that the contractual fee rates paid by the Fund, which include a 0.097% fee paid to DIMA under the Fund's administrative services agreement, were equal to the median (2nd quartile) of the applicable Broadridge peer group (based on Broadridge data provided as of December 31, 2022). The Board noted that the Fund's Class A shares total (net) operating expenses were expected to be lower than the median (2nd quartile) of the applicable Broadridge expense universe (based on Broadridge data provided as of December 31, 2022, and analyzing Broadridge expense universe Class A (net) expenses less any applicable 12b-1 fees) ("Broadridge Universe Expenses"). The Board also reviewed data comparing each other operational share class's total (net) operating expenses to the applicable Broadridge Universe Expenses. The Board noted that the expense limitations agreed to by DIMA were expected to help the Fund's total (net) operating expenses remain competitive. The Board considered the Fund's management fee rate as compared to fees charged by DIMA to comparable DWS U.S. registered funds ("DWS Funds") and considered differences between the Fund and the comparable DWS Funds. The information requested by the Board as part of its review of fees and expenses also included information about institutional accounts (including any sub-advised funds and accounts) and funds offered primarily to European investors ("DWS Europe Funds") managed by DWS Group. The Board noted that DIMA indicated that DWS Group does not manage any institutional accounts or DWS Europe Funds comparable to the Fund.

On the basis of the information provided, the Board concluded that management fees were reasonable and appropriate in light of the nature, quality and extent of services provided by DIMA.

Profitability. The Board reviewed detailed information regarding revenues received by DIMA under the Agreement. The Board considered the estimated costs to DIMA, and pre-tax profits realized by DIMA, from advising the DWS Funds, as well as estimates of the pre-tax profits attributable to managing the Fund in particular. The Board also received information regarding the estimated enterprise-wide profitability of DIMA and its affiliates with respect to all fund services in totality and by fund. The Board and the Fee Consultant reviewed DIMA's methodology in allocating its costs to the management of the Fund. Based on the information provided, the Board concluded that the pre-tax profits realized by DIMA in connection with the management of the Fund were not unreasonable. The Board also reviewed certain publicly available information regarding the profitability of certain similar investment management firms. The Board noted that, while information regarding the profitability of such firms is limited (and in some cases is not necessarily prepared on a comparable basis), DIMA and its affiliates' overall profitability with respect to the DWS Funds (after taking into account distribution and other services provided to the funds by DIMA and its affiliates) was lower than the overall profitability levels of most comparable firms for which such data was available.

Economies of Scale. The Board considered whether there are economies of scale with respect to the management of the Fund and whether the Fund benefits from any economies of scale. The Board noted that the Fund's investment management fee schedule includes fee breakpoints. The Board concluded that the Fund's fee schedule represents an appropriate sharing between the Fund and DIMA of such economies of scale as may exist in the management of the Fund at current asset levels.

Other Benefits to DIMA and Its Affiliates. The Board also considered the character and amount of other incidental or "fall-out" benefits received by DIMA and its affiliates, including any fees received by DIMA for administrative services provided to the Fund, any fees received by an affiliate of DIMA for transfer agency services provided to the Fund and any fees received by an affiliate of DIMA for distribution services. The Board noted that DIMA pays a licensing fee to an affiliate related to the Fund's use of the CROCI® strategy. The Board also considered benefits to DIMA related to brokerage and soft-dollar allocations, including allocating brokerage to pay for research generated by parties other than the executing broker dealers, which pertain primarily to funds investing in equity securities. In addition, the Board considered the incidental public relations benefits to DIMA related to DWS Funds advertising and cross-selling opportunities among DIMA

products and services. The Board considered these benefits in reaching its conclusion that the Fund's management fees were reasonable.

