May 1, 2026

LEGG MASON PARTNERS VARIABLE EQUITY TRUST

Fund	Ticker Symbol	
	Class I	Class II
CLEARBRIDGE VARIABLE GROWTH PORTFOLIO ("Growth Portfolio")	QLMGOX	QLMGTX
CLEARBRIDGE VARIABLE MID CAP PORTFOLIO ("Mid Cap Portfolio")	QLMMIX	QLMPTX
CLEARBRIDGE VARIABLE SMALL CAP GROWTH PORTFOLIO ("Small Cap Growth Portfolio")	QLMSIX	QLMSTX

One Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10010
877-6LM-FUND/656-3863

STATEMENT OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This Statement of Additional Information ("SAI") is not a prospectus and is meant to be read in conjunction with the Prospectus of the Fund, dated May 1, 2026, as amended or supplemented from time to time, and is incorporated by reference in its entirety into each Prospectus. This SAI contains additional information about each fund listed above (references to the "Fund" mean each Fund listed on this cover page, unless otherwise noted).

Each Fund is a series of Legg Mason Partners Variable Equity Trust (the "Trust"), a Maryland statutory trust.

Fund shares are offered only to variable annuity and variable life insurance separate accounts established by insurance companies ("Participating Insurance Companies") to fund variable annuity contracts ("VA contracts") and variable life insurance policies ("VLI policies," and together with VA contracts, the "Policies") and to qualified retirement and pension plans. Individuals holding Policies are referred to herein as "Policyholders." Individuals may not purchase shares of the Fund directly from the Trust. The Policies are described in the separate prospectuses issued by the Participating Insurance Companies.

Additional information about the Fund's investments is available in the Fund's annual and semi-annual reports to shareholders and in Form N-CSR. In the Fund's annual report, you will find a discussion of the market conditions and investment strategies that significantly affected the Fund's performance during its last fiscal year. In Form N-CSR, you will find the Fund's annual and semi-annual financial statements. The Fund's audited financial statements and the accompanying independent registered public accounting firm's report for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025, as filed on Form N-CSR, are incorporated herein by reference (https://www.sec.gov/ix?doc=/Archives/edgar/data/0001176343/000113322826001910/cvgp-efp22466_ncsr.htm https://www.sec.gov/ix?doc=/Archives/edgar/data/0001176343/000113322826001897/cvmcp-efp22463_ncsr.htm https://www.sec.gov/ix?doc=/Archives/edgar/data/1176343/000113322826002063/cvscgp-efp22481_ncsr.htm). The Fund's Prospectus, copies of the annual and semi-annual reports and other information such as Fund financial statements may be obtained free of charge from Participating Insurance Companies and qualified pension and retirement plans, by writing the Trust at Legg Mason Funds, P.O. Box 33030, St. Petersburg, FL 33733-8030, by calling the telephone number set forth above, by sending an e-mail request to prospectus.us.franklintempleton@fisglobal.com or by visiting www.franklintempleton.com/prospectus. Franklin Distributors, LLC ("Franklin Distributors" or the "Distributor"), an indirect, wholly-owned broker/dealer subsidiary of Franklin Resources, Inc., serves as the Fund's sole and exclusive distributor.

The Fund issues two classes of shares: Class I shares and Class II shares. Policyholders should consult the applicable prospectus of the separate account of the Participating Insurance Company or information provided by the qualified retirement or pension plan to determine which class of Fund shares may be purchased by the separate account or plan.

THIS SAI IS NOT A PROSPECTUS AND IS AUTHORIZED FOR DISTRIBUTION TO PROSPECTIVE INVESTORS ONLY IF PRECEDED OR ACCOMPANIED BY AN EFFECTIVE PROSPECTUS.

No person has been authorized to give any information or to make any representations not contained in the Prospectus or this SAI in connection with the offering made by the Prospectus and, if given or made, such information or representations must not be relied upon as having been authorized by the Fund or the Distributor. The Prospectus and this SAI do not constitute an offering by the Fund or by the Distributor in any jurisdiction in which such offering may not lawfully be made.

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LEGG MASON GLOBAL ASSET MANAGEMENT TRUST
LEGG MASON PARTNERS INVESTMENT TRUST
LEGG MASON PARTNERS VARIABLE EQUITY TRUST
SUPPLEMENT DATED OCTOBER 1, 2026 TO THE STATEMENT OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ("SAI") OF EACH FUND LISTED IN SCHEDULE A (THE "FUNDS")

Effective October 1, 2026, the Board of Trustees of each Trust listed on Schedule A appointed Phyllis K. Costanza and Keith E. Mitchell as independent trustees of each Trust. Accordingly, effective October 1, 2026, the SAI for each of the Funds is amended as follows:

I. The following is added to the Independent Trustees table in the "MANAGEMENT – Trustees and Officers" section of each Fund's SAI:

Independent Trustees#:

Name and Year of Birth	Position(s) with Trust	Term of Office* and Year Service Began**	Principal Occupation(s) During the Past Five Years	Number of Funds in the Franklin Templeton Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee***	Other Board Memberships Held by Trustee During the Past Five Years
Phyllis K. Costanza± Born 1963	Trustee	Since October 2026	Senior Adviser, Big Win Philanthropy (non-profit) (2025 to present); formerly, Chief Social Investment Officer, Advanced Portfolio Management (finance) (2024 to 2025); President, OutcomesX (impact evaluation) (2022 to 2024); and Global Head, Social Impact, UBS (2011 to 2022)	44	None
Keith E. Mitchell± Born 1954	Trustee	Since 2009	Formerly, Managing Member, Mitchell, Hartley & Bechtel Advisers, LLC (formerly, Mitchell Advisers, LLC) (advisory firm) (2003 to 2015) and Managing Director, Putnam Lovell NBF (investment banking) (2000 to 2003)	44	Formerly, Trustee of separate series within the Franklin Templeton fund complex consisting of 9 portfolios (2009 to 2026)

[#] Trustees who are not "interested persons" of the Trust within the meaning of Section 2(a)(19) of the 1940 Act.

[*] Each Trustee serves until his or her respective successor has been duly elected and qualified or until his or her earlier death, resignation, retirement or removal.

[**] Indicates the earliest year in which the Trustee became a board member for a fund in the Franklin Templeton fund complex.

[***] Information is for the calendar year ended December 31, 2025, except as otherwise noted.

[±] Ms. Costanza and Mr. Mitchell were each appointed to the Board effective October 1, 2026. Information pertaining to the number of funds in the Franklin Templeton fund complex overseen by Ms. Costanza and Mr. Mitchell is as of October 1, 2026.

II. The following is added to the table providing the dollar range of equity securities owned by the independent board members in the "MANAGEMENT – Trustee Ownership of Securities" section of each Fund's SAI, except ClearBridge Dividend Strategy Fund's SAI:

Name of Trustee	Dollar Range of Equity Securities in the Fund ($)	Aggregate Dollar Range of Equity Securities in All Registered Investment Companies in Franklin Templeton Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee ($)
Phyllis K. Costanza[1]	None	None
Keith E. Mitchell[1]	None	10,001-50,000

[1] Information is as of October 1, 2026.

III. The following is added to the table providing the dollar range of equity securities owned by the independent board members in the "MANAGEMENT – Trustee Ownership of Securities" section of ClearBridge Dividend Strategy Fund's SAI:

Name of Trustee	Dollar Range of Equity Securities in the Fund ($)	Aggregate Dollar Range of Equity Securities in All Registered Investment Companies in Franklin Templeton Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee ($)
Phyllis K. Costanza[1]	None	None
Keith E. Mitchell[1]	10,001-50,000	10,001-50,000

[1] Information is as of October 1, 2026.

IV. The following is added to the table providing the total fees paid to independent board members in the "MANAGEMENT – Trustee Compensation" section of each Fund's SAI:

Name of Trustee	Aggregate Compensation from the Fund* ($)	Total Pension or Retirement Benefits Paid as Part of Fund Expenses*($)	Total Compensation from Franklin Templeton Fund Complex Paid to Trustee**
Phyllis K. Costanza[1]	N/A	N/A	N/A
Keith E. Mitchell[1]	N/A	N/A	617,000[2]

[*] Information is for the Fund's last fiscal year.

[**] Information is for the calendar year ended December 31, 2025.

[1] Ms. Costanza and Mr. Mitchell were each appointed to the Board effective October 1, 2026.

[2] As of December 31, 2025, Mr. Mitchell served as an independent trustee for separate series of U.S. registered investment companies within the Franklin Templeton fund complex.

V. The following replace the first three paragraphs of the section titled "MANAGEMENT – Qualifications of Trustees, Board Leadership Structure and Oversight and Standing Committees in each Fund's SAI:

The Independent Trustees were selected to join the Board based upon the following as to each Trustee: character and integrity; service as a board member of predecessor funds and/or other Franklin Templeton funds; willingness to serve and willingness and ability to commit the time necessary to perform the duties of a Trustee; such person's skills, experience, judgment, analytical ability, intelligence, and common sense; their current or previous profit and non-profit board membership; such person's considerable familiarity with the special regulatory requirements governing regulated investment companies and the special responsibilities of investment company trustees; and the Trustee's status as not being an "interested person" of the Fund, as defined in the 1940 Act. Ms. Trust was selected to join the Board based upon her investment management and risk oversight experience as an executive and portfolio manager and leadership roles with Franklin Templeton and affiliated entities. The Board also considered her character and integrity, her willingness to serve and willingness and ability to commit the time necessary to perform the duties of a Trustee, her skills, experience, judgment, analytical ability, intelligence, and common sense, her considerable familiarity with the special regulatory requirements governing regulated investment companies and the special responsibilities of investment company trustees, and her status as a representative of Franklin Templeton. Ms. Trust is an interested person of the Fund. Mr. O'Brien serves as Chair of the Board and is an Independent Trustee. Independent Trustees constitute more than 75% of the Board.

The Board believes that each Trustee's experience, qualifications, attributes or skills on an individual basis and in combination with those of the other Trustees lead to the conclusion that the Board possesses the requisite attributes and skills. The Board believes that the Trustees' ability to review critically, evaluate, question and discuss information provided to them, to interact effectively with the Manager, the Subadviser(s), other service providers, counsel and the independent registered public accounting firm, and to exercise effective business judgment in the performance of their duties support this conclusion. In addition, the following specific experience, qualifications, attributes and/or skills apply to each Trustee.

Each Trustee, except for Ms. Costanza, has served as a board member of the Fund and/or other Franklin Templeton funds for at least ten years. Mr. Breech has substantial experience as the chief executive of a private corporation. Ms. Costanza has business and investment industry experience serving in executive or senior roles focusing on social impact investing for a non-profit and various investment management firms. Mr. Gross has a

substantial accounting background and experience as an officer, trustee and board member of various organizations. Ms. Heilbron has substantial legal background and experience, business and consulting experience, and experience as a board member of public companies. Dr. Lehman has experience as chief executive officer of major museums and other entities involved in the arts, has previously served as a lead independent trustee and board chair for certain Franklin Templeton funds and has experience as a founding director of certain Franklin Templeton funds. Ms. Masters has investment management experience as chief investment officer, as a director of an investment advisory firm and from her service on the boards of other investment companies. Mr. Mitchell has substantial asset management experience as a managing director of an investment banking firm and from previously serving as an independent trustee on the board of certain Franklin Templeton funds. Mr. O'Brien has experience at senior levels of a large financial services company and has experience from his service on the boards of academic institutions and a residential home care company. Mr. Schlafly has substantial experience practicing law and also serves as the non-executive Chairman of a private corporation and as director of a bank. Ms. Trust has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust and other funds in the fund complex since 2015 and has investment management and risk oversight experience as an executive and portfolio manager and in leadership roles with Franklin Templeton (and before that, Legg Mason) and affiliated entities. References to the experience, qualifications, attributes and skills of Trustees are pursuant to requirements of the Securities and Exchange Commission, do not constitute holding out of the Board or any Trustee as having any special expertise, and shall not impose any greater responsibility or liability on any such person or on the Board.

SCHEDULE A

Fund	Date of SAI
LEGG MASON GLOBAL ASSET MANAGEMENT TRUST	
BrandywineGLOBAL – Diversified US Large Cap Value Fund	February 1, 2026
BrandywineGLOBAL – Flexible Bond Fund	May 1, 2026
BrandywineGLOBAL – Global Opportunities Bond Fund	May 1, 2026
BrandywineGLOBAL – Multi-Sector Opportunities Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Global Infrastructure Income Fund	February 1, 2026
ClearBridge International Growth Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Small Cap Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Value Fund	March 1, 2026
Franklin International Equity Fund	February 1, 2026
Franklin U.S. Small Cap Equity Fund	May 1, 2026
ClearBridge Emerging Markets Fund	February 1, 2026
ClearBridge SMASh Series EM Fund	December 1, 2025
LEGG MASON PARTNERS INVESTMENT TRUST	

Fund	Date of SAI
BrandywineGLOBAL – Corporate Credit Fund	May 1, 2026
BrandywineGLOBAL – High Yield Fund	May 1,2026
ClearBridge Appreciation Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Dividend Strategy Fund	May 1, 2026
ClearBridge Growth Fund	January 1, 2026
ClearBridge International Value Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Large Cap Growth Fund	April 1, 2026
ClearBridge Large Cap Value Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Mid Cap Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Mid Cap Growth Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Select Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Small Cap Growth Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Sustainability Leaders Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Tactical Dividend Income Fund	March 1, 2026
Franklin Global Equity Fund	March 1, 2026
Franklin S&P 500 Index Fund	February 1, 2026
Franklin U.S. Large Cap Equity Fund	April 1,2026
Franklin Multi-Asset Conservative Growth Fund	June 1,2026
Franklin Multi-Asset Defensive Growth Fund	June 1, 2026
Franklin Multi-Asset Growth Fund	June 1, 2026
Franklin Multi-Asset Moderate Growth Fund	June 1, 2026
LEGG MASON PARTNERS VARIABLE EQUITY TRUST	
ClearBridge Variable Growth Portfolio	May 1, 2026
ClearBridge Variable Mid Cap Portfolio	May 1, 2026
ClearBridge Variable Small Cap Growth Portfolio	May 1, 2026
Franklin Multi-Asset Variable Conservative Growth Fund	May 1, 2026
Franklin Multi-Asset Variable Growth Fund	May 1, 2026
Franklin Multi-Asset Variable Moderate Growth Fund	May 1, 2026
Franklin Templeton Aggressive Model Portfolio	May 1, 2026
Franklin Templeton Conservative Model Portfolio	May 1, 2026
Franklin Templeton Moderate Model Portfolio	May 1, 2026
Franklin Templeton Moderately Aggressive Model Portfolio	May 1, 2026
Franklin Templeton Moderately Conservative Model Portfolio	May 1, 2026

Please retain this supplement for future reference.

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LEGG MASON GLOBAL ASSET MANAGEMENT TRUST
LEGG MASON PARTNERS INVESTMENT TRUST
LEGG MASON PARTNERS VARIABLE EQUITY TRUST
SUPPLEMENT DATED JULY 1, 2026 TO THE STATEMENT OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ("SAI") OF EACH FUND LISTED IN SCHEDULE A (THE "FUNDS")

Effective July 1, 2026, the following replaces the section titled "INVESTMENT PRACTICES AND RISK FACTORS – Securities Lending" in each Fund's SAI:

Securities Lending

In an effort to generate additional income, the Fund may lend certain of its portfolio securities to qualified banks and broker-dealers (referred to as "borrowers"). In exchange, the Fund receives cash collateral from a borrower at least equal to the value of the security loaned by the Fund. Cash collateral typically consists of any combination of cash, securities issued by the U.S. government and its agencies and instrumentalities, and irrevocable letters of credit. The Fund may invest this cash collateral while the loan is outstanding and generally retains part or all of the interest earned on the cash collateral. Securities lending allows the Fund to retain ownership of the securities loaned and, at the same time, potentially earn additional income.

For each loan, the borrower usually must maintain with the Fund's custodian collateral with an initial market value at least equal to 102% of the market value of the domestic securities loaned (or 105% of the market value of foreign securities loaned), including any accrued interest thereon. Such collateral will be marked-to-market daily, and if the coverage falls below 100%, the borrower will be required to deliver additional collateral equal to at least 102% of the market value of the domestic securities loaned (or 105% of the foreign securities loaned).

The Fund retains all or a portion of any interest received on investment of the cash collateral or receives a fee from the borrower. The Fund also continues to receive any distributions paid on the loaned securities. The Fund seeks to maintain the ability to obtain the right to vote or consent on proxy proposals involving material events affecting securities loaned. The Fund may terminate a loan at any time and obtain the return of the securities loaned within the normal settlement period for the security involved.

If the borrower defaults on its obligation to return the securities loaned because of insolvency or other reasons, the Fund could experience delays and costs in recovering the securities loaned or in gaining access to the collateral. These delays and costs could be greater for foreign securities. If the Fund is not able to recover the securities loaned, the Fund may sell the collateral and purchase a replacement investment in the market. Additional transaction costs would result, and the value of the collateral could decrease below the value of the replacement investment by the time the replacement investment is purchased. Until the replacement can be purchased, the Fund will not have the desired level of exposure to the security which the borrower failed to return. Cash received as collateral through loan transactions may be invested in other eligible securities, including shares of a money market fund. Investing this cash subjects the Fund to greater market risk including losses on the collateral and, should the Fund need to look to the collateral in the event of the borrower's default, losses on the loan secured by that collateral.

