STIFEL

FISCAL TRAJECTORY: BORROWED TIME

The U.S. federal debt burden has surpassed $40 trillion, roughly 125% of GDP, reflecting persistent deficits and rising interest costs. Is this trajectory sustainable in the medium-to-long term? As we've said for many years, regardless of which party has held power, the U.S. fiscal trajectory is not sustainable.

Importantly, we are not yet facing an imminent crisis. The U.S. still benefits from robust capital markets, reserve currency status, and steady investor demand. But the window for meaningful course correction is beginning to narrow. Each year of delay compounds the problem, increasing the risk that the eventual economic and market impacts will be abrupt and painful. Now is the time to consider the workable options and more fully assess how the necessary choices made (or ignored) will impact people for decades to come.

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THE STATE OF THE FISCAL UNION

The U.S. has carried public debt since its founding. Debt from the Revolutionary War, borrowed to finance the fight for independence, totaled about $75 million.

After World War II, the debt load declined for decades. From the late 1940s through the 1970s, strong postwar growth, low interest rates, moderate inflation, and restrained budgets steadily reduced the debt-to-GDP ratio from over 100% to roughly 25%.

That trend reversed in the 1980s as tax cuts, higher defense spending, and slower growth produced persistent deficits that were modest by today's standards. The nation entered the new millennium with about $5.7 trillion in debt – roughly 57% of GDP, a workable level, in our view. Since then, outsized government support after the Great Recession and the pandemic has been a primary driver of today's record deficit and debt levels, with other factors, including increased military spending and rising entitlement costs, adding to the upward trend.

When is government debt "sustainable?" In principle, sustainable debt means the economy can continue to grow while the government services its obligations – paying interest and principal – without eroding economic growth, long-term stability, or investor confidence.

While specific levels are always subject to debate, some studies outline sustainable debt and deficit levels as a share of GDP, generally targeting a reduction in U.S. debt to 60%-80% of GDP and a deficit at or below 3% of GDP. To review, the current debt sits at 125% of GDP, and deficits have been averaging 6% of GDP since 2009. We have a long way to go.

FORCES SHAPING THE PATH AHEAD

The path ahead will be influenced by the strength or weakness of economic growth, interest rate levels, inflation, and the will of elected officials from both parties to summon the political courage to cut spending and selectively raise taxes.

Strong growth can ease fiscal strain, while slower expansion magnifies it. Higher interest rates increase debt servicing costs, and inflation – though it can erode debt in real terms – risks undermining credibility. Above all, political cohesion will determine whether reform occurs through leadership or market pressure.

Taken together, these factors will set the course for whether the nation can gradually restore balance or drift toward a more disruptive adjustment. While many outcomes are possible, we've outlined four representative scenarios that illustrate how different combinations of growth, inflation, interest rates, and policy choices could influence the nation's trajectory.

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1

BASELINE DRIFT: *MANAGED IMBALANCE*

In this scenario, the U.S. continues to operate under a state of managed imbalance: persistent large deficits and limited reform, but ongoing market tolerance. Policymakers defer substantive fiscal adjustments, relying instead on steady economic growth, moderate inflation, and continued global demand for Treasuries to finance large deficits. Debt rises gradually, yet markets remain largely undisturbed.

The economy grows near its long-term trend, supported by resilient consumption and private investment. However, higher structural deficits leave the government with less room to respond to future shocks. Any downturn or recession would constrain its ability to issue additional debt without risking a sharper rise in yields or political friction over borrowing limits.

Interest costs continue to climb as rates normalize above pre-pandemic levels, consuming a larger share of the budget and crowding out discretionary spending. Still, the dollar's reserve currency status and the depth of U.S. capital markets sustain investor confidence, postponing the need for immediate consolidation. The result is a slow-burn fiscal trajectory – a gradual erosion of flexibility that leads to a sharper reckoning down the road.