Compliance. The Board considered the significant attention and resources dedicated by DIMA to its compliance processes in recent years. The Board noted in particular (i) the experience, seniority and time commitment of the individuals serving as DIMAs and the Fund's chief compliance officers; (ii) the substantial commitment of resources by DIMA and its affiliates to compliance matters, including the retention of compliance personnel; and (iii) ongoing efforts to enhance the compliance program.

Based on all of the information considered and the conclusions reached, the Board determined that the continuation of the Agreement is in the best interests of the Fund. In making this determination, the Board did not give particular weight to any single factor identified above. The Board considered these factors over the course of numerous meetings, certain of which were in executive session with only the Independent Trustees and counsel present. It is possible that individual Independent Trustees may have weighed these factors differently in reaching their individual decisions to approve the continuation of the Agreement.

Board Members and Officers

The following table presents certain information regarding the Board Members and Officers of the Trust/Corporation. Each Board Member's year of birth is set forth in parentheses after his or her name. Unless otherwise noted, (i) each Board Member has engaged in the principal occupation(s) noted in the table for at least the most recent five years, although not necessarily in the same capacity; and (ii) the address of each Independent Board Member is c/o Keith R. Fox, DWS Funds Board Chair, c/o Thomas R. Hiller, Ropes & Gray LLP, Prudential Tower, 800 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02199-3600. Except as otherwise noted below, the term of office for each Board Member is until the election and qualification of a successor, or until such Board Member sooner dies, resigns, is removed or as otherwise provided in the governing documents of the Trust/Corporation. Because the Fund does not hold an annual meeting of shareholders, each Board Member will hold office for an indeterminate period.

The Board Members may also serve in similar capacities with other funds in the fund complex. The number of funds in the DWS fund complex shown in the table below includes all registered open- and closed-end funds (including all of their portfolios) advised by the Advisor and any registered funds that have an investment advisor that is an affiliated person of the Advisor.

Independent Board Members/Independent Advisory Board Members

Name, Year of Birth, Position with the Trust/Corporation and Length of Time Served ¹	Business Experience and Directorships During the Past Five Years	Number of Funds in DWS Fund Complex Overseen	Other Directorships Held by Board Member
Keith R. Fox, CFA (1954) Chairperson since 2017, and Board Member since 1996	Managing General Partner, Exeter Capital Partners (a series of private investment funds) (since 1986); Former Chairman, National Association of Small Business Investment Companies; Former Directorships: ICI Mutual Insurance Company; BoxTop Media Inc. (advertising); Sun Capital Advisers Trust (mutual funds); Progressive International Corporation (kitchen goods designer and distributor)	68	—
John W. Ballantine (1946) Board Member since 1999	Retired; formerly: Executive Vice President and Chief Risk Management Officer, First Chicago NBD Corporation/The First National Bank of Chicago (1996–1998); Executive Vice President and Head of International Banking (1995–1996); Not-for-Profit Directorships: Window to the World Communications (public media); Life Director of Harris Theater for Music and Dance (Chicago); Life Director of Hubbard Street Dance Chicago; Former Directorships: Director and Chairman of the Board, Healthways Inc. ² (population well-being and wellness services) (2003–2014); Stockwell Capital Investments PLC (private equity); Enron Corporation; FNB Corporation; Tokheim Corporation; First Oak Brook Bancshares, Inc.; Oak Brook Bank; Portland General Electric ² (utility company) (2003–2021); and Prisma Energy International; Former Not-for-Profit Directorships: Public Radio International; Palm Beach Civic Assn.	68	—
Mary Schmid Daugherty, NACD.DC, PHD, CFA (1958) Board Member or Advisory Board Member since 2023 ³	Senior Fellow in Applied Finance, Department of Finance, Opus College of Business at the University of St. Thomas (1987–present); Directorships: The Meritex Company (2017–present); Driessen Water, Inc. (2016–present); and The Hardenbergh Foundation (2021–present); Former Directorships: Mairs & Power Funds Trust (mutual funds) (2010–2022); and Crescent Electric Supply Company (2010–2019)	21 ⁴	—
Dawn-Marie Driscoll (1946) Board Member since 1987	Emeritus Advisory Board and former Executive Fellow, Hoffman Center for Business Ethics, Bentley University; formerly: Partner, Palmer & Dodge (law firm) (1988–1990); Vice President of Corporate Affairs and General Counsel, Filene's (retail) (1978–1988); Directorships: Trustee and former Chairman of the Board, Southwest Florida Community Foundation (charitable organization); Former Directorships: ICI Mutual Insurance Company (2007–2015); Sun Capital Advisers Trust (mutual funds) (2007–2012); Investment Company Institute (audit, executive, nominating committees) and Independent Directors Council (governance, executive committees)	68	—