The Fund will loan its securities only to parties who meet creditworthiness standards approved by the Fund's board (i.e., banks or broker-dealers that the investment manager has determined are not apparently at risk of becoming involved in bankruptcy proceedings within the time frame contemplated by the loan). In addition, pursuant to the 1940 Act and SEC interpretations thereof, the aggregate market value of securities that may be loaned by the Fund is limited to 33 1/3% of the Fund's total assets or such lower limit as set by the Fund or its board.

SCHEDULE A

Fund	Date of SAI
LEGG MASON GLOBAL ASSET MANAGEMENT TRUST	
BrandywineGLOBAL – Diversified US Large Cap Value Fund	February 1, 2026
BrandywineGLOBAL – Flexible Bond Fund	May 1, 2026
BrandywineGLOBAL – Global Opportunities Bond Fund	May 1, 2026
BrandywineGLOBAL – Multi-Sector Opportunities Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Global Infrastructure Income Fund	February 1, 2026
ClearBridge International Growth Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Small Cap Fund	March 1, 2026

Fund	Date of SAI
ClearBridge Value Fund	March 1, 2026
Franklin International Equity Fund	February 1, 2026
Franklin U.S. Small Cap Equity Fund	May 1, 2026
ClearBridge Emerging Markets Fund	February 1, 2026
ClearBridge SMASh Series EM Fund	December 1, 2025

LEGG MASON PARTNERS INVESTMENT TRUST

BrandywineGLOBAL – Corporate Credit Fund	May 1, 2026
BrandywineGLOBAL – High Yield Fund	May 1, 2026
ClearBridge Appreciation Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Dividend Strategy Fund	May 1, 2026
ClearBridge Growth Fund	January 1, 2026
ClearBridge International Value Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Large Cap Growth Fund	April 1, 2026
ClearBridge Large Cap Value Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Mid Cap Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Mid Cap Growth Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Select Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Small Cap Growth Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Sustainability Leaders Fund	March 1, 2026
ClearBridge Tactical Dividend Income Fund	March 1, 2026
Franklin Global Equity Fund	March 1, 2026
Franklin S&P 500 Index Fund	February 1, 2026
Franklin U.S. Large Cap Equity Fund	April 1, 2026
Franklin Multi-Asset Conservative Growth Fund	June 1, 2026
Franklin Multi-Asset Defensive Growth Fund	June 1, 2026
Franklin Multi-Asset Growth Fund	June 1, 2026
Franklin Multi-Asset Moderate Growth Fund	June 1, 2026

LEGG MASON PARTNERS VARIABLE EQUITY TRUST

ClearBridge Variable Growth Portfolio	May 1, 2026
ClearBridge Variable Mid Cap Portfolio	May 1, 2026
ClearBridge Variable Small Cap Growth Portfolio	May 1, 2026
Franklin Multi-Asset Variable Conservative Growth Fund	May 1, 2026
Franklin Multi-Asset Variable Growth Fund	May 1, 2026
Franklin Multi-Asset Variable Moderate Growth Fund	May 1, 2026
Franklin Templeton Aggressive Model Portfolio	May 1, 2026
Franklin Templeton Conservative Model Portfolio	May 1, 2026
Franklin Templeton Moderate Model Portfolio	May 1, 2026
Franklin Templeton Moderately Aggressive Model Portfolio	May 1, 2026
Franklin Templeton Moderately Conservative Model Portfolio	May 1, 2026

Please retain this supplement for future reference.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Because the following is a combined glossary of terms, certain terms below may not apply to your fund. Any terms used but not defined herein have the meaning ascribed to them in the applicable Fund's prospectus.

"12b-1 Plans" means the Fund's distribution and shareholder services plan.

"1933 Act" means the Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

"1934 Act" means the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended.

"1940 Act" means the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended.

"1940 Act Vote" means the vote of the lesser of: (a) more than 50% of the outstanding shares of the Fund; or (b) 67% or more of the shares of the Fund present at a shareholders' meeting if more than 50% of the outstanding shares of that Fund are represented at the meeting in person or by proxy.

"Advisers Act" means the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, as amended.

"Board" means the Board of Trustees or Board of Directors, as applicable.

"CEA" means the Commodity Exchange Act, as amended.

"CFTC" means the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

"Code" means the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.

"Corporation" (if applicable) means the corporation listed on the cover page of this SAI.

"Directors" means the directors of the Corporation.

"Distributor" means the party that is responsible for the distribution or sale of the Fund's shares. Franklin Distributors, LLC ("Franklin Distributors") is the Fund's distributor.

"FINRA" means the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc.

"Franklin Resources" means Franklin Resources, Inc.

"Fund" means the Fund or Funds listed on the cover of this SAI unless stated otherwise.

"Fundamental Investment Policy" means an investment policy of the Fund that may be changed only by a 1940 Act Vote. Only those policies expressly designated as such are fundamental investment policies. All other policies and restrictions may be changed by the Board without shareholder approval.

"Independent Director" or "Independent Trustee" (as applicable) means a Director of the Corporation or a Trustee of the Trust who is not an "interested person" (as defined in the 1940 Act) of the Corporation or Trust (as applicable).

"IRAs" means Individual Retirement Accounts.

"IRS" means Internal Revenue Service.

"Legg Mason" means Legg Mason, Inc.

"Manager" or "FTFA" means Franklin Templeton Fund Adviser, LLC.

"NAV" means net asset value.

"NRSROs" means nationally recognized (or non-U.S.) statistical rating organizations, including, but not limited to, Moody's Investors Service, Inc. ("Moody's"), Fitch Ratings and S&P Global Ratings, a subsidiary of S&P Global Inc. ("S&P").

"NYSE" means the New York Stock Exchange.

"Prospectus" means the prospectus of a Fund as referenced on the cover page of this SAI.

"SAI" means this Statement of Additional Information.

"SEC" means the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

"Service Agent" means each bank, broker, dealer, insurance company, investment adviser, financial consultant or adviser, mutual fund supermarket and any other financial intermediaries that have entered into an agreement with the Distributor to sell shares of the Fund.

"Subadviser" means ClearBridge Investments, LLC and Western Asset Management Company, LLC, as applicable, and as referred to in the Fund's Prospectus and this SAI.

"Trust" (if applicable) means the trust listed on the cover page of this SAI.

"Trustees" means the trustees of the Trust.

INVESTMENT POLICIES

Investment Objective and Strategies

The Fund is registered under the 1940 Act as an open-end management investment company. The Fund's Prospectus discusses the Fund's investment objective and strategies. The following is a summary of certain strategies and investment limitations of the Fund and supplements the description of the Fund's investment strategies in its Prospectus. Additional information regarding investment practices and risk factors with respect to the Fund may also be found below in the section entitled *Investment Practices and Risk Factors*.

Growth Portfolio

- *Investment objective*. The Fund seeks capital appreciation.
- The Fund invests primarily in common stocks of companies the portfolio managers believe are experiencing, or will experience, growth in earnings exceeding the average rate of earnings growth of the companies which comprise the S&P 500 Index.
- A significant portion of the Fund's assets may be invested in the securities of small to medium capitalization companies.
- The Fund may invest up to 25% of its net assets (at the time of investment) in equity securities of foreign issuers, either directly or through depositary receipts.
- The Fund may designate no more than 25% of the Fund's net assets (taken at the then-current market value) as required collateral for short sales at any one time.

Mid Cap Portfolio

- *Investment objective*. The Fund seeks long-term growth of capital.
- Under normal circumstances, the Fund invests at least 80% of its net assets, plus borrowings for investment purposes, if any, in equity securities, or other investments with similar economic characteristics, of medium capitalization companies. Medium capitalization companies are defined as those companies whose market capitalization values are in the range of the market capitalization values of the constituents of the S&P MidCap 400 Index or the Russell Midcap Index, as determined from time to time. Securities of companies whose market capitalizations no longer meet this definition after purchase by the Fund still will be considered to be securities of medium capitalization companies for purposes of the Fund's 80% investment policy. The Fund's 80% investment policy may be changed by the Board without shareholder approval upon 60 days' prior notice to shareholders.
- The Fund may invest up to 20% of its assets in equity securities of companies other than medium capitalization companies.
- The Fund may invest up to 25% of its net assets (at the time of investment) in foreign securities either directly or through depositary receipts.
- The Fund may designate no more than 25% of the Fund's net assets (taken at the then-current market value) as required collateral for short sales at any one time.

Small Cap Growth Portfolio

- *Investment objective*. The Fund seeks long-term growth of capital.
- Under normal circumstances, the Fund invests at least 80% of its assets in equity securities of companies with small market capitalizations and related investments. For the purposes of this 80% policy, small capitalization companies are companies with market capitalization values not exceeding (i) $3 billion or (ii) the highest month-end market capitalization value of any stock in the Russell 2000 Index for the previous 12 months, whichever is greater. Securities of companies whose market capitalizations no longer meet this definition after purchase by the Fund are still considered to be securities of small capitalization companies for the purpose of the Fund's 80% investment policy. The Fund's 80% investment policy may be changed by the Board without shareholder approval upon 60 days' prior notice to shareholders.
- The Fund may invest up to 20% of its assets in equity securities of companies that are not considered to be small capitalization companies.
- The Fund may invest up to 20% of its assets in non-convertible bonds, notes and other debt obligations when the subadviser believes that their total return potential equals or exceeds the potential return of equity securities.
- The Fund may invest up to 20% of its net assets (at the time of investment) in foreign securities, either directly or through depositary receipts.

- The Fund may designate no more than 25% of the Fund's net assets (taken at the then-current market value) as required collateral for short sales at any one time.

Fundamental and Non-Fundamental Investment Policies

General

The Fund has adopted the fundamental and non-fundamental investment policies below for the protection of shareholders. Fundamental investment policies of the Fund may not be changed without a 1940 Act Vote. The Board may change non-fundamental investment policies at any time without shareholder approval and upon notice to shareholders.

If any percentage restriction described below (other than the limitation on borrowing) is complied with at the time of an investment, a later increase or decrease in the percentage resulting from a change in asset values or characteristics will not constitute a violation of such restriction, unless otherwise noted below.

The Fund's investment objective is non-fundamental.

Fundamental Investment Policies

The Fund's fundamental investment policies are as follows:

Borrowing. The Fund may not borrow money except as permitted by (i) the 1940 Act or interpretations or modifications by the SEC, SEC staff or other authority with appropriate jurisdiction, or (ii) exemptive or other relief or permission from the SEC, SEC staff or other authority.

Underwriting. The Fund may not engage in the business of underwriting the securities of other issuers except as permitted by (i) the 1940 Act or interpretations or modifications by the SEC, SEC staff or other authority with appropriate jurisdiction, or (ii) exemptive or other relief or permission from the SEC, SEC staff or other authority.

Lending. The Fund may lend money or other assets to the extent permitted by (i) the 1940 Act or interpretations or modifications by the SEC, SEC staff or other authority with appropriate jurisdiction, or (ii) exemptive or other relief or permission from the SEC, SEC staff or other authority.

Senior Securities. The Fund may not issue senior securities except as permitted by (i) the 1940 Act or interpretations or modifications by the SEC, SEC staff or other authority with appropriate jurisdiction, or (ii) exemptive or other relief or permission from the SEC, SEC staff or other authority.

Real Estate. The Fund may not purchase or sell real estate except as permitted by (i) the 1940 Act or interpretations or modifications by the SEC, SEC staff or other authority with appropriate jurisdiction, or (ii) exemptive or other relief or permission from the SEC, SEC staff or other authority.

Commodities. The Fund may purchase or sell commodities or contracts related to commodities to the extent permitted by (i) the 1940 Act or interpretations or modifications by the SEC, SEC staff or other authority with appropriate jurisdiction, or (ii) exemptive or other relief or permission from the SEC, SEC staff or other authority.

Concentration (Except for Small Cap Growth Portfolio). Except as permitted by exemptive or other relief or permission from the SEC, SEC staff or other authority with appropriate jurisdiction, the Fund may not make any investment if, as a result, the Fund's investments will be concentrated in any one industry (except that the Fund may invest without limit in obligations issued by banks).

Concentration (Small Cap Growth Portfolio Only). Except as permitted by exemptive or other relief or permission from the SEC, SEC staff or other authority with appropriate jurisdiction, the Fund may not make any investment if, as a result, the Fund's investments will be concentrated in any one industry.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to borrowing money set forth above, the 1940 Act permits a fund to borrow money in amounts of up to one-third of the fund's total assets from banks for any purpose, and to borrow up to 5% of the fund's total assets from banks or other lenders for temporary purposes. (A fund's total assets include the amounts being borrowed.) To limit the risks attendant to borrowing, the 1940 Act requires a fund to maintain an "asset coverage" of at least 300% of the amount of its borrowings, provided that in the event that the

fund's asset coverage falls below 300%, the fund is required to reduce the amount of its borrowings so that it meets the 300% asset coverage threshold within three days (not including Sundays and holidays). Asset coverage means the ratio that the value of a fund's total assets (including amounts borrowed), minus liabilities other than borrowings, bears to the aggregate amount of all borrowings. Certain trading practices and investments, such as reverse repurchase agreements, may be considered to be borrowing and thus subject to the 1940 Act restrictions. Borrowing money to increase portfolio holdings is known as "leveraging." Borrowing, especially when used for leverage, may cause the value of the Fund's shares to be more volatile than if the Fund did not borrow. This is because borrowing tends to magnify the effect of any increase or decrease in the value of the Fund's portfolio holdings. Borrowed money thus creates an opportunity for greater gains, but also greater losses. To repay borrowings, the Fund may have to sell securities at a time and at a price that is unfavorable to the Fund. There also are costs associated with borrowing money, and these costs would offset and could eliminate the Fund's net investment income in any given period. Currently, the Fund does not contemplate borrowing money for leverage but if the Fund does so, it will not likely do so to a substantial degree. The policy above will be interpreted to permit the Fund to engage in trading practices and investments that may be considered to be borrowing to the extent permitted by the 1940 Act. Short-term credits necessary for the settlement of securities transactions and arrangements with respect to securities lending will not be considered to be borrowings under the policy. Practices and investments that may involve leverage but are not considered to be borrowings are not subject to the policy.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to underwriting set forth above, the 1940 Act does not prohibit a fund from engaging in the underwriting business or from underwriting the securities of other issuers; in fact, the 1940 Act permits a fund to have underwriting commitments of up to 25% of its assets under certain circumstances. Those circumstances currently are that the amount of the fund's underwriting commitments, when added to the value of the fund's investments in issuers where the fund owns more than 10% of the outstanding voting securities of those issuers, cannot exceed the 25% cap. A fund engaging in transactions involving the acquisition or disposition of portfolio securities may be considered to be an underwriter under the 1933 Act. Under the 1933 Act, an underwriter may be liable for material omissions or misstatements in an issuer's registration statement or prospectus. Securities purchased from an issuer and not registered for sale under the 1933 Act are considered restricted securities. There may be a limited market for these securities. If these securities are registered under the 1933 Act, they may then be eligible for sale but participating in the sale may subject the seller to underwriter liability. These risks could apply to a fund investing in restricted securities. Although it is not believed that the application of the 1933 Act provisions described above would cause the Fund to be engaged in the business of underwriting, the policy above will be interpreted not to prevent the Fund from engaging in transactions involving the acquisition or disposition of portfolio securities, regardless of whether the Fund may be considered to be an underwriter under the 1933 Act.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to lending set forth above, the 1940 Act does not prohibit a fund from making loans; however, SEC staff interpretations currently prohibit funds from lending more than one-third of their total assets, except through the purchase of debt obligations or the use of repurchase agreements. (A repurchase agreement is an agreement to purchase a security, coupled with an agreement to sell that security back to the original seller on an agreed-upon date at a price that reflects current interest rates. The SEC frequently treats repurchase agreements as loans.) While lending securities may be a source of income to the Fund, as with other extensions of credit, there are risks of delay in recovery or even loss of rights in the underlying securities should the borrower fail financially. However, loans would be made only when the Fund's Manager or a Subadviser believes the income justifies the attendant risks. The Fund also will be permitted by this policy to make loans of money, including to other funds. The Fund would have to obtain exemptive relief from the SEC to make loans to other funds. The policy above will be interpreted not to prevent the Fund from purchasing or investing in debt obligations and loans. In addition, collateral arrangements with respect to options, forward currency and futures transactions and other derivative instruments, as well as delays in the settlement of securities transactions, will not be considered loans.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to issuing senior securities set forth above, "senior securities" are defined as fund obligations that have a priority over the fund's shares with respect to the payment of dividends or the distribution of fund assets. The 1940 Act prohibits a fund from issuing senior securities except that the fund may borrow money in amounts of up to one-third of the fund's total assets from banks for any purpose. A fund also may borrow up to 5% of the fund's total assets from banks or other lenders for temporary purposes, and these

borrowings are not considered senior securities. The issuance of senior securities by a fund can increase the speculative character of the fund's outstanding shares through leveraging. Leveraging of the Fund's portfolio through the issuance of senior securities magnifies the potential for gain or loss on monies, because even though the Fund's net assets remain the same, the total risk to investors is increased to the extent of the Fund's gross assets. The policy above will be interpreted not to prevent collateral arrangements with respect to swaps, options, forward or futures contracts or other derivatives, or the posting of initial or variation margin.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to real estate set forth above, the 1940 Act does not prohibit a fund from owning real estate; however, a fund is limited in the amount of illiquid assets it may purchase. Investing in real estate may involve risks, including that real estate is generally considered illiquid and may be difficult to value and sell. Owners of real estate may be subject to various liabilities, including environmental liabilities. To the extent that investments in real estate are considered illiquid, an SEC rule limits a fund's purchases of illiquid securities to 15% of net assets. The policy above will be interpreted not to prevent the Fund from investing in real estate-related companies, companies whose businesses consist in whole or in part of investing in real estate, instruments (like mortgages) that are secured by real estate or interests therein, or real estate investment trust securities.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to commodities set forth above, the 1940 Act does not prohibit a fund from owning commodities, whether physical commodities and contracts related to physical commodities (such as oil or grains and related futures contracts), or financial commodities and contracts related to financial commodities (such as currencies and, possibly, currency futures). However, a fund is limited in the amount of illiquid assets it may purchase. To the extent that investments in commodities are considered illiquid, an SEC rule limits a fund's purchases of illiquid securities to 15% of net assets. If the Fund were to invest in a physical commodity or a physical commodity-related instrument, the Fund would be subject to the additional risks of the particular physical commodity and its related market. The value of commodities and commodity-related instruments may be extremely volatile and may be affected either directly or indirectly by a variety of factors. There also may be storage charges and risks of loss associated with physical commodities. The policy above will be interpreted to permit investments in exchange-traded funds that invest in physical and/or financial commodities.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to concentration set forth above, the 1940 Act does not define what constitutes "concentration" in an industry. The SEC staff has taken the position that investment of 25% or more of a fund's total assets in one or more issuers conducting their principal activities in the same industry or group of industries constitutes concentration. It is possible that interpretations of concentration could change in the future. A fund that invests a significant percentage of its total assets in a single industry may be particularly susceptible to adverse events affecting that industry and may be more risky than a fund that does not concentrate in an industry. The policy above will be interpreted to refer to concentration as that term may be interpreted from time to time. The policy also will be interpreted to permit investment without limit in the following: securities of the U.S. government and its agencies or instrumentalities; securities of state, territory, possession or municipal governments and their authorities, agencies, instrumentalities or political subdivisions; securities of foreign governments; and repurchase agreements collateralized by any such obligations. Accordingly, issuers of the foregoing securities will not be considered to be members of any industry. There also will be no limit on investment in issuers domiciled in a single jurisdiction or country. The policy also will be interpreted to give broad authority to the Fund as to how to classify issuers within or among industries.