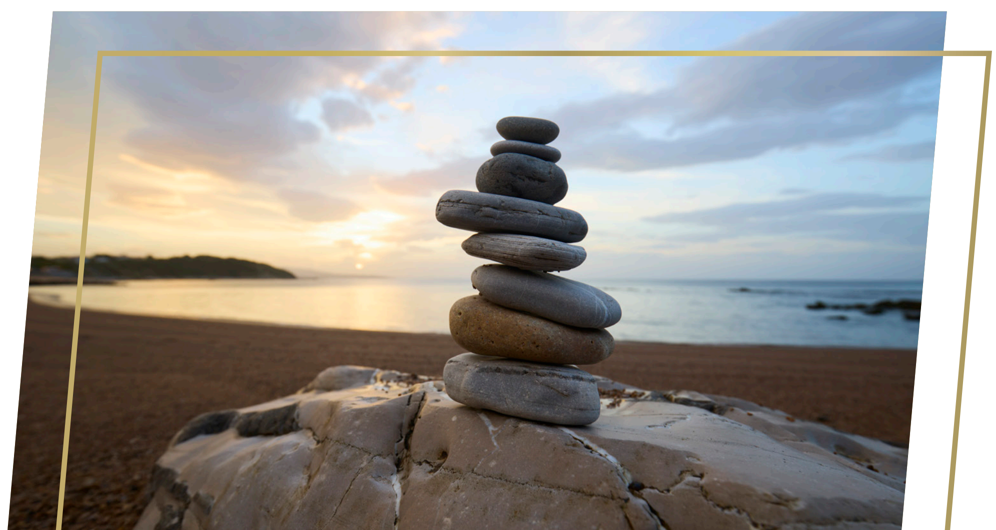
2

DISCIPLINED STABILIZATION: *REFORM BY NECESSITY*

A period of market volatility and rising borrowing costs delivers a wake-up call to Washington. Market pressure and voter concern make inaction untenable, compelling politicians to act. The result is not austerity by choice, but reform by necessity – adjustment undertaken to preserve credibility and restore confidence in U.S. policy.

Under this scenario, politicians implement a mix of targeted spending restraints and moderate tax increases to slow the debt trajectory. Entitlement reforms are incremental but credible, helping to stabilize debt near current levels over the medium term. After a period of increased volatility and fear, fiscal adjustment improves investor confidence as markets calm, rewarding discipline with lower risk premiums and steadier yields.

Economic growth softens initially as stimulus wanes, but private investment and improving productivity help the economy recover to its long-term trend. The political narrative shifts from crisis avoidance to restoring stability – a recognition that gradual repair is preferable to forced correction.



3 CRISIS SPIRAL: *DISCIPLINE THROUGH SHOCK*

In this most severe scenario, fiscal and political pressures converge to trigger a full loss of market confidence. Persistent deficits, rising interest costs, and years of gridlock lead to investors losing faith in U.S. fiscal policy. Treasury issuance outpaces demand, yields spike, and risk premiums surge, forcing an abrupt tightening of financial conditions.

The economy slips into a deep recession – potentially even a depression – as higher borrowing costs, contracting credit, and collapsing confidence feed a downward spiral. Unemployment rises sharply, business investment stalls, and asset prices decline. The fiscal imbalance begins to correct only through painful adjustment. Markets impose the discipline that policymakers could not, driving forced austerity and emergency monetary intervention.

Structural headwinds amplify the downturn. Protectionism and geopolitical tensions constrain trade, while an aging population reduces labor supply and increases the burden on the remaining workforce. Productivity gains from artificial intelligence and automation soften the blow but fall short of offsetting the magnitude of contraction. The U.S.'s role as a global anchor is challenged by rising powers and the dollar's safe-haven status is at serious risk.

4 GROWTH RENAISSANCE: *A PRODUCTIVE ESCAPE*

The most durable and least disruptive path to fiscal stability is one powered by sustained growth and innovation, coupled with fiscal discipline. Years of investment in artificial intelligence, automation, and advanced manufacturing lifts productivity across the economy, setting the stage for lasting improvements in potential growth. As these technologies are deployed further, firms produce more with less effort, expanding capacity and raising efficiency.