Name, Year of Birth, Position with the Trust/Corporation and Length of Time Served¹	Business Experience and Directorships During the Past Five Years	Number of Funds in DWS Fund Complex Overseen	Other Directorships Held by Board Member
Richard J. Herring (1946) Board Member since 1990	Jacob Safra Professor of International Banking and Professor of Finance, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania (1972–present); formerly: Director, The Wharton Financial Institutions Center (1994–2020); Vice Dean and Director, Wharton Undergraduate Division (1995–2000) and Director, The Lauder Institute of International Management Studies (2000–2006); Member FDIC Systemic Risk Advisory Committee (2011–present), member Systemic Risk Council (2012–present) and member of the Advisory Board of the Yale Program on Financial Stability (2013–present); Former Directorships: Co-Chair of the Shadow Financial Regulatory Committee (2003–2015), Executive Director of The Financial Economists Roundtable (2008–2015), Director of The Thai Capital Fund (2007–2013), Director of The Aberdeen Singapore Fund (2007–2018), Director, The Aberdeen Japan Fund (2007–2021) and Nonexecutive Director of Barclays Bank DE (2010–2018)	68	—
Chad D. Perry (1972) Board Member or Advisory Board Member since 2021 ³	Executive Vice President and General Counsel, RLJ Lodging Trust ² (since 2023); formerly Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary, Tanger Factory Outlet Centers, Inc. ² (2011–2023); Executive Vice President and Deputy General Counsel, LPL Financial Holdings Inc. ² (2006–2011); Senior Corporate Counsel, EMC Corporation (2005–2006); Associate, Ropes & Gray LLP (1997–2005)	21 ⁴	Director, Great Elm Capital Corp. (business development company) (since 2022)
Rebecca W. Rimel (1951) Board Member since 1995	Directorships: Washington College (since July 2023); Formerly: Executive Vice President, The Glenmede Trust Company (investment trust and wealth management) (1983–2004); Board Member, Investor Education (charitable organization) (2004–2005); Former Directorships: Trustee, Executive Committee, Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce (2001–2007); Director, Viasys Health Care ² (January 2007–June 2007); Trustee, Thomas Jefferson Foundation (charitable organization) (1994–2012); President, Chief Executive Officer and Director (1994–2020) and Senior Advisor (2020–2021), The Pew Charitable Trusts (charitable organization); Director, BioTelemetry Inc. ² (acquired by Royal Philips in 2021) (healthcare) (2009–2021); Director, Becton Dickinson and Company ² (medical technology company) (2012–2022)	68	Director, The Bridgespan Group (nonprofit organization) (since October 2020)
Catherine Schrand (1964) Board Member since 2021	Celia Z. Moh Professor of Accounting (2016–present) and Professor of Accounting (1994–present); Directorships: Advisory Board Member, the Jacobs Levy Center, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania (since 2023); Former positions: Vice Dean, Wharton Doctoral Programs, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania (2016–2019)	68	—
William N. Searcy, Jr. (1946) Board Member since 1993	Private investor since October 2003; formerly: Pension & Savings Trust Officer, Sprint Corporation ² (telecommunications) (November 1989–September 2003); Former Directorships: Trustee, Sun Capital Advisers Trust (mutual funds) (1998–2012)	68	—