The Fund's fundamental policies will be interpreted broadly. For example, the policies will be interpreted to refer to the 1940 Act and the related rules as they are in effect from time to time, and to interpretations and modifications of or relating to the 1940 Act by the SEC and others as they are given from time to time. When a policy provides that an investment practice may be conducted as permitted by the 1940 Act, the policy will be interpreted to mean either that the 1940 Act expressly permits the practice or that the 1940 Act does not prohibit the practice.

Diversification

The Fund is currently classified as a diversified fund under the 1940 Act. This means that the Fund may not purchase securities of an issuer (other than obligations issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government, its agencies or instrumentalities) if, with respect to 75% of its total assets, (a) more than 5% of the Fund's total assets would be invested in securities of that issuer or (b) the Fund would hold more than 10% of the outstanding voting securities of that issuer. With respect to the remaining 25%

of its total assets, the Fund can invest more than 5% of its assets in one issuer. Under the 1940 Act, the Fund cannot change its classification from diversified to non-diversified without shareholder approval.

Non-Fundamental Investment Policies

The Fund's non-fundamental investment policies are as follows:

- The Fund may not invest in other registered open-end management investment companies and registered unit investment trusts in reliance upon the provisions of subparagraphs (G) or (F) of Section 12(d)(1) of the 1940 Act. The foregoing investment policy does not restrict the Fund from (i) acquiring securities of other registered investment companies in connection with a merger, consolidation, reorganization, or acquisition of assets, or (ii) purchasing the securities of registered investment companies, to the extent otherwise permissible under Section 12(d)(1) of the 1940 Act.
- The Fund may not purchase or otherwise acquire any security if, as a result, more than 15% of its net assets would be invested in securities that are illiquid. The Fund monitors the portion of the Fund's total assets that is invested in illiquid securities on an ongoing basis, not only at the time of investment in such securities.

Commodity Exchange Act Regulation — Exclusion from Commodity Pool Operator Definition

The Fund is operated by persons who have claimed an exclusion, granted to operators of registered investment companies like the Fund, from registration as a "commodity pool operator" with respect to the Fund under the CEA and, therefore are not subject to registration or regulation with respect to the Fund under the CEA. As a result, the Fund is limited in its ability to trade instruments subject to the CFTC's jurisdiction, including commodity futures (which include futures on broad-based securities indexes, interest rate futures and currency futures), options on commodity futures, and certain swaps or other investments, either directly or indirectly through investments in other investment vehicles (collectively, "Commodity Interests").

Under this exclusion, the Fund must satisfy one of the following two trading limitations whenever it establishes a new Commodity Interest position: (1) the aggregate initial margin and premiums required to establish the Fund's Commodity Interest positions does not exceed 5% of the liquidation value of the Fund's portfolio (after accounting for unrealized profits and unrealized losses on any such investments); or (2) the aggregate net notional value of the Fund's Commodity Interests, determined at the time the most recent position was established, does not exceed 100% of the liquidation value of the Fund's portfolio (after accounting for unrealized profits and unrealized losses on any such positions). The Fund is not required to consider its exposure to such instruments if they are held for "bona fide hedging" purposes, as such term is defined in the rules of the CFTC. In addition to meeting one of the foregoing trading limitations, the Fund may not be marketed as a commodity pool or otherwise as a vehicle for trading in the markets for Commodity Interests.

If the Fund's operators were to lose their ability to claim this exclusion with respect to the Fund, such persons would be required to comply with certain CFTC rules regarding commodity pools that could impose additional regulatory requirements and compliance obligations.

INVESTMENT PRACTICES AND RISK FACTORS

In addition to the investment strategies and the risks described in the Fund's Prospectus and in this SAI under Investment Objective and Strategies, the Fund may employ other investment practices and may be subject to other risks, which are described below. The Fund may engage in the practices described below to the extent consistent with its investment objectives, strategies, policies and restrictions. However, as with any investment or investment technique, even when the Fund's Prospectus or this discussion indicates that the Fund may engage in an activity, the Fund may not actually do so for a variety of reasons. In addition, new types of instruments and other securities may be developed and marketed from time to time. Consistent with its investment limitations, the Fund expects to invest in those new types of securities and instruments that its portfolio manager believes may assist the Fund in achieving its investment objective.

This discussion is not intended to limit the Fund's investment flexibility, unless such a limitation is expressly stated, and therefore will be construed by the Fund as broadly as possible. Statements concerning what the Fund may do are not intended to limit any other activity.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence refers to computer systems that can perform tasks that would otherwise require human intelligence and encompasses various different forms of artificial intelligence, including machine learning models. Artificial intelligence is typically designed to analyze data, learn from patterns and experiences, make decisions, and solve problems. Artificial intelligence can be categorized into two types: narrow artificial intelligence, which is designed for specific tasks, and general artificial intelligence, which has the ability to perform any intellectual task that a human can do and includes generative artificial intelligence ("GAI"). GAI is a type of artificial intelligence technology that produces new text, images, audio, and other content based on training data that includes examples of the desired output.

Typically, users enter questions, queries, or other inputs that prompt the GAI model or tool to produce output. In addition, some software uses GAI to suggest changes, summarize information, or translate text. Artificial intelligence has various applications in many fields such as healthcare, finance, transportation, and law.

The use of artificial intelligence in general may adversely impact markets, the overall performance of the Fund's investments, or the services provided to the Fund by its service providers. The Manager or the Subadviser or a third party service provider may use and/or expand its use of artificial intelligence in connection with its business, operating and investment activities and the Fund's investments may also use such technologies. Actual usage of such artificial intelligence will vary, and while the Manager or the Subadviser expects that it and the third party service providers to the Fund may, from time to time, adopt and adjust usage policies and procedures governing the use of artificial intelligence by its personnel, there is a risk of misuse of artificial intelligence technologies.

Artificial intelligence is highly reliant on the collection and analysis of large amounts of data and complex algorithms, but it is not possible nor practicable to incorporate all data that would be relevant for a task conducted by artificial intelligence. Therefore, it is possible that the information provided through use of artificial intelligence could be insufficient, incomplete, inaccurate or biased leading to adverse effects for the Fund, including, potentially, operational errors and investment losses.

Artificial intelligence and its current and potential future applications, including in the investment and financial sectors, as well as the regulatory frameworks within which they operate, continue to rapidly evolve, and it is impossible to predict the full extent of future applications or regulations. Ongoing and future regulatory actions with respect to artificial intelligence generally or artificial intelligence's use in any industry in particular may alter, perhaps to a materially adverse extent, the ability of the Manager or the Subadviser, a third-party service provider, the Fund or its investments to utilize artificial intelligence in the manner it has to-date, and may have an adverse impact on the ability of any of those entities to continue to operate as intended.

Bank Obligations

The Fund may invest in all types of bank obligations, including certificates of deposit ("CDs"), time deposits and bankers' acceptances. CDs are short-term negotiable obligations of commercial banks. Time deposits are non-negotiable deposits maintained in banking institutions for specified periods of time at stated interest rates. Bankers' acceptances are time drafts drawn on commercial banks by borrowers usually in connection with international transactions.

U.S. commercial banks organized under federal law are supervised and examined by the Comptroller of the Currency and are required to be members of the Federal Reserve System and to be insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (the "FDIC"). U.S. banks organized under state law are supervised and examined by state banking authorities, but are members of the Federal Reserve System only if they elect to join. Most state banks are insured by the FDIC (although such insurance may not be of material benefit to the Fund, depending upon the principal amount of CDs of each bank held by the Fund) and are subject to federal examination and to a substantial body of federal law and regulation. As a result of federal and state laws and regulations, U.S. branches of U.S. banks are, among other things, generally required to maintain specified levels of reserves, and are subject to other supervision and regulation designed to promote financial soundness. Banks may be particularly susceptible to certain economic factors, such as interest rate changes and adverse developments in the market for real estate. Fiscal and monetary policy and general economic cycles can affect the availability and cost of funds, loan demand and asset quality and thereby impact the earnings and financial conditions of banks.

Obligations of foreign branches of U.S. banks, such as CDs and time deposits, may be general obligations of the parent bank in addition to the issuing branch, or may be limited by the terms of a specific obligation and governmental regulation. Such obligations are subject to different risks than are those of U.S. banks or U.S. branches of foreign banks. These risks relate to foreign economic and political developments, foreign governmental restrictions that may adversely affect payment of principal

and interest on the obligations, foreign exchange controls and foreign withholding and other taxes on interest income. Foreign branches of U.S. banks and foreign branches of foreign banks are not necessarily subject to the same or similar regulatory requirements that apply to U.S. banks, such as mandatory reserve requirements, loan limitations and accounting, auditing and financial recordkeeping requirements. In addition, less information may be publicly available about a foreign branch of a U.S. bank or about a foreign bank than about a U.S. bank.

Obligations of U.S. branches of foreign banks may be general obligations of the parent bank, in addition to the issuing branch, or may be limited by the terms of a specific obligation and by federal and state regulation as well as governmental action in the country in which the foreign bank has its head office. A U.S. branch of a foreign bank with assets in excess of $1 billion may or may not be subject to reserve requirements imposed by the Federal Reserve System or by the state in which the branch is located if the branch is licensed in that state. In addition, branches licensed by the Comptroller of the Currency and branches licensed by certain states ("State Branches") may or may not be required to: (a) pledge to the regulator, by depositing assets with a designated bank within the state; and (b) maintain assets within the state in an amount equal to a specified percentage of the aggregate amount of liabilities of the foreign bank payable at or through all of its agencies or branches within the state. The deposits of State Branches may not necessarily be insured by the FDIC. In addition, there may be less publicly available information about a U.S. branch of a foreign bank than about a U.S. bank.

Volatility in the banking system may impact the viability of banking and financial services institutions. In the event of failure of any of the financial institutions where the Fund maintains its cash and cash equivalents, there can be no assurance that the Fund would be able to access uninsured funds in a timely manner or at all and the Fund may incur losses. Any such event could adversely affect the business, liquidity, financial position and performance of the Fund.

Benchmark Reference Rates Risk

Many debt securities, derivatives, and other financial instruments utilize benchmark or reference rates for variable interest rate calculations, including the Euro Interbank Offer Rate, Sterling Overnight Index Average Rate, and the Secured Overnight Financing Rate (each a "Reference Rate"). Instruments in which the Fund invests may pay interest at floating rates based on such Reference Rates or may be subject to interest caps or floors based on such Reference Rates. The Fund and issuers of instruments in which the Fund invests may also obtain financing at floating rates based on such Reference Rates. The elimination of a Reference Rate or any other changes to or reforms of the determination or supervision of Reference Rates could have an adverse impact on the market for, or value of, any instruments or payments linked to those Reference Rates.

For example, some Reference Rates, as well as other types of rates and indices, are described as "benchmarks" and have been the subject of ongoing national and international regulatory reform, including under the European Union regulation on indices used as benchmarks in financial instruments and financial contracts (known as the "Benchmarks Regulation"). The Benchmarks Regulation has been enacted into United Kingdom law by virtue of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (as amended), subject to amendments made by the Benchmarks (Amendment and Transitional Provision) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/657) and other statutory instruments. Following the implementation of these reforms, the manner of administration of benchmarks has changed and may further change in the future, with the result that relevant benchmarks may perform differently than in the past, the use of benchmarks that are not compliant with the new standards by certain supervised entities may be restricted, and certain benchmarks may be eliminated entirely. Such changes could cause increased market volatility and disruptions in liquidity for instruments that rely on or are impacted by such benchmarks. Additionally, there could be other consequences which cannot be predicted.

Commercial Paper

Commercial paper (including variable amount master demand notes and funding agreements) consists of short-term, unsecured promissory notes issued by corporations, partnerships, trusts and other entities to finance short-term credit needs.

Common Stock

Common stocks are shares of ownership in a corporation or other entity that entitle the holder to a pro rata share of the profits of the corporation, if any, distributed as dividends to holders of common stock, without preference over any other shareholder or class of shareholders, including holders of the entity's preferred stock and other senior equity securities. Common stock usually carries with it the right to vote and frequently an exclusive right to do so.

Convertible Securities

Convertible securities are fixed income securities (usually debt or preferred stock) that may be converted or exchanged for a prescribed amount of common stock or other equity securities of the same or a different issuer within a particular period of time at a specified price or formula. A convertible security entitles the holder to receive interest paid or accrued on debt or the dividend paid on preferred stock until the convertible security matures or is redeemed, converted or exchanged. Before conversion or exchange, convertible securities ordinarily provide a stream of income with generally higher yields than those of common stocks of the same or similar issuers, but lower than the yield of nonconvertible debt. However, there can be no assurance of current income because the issuers of the convertible securities may default on their obligations. Convertible securities are usually subordinated to comparable nonconvertible debt or preferred stock, but rank senior to common stock in a corporation's capital structure.

The value of a convertible security is generally related to (1) its yield in comparison with the yields of other securities of comparable maturity and quality that do not have a conversion privilege and/or (2) its worth, at market value, if converted or exchanged into the underlying common stock. A convertible security may be subject to redemption at the option of the issuer at a price established in the convertible security's governing instrument, which may be less than the ultimate conversion or exchange value.

Convertible securities are subject to stock market and other risks associated with equity securities, as well as credit, interest rate and other risks associated with fixed income securities. As the market price of the equity security underlying a convertible security falls, the convertible security tends to trade on the basis of its yield and other fixed income characteristics. As the market price of such equity security rises, the convertible security tends to trade on the basis of its equity conversion features. Investments in convertible securities generally entail less risk than investments in common stock of the same issuer.

Synthetic Convertible Securities

A synthetic convertible security is comprised of two distinct securities that together resemble convertible securities in certain respects. Synthetic convertible securities are created by combining non-convertible bonds or preferred shares with common stocks, warrants or stock call options. The options that will form elements of synthetic convertible securities will be listed on a securities exchange. The two components of a synthetic convertible security, which will be issued with respect to the same entity, generally are not offered as a unit, and may be purchased and sold by the Fund at different times. Synthetic convertible securities differ from convertible securities in certain respects, including that each component of a synthetic convertible security has a separate market value and responds differently to market fluctuations. Investing in synthetic convertible securities involves the risk normally involved in holding the securities comprising the synthetic convertible security.

Custodial Receipts

The Fund may acquire custodial receipts or certificates underwritten by securities dealers or banks that evidence ownership of future interest payments, principal payments or both on certain municipal obligations. The underwriter of these certificates or receipts typically purchases municipal obligations and deposits the obligations in an irrevocable trust or custodial account with a custodian bank, which then issues receipts or certificates that evidence ownership of the periodic unmatured coupon payments and the final principal payment on the obligations. Although under the terms of a custodial receipt, the Fund would be typically authorized to assert its rights directly against the issuer of the underlying obligation, the Fund could be required to assert through the custodian bank those rights as may exist against the underlying issuer. Thus, in the event the underlying issuer fails to pay principal and/or interest when due, the Fund may be subject to delays, expenses and risks that are greater than those that would have been involved if the Fund had purchased a direct obligation of the issuer. In addition, in the event that the trust or custodial account in which the underlying security has been deposited is determined to be an association taxable as a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes, the yield on the underlying security would be reduced by any entity-level corporate taxes paid by the issuer.