A small productivity gain – comparable to the digital revolution of the 1990s – could lift long-term GDP growth from roughly the currently forecasted rate of 1.8% to the 2.5%-3.0% range. The fiscal implications of such a shift are profound. According to a May 2025 analysis by the Congressional Budget Office, a sustained 0.5 percentage point increase in annual productivity growth would cause federal debt in 2055 to fall to 113% of GDP, a dramatic improvement from the baseline projection of 156%.

This "productive escape" reflects an economy adjusting through growth more than austerity. Rising investment, reshoring, and innovation support real income growth and competitiveness, while efficiency gains help anchor inflation near the Fed's target and renew confidence in U.S. leadership.

Still, even under this favorable scenario, stronger growth alone would not return public finances to fully sustainable levels. It would move the nation toward a more reasonable and manageable fiscal position, but lasting sustainability would also require the political will to enact structural change – balancing taxation and spending, with the potential for entitlement reforms.

FISCAL TRAJECTORY: **BORROWED TIME**

WHAT CAN INVESTORS DO?

Market turning points, especially those driven by an unknown or troublesome fiscal trajectory, are difficult to time. Yet their portfolio impact can be swift, making diversification paramount.

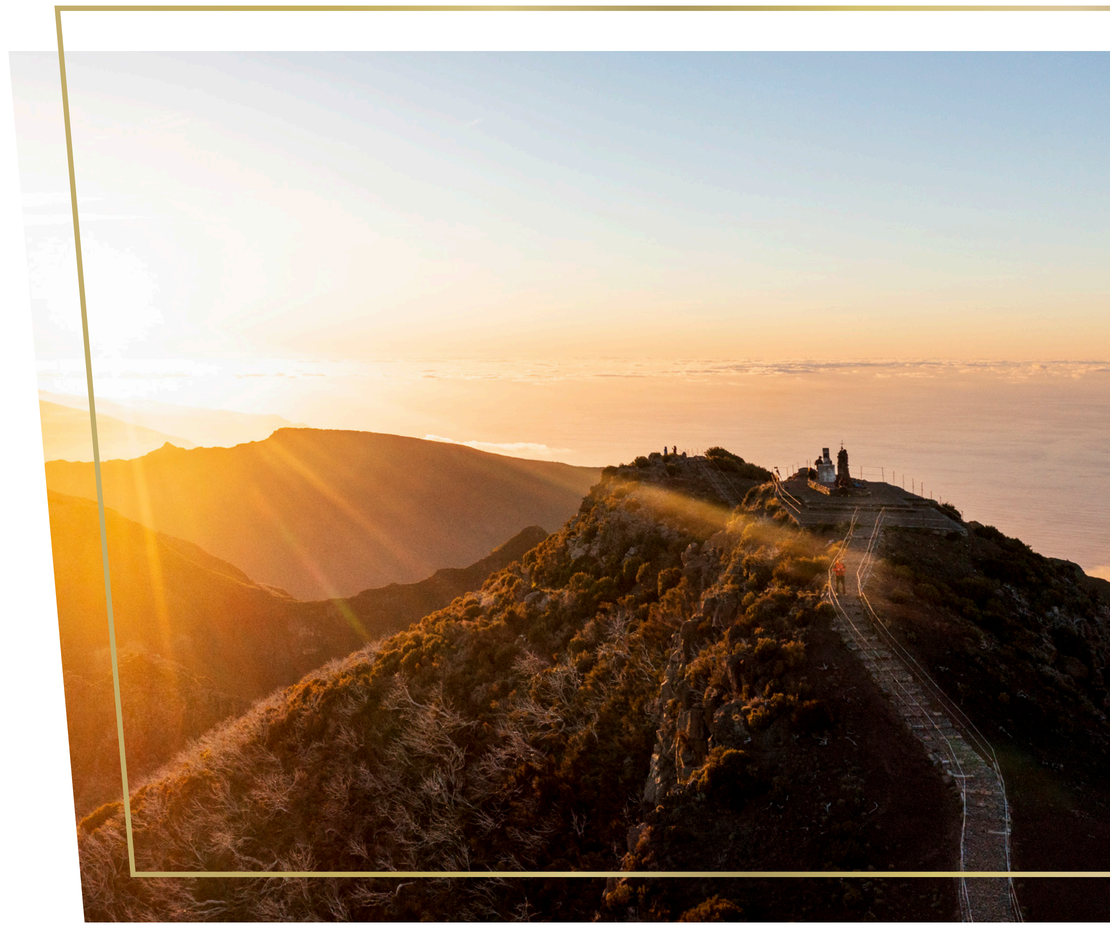
Three of the four scenarios present varying degrees of downside risk, underscoring the importance of asset allocation. We believe investors should focus on diversification, quality investments, and prudent risk management. Equities with strong balance sheets and durable cash flows, fixed income tilted toward higher-quality issuers, and selective real assets and alternatives can all help navigate shifting policy environments.