Officers⁵

Name, Year of Birth, Position with the Trust/Corporation and Length of Time Served⁶	Business Experience and Directorships During the Past Five Years
Hepsen Uzman ⁷ (1974) President and Chief Executive Officer, 2017–present	Head of Americas CEO Office, DWS (2023–present), Head of Fund Administration, Head of Product Americas and Head of U.S. Mutual Funds, DWS (2017–present); Vice President, DWS Service Company (2018–present); President, DB Investment Managers, Inc. (2018–present); President and Chief Executive Officer, The European Equity Fund, Inc., The New Germany Fund, Inc. and The Central and Eastern Europe Fund, Inc. (2017–present); Vice President, DWS Investment Management Americas, Inc. (2023–present); formerly: Vice President for the Deutsche funds (2016–2017); Assistant Secretary for the DWS funds (2013–2019); Secretary, DWS USA Corporation (2018–2023); Assistant Secretary, DWS Investment Management Americas, Inc. (2018–2023); Assistant Secretary, DWS Trust Company (2018–2023); Assistant Secretary, The European Equity Fund, Inc., The New Germany Fund, Inc. and The Central and Eastern Europe Fund, Inc. (2013–2020); Assistant Secretary, DWS Distributors, Inc. (2018–2023); Directorships: Director of DWS Service Company (2018–present); Director of DB Investment Managers, Inc. (2018–present); Director of Episcopalians Charities of New York (2018–present); Interested Director of The European Equity Fund, Inc., The New Germany Fund, Inc. and The Central and Eastern Europe Fund, Inc. (2020–present); Director of ICI Mutual Insurance Company (2020–present); Director of DWS USA Corporation (2023–present); Director of DWS Investment Management Americas, Inc. (2023–present); and Manager of DBX Advisors LLC. (2023–present)
John Millette ⁸ (1962) Vice President and Secretary, 1999–present	Legal (Associate General Counsel), DWS; Chief Legal Officer, DWS Investment Management Americas, Inc. (2015–present); Director and Vice President, DWS Trust Company (2016–present); Secretary, DBX ETF Trust (2020–present); Vice President, DBX Advisors LLC (2021–present); Secretary, The European Equity Fund, Inc., The New Germany Fund, Inc. and The Central and Eastern Europe Fund, Inc. (2011–present); formerly: Secretary, Deutsche Investment Management Americas Inc. (2015–2017); and Assistant Secretary, DBX ETF Trust (2019–2020)