Custodial receipts may also evidence ownership of future interest payments, principal payments or both on certain U.S. government obligations. Such obligations are held in custody by a bank on behalf of the owners. Custodial receipts are generally not considered obligations of the U.S. government for purposes of securities laws.

Cybersecurity Risk

Like other funds and business enterprises, the Fund, the Manager and the Subadviser and their service providers are subject to the risk of cyber incidents occurring from time to time. With the increased use of technologies such as mobile devices and Web-based or "cloud" applications, and the dependence on the Internet and computer systems to conduct business, the Fund, the Manager, the Subadviser, and other service providers are susceptible to operational, information security and related risks. In general, cybersecurity incidents can result from deliberate attacks or unintentional events (arising from external or internal sources) that may cause the Fund, the Manager and the Subadviser and/or their service providers to lose proprietary information, suffer data corruption, physical damage to a computer or network system or lose operational capacity. Cybersecurity attacks include, but are not limited to, infection by malicious software, such as malware or computer viruses or gaining unauthorized access to digital systems, networks or devices that are used to service the Fund's operations (e.g., through "hacking," "phishing" or malicious software coding) or other means for purposes of misappropriating assets or sensitive information, corrupting data, or causing operational disruption. Cybersecurity attacks may also be carried out in a manner that does not require gaining unauthorized access, such as causing denial-of-service attacks on the Fund's websites (i.e., efforts to make network services unavailable to intended users). Recently, geopolitical tensions may have increased the scale and sophistication of deliberate cybersecurity attacks, particularly those from nation-states or from entities with nation-state backing. In addition, authorized persons could inadvertently or intentionally release confidential or proprietary information stored on the Fund's systems.

Cybersecurity incidents affecting the Fund's Manager, the Subadviser, and other service providers to the Fund or its shareholders (including, but not limited to, Fund accountants, custodians, sub-custodians, transfer agents and financial intermediaries) have the ability to cause disruptions and impact business operations, potentially resulting in financial losses to both the Fund and its shareholders, interference with the Fund's ability to calculate its net asset value, impediments to trading, the inability of Fund shareholders to transact business and the Fund to process transactions (including fulfillment of Fund share purchases and redemptions), violations of applicable privacy and other laws (including the release of private shareholder information) and attendant breach notification and credit monitoring costs, regulatory fines, penalties, litigation costs, reputational damage, reimbursement or other compensation costs, forensic investigation and remediation costs, and/or additional compliance costs. Similar adverse consequences could result from cybersecurity incidents affecting issuers of securities in which the Fund invests, counterparties with which the Fund engages in transactions, governmental and other regulatory authorities, exchange and other financial market operators, banks, brokers, dealers, insurance companies and other financial institutions (including financial intermediaries and other service providers) and other parties. In addition, substantial costs may be incurred in order to safeguard against and reduce the risk of any cybersecurity incidents in the future. In addition to administrative, technological and procedural safeguards, the Fund's Manager and the Subadviser have established business continuity plans in the event of, and risk management systems to prevent or reduce the impact of, such cybersecurity incidents. However, there are inherent limitations in such plans and systems, including the possibility that certain risks have not been identified, as well as the rapid development of new threats. Furthermore, the Fund cannot control the cybersecurity plans and systems put in place by its service providers or any other third parties whose operations may affect the Fund and its shareholders. The Fund and its shareholders could be negatively impacted as a result.

New ways to carry out cyber attacks continue to develop. There is a chance that some risks have not been identified or prepared for, or that an attack may not be detected, which puts limitations on the Fund's, the Manager's and the Subadviser's and/or their service providers' ability to plan for or respond to a cyber attack.

Debt and Fixed Income Securities

The Fund may invest in a variety of debt and fixed income securities, which may be issued by governmental, corporate or other issuers. Debt securities may pay fixed, floating or variable rates of interest or interest at a rate contingent upon some other factor. Variable rate securities reset at specified intervals, while floating rate securities reset whenever there is a change in a specified index rate. In most cases, these reset provisions reduce the effect of market interest rates on the value of the security. However, some securities do not track the underlying index directly, but reset based on formulas that can produce an effect similar to leveraging; others may provide for interest payments that vary inversely with market rates. The market prices of these securities may fluctuate significantly when interest rates change.

These securities share principal risks. For example, the level of interest income generated by the Fund's fixed income investments may decline due to a decrease in market interest rates. Thus, when fixed income securities mature or are sold, they

may be replaced by lower-yielding investments. Also, their values fluctuate with changes in interest rates. A decrease in interest rates will generally result in an increase in the value of the Fund's fixed income investments. Conversely, during periods of rising interest rates, the value of the Fund's fixed income investments will generally decline. However, a change in interest rates will not have the same impact on all fixed rate securities. For example, the magnitude of these fluctuations will generally be greater when the Fund's duration or average maturity is longer. In addition, certain fixed income securities are subject to credit risk, which is the risk that an issuer of securities will be unable to pay principal and interest when due, or that the value of the security will suffer because investors believe the issuer is unable to pay. Recently, there have been inflationary price movements. As such, fixed income securities markets may experience heightened levels of interest rate volatility and liquidity risk.

Changing Interest Rates. In a low or negative interest rate environment, debt securities may trade at, or be issued with, negative yields, which means the purchaser of the security may receive at maturity less than the total amount invested. To the extent the Fund holds a negatively-yielding debt security or has a bank deposit with a negative interest rate, the Fund would generate a negative return on that investment. Cash positions may also subject the Fund to increased counterparty risk to the Fund's bank. Debt market conditions are highly unpredictable and some parts of the market are subject to dislocations. In a low or negative interest rate environment, some investors may seek to reallocate assets to other income-producing assets. This may cause the price of such higher yielding instruments to rise, could further reduce the value of instruments with a negative yield, and may limit the Fund's ability to locate fixed income instruments containing the desired risk/return profile. Changes in monetary or fiscal policy may exacerbate the risks associated with changing interest rates. In the past, the U.S. government and certain foreign central banks have taken steps to stabilize markets by, among other things, reducing interest rates. In recent years, the U.S. government implemented increases to the federal funds interest rate and there may be further rate increases or other actions which may increase market volatility to the extent inconsistent with general market expectations. As interest rates rise, there is risk that rates across the financial system also may rise. To the extent rates increase substantially and/or rapidly, the Fund may be subject to significant losses. Changing interest rates could have unpredictable effects on the markets and may expose fixed income markets to heightened volatility, increased redemptions, and potential illiquidity.

Fixed Income Securities Ratings. Securities rated in the fourth highest ratings category by a NRSRO, such as those rated BBB by S&P, or Baa by Moody's, and unrated securities of comparable quality, are generally regarded as having adequate capacity to pay interest and repay principal but may have some speculative characteristics. Securities rated below the fourth highest ratings category by a NRSRO, including those rated below Baa by Moody's or BBB by S&P, and unrated securities of comparable quality, are generally considered below "investment grade," and may have speculative characteristics, including a greater possibility of default or bankruptcy of the issuers of such securities, market price volatility based upon interest rate sensitivity, questionable creditworthiness and relative liquidity of the secondary trading market. Changes in economic conditions or other circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity for lower rated securities to make principal and interest payments, including a greater possibility of default or bankruptcy of the issuer, than is the case for high rated securities. Appendix B to this SAI contains further information concerning the rating categories of NRSROs and their significance.

Derivatives — Generally

A derivative is a financial instrument that has a value based on, or derived from, the value of one or more underlying reference instruments or measures of value or interest rates ("underlying instruments"), such as a security, a commodity, a currency, an index, an interest rate or a currency exchange rate. A derivative can also have a value based on the likelihood that an event will or will not occur. Derivatives include futures contracts, forward contracts, options and swaps.

The Fund may use derivatives for any purpose, including but not limited to, to attempt to enhance income, yield or return, as a substitute for investing directly in a security or asset, or as a hedging technique in an attempt to manage risk in the Fund's portfolio. The Fund may choose not to make use of derivatives for a variety of reasons, and no assurance can be given that any derivatives strategy employed will be successful. The Fund's use of derivative instruments may be limited from time to time by applicable law, availability or by policies adopted by the Board, Manager or Subadviser (as applicable).

The Fund may utilize multiple derivative instruments and combinations of derivative instruments to seek to adjust the risk and return characteristics of its overall position. Combined positions will typically contain elements of risk that are present in each of its component transactions. It is possible that the combined position will not achieve its intended goal and will instead increase losses or risk to the Fund. Because combined positions involve multiple trades, they result in higher transaction costs and may be more difficult to open and close out.

The Fund may enter into derivatives with standardized terms that have no or few special or unusual components, which are generally traded on an exchange, as well as derivatives with more complex features, singly or in combination. Non-standardized derivatives are generally traded over the counter ("OTC"). OTC derivatives may be standardized or have customized features and may have limited or no liquidity. The Fund's derivatives contracts may be centrally cleared or settled bilaterally directly with a counterparty. The Fund's derivatives contracts may be cash settled or physically settled.

In addition to the instruments and strategies discussed in this section, additional opportunities in connection with derivatives and other similar or related techniques may become available to the Fund as a result of the development of new techniques, the development of new derivative instruments or a regulatory authority broadening the range of permitted transactions. The Fund may utilize these opportunities and techniques to the extent that they are consistent with the Fund's investment objectives and permitted by its investment limitations and applicable regulatory authorities. These opportunities and techniques may involve risks different from or in addition to those summarized herein.

- *Risks of Derivatives Generally*. The use of derivatives involves special considerations and risks, certain of which are summarized below, and may result in losses to the Fund. In general, derivatives may increase the volatility of the Fund and may involve a small investment of cash relative to the magnitude of the risk or exposure assumed. Even a small investment in derivatives may magnify or otherwise increase investment losses to the Fund.
- *Market risk.* Derivatives can be complex, and their success depends in part upon the portfolio manager's ability to forecast correctly future market or other trends or occurrences or other financial or economic factors or the value of the underlying instrument. Even if the portfolio manager's forecasts are correct, other factors may cause distortions or dislocations in the markets that result in losses or otherwise unsuccessful transactions. Derivatives may behave in unexpected ways, especially in abnormal or volatile market conditions. The market value of the derivative itself or the market value of underlying instruments may change in a way that is adverse to the Fund's interest. There is no assurance that the use of derivatives will be advantageous to the Fund or that the portfolio manager will use derivatives to hedge at an appropriate time.
- *Illiquidity risk*. The Fund's ability to close out or unwind a derivative prior to expiration or maturity depends on the existence of a liquid market or, in the absence of such a market, the ability and willingness of the other party to the transaction (the "counterparty") to enter into a transaction closing out the position. If there is no market or the Fund is not successful in its negotiations, the Fund may not be able to sell or unwind the derivative position at an advantageous or anticipated time or price. This may also be the case if the counterparty becomes insolvent. The Fund may be required to make delivery of portfolio securities or other underlying instruments in order to settle a position or to sell portfolio securities or assets at a disadvantageous time or price in order to obtain cash to settle the position. While a position remains open, the Fund continues to be subject to investment risk on a derivative. The Fund may or may not be able to take other actions or enter into other transactions, including hedging transactions, to limit or reduce its exposure to the derivative. Illiquidity risk may be enhanced if a derivative transaction is particularly large. Certain derivatives, including certain OTC options and swaps, may be considered illiquid and therefore subject to the Fund's limitation on illiquid investments.
- *Leverage risk*. Certain derivative transactions may have a leveraging effect on the Fund, meaning that the Fund can obtain significant investment exposure in return for meeting a relatively small margin or other investment requirement. An adverse change in the value of an underlying instrument can result in losses substantially greater than the amount invested in the derivative itself. When the Fund engages in transactions that have a leveraging effect, the value of the Fund is likely to be more volatile and certain other risks also are likely to be compounded. This is because leverage generally magnifies the effect of any increase or decrease in the value of an investment. Certain derivatives have the potential for unlimited loss, regardless of the size of the initial investment.
- *Margin risk.* Certain derivatives require the Fund to make initial margin payments, a form of security deposit intended to protect against nonperformance of the derivative contract. The Fund may have to post additional margin (known as "variation margin") if the value of the derivative position changes in a manner adverse to the Fund. Derivatives may be difficult to value, which may result in increased payment requirements to counterparties or a loss of value to the Fund. If the Fund has insufficient cash to meet additional margin requirements, it might need to sell securities at a disadvantageous time.
- *Speculation risk.* Derivatives used for non-hedging purposes may result in losses which are not offset by increases in the value of portfolio holdings or declines in the cost of securities or other assets to be acquired. In the event that the Fund uses a derivative as an alternative to purchasing or selling other investments or in order to obtain desired exposure to an index or

market, the Fund will be exposed to the same risks as are incurred in purchasing or selling the other investments directly, as well as the risks of the derivative transaction itself, such as counterparty risk.

- *Counterparty risk.* Derivatives involve the risk of loss resulting from the actual or potential insolvency or bankruptcy of the counterparty or the failure by the counterparty to make required payments or otherwise comply with the terms of the contract. In the event of default by a counterparty (or its affiliates), the Fund may have contractual remedies pursuant to the agreements related to the transaction, which may be limited by applicable law in the case of the counterparty's (or its affiliates') bankruptcy. The Fund may not be able to recover amounts owed to it by an insolvent counterparty.
- *Operational risk.* There may be incomplete or erroneous documentation or inadequate collateral or margin, or transactions may fail to settle. The Fund may have only contractual remedies in the event of a counterparty default, and there may be delays, costs or disagreements as to the meaning of contractual terms and litigation in enforcing those remedies.
- *OTC risk.* Derivative transactions that are traded OTC, such as options, swaps, forward contracts, and options on foreign currencies, are entered into directly with counterparties or financial institutions acting as market makers, rather than being traded on exchanges or centrally cleared. Because OTC derivatives and other transactions are traded between counterparties based on contractual relationships, the Fund is subject to increased risk that its counterparty will not perform its obligations under the related contracts. Although the Fund intends to enter into transactions only with counterparties which the Fund believes to be creditworthy, there can be no assurance that a counterparty will not default and that the Fund will not sustain a loss on a transaction as a result. Information available on counterparty creditworthiness may be incomplete or outdated, thus reducing the ability to anticipate counterparty defaults. The Fund bears the risk of loss of the amount expected to be received under an OTC derivative in the event of the default or bankruptcy of the counterparty to the OTC derivative. When a counterparty's obligations are not fully secured by collateral, then the Fund is essentially an unsecured creditor of the counterparty. If the counterparty defaults, the Fund will have contractual remedies, but there is no assurance that a counterparty will be able to meet its obligations pursuant to such contracts or that, in the event of default, the Fund will succeed in enforcing contractual remedies. Credit/counterparty risk still exists even if a counterparty's obligations are secured by collateral because the Fund's interest in collateral may not be perfected or additional collateral may not be promptly posted as required. Credit/counterparty risk also may be more pronounced if a counterparty's obligations exceed the amount of collateral held by the Fund (if any), the Fund is unable to exercise its interest in collateral upon default by the counterparty, or the termination value of the instrument varies significantly from the marked-to-market value of the instrument.
- *Non-U.S. derivatives risk.* Derivative transactions may be conducted OTC outside of the United States or traded on foreign exchanges. Such transactions may not be regulated as effectively as similar transactions in the United States, may not involve a clearing mechanism and related guarantees and are subject to the risk of governmental actions affecting trading in, or the price of, foreign securities or currencies. The value of such positions also could be adversely affected by (1) other foreign political, legal and economic factors, (2) lesser availability than in the United States of data on which to make trading decisions, (3) delays in the Fund's ability to act upon economic events occurring in foreign markets during non-business hours in the United States, (4) the imposition of different exercise and settlement terms, procedures, margin requirements, fees, taxes or other charges than in the United States and (5) lesser trading volume. Counterparty risk and many of the risks of OTC derivatives transactions are also applicable to derivative transactions conducted outside the United States.
- *Currency derivatives risk.* Currency related transactions may be negatively affected by factors such as government exchange controls, blockages, and manipulations. Exchange rates may be influenced by factors extrinsic to a country's economy. Also, there is no systematic reporting of last sale information with respect to foreign currencies. As a result, the information on which trading in currency derivatives is based may not be as complete as, and may be delayed beyond, comparable data for other types of transactions.
- *Turnover risk.* Use of derivatives involves transaction costs, which may be significant. The Fund may be required to sell or purchase investments in connection with derivative transactions, potentially increasing the Fund's portfolio turnover rate and transaction costs. Use of derivatives also may increase the amount of taxable income to shareholders, if applicable.

Risks Associated with Hedging with Derivatives. If the portfolio manager uses a hedging strategy at the wrong time or judges market conditions incorrectly, hedging strategies may reduce the Fund's return. Successful use of derivatives to hedge positions depends on the correlation between the price of the derivative and the price of the hedged asset.

The Fund may attempt to protect against declines in the value of the Fund's portfolio assets by entering into a variety of derivatives transactions, including selling futures contracts, entering into swaps or purchasing puts on indices or futures contracts (short hedging). Short hedging involves the risk that the prices of the futures contracts or the value of the swap or the applicable index will correlate imperfectly with price movements in the Fund's assets. If the value of the assets held in the Fund's portfolio declines while the Fund has used derivative instruments in a short hedge, and the prices referenced in the short hedge do not also decline, the value of the Fund's assets would decline, and the short hedge would not hedge or mitigate the loss in the value of the assets. With respect to a derivative transaction based on an index, the risk of imperfect correlation increases as the composition of the Fund's portfolio diverges from the assets included in the applicable index. To compensate for the imperfect correlation of movements in the price of the portfolio securities being hedged and movements in the price of the hedging instruments, the Fund may use derivative instruments in a greater dollar amount than the dollar amount of portfolio assets being hedged. It might do so if the historical volatility of the prices of the portfolio assets being hedged is more than the historical volatility of the applicable index.