Given the wide range of possible fiscal outcomes, now may be an appropriate time to reassess your risk tolerance and ensure your allocation aligns with your long-term objectives. If you hold strong views on which scenario is more likely or want to understand how each path could affect your portfolio, speak with your Stifel Financial Advisor about whether adjustments or rebalancing are appropriate. A well-constructed, goals-aligned allocation remains the most effective way to endure volatility while staying positioned for opportunity.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

A disorderly fiscal crisis remains unlikely in the near term, but debt management continues to matter. The U.S. can fund large deficits as long as investors maintain confidence, yet that confidence is not guaranteed. A higher term premium on Treasuries and a more volatile cost of capital are the natural byproducts of this developing environment. Over time, some combination of tighter fiscal policy, reforms, higher growth, or higher inflation will be needed to restore equilibrium.

That said, there are still reasons for cautious optimism. Long-term sustainability depends less on short-term deficits than on the economy's capacity to grow. Technological progress, particularly in artificial intelligence, automation, and energy innovation, could lift productivity and broaden the base of taxable growth. If the U.S. maintains its lead in these areas, the adjustment to a better, more sustainable state could be gradual rather than abrupt. ■



INDEX DESCRIPTIONS

The **Standard & Poor's 500 Index** is a capitalization-weighted index that is generally considered representative of the U.S. large capitalization market.

The **Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA)** is a price-weighted average of 30 significant stocks traded on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) and the Nasdaq.

The **Bloomberg U.S. 1000 Total Return Index** is a float market-cap-weighted benchmark of the 1,000 most highly capitalized U.S. companies.

The **Bloomberg U.S. 1000 Growth Total Return Index** is a float market cap-weighted benchmark comprised of those companies in the Bloomberg U.S. 1000 Total Return Index with superior growth factor scores based on their earnings yield, valuation, dividend yield, and growth.

The **Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Total Return Index** is a float market cap-weighted benchmark of the lower 2,000 in capitalization of the Bloomberg U.S. 3000 Index.

The **Bloomberg U.S. 2500 Total Return Index** is a float market cap-weighted benchmark of the lower 2,500 in capitalization of the Bloomberg U.S. 3000 Index.

The **Bloomberg U.S. Micro Cap Total Return Index** is a float market-cap-weighted benchmark of those securities in the U.S. Aggregate Equity Index with a market capitalization ranking of lower than 2,500.

The **Dow Jones U.S. Select Dividend Index** aims to represent the U.S.'s leading stocks by dividend yield.

The **S&P 500 Dividend Aristocrats®** measures the performance of S&P 500 companies that have increased dividends every year for the last 25 consecutive years. The Index treats each constituent as a distinct investment opportunity without regard to its size by equally weighting each company.