Name, Year of Birth, Position with the Trust/Corporation and Length of Time Served⁶	Business Experience and Directorships During the Past Five Years
Ciara Crawford ⁹ (1984) Assistant Secretary, 2019–present	Fund Administration (Specialist), DWS (2015–present); Assistant Secretary, DWS Service Company (2018–present); Assistant Secretary of U.S. Mutual Funds, DWS (2019–present); Assistant Secretary, DWS USA Corporation (2023–present); Assistant Secretary, DBX Advisors, LLC (2023–present); Assistant Secretary, DWS Investment Management Americas, Inc. (2023–present); Assistant Clerk, DWS Trust Company (2023–present); formerly, Legal Assistant at Accelerated Tax Solutions
Diane Kenneally ⁸ (1966) Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, 2018–present	Fund Administration Treasurer’s Office (Co-Head since 2018), DWS; Treasurer, Chief Financial Officer and Controller, DBX ETF Trust (2019–present); Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer, The European Equity Fund, Inc., The New Germany Fund, Inc. and The Central and Eastern Europe Fund, Inc. (2018–present); formerly: Assistant Treasurer for the DWS funds (2007–2018)
Yvonne Wong ⁸ (1960) Assistant Treasurer, since December 1, 2023	Fund Administration (Senior Analyst), DWS; Assistant Treasurer, DBX ETF Trust (since November 14, 2023)
Sheila Cadogan ⁸ (1966) Assistant Treasurer, 2017–present	Fund Administration Treasurer’s Office (Co-Head since 2018), DWS; Director and Vice President, DWS Trust Company (2018–present); Assistant Treasurer, DBX ETF Trust (2019–present); Assistant Treasurer, The European Equity Fund, Inc., The New Germany Fund, Inc. and The Central and Eastern Europe Fund, Inc. (2018–present)
Scott D. Hogan ⁸ (1970) Chief Compliance Officer, 2016–present	Anti-Financial Crime & Compliance US (Senior Team Lead), DWS; Chief Compliance Officer, The European Equity Fund, Inc., The New Germany Fund, Inc. and The Central and Eastern Europe Fund, Inc. (2016–present)
Caroline Pearson ⁸ (1962) Chief Legal Officer, 2010–present	Legal (Senior Team Lead), DWS; Assistant Secretary, DBX ETF Trust (2020–present); Chief Legal Officer, DBX Advisors LLC (2020–present); Chief Legal Officer, The European Equity Fund, Inc., The New Germany Fund, Inc. and The Central and Eastern Europe Fund, Inc. (2012–present); formerly: Secretary, Deutsche AM Distributors, Inc. (2002–2017); Secretary, Deutsche AM Service Company (2010–2017); and Chief Legal Officer, DBX Strategic Advisors LLC (2020–2021)
Christian Rijs ⁷ (1980) Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Officer, 2021–present	Senior Team Lead Anti-Financial Crime and Compliance, DWS; AML Officer, DWS Trust Company (2021–present); AML Officer, DBX ETF Trust (2021–present); AML Officer, The European Equity Fund, Inc., The New Germany Fund, Inc. and The Central and Eastern Europe Fund, Inc. (2021–present); formerly: DWS UK & Ireland Head of Anti-Financial Crime and MLRO

¹ The length of time served represents the year in which the Board Member joined the board of one or more DWS funds currently overseen by the Board.

² A publicly held company with securities registered pursuant to Section 12 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

³ Mr. Perry and Ms. Daugherty are each an Advisory Board Member of Deutsche DWS Asset Allocation Trust, Deutsche DWS Equity 500 Index Portfolio, Deutsche DWS Global/International Fund, Inc., Deutsche DWS Income Trust, Deutsche DWS Institutional Funds, Deutsche DWS International Fund, Inc., Deutsche DWS Investment Trust, Deutsche DWS Investments VIT Funds, Deutsche DWS Money Market Trust, Deutsche DWS Municipal Trust, Deutsche DWS Portfolio Trust, Deutsche DWS Securities Trust, Deutsche DWS Tax Free Trust, Deutsche DWS Variable Series I and Government Cash Management Portfolio. Mr. Perry and Ms. Daugherty are each a Board Member of each other Trust.

⁴ Mr. Perry and Ms. Daugherty each oversees 21 funds in the DWS Fund Complex as a Board Member of various Trusts. Mr. Perry and Ms. Daugherty are each an Advisory Board Member of various Trusts/Corporations comprised of 47 funds in the DWS Fund Complex.

⁵ As a result of their respective positions held with the Advisor or its affiliates, these individuals are considered “interested persons” of the Advisor within the meaning of the 1940 Act. Interested persons receive no compensation from the Fund.

⁶ The length of time served represents the year in which the officer was first elected in such capacity for one or more DWS funds.

⁷ Address: 875 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10022.

⁸ Address: 100 Summer Street, Boston, MA 02110.

⁹ Address: 5201 Gate Parkway, Jacksonville, FL 32256.

Certain officers hold similar positions for other investment companies for which DIMA or an affiliate serves as the Advisor.

The Fund’s Statement of Additional Information (“SAI”) includes additional information about the Board Members. The SAI is available, without charge, upon request. If you would like to request a copy of the SAI, you may do so by calling the following toll-free number: (800) 728-3337.

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