If the Fund has used derivatives to hedge or otherwise reduce the Fund's risk exposure to a particular position and then disposes of that position at a time at which it cannot also settle, terminate or close out the corresponding hedge position, this may create short investment exposure. Certain "short" derivative positions involve investment leverage, and the amount of the Fund's potential loss is theoretically unlimited.

The Fund can use derivative instruments to establish a position in the market as a temporary substitute for the purchase of individual securities or other assets (long hedging) by buying futures contracts and/or calls on such futures contracts, indices or on securities or other assets, or entering into swaps. It is possible that when the Fund does so the market might decline. If the Fund then decides not to invest in the assets because of concerns that the market might decline further or for other reasons, the Fund will realize a loss on the hedge position that is not offset by a reduction in the price of the asset the Fund had intended to purchase.

Risk of Government Regulation of Derivatives. The regulation of derivatives transactions and funds that engage in such transactions is an evolving area of law and is subject to modification by government, self-regulatory organization and judicial action. Registered investment companies are subject to regulatory limitations on their use of derivative investments and certain financing transactions (e.g. reverse repurchase agreements). Among other things, a fund that invests in derivative instruments beyond a specified limited amount must apply a value-at-risk based limit to its use of certain derivative instruments and financing transactions and must adopt and implement a derivatives risk management program. A fund that uses derivative instruments in a limited amount, as specified by applicable rules, is not subject to the same restrictions. Regulatory restrictions may restrict the Fund's ability to engage in certain derivatives transactions and/or increase the costs of such derivatives transactions, which could adversely affect the value or performance of the Fund.

The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (the "Dodd-Frank Act") has caused broad changes to the OTC derivatives market and granted significant authority to the SEC and the CFTC to regulate OTC derivatives and market participants. Pursuant to such authority, rules have been enacted that currently require clearing of many OTC derivatives transactions and may require clearing of additional OTC derivatives transactions in the future and that impose minimum margin and capital requirements for uncleared OTC derivatives transactions. Similar regulations have been or are being adopted in other jurisdictions around the world. The implementation of the clearing requirement has increased the costs of derivatives transactions since investors have to pay fees to clearing members and are typically required to post more margin for cleared derivatives than had historically been the case. While the new rules and regulations and central clearing of some derivatives transactions are designed to reduce systemic risk (i.e., the risk that the interdependence of large derivatives dealers could cause them to suffer liquidity, solvency or other challenges simultaneously), there is no assurance that they will achieve that result, and mandatory clearing of derivatives may expose the Fund to new kinds of costs and risks.

Additionally, new regulations may result in increased uncertainty about credit/counterparty risk and may limit the flexibility of the Fund to protect its interests in the event of an insolvency of a derivatives counterparty. In the event of a counterparty's (or its affiliate's) insolvency, the Fund's ability to exercise remedies, such as the termination of transactions, netting of obligations and realization on collateral, could be stayed or eliminated under the rules of the applicable exchange or clearing corporation or under relatively new special resolution regimes adopted in the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union and various other jurisdictions. Such regimes provide government authorities with broad authority to intervene when a financial institution is experiencing financial difficulty. In particular, with respect to counterparties who are subject to

such proceedings in the United Kingdom and the European Union, the liabilities of such counterparties to the Fund could be reduced, eliminated, or converted to equity in such counterparties (sometimes referred to as a "bail in").

Foreign Currency Instruments and Hedging Strategies

The Fund may use options and futures contracts on foreign currencies and forward currency contracts and currency swap agreements (collectively, "Currency Instruments"), deliverable and non-deliverable, to attempt to hedge against movements in the values of the foreign currencies in which the Fund's securities are denominated or to attempt to enhance the Fund's return or yield. The Fund may also use such investments to attempt to establish a short position or to gain exposure to a market that would be more costly or difficult to access with other types of investments, such as bonds or currency. The Fund may also engage in foreign currency transactions on a spot (cash) basis at the rate prevailing in the currency exchange market at the time of the transaction. The Fund may determine not to hedge, and the Fund may be completely unhedged at any point in time. In cases when a particular currency is difficult to hedge or difficult to hedge against the U.S. dollar, the Fund may seek to hedge against price movements in that currency by entering into transactions using Currency Instruments on another currency or a basket of currencies, the value of which the portfolio manager believes will have a high degree of positive correlation to the value of the currency being hedged. The risk that movements in the price of the Currency Instrument will not correlate perfectly with movements in the price of the currency subject to the hedging transaction is magnified when this strategy is used.

Currency Instruments Risks. In addition to the risks found under "Derivatives – Risks of Derivatives Generally," Currency Instruments are subject to the following risks:

The value of Currency Instruments depends on the value of the underlying foreign currency relative to the U.S. dollar. Because foreign currency transactions occurring in the interbank market might involve substantially larger amounts than those involved in the Fund's use of such Currency Instruments, the Fund could be disadvantaged by having to deal in the odd lot market (generally consisting of transactions of less than $1 million) for the underlying foreign currencies at prices that are less favorable than for round lots. There is no systematic reporting of last sale information for foreign currencies or any regulatory requirement that quotations available through dealers or other market sources be firm or revised on a timely basis. Quotation information generally is representative of very large transactions in the interbank market and thus might not reflect odd-lot transactions where rates might be less favorable. The interbank market in foreign currencies is a global, round-the-clock market. To the extent the U.S. options or futures markets are closed while the markets for the underlying currencies remain open, significant price and rate movements might take place in the underlying markets that cannot be reflected in the U.S. markets for the Currency Instruments until they reopen.

Settlement of hedging transactions involving foreign currencies might be required to take place within the country issuing the underlying currency. Thus, the Fund might be required to accept or make delivery of the underlying foreign currency in accordance with any U.S. or foreign regulations regarding the maintenance of foreign banking arrangements by U.S. residents and might be required to pay any fees, taxes and charges associated with such delivery assessed in the issuing country.

Forward Currency Contracts

The Fund may enter into forward currency contracts to purchase or sell foreign currencies for a fixed amount of U.S. dollars or another currency at a future date and at a price set by the parties to the forward currency contract. Forward currency contracts are traded directly between currency traders (usually large commercial banks) and their customers (such as the Fund).

The Fund may purchase a forward currency contract to lock in the U.S. dollar price of a security denominated in a foreign currency that the Fund intends to acquire (a long hedge). The Fund may sell a forward currency contract to lock in the U.S. dollar equivalent of the proceeds from the anticipated sale of a security, dividend or interest payment denominated in a foreign currency (a short hedge). A "position hedge" is when the Fund owns a security denominated in, for example, euros and to protect against a possible decline in the euro's value, the Fund enters into a forward currency contract to sell euros in return for U.S. dollars. A "position hedge" tends to offset both positive and negative currency fluctuations but would not offset changes in security values caused by other factors. A "proxy hedge" is when the Fund owns a security denominated in, for example, euros and to protect against a possible decline in the euro's value, the Fund enters into a forward currency contract to sell a currency expected to perform similarly to the euro in return for U.S. dollars. A "proxy hedge" could offer advantages in terms of cost, yield or efficiency, but generally would not hedge currency exposure as effectively as a position hedge to the extent the proxy currency does not perform similarly to the targeted currency. The Fund could, in fact, lose money on both legs of the hedge, *i.e.*, between the euro and proxy currency, and between the proxy currency and the dollar. The Fund also may use forward currency contracts to

attempt to enhance return or yield. The Fund could use forward currency contracts to increase its exposure to foreign currencies that the portfolio manager believes might rise in value relative to the U.S. dollar, or shift its exposure to foreign currency fluctuations from one currency to another. For example, if the Fund's portfolio manager believes that the U.S. dollar will increase in value relative to the euro, the Fund could write a forward contract to buy U.S. dollars in three months at the current price in order to sell those U.S. dollars for a profit if the U.S. dollar does in fact appreciate in value relative to the euro. The cost to the Fund of engaging in forward currency contracts varies with factors such as the currency involved, the length of the contract period and the market conditions then prevailing. Because forward currency contracts are usually entered into on a principal basis, no fees or commissions are involved. When the Fund enters into a forward currency contract, it relies on the counterparty to make or take delivery of the underlying currency at the maturity of the contract or to otherwise fulfill its obligations in connection with settlement. Failure by the counterparty to do so would result in the loss of any expected benefit of the transaction.

The precise matching of forward currency contract amounts, and the value of the securities involved generally will not be possible because the value of such securities, measured in the foreign currency, will change after the forward currency contract has been established. Thus, the Fund may need to purchase or sell foreign currencies in the spot (*i.e.*, cash) market to the extent such foreign currencies are not covered by forward currency contracts. The projection of short-term currency market movements is extremely difficult, and the successful execution of a short-term hedging strategy is highly uncertain.

Successful use of forward currency contracts depends on the portfolio manager's skill in analyzing and predicting currency values. Forward currency contracts may substantially change the Fund's exposure to changes in currency exchange rates and could result in losses to the Fund if currencies do not perform as the portfolio manager anticipates. There is no assurance that the portfolio manager's use of forward currency contracts will be advantageous to the Fund or that the portfolio manager will hedge at an appropriate time.

Non-deliverable Forwards. The consummation of a deliverable foreign exchange forward requires the actual exchange of the principal amounts of the two currencies in the contract (i.e., settlement on a physical basis). Forward currency contracts in which the Fund may engage also include non-deliverable forwards ("NDFs"). NDFs are cash-settled, forward contracts on foreign currencies (each a "Reference Currency") that are non-convertible and that may be thinly traded or illiquid. NDFs involve an obligation to pay an amount equal to the difference between the prevailing market exchange rate for the Reference Currency and the agreed upon exchange rate, with respect to an agreed notional amount. NDFs are subject to many of the risks associated with derivatives in general and forward currency transactions, including risks associated with fluctuations in foreign currency and the risk that the counterparty will fail to fulfill its obligations.

Under the Dodd-Frank Act, NDFs are classified as "swaps" and are therefore subject to the full panoply of CFTC swap regulations under the Dodd-Frank Act. Although NDFs have historically been traded OTC, in the future, pursuant to the Dodd-Frank Act, they may be subject to mandatory clearing. Non-centrally-cleared NDFs are subject to mandatory minimum margin requirements for uncleared swaps. Deliverable foreign exchange forwards that solely involve the exchange of two different currencies on a specific future date at a fixed rate agreed upon by the parties are not considered "swaps" and accordingly are not subject to many of the regulations that apply to NDFs. However, as mandated by the Dodd-Frank Act and set forth in CFTC regulations adopted thereunder, foreign exchange forwards must be reported to a swap data repository, and swap dealers and major swap participants who are party to such transactions remain subject to the business conduct standards pertaining to swaps in connection with such deliverable foreign exchange forwards.

Futures Contracts and Options on Futures Contracts

Generally, a futures contract is an exchange-traded, standardized agreement that obligates the seller of the contract to sell a specified quantity of an underlying instrument or asset, such as a security, currency or commodity, to the purchaser of the contract, who has the obligation to buy the underlying instrument or asset, at a specified price and date. In the case of futures on indices, the two parties agree to take or make delivery of an amount of cash equal to the difference between the level of the index calculated for purposes of settlement and the price at which the contract originally was written. Options on futures give the purchaser the right to assume a position in a futures contract at the specified exercise price at any time during the period of the option or at the expiration of the option, depending on the terms of the option.

Futures contracts, by their terms, have stated expirations and, at a specified point in time prior to expiration, trading in a futures contract for the current delivery month will cease. As a result, an investor wishing to maintain exposure to a futures

contract with the nearest expiration must close out the position in the expiring contract and establish a new position in the contract for the next delivery month, a process referred to as "rolling." The process of rolling a futures contract can be profitable or unprofitable depending in large part on whether the futures price for the subsequent delivery month is less than or more than the price of the expiring contract.

Futures contracts and related options may be used for hedging and non-hedging purposes, such as to simulate full investment in the underlying instrument or asset while retaining a cash balance for portfolio management purposes, as a substitute for direct investment in the underlying instrument or asset, to facilitate trading, to reduce transaction costs, or to seek higher investment returns (e.g., when a futures contract or option is priced more attractively than the underlying instrument). In addition, futures strategies can be used to manage the average duration of the Fund's fixed income portfolio, if applicable. The Fund may sell a debt futures contract or a call option thereon or purchase a put option on that futures contract to attempt to shorten the portfolio's average duration. Alternatively, the Fund may buy a debt futures contract or a call option thereon or sell a put option thereon to attempt to lengthen the portfolio's average duration.

At the inception of a futures contract the Fund is required to deposit "initial margin" with a futures commission merchant ("FCM") in an amount at least equal to the amount designated by the futures exchange. Margin must also be deposited when writing a call or put option on a futures contract, in accordance with applicable exchange rules. Unlike margin in securities transactions, initial margin on futures contracts does not represent a borrowing, but rather is in the nature of a performance bond or good-faith deposit that is required to be returned to the Fund at the termination of the transaction if all contractual obligations have been satisfied. Under certain circumstances, such as periods of high volatility, the Fund may be required by an exchange or by its FCM to increase the level of its initial margin payment, and initial margin requirements might be increased generally in the future by regulatory action.

In addition to initial margin payments, during the life of the transaction "variation margin" payments are made to and from the FCM as the value of the margin and the underlying derivative transaction varies, a process known as "marking-to-market." Variation margin is intended to represent a daily settlement of the Fund's obligations to or from an FCM. When the Fund purchases an option on a futures contract, the premium paid plus transaction costs is all that is at risk. However, there may be circumstances when the purchase of an option on a futures contract would result in a loss to the Fund when the use of a futures contract would not, such as when there is no movement in the value of the securities or currencies being hedged. In that case, the Fund would lose the premium it paid for the option plus transaction costs. In contrast, when the Fund purchases or sells a futures contract or writes a call or put option thereon, it is subject to daily variation margin calls that could be substantial in the event of adverse price movements. If the Fund has insufficient cash to meet daily variation margin requirements, it might need to sell securities at a time when such sales are disadvantageous.

Although some futures and options on futures call for making or taking delivery of the underlying instrument or asset, generally those contracts are closed out prior to delivery by offsetting purchases or sales of matching futures or options (involving the same instrument or asset and delivery month). If an offsetting purchase price is less than the original sale price, the Fund realizes a gain, or if it is more, the Fund realizes a loss. If an offsetting sale price is more than the original purchase price, the Fund realizes a gain, or if it is less, the Fund realizes a loss. The Fund will also bear transaction costs for each contract, which will be included in these calculations. Positions in futures and options on futures may be closed only on an exchange or board of trade that provides a secondary market. However, there can be no assurance that a liquid secondary market will exist for a particular contract at a particular time. In such event, it may not be possible to close a futures contract or options position.

Under certain circumstances, futures exchanges may establish daily limits on the amount that the price of a futures contract or an option on a futures contract can vary from the previous day's settlement price; once that limit is reached, no trades may be made that day at a price beyond the limit. Daily price limits do not limit potential losses because prices could move to the daily limit for several consecutive days with little or no trading, thereby preventing liquidation of unfavorable positions. If the Fund were unable to liquidate a futures contract or an option on a futures position due to the absence of a liquid secondary market, the imposition of price limits or otherwise, it could incur substantial losses. The Fund would continue to be subject to market risk with respect to the position. In addition, except in the case of purchased options, the Fund would continue to be required to make daily variation margin payments.

Risks of Futures Contracts and Options Thereon. In addition to the risks found under "Derivatives – Risks of Derivatives Generally," futures contracts and options on futures contracts are subject to the following risks:

Successful use of futures contracts and related options depends upon the ability of the portfolio manager to assess movements in the direction of prices of securities, commodities, measures of value, or interest or exchange rates, which requires different skills and techniques than assessing the value of individual securities. Moreover, futures contracts relate not to the current price level of the underlying instrument or asset, but to the anticipated price level at some point in the future; accordingly trading of stock index futures may not reflect the trading of the securities that are used to formulate the index or even actual fluctuations in the index itself. There is, in addition, the risk that movements in the price of the futures contract will not correlate with the movements in the prices of the securities or other assets being hedged. Price distortions in the marketplace, resulting from increased participation by speculators in the futures market (among other things), may also impair the correlation between movements in the prices of futures contracts and movements in the prices of the hedged assets. If the price of the futures contract moves less than the price of assets that are the subject of the hedge, the hedge will not be fully effective; but if the price of the assets being hedged has moved in an unfavorable direction, the Fund would be in a better position than if it had not hedged at all. If the price of the assets being hedged has moved in a favorable direction, this advantage may be partially offset by losses on the futures position.

Positions in futures contracts and related options may be closed out only on an exchange or board of trade that provides a market for such contracts. Although the Fund intends to purchase and sell futures and related options only on exchanges or boards of trade where there appears to be a liquid market, there is no assurance that such a market will exist for any particular contract at any particular time. In such event, it may not be possible to close a futures position and, in the event of adverse price movements, the Fund would continue to be required to make variation margin payments, where applicable. Options have a limited life and thus can be disposed of only within a specific time period.