The **S&P 500 Health Care Index** comprises those companies included in the S&P 500 that are classified as members of the GICS® health care sector.

The **Euro STOXX 50® Index** represents the performance of the 50 largest companies among the 19 supersectors in terms of free-float market capitalization in 11 Eurozone countries.

The **Nikkei 225 Index** is a price-weighted index of the 225 top Japanese companies listed in the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

The **MSCI EAFE Index** (Europe, Australasia, and the Far East) is a free float-adjusted market capitalization index that is designed to measure the equity market performance of developed markets, excluding the U.S. and Canada.

The **MSCI EM (Emerging Markets) Europe, Middle East, and Africa Index** is a free float-adjusted market capitalization-weighted index that is designed to measure the equity market performance of the emerging market countries of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

The **MSCI China Index** captures large and mid-cap representation across China A, H, and shares, Red chips, P chips, and foreign listings (e.g. ADRs). With 741 constituents, the index covers about 85% of this China equity universe.

The **MSCI Europe Index** is a free float-adjusted market capitalization-weighted index that is designed to measure the equity market performance of the developed markets in Europe.

The **MSCI World Index** is a free float-adjusted market capitalization-weighted index that is designed to measure the equity market performance of developed markets.

The **MSCI ACWI ex USA Index** captures large and mid cap representation across 22 of 23 Developed Markets (DM) countries (excluding the U.S.) and 25 Emerging Markets (EM) countries.

The **Bloomberg U.S. Treasury Bills Index** includes U.S. Treasury Bills that have a remaining maturity from one month up to (but not including) 12 months. It excludes zero coupon strips.

The **Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index** is market value-weighted inclusive of accrued interest and covers the most liquid portion of the global investment- grade fixed-rate bond market, including government, credit, and collateralized securities.

The Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index is a broad-based flagship benchmark that measures the investment-grade, U.S. dollar-denominated, fixed-rate taxable bond market. The index includes Treasuries, government-related, and corporate securities, MBS (agency fixed-rate and hybrid ARM pass-throughs), ABS, and CMBS (agency and nonagency). Provided the necessary inclusion rules are met, U.S. Aggregate-eligible securities also contribute to the multicurrency Global Aggregate Index and the U.S. Universal Index, which includes high yield and emerging markets debt.

The **Bloomberg U.S. Government/Credit Index** is a broad-based flagship benchmark that measures the non-securitized component of the U.S. Aggregate Index. It includes investment-grade, U.S. dollar-denominated, fixed-rate Treasuries, government-related, and corporate securities.

The **Bloomberg Mortgage-Backed Securities Index** is a measurement of the movement of the 15- and 30-year fixed rate securities backed by mortgage pools of the Government National Mortgage Association (GNMA), the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (FHLMC), and the Federal National Mortgage Association (FNMA). All returns are market value-weighted inclusive of accrued interest.

The **Bloomberg U.S. Corporate High-Yield Bond Index** covers the U.S. dollar-denominated, non-investment-grade, fixed rate, taxable corporate bond market. Securities are classified as high yield if the middle rating of Moody's, Fitch, and S&P is Ba1/BB+/BB+ or below. The index excludes emerging markets debt. The U.S. Corporate High-Yield Bond Index is part of the U.S. Universal and Global High-Yield Indices.

The **Bloomberg U.S. Municipal Bond Index** covers the U.S. dollar-denominated long-term, tax-exempt bond market. The index has four main sectors: state and local general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, insured bonds, and pre-refunded bonds.

The **Credit Suisse Leveraged Loan Index** tracks the investable market of the U.S. dollar-denominated leveraged loan market. It consists of issues rated "5B" or lower, meaning that the highest rated issues included in this index are Moody's/S&P ratings of Baa1/BB+ or Ba1/BBB+. All loans are funded term loans with a tenor of at least one year and are made by issuers domiciled in developed countries.

The **Dow Jones U.S. Select REIT Index** intends to measure the performance of publicly traded REITs and REIT-like securities. The index is a subset of the Dow Jones U.S. Select Real Estate Securities Index (RESI), which represents equity real estate investment trusts (REITs) and real estate operating companies (REOCs) traded in the U.S. The indices are designed to serve as proxies for direct real estate investment, in part by excluding companies whose performance may be driven by factors other than the value of real estate.

The **BofA Merrill Lynch Adjustable Rate Preferred Securities Index** tracks the performance of U.S. dollar-denominated investment-grade floating rate preferred securities publicly issued in the U.S. domestic market. Qualifying securities must have an investment-grade rating (based on an average of Moody's, S&P, and Fitch) and must have an investment-grade-rated country of risk (based on an average of Moody's, S&P, and Fitch foreign currency long-term sovereign debt ratings).

The **BofA Merrill Lynch Core Plus Fixed Rate Preferred Securities Index** tracks the performance of fixed rate U.S. dollar-denominated preferred securities issued in the U.S. domestic market. Qualifying securities must be rated at least B3 (based on an average of Moody's, S&P, and Fitch) and must have an investment grade-rated country of risk (based on an average of Moody's, S&P, and Fitch foreign currency long-term sovereign debt ratings).

The **Zillow Observed Rent Index (ZORI)** is a smoothed measure of the typical observed market rate rent across a given region. ZORI is a repeat-rent index that is weighted to the rental housing stock to ensure representativeness across the entire market, not just those homes currently listed for-rent. The index is dollar-denominated by computing the mean of listed rents that fall into the 40th to 60th percentile range for all homes and apartments in a given region, which is once again weighted to reflect the rental housing stock. Details available in ZORI methodology.

The **BofA Merrill Lynch U.S. High Yield Master II Index** is a market value-weighted index of all domestic and Yankee (bonds denominated in U.S. dollars and issued in the U.S. by foreign entities) high-yield bonds, including deferred interest bonds and payment-in-kind securities.

The **Bloomberg Commodity Index** ("BCOM" or the "Index") is designed to be a highly liquid and diversified benchmark for commodity investments.

The **HFRI Fund Weighted Composite Index** is an equal-weighted index utilized by numerous hedge fund managers as a benchmark for their own hedge funds. All single-manager HFRI Index constituents are included in the HFRI Fund Weighted Composite Index, which accounts for over 2,200 funds listed on the HFR database. Funds included in the index must report monthly returns, report net of all fees returns, report assets in U.S. dollars, and have at least $50 million under management or have been actively trading for at least 12 months.

Cash & Cash Equivalents is represented by the Bloomberg U.S. Treasury 3-6 Months Bill Index, comprised of treasury bills issued by the U.S. government with less than one year to maturity.

U.S. Gov't Bonds is represented by the Bloomberg U.S. Government Bond Index, comprised of the U.S. Treasury and U.S. Agency indexes.

U.S. Corp IG Bonds is represented by the Bloomberg U.S. Corporate Bond Index, comprised of the investment grade, fixed-rate, taxable corporate bond market.

High Yield Bonds is represented by the Bloomberg U.S. Corporate High Yield Bond Index, comprised of U.S. dollar-denominated, high yield, fixed-rate corporate bond market securities.

U.S. LC (Large Cap) equities is represented by Russell 1000 Index, comprised of 1,000 of the largest U.S. securities based on a combination of their market cap and current index membership.

U.S. SC (Small Cap) equities is represented by the Russell 2000 Index, comprised of 2,000 of the smallest U.S. securities based on a combination of their market cap and current index membership.

Dev Int'l Equities is represented by the MSCI EAFE Index, comprised of equity securities that belong to markets outside of the U.S. and Canada.

EM Equities is represented by the MSCI EM Index, comprised of equity securities that belong to emerging markets.

Moderate Bench stands for moderate benchmark portfolio return, which is a blended portfolio of stocks (60% weight, represented by MSCI AC World Index) and bonds (40% weight, represented by Bloomberg U.S. Government/Credit Index).