Purchasers of options on futures contracts pay a premium in cash at the time of purchase which, in the event of adverse price movements, could be lost. Sellers of options on futures contracts must post initial margin and are subject to additional margin calls that could be substantial in the event of adverse price movements. Because of the low margin deposits required, futures trading involves a high degree of leverage; as a result, a relatively small price movement in a futures contract may result in immediate and substantial loss, or gain, to the Fund. In addition, the Fund's activities in the futures markets may result in a higher portfolio turnover rate (see "Portfolio Transactions and Brokerage") and additional transaction costs in the form of added brokerage commissions.

As noted above, exchanges may impose limits on the amount by which the price of a futures contract or related option is permitted to change in a single day. If the price of a contract moves to the limit for several consecutive days, the Fund may be unable during that time to close its position in that contract and may have to continue making payments of variation margin. The CFTC and domestic exchanges have also established (and continue to evaluate and revise) speculative position limits on the maximum speculative position that any person, or group of persons acting in concert, may hold or control in particular contracts. Under current rules and regulations, other accounts managed by the Manager or, if applicable, Subadviser are combined with the positions held by the Fund under the Manager's or, if applicable, Subadviser's management for position limit purposes, unless an exemption applies. This aggregation could preclude additional trading by the Fund in such contracts and may require positions held by the Fund to be liquidated, which may adversely affect the performance of the Fund.

When the Fund engages in futures transactions, it will also be exposed to the credit risk of its FCM. If the Fund's FCM becomes bankrupt or insolvent, or otherwise defaults on its obligations to the Fund, the Fund may not receive all amounts owed to it in respect of its trading, even if the clearinghouse fully discharges all of its obligations. If an FCM were not to appropriately segregate client assets to the full extent required by the CEA, the Fund might not be fully protected in the event of the bankruptcy of an FCM. In the event of an FCM's bankruptcy, the Fund would be limited to recovering only a pro rata share of all available funds segregated on behalf of an FCM's combined customer accounts for the relevant account class, even if certain property held by an FCM is specifically traceable to the Fund (for example, U.S. Treasury bills deposited by the Fund). Such situations could arise due to various factors, or a combination of factors, including inadequate FCM capitalization, inadequate controls on customer trading and inadequate customer capital. In addition, in the event of the bankruptcy or insolvency of a clearinghouse, the Fund might experience a loss of funds deposited through its FCM as margin with the clearinghouse, a loss of unrealized profits on its open positions and the loss of funds owed to it as realized profits on closed positions. Such a bankruptcy or insolvency might also cause a substantial delay before the Fund could obtain the return of funds owed to it by an FCM who is a member of such clearinghouse.

Options

A call option gives the purchaser the right to buy, and obligates the writer to sell, an underlying investment (such as a specified security, commodity, currency, interest rate, currency exchange rate or index) at an agreed-upon price ("strike price"). A put option gives the purchaser the right to sell, and obligates the writer to buy, an underlying investment at an agreed-upon price. An American-style option may be exercised at any time during the term of the option, while a European-style option may be exercised only at the expiration of the option. Purchasers of options pay an amount, known as a premium, to the option writer in exchange for the right granted under the option contract.

The value of an option position will reflect, among other things, the current market value of the underlying instrument, the time remaining until expiration, the relationship of the strike price to the market price of the underlying instrument, the historical price volatility of the underlying instrument and general market conditions. If the purchaser does not exercise the option, it will expire and the purchaser will have only lost the premium paid. If a secondary market exists, a purchaser or the writer may terminate a put option position prior to its exercise by selling it in the secondary market at its current price. The Fund will pay a brokerage commission each time it buys or sells an option. Such commissions may be higher than those that would apply to direct purchases or sales of the underlying instrument.

Exchange-traded options in the United States are issued by a clearing organization affiliated with the exchange on which the option is listed and are standardized with respect to the underlying instrument, expiration date, contract size and strike price. In contrast, OTC options (options not traded on exchanges) are contracts between the Fund and a counterparty (usually a securities dealer or a bank) with no clearing organization guarantee. The terms of OTC options generally are established through negotiation with the other party to the option contract (the counterparty). For a discussion on options on futures see "*Futures Contracts and Options on Futures Contracts*".

Put Options. In return for receipt of the premium, the writer of a put option assumes the obligation to pay the strike price for the option's underlying instrument if the buyer exercises the option. A put writer would generally expect to profit, although its gain would be limited to the amount of the premium it received, if the underlying instrument's price remains greater than or equal to the strike price. If the underlying instrument's price falls below the strike price, the put writer would expect to suffer a loss. The buyer of a put option can expect to realize a gain if the underlying instrument's price falls enough to offset the cost of purchasing the option. Any losses suffered by the buyer would be limited to the amount of the premium plus related transaction costs.

Optional delivery standby commitments are a type of put that gives the buyer of an underlying instrument the right to sell the underlying instrument back to the seller on specified terms to induce a purchase of the underlying instrument.

Call Options. In return for the receipt of the premium, the writer of a call option assumes the obligation to sell the underlying instrument at the strike price to the buyer upon exercise of the option. A call writer would generally expect to profit, although its gain would be limited to the amount of the premium it received, if the option goes unexercised, which typically occurs when the underlying instrument's price remains less than or equal to the strike price. If the underlying instrument's price were to rise above the strike price, the writer of the call option would generally expect to suffer a loss, which is theoretically unlimited. A call buyer's maximum loss is the premium paid for the call option, whereas the buyer's maximum profit is theoretically unlimited.

Straddles. A long straddle is the purchase of a call and a put option with the same expiration date and relating to the same underlying instrument where the strike price of the put is less than or equal to the strike price of the call. The Fund may enter into a long straddle when its portfolio manager believes that the underlying instrument's price will move significantly during the term of the options. A short straddle is a combination of a call and a put written on the same underlying instrument with the same expiration date where the strike price of the put is less than or equal to the strike price of the call. In a covered short straddle, the underlying instrument is considered cover for both the put and the call that the Fund has written. The Fund may enter into a short straddle when the portfolio manager believes that it is unlikely that the underlying instrument's prices will experience volatility during the term of the options.

Options on Indices. Puts and calls on indices are similar to puts and calls on other underlying instruments except that all settlements are in cash and gains or losses depend on changes in the level of the index rather than on price movements of individual underlying instruments. The writer of a call on an index receives a premium and the obligation to pay the purchaser an amount of cash equal to the difference between the closing level of the index and the strike price times a specified multiple

("multiplier"), if the closing level of the index is greater than the strike price of the call. The writer of a put on an index receives a premium and the obligation to deliver to the buyer an amount of cash equal to the difference between the closing level of the index and strike price times the multiplier if the closing level is less than the strike price.

Risks of Options – In addition to the risks described under "*Derivatives – Risks of Derivatives Generally*," options are also subject to the following risks:

Options on Indices Risk. The risks of investment in options on indices may be greater than options on securities and other instruments. Because index options are settled in cash, when the Fund writes a call on an index it generally cannot provide in advance for other underlying instruments because it may not be practical for the call writer to hedge its potential settlement obligations by acquiring and holding the underlying securities. The Fund can offset some of the risk of writing a call index option by holding a diversified portfolio of securities similar to those on which the underlying index is based. However, the Fund cannot, as a practical matter, acquire and hold a portfolio containing exactly the same securities as underlie the index and, as a result, bears a risk that the value of the securities held will vary from the value of the index.

If the Fund exercises an index option before the closing index value for that day is available, there is the risk that the level of the underlying index may subsequently change. If such a change causes the exercised option to fall out-of-the-money, the Fund will be required to pay the difference between the closing index value and the strike price of the option (times the applicable multiplier) to the assigned writer.

Timing Risk. The hours of trading for options may not conform to the hours during which the underlying instrument are traded. To the extent that the options markets close before the markets for the underlying instrument, significant price and rate movements can take place in the underlying markets that cannot be reflected in the options markets. Options are marked to market daily and their value will be affected by changes in the value of the underlying instrument, changes in the dividend rates of the underlying securities, an increase in interest rates, changes in the actual or perceived volatility of the stock market and the underlying instrument and the remaining time to the options' expiration. Additionally, the exercise price of an option may be adjusted downward before the option's expiration as a result of the occurrence of certain corporate or other events affecting the underlying instrument, such as extraordinary dividends, stock splits, merger or other extraordinary distributions or events. A reduction in the exercise price of an option would reduce the Fund's capital appreciation potential on an underlying instrument.

*Yield Curve Options***.** The Fund may enter into options on the "spread," or yield differential, between two fixed income securities, in transactions referred to as "yield curve" options. In contrast to other types of options, a yield curve option is based on the difference between the yields of designated securities, rather than the prices of the individual securities, and is settled through cash payments. Accordingly, a yield curve option is profitable to the holder if this differential widens (in the case of a call) or narrows (in the case of a put), regardless of whether the yields of the underlying securities increase or decrease.

Yield curve options may be used for the same purposes as other options on securities. Specifically, the Fund may purchase or write such options for hedging purposes. For example, the Fund may purchase a call option on the yield spread between two securities, if it owns one of the securities, anticipates purchasing the other security and wants to hedge against an adverse change in the yield spread between the two securities. The Fund may also purchase or write yield curve options for other than hedging purposes (e.g., in an effort to increase its current income) if, in the judgment of the portfolio manager the Fund may profit from movements in the spread between the yields of the underlying securities. The trading of yield curve options is subject to all of the risks associated with the trading of other types of options. In addition, however, such options present risk of loss even if the yield of one of the underlying securities remains constant, if the spread moves in a direction or to an extent that was not anticipated.

Swaps

Generally, a swap agreement involves the exchange between two parties of their respective commitments to pay or receive cash flows, *e.g.*, an exchange of floating rate payments for fixed-rate payments. Swaps may be negotiated bilaterally and traded OTC (OTC swaps) or, for certain types of swaps, must be executed through a centralized exchange or regulated facility and be cleared through a regulated clearinghouse (cleared swaps). Swaps include but are not limited to, interest rate swaps, total return swaps, index swaps, inflation indexed swaps, currency swaps, credit default swaps and options on swaps or "swaptions".

OTC swap agreements can be individually negotiated and structured to include exposure to a variety of different types of investments (such as individual securities, baskets of securities and securities indices) or market factors. The swapped returns

are generally calculated with respect to a notional amount, that is, the nominal or face amount used to calculate the payments to be made between the parties to the OTC swap.

The Fund may enter into a swap agreement for hedging or non-hedging purposes, including but not limited to, to enhance returns, increase liquidity, protect against currency and security price fluctuations, manage duration and gain exposure to certain markets or securities in a more cost-efficient manner.

Risks of Swaps Generally. In addition to the risks found under "Derivatives – Risks of Derivatives Generally," swaps are subject to the following risks:

Depending on their structure, swap agreements may increase or decrease the overall volatility of the Fund's investments and its share price and yield and may affect the Fund's exposure to long- or short-term interest rates (in the United States or abroad), foreign currency values, mortgage-backed security values, corporate borrowing rates or other market factors such as security prices or inflation rates.

Swap agreements will tend to shift the Fund's investment exposure from one type of investment to another. For example, if the Fund agrees to exchange payments in U.S. dollars for payments in foreign currency, the swap agreement would tend to decrease the Fund's exposure to U.S. interest rates and increase its exposure to foreign currency and interest rates.

The absence of a central exchange or market for OTC swap transactions may lead, in some instances, to difficulties in trading and valuation, especially in the event of market disruptions.

Cleared Swaps. Relatively recent legislation and implementing regulation require certain swaps to be cleared through a regulated clearinghouse. Although this clearing mechanism is generally intended to reduce counterparty credit risk, it may disrupt or limit the swap market and may result in swaps being more difficult to trade or value. As swaps become more standardized, the Fund may not be able to enter into swaps that meet its investment needs. The Fund also may not be able to find a clearing member and clearinghouse willing to accept a swap for clearing. In a cleared swap, a central clearing organization will be the counterparty to the transaction. The Fund will assume the risk that the clearinghouse and the clearing member through which the Fund holds its position may be unable to or may otherwise fail to perform their obligations.

When the Fund enters into a cleared swap transaction, the Fund is subject to the credit and counterparty risk of the clearinghouse and the clearing member through which it holds its cleared position. Credit/counterparty risk of market participants with respect to centrally cleared swaps is concentrated in a few clearinghouses, and it is not clear how an insolvency proceeding of a clearinghouse would be conducted and what impact an insolvency of a clearinghouse would have on the financial system. A clearing member is obligated by contract and by applicable regulation to segregate all funds received from customers with respect to cleared derivatives transactions from the clearing member's proprietary assets. However, all funds and other property received by a clearing broker from its customers generally are held by the clearing broker on a commingled basis in an omnibus account by account class, and the clearing member may invest those funds in certain instruments permitted under the applicable regulations. The assets of the Fund might not be fully protected in the event of the bankruptcy of the Fund's clearing member, because the Fund would be limited to recovering only a pro rata share of all available funds segregated on behalf of the clearing broker's customers for a relevant account class. Also, the clearing member is required to transfer to the clearing organization the amount of margin required by the clearing organization for cleared derivatives, which amounts generally are held in an omnibus account at the clearing organization for all customers of the clearing member. Regulations promulgated by the CFTC require that the clearing member notify the clearinghouse of the amount of initial margin provided by the clearing member to the clearing organization that is attributable to each cleared swaps customer. However, if the clearing member does not provide accurate reporting, the Fund is subject to the risk that a clearing organization will use the Fund's assets held in an omnibus account at the clearing organization to satisfy payment obligations of a defaulting customer of the clearing member to the clearing organization. In addition, clearing members generally provide to the clearing organization the net amount of variation margin required for cleared swaps for all of its customers in the aggregate, rather than the gross amount of each customer. The Fund is therefore subject to the risk that a clearing organization will not make variation margin payments owed to the Fund if another customer of the clearing member has suffered a loss and is in default, and the risk that the Fund will be required to provide additional variation margin to the clearinghouse before the clearinghouse will move the Fund's cleared derivatives transactions to another clearing member. In addition, if a clearing member does not comply with the applicable regulations or its agreement with the Fund, or in the event of fraud or misappropriation of customer assets by a clearing member,

the Fund could have only an unsecured creditor claim in an insolvency of the clearing member with respect to the margin held by the clearing member.

In some ways, centrally cleared swaps arrangements are less favorable to the Fund than OTC swaps arrangements. For example, the Fund may be required to provide greater amounts of margin for cleared swaps than for OTC swaps. Also, in contrast to OTC swaps, following a period of notice to the Fund, a clearing member generally can require termination of existing cleared swaps at any time or increases in margin requirements above the margin that the clearing member required at the beginning of a transaction. Clearinghouses also have broad rights to increase margin requirements for existing transactions or to terminate transactions at any time. Any increase in margin requirements or termination by the clearing member or the clearinghouse could interfere with the ability of the Fund to pursue its investment strategy. Further, any increase in margin requirements by a clearing member could also expose the Fund to greater credit risk of its clearing member, because margin for cleared swaps in excess of clearinghouse margin requirements typically is held by the clearing member. While the documentation in place between the Fund and its clearing members generally provides that the clearing members will accept for clearing all transactions submitted for clearing that are within credit limits (specified in advance) for the Fund, the Fund is still subject to the risk that no clearing member will be willing or able to clear a transaction. In those cases, the transaction might have to be terminated, and the Fund could lose some or all of the benefit of the transaction, including loss of an increase in the value of the transaction and/or loss of hedging protection offered by the transaction. In addition, the documentation governing the relationship between the Fund and its clearing members is developed by the clearing members and generally is less favorable to the Fund than typical OTC swap documentation. For example, this documentation generally includes a one-way indemnity by the Fund in favor of the clearing member, indemnifying the clearing member against losses it incurs in connection with acting as the Fund's clearing member, and the documentation typically does not give the Fund any rights to exercise remedies if the clearing member defaults or becomes insolvent.

Some types of cleared swaps are required to be executed on an exchange or on a swap execution facility ("SEF"). A SEF is a trading platform where multiple market participants can execute swaps by accepting bids and offers made by multiple other participants in the platform. While this execution requirement is designed to increase transparency and liquidity in the cleared swap market, trading on a SEF can create additional costs and risks for the Fund. For example, SEFs typically charge fees, and if the Fund executes swaps on a SEF through a broker intermediary, the intermediary may impose fees as well. Also, the Fund may indemnify a SEF, or a broker intermediary who executes cleared swaps on a SEF on the Fund's behalf, against any losses or costs that may be incurred as a result of the Fund's transactions on the SEF.

The Fund may enter into swap transactions with certain counterparties pursuant to master netting agreements. A master netting agreement provides that all swaps entered into between the Fund and that counterparty shall be regarded as parts of an integral agreement. If amounts are payable on a particular date in the same currency in respect of more than one swap transaction, the amount payable shall be the net amount. In addition, the master netting agreement may provide that if one party (or its affiliates) defaults generally or on any swap, the counterparty can terminate all outstanding swaps with that party. As a result, to the extent the Fund enters into master netting agreements with a counterparty, the Fund may be required to terminate a greater number of swap agreements than if it had not entered into such an agreement, which may result in losses to the Fund.

Interest Rate Swaps, Caps and Floors. Interest rate swaps are agreements between two parties to exchange interest rate payment obligations. Typically, one party's obligation is based on a fixed interest rate while the other party's obligation is based on an interest rate that fluctuates with changes in a designated benchmark. An interest rate cap transaction entitles the purchaser, to the extent that a specified index exceeds a predetermined value, to receive payments on a notional principal amount from the party selling the cap. An interest rate floor transaction entitles the purchaser, to the extent that a specified index falls below a predetermined value, to receive payments on a notional principal amount from the party selling the floor. A collar combines elements of buying a cap and a floor. Caps and floors have an effect similar to buying or writing options. Caps and floors typically have lower liquidity than swaps.