Indices are unmanaged, do not reflect fees and expenses, and you cannot invest directly in an index.

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Index returns include the reinvestment of dividends but do not include adjustments for brokerage, custodian, and advisory fees.

DISCLOSURES

ASSET CLASS RISKS AND DESCRIPTION OF TERMS

Bonds – Bonds are subject to market, interest rate, and credit risk. Prices on bonds and other interest rate-sensitive securities will decline as interest rates rise. Municipal bonds may be subject to state and alternative minimum taxes, and capital gains taxes may apply. High yield bonds have greater credit risk than higher quality bonds. Bond laddering does not assure a profit or protect against loss in a declining market. Yields and market values will fluctuate, and if sold prior to maturity, bonds may be worth more or less than the original investment.

Cash Equivalents – Portfolios that invest in very short-term securities provide taxable or tax-advantaged current income, pose little risk to principal, and offer the ability to convert the investment into cash quickly. These investments may result in a lower yield than would be available from investments with a lower quality or longer term.

Core Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) – The PCE Price Index excluding volatile food and energy prices, revealing underlying inflation trends.

Duration – Duration is a measure of the sensitivity of the price – the value of principal – of a fixed-income investment to a change in interest rates. Duration is expressed as a number of years.

Equities – Portfolios that emphasize stocks may involve price fluctuations as stock market conditions change. Small and mid capitalization stocks are typically more volatile and carry additional risks, since smaller companies generally are not as well established as larger companies.

Generative AI – Generative AI is a type of artificial intelligence that can produce content such as audio, text, code, video, and images.

International/Global Investing/Emerging Markets – There are special considerations associated with international and global investing, including the risk of currency fluctuations and political and economic events. Investing in emerging markets may involve greater risk and volatility than investing in more developed countries.

Alternative Investments or Non-Traditional Assets – Alternative investments involve a high degree of risk, often engage in leveraging and other speculative investment practices that may increase the risk of investment loss, can be highly illiquid, are not required to provide periodic pricing or valuation information to investors, may involve complex tax structures and delays in distributing tax information, are not subject to the same regulatory requirements as more traditional investments, and often charge high fees, which may erode performance. An investment is appropriate only for investors who have the capacity to absorb a loss of some or all of their investment.

Real Estate – When investing in real estate companies, property values can fall due to environmental, economic, or other reasons, and changes in interest rates can negatively impact the performance.

Commodities and Futures – The risk of loss in trading commodities and futures can be substantial. You should therefore carefully consider whether such trading is suitable for you in light of your financial condition. The high degree of leverage that is often obtainable in commodity trading can work against you as well as for you. The use of leverage can lead to large losses as well as gains.

Hedge Funds – Investors should be aware that hedge funds often engage in leverage, short- selling, arbitrage, hedging, derivatives, and other speculative investment practices that may increase investment loss. Hedge funds can be highly illiquid, are not required to provide periodic pricing or valuation information to investors, and often charge high fees that can erode performance. Additionally, they may involve complex tax structures and delays in distributing tax information. While hedge funds may appear similar to mutual funds, they are not necessarily subject to the same regulatory requirements as mutual funds.

Venture Capital – Venture capital investments involve substantial risks. The risks associated with investing in companies in the start-up or expansion stages of development are greater than those of companies in later stages, because the companies' business concepts generally are unproven and the companies have little or no track record.

Limited Partnerships – Generally, limited partnership investments are suitable only for a narrow class of relatively sophisticated investors. Limited partnership investments may be speculative in nature and be subject to resale restrictions or illiquidity. An investment is appropriate only for investors who have the capacity to absorb a loss of some or all of their investment.

Private Equity – Private equity funds are not appropriate for all investors. Investors should be aware that private equity funds may contain speculative investment practices that can lead to a loss of the entire investment. Private equity funds may invest in entities in which no secondary market exists and, as such, may be highly illiquid. The funds are not required to provide periodic pricing or valuation information to investors and often charge high fees that can erode performance. Additionally, they may involve complex tax structures and delays in distributing tax information.