Options on Swaps ("Swaptions"). A swaption is a contract that gives the counterparty the right, but not the obligation to enter into a new swap agreement or to shorten, extend, cancel or otherwise modify an existing swap agreement, at some designated future time on specified terms. The Fund may write (sell) and purchase put and call swaptions. Swaptions are generally subject to the same risks involved in the use of options and swaps. Depending on the terms of the option agreement, the Fund will generally incur a greater degree of risk when it writes a swaption than it will incur when it purchases a swaption.

When the Fund purchases a swaption, only the amount of premium the Fund paid is at risk should the option expire unexercised. However, when the Fund writes a swaption, upon exercise of the option the Fund will become obligated according to the terms of the underlying agreement, which may result in losses to the Fund in excess of the premium it received.

Credit Default Swaps and Related Investments. The Fund may enter into credit default swap contracts for investment purposes and to add leverage to its investment portfolio. As the seller in a credit default swap contract, the Fund would be required to pay the par (or other agreed-upon) value of a debt-reference obligation to the counterparty in the event of a default by a third party on the debt obligation. In return, the Fund would receive from the counterparty a periodic stream of payments over the term of the contract provided that no event of default has occurred. If no default occurs, the Fund would keep the stream of payments and would have no payment obligations. As the seller, the Fund would effectively add leverage to its portfolio because, in addition to its net assets, the Fund would be subject to investment exposure on the swap. Credit default swap contracts involve special risks and may result in losses to the Fund. Credit default swaps may in some cases be illiquid, and they increase credit risk since the Fund has exposure to both the issuer of the referenced obligation and the counterparty to the credit default swap. As there is no central exchange or market for certain credit default swap transactions, they may be difficult to trade or value, especially in the event of market disruptions. It is possible that developments in the swap market, including new or modified government regulation, could adversely affect the Fund's ability to terminate existing credit default swap agreements or to realize amounts to be received under such agreements.

The Fund may also purchase credit default swap contracts to attempt to hedge against the risk of default of debt securities held in its portfolio, in which case the Fund would function as the counterparty referenced in the preceding paragraph. This would involve the risk that the investment may expire worthless and would only generate income in the event of an actual default by the issuer of the underlying obligation (or, as applicable, a credit downgrade or other indication of financial instability). It would also involve credit risk—that the seller may fail to satisfy its payment obligations to the Fund in the event of a default.

The Fund may invest in credit default swap index products that provide exposure to obligations of multiple issuers. The Fund can either buy the index (take on credit exposure) or sell the index (pass credit exposure to a counterparty). Such investments are subject to the associated risks with investments in credit default swaps discussed above.

Distressed Debt Securities

Distressed debt securities are debt securities that are purchased in the secondary market and are the subject of bankruptcy proceedings or otherwise in default as to the repayment of principal and/or interest at the time of acquisition by the Fund or are rated in the lower rating categories (Ca or lower by Moody's and CC or lower by S&P) or, if unrated, are in the judgment of the portfolio manager of equivalent quality. Investment in distressed debt securities is speculative and involves significant risk. The risks associated with high yield securities are heightened when investing in distressed debt securities.

The Fund may make such investments when the portfolio manager believes it is reasonably likely that the issuer of the distressed debt securities will make an exchange offer or will be the subject of a plan of reorganization pursuant to which the Fund will receive new securities (e.g., equity securities) and/or other assets. However, there can be no assurance that such an exchange offer will be made or that such a plan of reorganization will be adopted. In addition, a significant period of time may pass between the time at which the Fund makes its investment in distressed debt securities and the time that any such exchange offer or plan of reorganization is completed. During this period, it is unlikely that the Fund will receive any interest payments on the distressed debt securities, the Fund will be subject to significant uncertainty as to whether the exchange offer or plan will be completed and the Fund may be required to bear extraordinary expenses to protect or recover its investment. Even if an exchange offer is made or a plan of reorganization is adopted with respect to the distressed debt securities held by the Fund, there can be no assurance that the securities or other assets received by the Fund in connection with such exchange offer or plan of reorganization will not have a lower value or income potential than may have been anticipated when the investment was made. Moreover, any securities received by the Fund upon completion of an exchange offer or plan of reorganization may be restricted as to resale. As a result of the Fund's participation in negotiations with respect to any exchange offer or plan of reorganization with respect to an issuer of distressed debt securities, the Fund may be restricted from disposing of such securities.

Equity Securities

Equity securities include exchange-traded and over-the-counter common and preferred stocks, warrants and rights, and securities convertible into common stocks. Equity securities fluctuate in price based on changes in a company's financial condition and overall market and economic conditions. The value of a particular security may decline due to factors that affect a

particular industry or industries, such as an increase in production costs, competitive conditions or labor shortages; or due to general market conditions, such as real or perceived adverse economic conditions, changes in the general outlook for corporate earnings, changes in interest or currency rates or generally adverse investor sentiment. The value of an equity security can be more volatile than the market as a whole and can perform differently from the value of the market as a whole. The value of a company's equity securities may deteriorate because of a variety of factors, including disappointing earnings reports by the issuer, unsuccessful products or services, loss of major customers, major litigation against the issuer or changes in government regulations affecting the issuer or the competitive environment.

Exchange Traded Funds ("ETFs")

ETFs are ownership interests in investment companies, unit investment trusts, depositary receipts and other pooled investment vehicles that are traded on an exchange and that hold a portfolio of securities or other financial instruments (the "Underlying Assets"). The Underlying Assets are typically selected to correspond to the securities that comprise a particular broad based sector or international index, or to provide exposure to a particular industry sector or asset class, including precious metals or other commodities. "Short ETFs" seek a return similar to the inverse, or a multiple of the inverse, of a reference index. Short ETFs carry additional risks because their Underlying Assets may include a variety of financial instruments, including futures and options on futures, options on securities and securities indexes, swap agreements and forward contracts, and a short ETF may engage in short sales. An ETF's losses on short sales are potentially unlimited; however, the Fund's risk would be limited to the amount it invested in the ETF. Certain ETFs are actively managed by a portfolio manager or management team that makes investment decisions on Underlying Assets without seeking to replicate the performance of a reference index or industry sector or asset class.

Unlike shares of typical open-end management investment companies or unit investment trusts, shares of ETFs are designed to be traded throughout the trading day and bought and sold based on market price rather than net asset value. Shares can trade at either a premium or discount to net asset value. The portfolios held by ETFs are typically publicly disclosed on each trading day and an approximation of actual net asset value is disseminated throughout the trading day. An ETF will generally gain or lose value depending on the performance of the Underlying Assets. In the future, as new products become available, the Fund may invest in ETFs that do not have this same level of transparency and, therefore, may be more likely to trade at a larger discount or premium to actual net asset values.

Gains or losses on the Fund's investment in ETFs will ultimately depend on the purchase and sale price of the ETF. An active trading market for an ETF's shares may not develop or be maintained and trading of an ETF's shares may be halted if the listing exchange's officials deem such action appropriate, the shares are delisted from the exchange or the activation of market-wide "circuit breakers" (which are tied to large decreases in stock prices) halts stock trading generally. The performance of an ETF will be reduced by transaction and other expenses, including fees paid by the ETF to service providers. Investors in ETFs are eligible to receive their portion of income, if any, accumulated on the securities held in the portfolio, less fees and expenses of the ETF.

An investment in an ETF involves risks similar to investing directly in the Underlying Assets, including the risk that the value of the Underlying Assets may fluctuate in accordance with changes in the financial condition of their issuers, the value of securities and other financial instruments generally, and other market factors.

If an ETF is a registered investment company (as defined in the 1940 Act), the limitations applicable to the Fund's ability to purchase securities issued by other investment companies apply absent certain exemptive rules or other available exemptive relief. However, under Rule 12d1-4, the Fund may invest in other investment companies, including ETFs, in excess of these limits, subject to certain conditions. These restrictions may limit the Fund's ability to invest in ETFs to the extent desired. Some ETFs are not structured as investment companies and thus are not regulated under the 1940 Act.

Foreign Securities

The risks of investing in securities of non-U.S. issuers or issuers with significant exposure to non-U.S. markets may be related, among other things, to (i) differences in size, liquidity and volatility of, and the degree and manner of regulation of, the securities markets of certain non-U.S. markets compared to the securities markets in the U.S.; (ii) economic, political and social factors; and (iii) foreign exchange matters, such as restrictions on the repatriation of capital, fluctuations in exchange rates between the U.S. dollar and the currencies in which the Fund's portfolio securities are quoted or denominated, exchange control regulations and costs associated with currency exchange. The political and economic structures in certain foreign countries,

particularly emerging markets, are expected to undergo significant evolution and rapid development, and such countries may lack the social, political and economic stability characteristic of more developed countries.

Unanticipated political or social developments may affect the values of the Fund's investments in such countries. The economies and securities and currency markets of many emerging markets have experienced significant disruption and declines. There can be no assurances that these economic and market disruptions will not continue.

Legal remedies available to investors in certain foreign countries may be less extensive than those available to investors in the U.S. or other foreign countries. Accounting standards in other countries are also not necessarily the same as in the United States. If the accounting standards in another country do not require as much detail as U.S. accounting standards, it may be harder for the portfolio manager to completely and accurately determine a company's financial condition. In addition, the U.S. Government has from time to time in the past imposed restrictions, through penalties and otherwise, on foreign investments by U.S. investors such as the Fund. Also, brokerage commissions and other costs of buying or selling securities often are higher in foreign countries than they are in the U.S. This reduces the amount the Fund can earn on its investments.

The Fund generally holds its foreign securities and cash in foreign banks and securities depositories. Some foreign banks and securities depositories may be recently organized or new to the foreign custody business. In addition, there may be limited or no regulatory oversight over their operations. Also, the laws of certain countries may put limits on the Fund's ability to recover its assets if a foreign bank or depository or issuer of a security or any of their agents goes bankrupt. In addition, it is often more expensive for the Fund to buy, sell and hold securities in certain foreign markets than in the U.S. The increased expense of investing in foreign markets reduces the amount the Fund can earn on its investments and typically results in a higher operating expense ratio for the Fund as compared to investment companies that invest only in the United States.

Securities of some foreign companies have lower liquidity, and their prices are more volatile, than securities of comparable domestic companies. Certain foreign countries are known to experience long delays between the trade and settlement dates of securities purchased or sold resulting in increased exposure of the Fund to market and foreign exchange fluctuations brought about by such delays, and to the corresponding negative impact on Fund liquidity.

Foreign Currency Risks

The U.S. dollar value of securities denominated in a foreign currency will vary with changes in currency exchange rates, which can be volatile. Accordingly, changes in the value of the currency in which the Fund's investments are denominated relative to the U.S. dollar will affect the Fund's net asset value. Exchange rates are generally affected by the forces of supply and demand in the international currency markets, the relative merits of investing in different countries and the intervention or failure to intervene of U.S. or foreign governments and central banks. However, currency exchange rates may fluctuate based on factors intrinsic to a country's economy. Some emerging market countries also may have managed currencies, which are not free floating against the U.S. dollar. In addition, emerging markets are subject to the risk of restrictions upon the free conversion of their currencies into other currencies. Any devaluations relative to the U.S. dollar in the currencies in which the Fund's securities are quoted would reduce the Fund's net asset value per share.

Investment in Emerging Markets

Investors are strongly advised to consider carefully the special risks involved in emerging markets, which are in addition to the usual risks of investing in developed foreign markets around the world.

The risks of investing in securities in emerging countries include: (i) less social, political and economic stability; (ii) the smaller size of the markets for such securities and lower volume of trading, which result in a lack of liquidity and in greater price volatility; (iii) certain national policies that may restrict the Fund's investment opportunities, including restrictions on investment in issuers or industries deemed sensitive to national interests; (iv) foreign taxation; (v) the absence of developed structures governing private or foreign investment or allowing for judicial redress for injury to private property; and (vi) military unrest, war and terrorism.

Investors should note that upon the accession to power of authoritarian regimes, the governments of a number of emerging market countries previously expropriated large quantities of real and personal property similar to the property which may be represented by the securities purchased by the Fund. The claims of property owners against those governments were never finally settled. There can be no assurance that any property represented by securities purchased by the Fund will not also be expropriated, nationalized, or otherwise confiscated at some time in the future. If such confiscation were to occur, the Fund

could lose a substantial portion or all of its investments in such countries. The Fund's investments would similarly be adversely affected by exchange control regulation in any of those countries.

Certain countries in which the Fund may invest may have vocal groups that advocate radical religious or revolutionary philosophies or support ethnic independence. Any disturbance on the part of such individuals could carry the potential for widespread destruction or confiscation of property owned by individuals and entities foreign to such country and could cause the loss of the Fund's investment in those countries.

Settlement mechanisms in emerging market securities may be less efficient and reliable than in more developed markets. In such emerging securities markets there may be delays and failures in share registration and delivery. In certain markets there have been times when settlements have been unable to keep pace with the volume of securities transactions, making it difficult to conduct such transactions. The inability of the Fund to make intended securities purchases due to settlement problems could cause the Fund to miss attractive investment opportunities. Inability to dispose of a portfolio security caused by settlement problems could result either in losses to the Fund due to subsequent declines in the value of the portfolio security or, if the Fund has entered into a contract to sell the security, in possible liability to the purchaser. There may also be a danger that, because of uncertainties in the operation of settlement systems in individual markets, competing claims may arise in respect of securities held by or to be transferred to the Fund. Furthermore, compensation schemes may be non-existent, limited or inadequate to meet the Fund's claims in any of these events.

Inflation and rapid fluctuations in inflation rates have had, and may continue to have, very negative effects on the economies and securities markets of certain emerging markets. While some emerging market countries have sought to develop a number of corrective mechanisms to reduce inflation or mitigate its effects, inflation may continue to have significant effects both on emerging market economies and their securities markets. In addition, many of the currencies of emerging market countries have experienced steady devaluations relative to the U.S. dollar and major devaluations have occurred in certain countries. Economies in emerging markets generally are heavily dependent upon international trade and, accordingly, have been and may continue to be affected adversely by economic conditions, trade barriers, exchange controls, managed adjustments in relative currency values and other protectionist measures imposed or negotiated by the countries with which they trade.

Because of the high levels of foreign-denominated debt owed by many emerging market countries, fluctuating exchange rates can significantly affect the debt service obligations of those countries. This could, in turn, affect local interest rates, profit margins and exports, which are a major source of foreign exchange earnings.

To the extent an emerging market country faces a liquidity crisis with respect to its foreign exchange reserves, it may increase restrictions on the outflow of any foreign exchange. Repatriation is ultimately dependent on the ability of the Fund to liquidate its investments and convert the local currency proceeds obtained from such liquidation into U.S. dollars. Where this conversion must be done through official channels (usually the central bank or certain authorized commercial banks), the ability to obtain U.S. dollars is dependent on the availability of such U.S. dollars through those channels and, if available, upon the willingness of those channels to allocate those U.S. dollars to the Fund. The Fund's ability to obtain U.S. dollars may be adversely affected by any increased restrictions imposed on the outflow of foreign exchange. If the Fund is unable to repatriate any amounts due to exchange controls, it may be required to accept an obligation payable at some future date by the central bank or other governmental entity of the jurisdiction involved. If such conversion can legally be done outside official channels, either directly or indirectly, the Fund's ability to obtain U.S. dollars may not be affected as much by any increased restrictions except to the extent of the price which may be required to be paid in U.S. dollars. Furthermore, repatriation of investment income, capital and the proceeds of sales by foreign investors may require governmental registration and/or approval in some countries.

Many emerging market countries have little experience with the corporate form of business organization and may not have well-developed corporation and business laws or concepts of fiduciary duty in the business context. The Fund may encounter substantial difficulties in obtaining and enforcing judgments against individuals and companies located in certain emerging market countries. It may be difficult or impossible to obtain or enforce legislation or remedies against governments, their agencies and sponsored entities.

Disclosure and regulatory standards in emerging markets in many respects are less stringent than in the United States and other major markets. There also may be a lower level of monitoring and regulation of emerging markets and the activities of investors in such markets; enforcement of existing regulations has been extremely limited. Additionally, accounting, auditing and financial reporting and recordkeeping standards in emerging markets may not provide the same degree of investor protection or

information to investors as would generally apply in more developed markets. The Public Company Accounting Oversight Board, which regulates auditors of U.S. public companies, may, from time to time, be unable to inspect audit work papers in certain foreign or emerging market countries.

Trading in the securities of emerging markets presents additional credit and financial risks. The Fund may have limited access to, or there may be a limited number of, potential counterparties that trade in the securities of emerging market issuers. Governmental regulations may restrict potential counterparties to certain financial institutions located or operating in the particular emerging market. Potential counterparties may not possess, adopt or implement creditworthiness standards, financial reporting standards or legal and contractual protections similar to those in developed markets. Currency hedging techniques may not be available or may be limited. The Fund may not be able to reduce or mitigate risks related to trading with emerging market counterparties.