Mutual Funds and Exchange Traded Funds – The investment return and principal value of an investment in funds will fluctuate, so that an investor's shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost. ETFs trade like a stock and may trade for less than their net asset value. There will be brokerage commissions associated with buying and selling exchange traded funds unless trading occurs in a fee-based account.

Standard Deviation – Standard deviation is a measure of the dispersion of a set of data from its mean. It is calculated as the square root of variance by determining the variation between each data point relative to the mean. If the data points are further from the mean, there is higher deviation within the data set.

Volatility – Volatility is measured by calculating the standard deviation of the annualized returns over a given period of time.

RISK PROFILES

RP 1 Conservative – A conservative investor values protecting principal over seeking appreciation. This investor is comfortable accepting lower returns in exchange for a higher degree of liquidity and/or stability. Typically, a Conservative investor primarily seeks to minimize risk and loss of principal.

RP 2 Moderately Conservative – A moderately conservative investor values principal preservation, but is comfortable accepting a small degree of risk and volatility to seek some degree of appreciation. This investor desires greater liquidity, is willing to accept lower returns, and is willing to accept minimal losses.

RP 3 Moderate – A moderate investor values reducing risks and enhancing returns equally. This investor is willing to accept modest risks to seek higher long-term returns. A moderate investor may endure a short-term loss of principal and lower degree of liquidity in exchange for long-term appreciation.

RP 4 Moderate Growth – A moderate growth investor values higher long-term returns and is willing to accept considerable risk. This investor is comfortable with short-term fluctuations in exchange for seeking long-term appreciation. The moderate growth investor is willing to endure larger short-term losses of principal in exchange for the potential of higher long-term returns. Liquidity is a secondary concern to a moderate growth investor.

RP 5 Moderately Aggressive – A moderately aggressive investor primarily values higher long-term returns and is willing to accept significant risk. This investor believes higher long-term returns are more important than protecting principal. A moderately aggressive investor may endure large losses in favor of potentially higher long-term returns. Liquidity may not be a concern to a moderately aggressive investor.

RP 6 Aggressive – An aggressive investor values maximizing returns and is willing to accept substantial risk. This investor believes maximizing long-term returns is more important than protecting principal. An aggressive investor may endure extensive volatility and significant losses. Liquidity is generally not a concern to an aggressive investor.

IMPORTANT NOTES AND DISCLOSURES

The recommendations made for your actual portfolio will differ from any asset allocation or strategies outlined in this document. The model portfolios are not available to investors since they represent investment ideas, which are general in nature, and do not include fees. Your asset allocation will be customized to your preferences and risk tolerance, and you will be charged fees. You should ensure that your portfolio is updated or redefined when your investment objectives or personal circumstances change.

Diversification and asset allocation do not ensure a profit or guarantee against losses. Investing involves risk, including the possible loss of principal. Any data on past performance contained herein is no indication as to future performance. The value of any investment may fluctuate as a result of market changes. The information in this document is not intended to predict actual results, and no assurances are given with respect thereto.

Assumptions are estimates based on historic performance and an evaluation of the current market environment. References to future expected returns and performance do not constitute a promise of performance for any asset class or investment strategy, nor should they be relied on as advice or interpreted as a recommendation to engage in the purchase or sale of any security or financial product. The assumptions are subjective estimates based on circumstances and events that may not occur. Further, any valuations given in this document may not accurately reflect the values at which investments may actually be bought or sold, and no allowance has been made for taxation.

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Led by Stifel Chief Investment Officer Michael O'Keeffe, the Stifel CIO Office is comprised of several investment professionals. The team works collaboratively with other Stifel professionals to develop macroeconomic analysis, market analysis, strategic and dynamic asset allocation guidance, applied behavioral finance, and specific investment solutions for advisors and clients.

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