The risk also exists that an emergency situation may arise in one or more emerging markets as a result of which trading of securities may cease or may be substantially curtailed and prices for the Fund's portfolio securities in such markets may not be readily available. Section 22(e) of the 1940 Act permits a registered investment company to suspend redemption of its shares for any period during which an emergency exists, as determined by the SEC. Accordingly, if the Fund believes that appropriate circumstances warrant, it may apply to the SEC for a determination that an emergency exists within the meaning of Section 22(e) of the 1940 Act. During the period commencing from the Fund's identification of such conditions until the date of SEC action, the portfolio securities in the affected markets will be valued at fair value as determined by the Manager in accordance with the Fund's valuation policy.

Although it might be theoretically possible to hedge for anticipated income and gains, the ongoing and indeterminate nature of the risks associated with emerging market investing (and the costs associated with hedging transactions) makes it very difficult to hedge effectively against such risks.

Europe — Recent Events

A number of countries in Europe have experienced severe economic and financial difficulties. Many non-governmental issuers, and even certain governments, have defaulted on, or been forced to restructure, their debts; many other issuers have faced difficulties obtaining credit or refinancing existing obligations; financial institutions have in many cases required government or central bank support, have needed to raise capital, and/or have been impaired in their ability to extend credit; and financial markets in Europe and elsewhere have experienced extreme volatility and declines in asset values and liquidity. These difficulties may continue, worsen or spread within and outside of Europe. Responses to the financial problems by European governments, central banks and others, including austerity measures and reforms, may not work, may result in social unrest and may limit future growth and economic recovery or have other unintended consequences. Further defaults or restructurings by governments and others of their debt could have additional adverse effects on economies, financial markets and asset valuations around the world.

In addition, the United Kingdom left the European Union on January 31, 2020, commonly referred to as "Brexit." Following a transition period, the United Kingdom's post-Brexit trade agreement with the European Union passed into law in December 2020, was provisionally applied effective January 1, 2021, and formally entered into force on May 1, 2021. There is significant market uncertainty regarding Brexit's ramifications. The range and potential implications of possible political, regulatory, economic, and market outcomes cannot be fully known but could be significant, potentially resulting in increased volatility and illiquidity and lower economic growth for companies that rely significantly on Europe for their business activities and revenues. The United Kingdom has one of the largest economies in Europe and is a major trading partner with the European Union countries and the United States. Brexit may create additional and substantial economic stresses for the United Kingdom, including a contraction of the United Kingdom's economy, decreased trade, capital outflows, devaluation of the British pound, as well as a decrease in business and consumer spending and investment. The negative impact on not only the United Kingdom and other European economies but also the broader global economy could be significant. Moreover, other countries may seek to withdraw from the European Union and/or abandon the euro, the common currency of the European Union. A number of countries in Europe have suffered terror attacks, and additional attacks may occur in the future. Europe has also been struggling with mass migration from the Middle East and Africa.

The ultimate effects of these events and other socio-political or geopolitical issues are not known but could profoundly affect global economies and markets. Whether or not the Fund invests in securities of issuers located in Europe or with

significant exposure to European issuers or countries, these events could negatively affect the value and liquidity of the Fund's investments.

Risks Related to Russia's Invasion of Ukraine

Russia's military invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 resulted in the United States, other countries and certain international organizations levying broad economic sanctions against Russia. These sanctions froze certain Russian assets and prohibited, among other things, trading in certain Russian securities and doing business with specific Russian corporate entities, large financial institutions, officials and oligarchs. The sanctions also included the removal of some Russian banks from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT), the electronic network that connects banks globally, and imposed restrictive measures to prevent the Russian Central Bank from undermining the impact of the sanctions. The United States and other countries have also imposed economic sanctions on Belarus and may impose sanctions on other countries that support Russia's military invasion. A number of large corporations and U.S. states have also announced plans to divest interests or otherwise curtail business dealings with certain Russian businesses. These sanctions and any additional sanctions or other intergovernmental actions that may be undertaken against Russia or other countries that support Russia's military invasion in the future may result in the devaluation of Russian or other affected currencies, a downgrade in the sanctioned country's credit rating, and a decline in the value and liquidity of Russian securities and securities of issuers in other countries that support the invasion. The potential for wider conflict may further decrease the value and liquidity of certain Russian securities and securities of issuers in other countries affected by the invasion. In addition, the ability to price, buy, sell, receive, or deliver such securities is also affected due to these measures. For example, the Fund may be prohibited from investing in securities issued by companies subject to such sanctions. In addition, the sanctions may require the Fund to freeze its existing investments in companies operating in or having dealings with Russia or other sanctioned countries, which would prevent the Fund from selling these investments. Any exposure that the Fund may have to Russian counterparties or counterparties in other sanctioned countries also could negatively impact the Fund's portfolio.

Additionally, Russia has taken retaliatory actions, including preventing repatriation of capital by U.S. and other investors. The ongoing conflict has resulted in significant market disruptions, including in certain markets, industries and sectors, such as the oil and natural gas markets, and has negatively affected global supply chains, food supplies, inflation and global growth. The extent and duration of Russia's military actions and the repercussions of such actions (including any sanctions, retaliatory actions and countermeasures, including cyber attacks) are impossible to predict. These and any related events could significantly impact the Fund's performance and the value of an investment in the Fund, even if the Fund does not have direct exposure to Russian issuers or issuers in other countries affected by the invasion.

Eurodollar or Yankee Obligations

Eurodollar bank obligations are U.S. dollar denominated debt obligations issued outside the U.S. capital markets by non-U.S. branches of U.S. banks and by non-U.S. banks. Yankee obligations are U.S. dollar denominated obligations issued in the U.S. capital markets by non-U.S. issuers. Eurodollar (and to a limited extent, Yankee) obligations are subject to certain sovereign risks. One such risk is the possibility that a non-U.S. government might prevent U.S. dollar denominated funds from flowing across its borders. Other risks include: adverse political and economic developments in a non-U.S. country; the extent and quality of government regulation of financial markets and institutions; the imposition of non-U.S. withholding taxes; and expropriation or nationalization of non-U.S. issuers.

Sovereign Government and Supranational Debt Obligations

The Fund may invest in all types of debt securities of governmental issuers in all countries, including emerging markets. These sovereign debt securities may include: debt securities issued or guaranteed by governments, governmental agencies or instrumentalities and political subdivisions located in emerging market countries; debt securities issued by government owned, controlled or sponsored entities located in emerging market countries; interests issued for the purpose of restructuring the investment characteristics of instruments issued by any of the above issuers; participations in loans between emerging market governments and financial institutions; or debt securities issued by supranational entities such as the World Bank. A supranational entity is a bank, commission or company established or financially supported by the national governments of one or more countries to promote reconstruction or development. Included among these entities are the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, the European Investment Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Supranational organizations have no taxing authority and are dependent on their members for payments of interest and principal. There is no guarantee that one or

more members of a supranational organization will continue to make capital contributions. If such contributions are not made, the organization may be unable to pay interest or repay principal on its debt securities, and the Fund may lose money on such investments. Further, the lending activities of such entities are limited to a percentage of their total capital, reserves and net income.

Sovereign debt is subject to risks in addition to those relating to non-U.S. investments generally. As a sovereign entity, the issuing government may be immune from lawsuits in the event of its failure or refusal to pay the obligations when due. The debtor's willingness or ability to repay in a timely manner may be affected by, among other factors, its cash flow situation, the extent of its non-U.S. currency reserves, the availability of sufficient foreign currency exchange on the date a payment is due, the relative size of the debt service burden to the economy as a whole, the sovereign debtor's policy toward principal international lenders and the political constraints to which the sovereign debtor may be subject. Sovereign debtors may also be dependent on disbursements or assistance from non-U.S. governments or multinational agencies, the country's access to trade and other international credits, and the country's balance of trade. Assistance may be dependent on a country's implementation of austerity measures and reforms, economic performance and/or the timely service of such debtor's obligations. Failure to implement such reforms, achieve such levels of economic performance or repay principal or interest when due may result in the cancellation of such third parties' commitments to lend funds to the governmental entity, which may further impair such debtor's ability or willingness to service its debts in a timely manner. Some sovereign debtors have rescheduled their debt payments, declared moratoria on payments or restructured their debt to effectively eliminate portions of it, and similar occurrences may happen in the future. There is no bankruptcy proceeding by which sovereign debt on which governmental entities have defaulted may be collected in whole or in part.

Depositary Receipts

Depositary receipts demonstrate ownership of shares of a foreign issuer and are alternatives to directly purchasing the underlying foreign security. Depositary receipts may be sponsored or unsponsored and include American Depositary Receipts ("ADRs"), Global Depositary Receipts ("GDRs"), European Depositary Receipts ("EDRs") and non-voting depositary receipts ("NVDRs"). ADRs in registered form are typically issued by a U.S. bank or trust company, traded in U.S. dollars, and are designed for use in the domestic market. GDRs, EDRs, NVDRs and other similar instruments may be issued by a U.S. or non-U.S. entity and may be traded in other currencies. GDRs are tradable both in the United States and Europe and are designed for use throughout the world. EDRs are issued in bearer form and are designed for use in European securities markets.

Depositary receipts in general are subject to many of the risks associated with foreign investing (e.g., increased market, illiquidity, currency, political, information and other risks), and even where traded in U.S. dollars are subject to currency risk if the underlying security is traded in a foreign currency. Unsponsored depositary receipts are issued without the participation of the issuer of the underlying foreign security and there may be less information available about such issuers than there is with respect to domestic companies and issuers of securities underlying sponsored depositary receipts. Even if there is information available, there may not be a correlation between such information and the market value of the depositary receipts.

High Yield ("Junk") Bonds

High yield securities are medium or lower rated securities and unrated securities of comparable quality, sometimes referred to as "high yield" or "junk" bonds. Generally, such securities offer a higher current yield than is offered by higher rated securities, but also are predominantly speculative with respect to the issuer's capacity to pay interest and repay principal in accordance with the terms of the securities. The market values of certain of these securities also tend to be more sensitive to individual corporate developments and changes in economic conditions than higher quality bonds. In addition, medium and lower rated securities and comparable unrated securities generally present a higher degree of credit risk. The risk of loss because of default by issuers of these securities is significantly greater because medium and lower rated securities generally are unsecured and frequently subordinated to senior indebtedness. In addition, the market value of securities in lower rated categories is generally more volatile than that of higher quality securities, and the markets in which medium and lower rated securities are traded are more limited than those in which higher rated securities are traded. The existence of limited markets may make it more difficult for the Fund to obtain accurate market quotations for purposes of valuing its securities and calculating its net asset value. Moreover, the lack of a liquid trading market may restrict the availability of securities for the Fund to purchase and may also limit the ability of the Fund to sell securities at their fair value either to meet redemption requests or to respond to changes in the economy or the financial markets.

Lower rated debt obligations often have redemption features that permit an issuer to repurchase the security from the Fund before it matures. If an issuer exercises that right, the Fund may have to replace the security with a lower yielding security, resulting in a decreased return for investors. If the Fund experiences unexpected net redemptions, it may be forced to sell its higher rated bonds, resulting in a decline in the overall credit quality of the securities held by the Fund and increasing the exposure of the Fund to the risks of lower rated securities. Investments in lower rated zero coupon bonds may be more speculative and subject to greater fluctuations in value because of changes in interest rates than lower rated bonds that pay interest currently.

Subsequent to its purchase by the Fund, an issue of securities may cease to be rated or its rating may be reduced below the minimum required for purchase by the Fund (if applicable). Neither event will require sale of these securities by the Fund, but the portfolio manager will consider the event in determining whether the Fund should continue to hold the security.

Illiquid Investments and Restricted Securities

The Fund may invest up to 15% of its net assets in illiquid investments. An illiquid security is any security which the Fund reasonably expects cannot be sold or disposed of in current market conditions in seven calendar days or less without the sale or disposition significantly changing the market value of the security. To the extent required by applicable law and SEC guidance, the Fund will not acquire an illiquid security if such acquisition would cause the aggregate value of illiquid securities to exceed 15% of the Fund's net assets. If at any time the portfolio manager determines that the value of illiquid securities held by the Fund exceeds 15% of the Fund's net assets, the portfolio manager will take such steps as it considers appropriate to reduce the percentage within a reasonable period of time consistent with applicable regulatory requirements. Because illiquid investments may not be readily marketable, the Fund may not be able to dispose of them in a timely manner. As a result, the Fund may be forced to hold illiquid investments while their price depreciates. Depreciation in the price of illiquid investments may cause the net asset value of the Fund to decline.

Restricted securities are securities subject to legal or contractual restrictions on their resale, such as private placements. Such restrictions might prevent the sale of restricted securities at a time when the sale would otherwise be desirable. Under SEC regulations, certain restricted securities acquired through private placements can be traded freely among qualified purchasers. While restricted securities are generally presumed to be illiquid, it may be determined that a particular restricted security is liquid. Investing in these restricted securities could have the effect of increasing the Fund's illiquidity if qualified purchasers become, for a time, uninterested in buying these securities.

Restricted securities may be sold only (1) pursuant to SEC Rule 144A or another exemption, (2) in privately negotiated transactions or (3) in public offerings with respect to which a registration statement is in effect under the 1933 Act. Rule 144A securities, although not registered in the U.S., may be sold to qualified institutional buyers in accordance with Rule 144A under the 1933 Act. As noted above, the Fund may determine that some Rule 144A securities are liquid. Where registration is required, the Fund may be obligated to pay all or part of the registration expenses and a considerable period may elapse between the time of the decision to sell and the time the Fund may be permitted to sell a restricted security under an effective registration statement. If, during such a period, adverse market conditions were to develop, the Fund might obtain a less favorable price than prevailed when it decided to sell.

Illiquid securities may be difficult to value, and the Fund may have difficulty disposing of such securities promptly. The Fund does not consider non-U.S. securities to be restricted if they can be freely sold in the principal markets in which they are traded, even if they are not registered for sale in the U.S.

Liquidity Risk Management. Rule 22e-4 under the 1940 Act requires, among other things, that the Fund and other Franklin Templeton ETFs and open-end funds establish a liquidity risk management program ("LRMP") that is reasonably designed to assess and manage liquidity risk. Rule 22e-4 defines "liquidity risk" as the risk that a fund could not meet requests to redeem shares issued by the fund without significant dilution of the remaining investors' interests in the fund. The Fund has implemented a LRMP designed to meet the relevant requirements. Additionally, the Board, including a majority of the Independent Trustees, approved the designation of the Fund's LRMP administrator to administer such program and review no less frequently than annually a written report prepared by the LRMP administrator that addresses the operation of the LRMP and assesses its adequacy and effectiveness of implementation. There is no guarantee the LRMP will be effective in its operations, and complying with Rule 22e-4 or any amendment thereto, including bearing related costs, could impact the Fund's performance and its ability to achieve its investment objective.

Investments in Other Investment Companies

Subject to applicable statutory and regulatory limitations described below, the Fund may invest in shares of other investment companies, including shares of open-end and closed-end investment companies affiliated or unaffiliated with the Fund, business development companies, exchange-traded funds and unregistered investment companies.

An investment in an investment company is subject to the risks associated with that investment company's portfolio securities. Investments in closed-end funds may entail the additional risk that the market value of such investments may be substantially less than their net asset value. To the extent the Fund invests in shares of another investment company, the Fund will indirectly bear a proportionate share of that investment company's advisory fees and other operating expenses. These fees are in addition to the advisory fees and other operational expenses incurred directly by the Fund. In addition, the Fund could incur a sales charge in connection with purchasing an investment company security or a redemption fee upon the redemption of such security.

Section 12(d)(1)(A) of the 1940 Act provides that a fund may not purchase or otherwise acquire the securities of other investment companies if, as a result of such purchase or acquisition, it would own: (i) more than 3% of the total outstanding voting stock of the acquired investment company; (ii) securities issued by any one investment company having a value in excess of 5% of the fund's total assets; or (iii) securities issued by all investment companies having an aggregate value in excess of 10% of the fund's total assets. These limitations are subject to certain statutory and regulatory exemptions including Rule 12d1-4, which permits the Fund to invest in other investment companies beyond the statutory limits, subject to certain conditions. Among other conditions, the Rule prohibits a fund from acquiring control of another investment company (other than an investment company in the same group of investment companies), including by acquiring more than 25% of its voting securities. In addition, the Rule imposes certain voting requirements when a fund's ownership of another investment company exceeds particular thresholds. If shares of a fund are acquired by another investment company, the "acquired" fund may not purchase or otherwise acquire the securities of an investment company or private fund if immediately after such purchase or acquisition, the securities of investment companies and private funds owned by that acquired fund have an aggregate value in excess of 10% of the value of the total assets of the acquired fund, subject to certain exceptions. These restrictions may limit the Fund's ability to invest in other investment companies to the extent desired. In addition, other unaffiliated investment companies may impose other investment limitations or redemption restrictions which may also limit the Fund's flexibility with respect to making investments in those unaffiliated investment companies.

Investment in Money Market Funds

The Fund may invest in money market instruments, including money market funds managed by the Manager or its affiliates and money market funds managed by unaffiliated advisers. Money market funds invest in high-quality, U.S. dollar-denominated short-term debt securities and must follow strict rules as to the credit quality, liquidity, diversification and maturity of their investments. The Fund may lose money on its investment in money market funds. If the Fund invests in money market funds it will indirectly bear its proportionate share of the management fees and other expenses that are charged by the money market fund in addition to the management fees and other expenses paid by the Fund. If the Fund invests in money market funds that are managed by the Manager or its affiliates, it is possible that a conflict of interest among the Fund and the affiliated funds could affect how the Fund's Manager and its affiliates fulfill their fiduciary duty to the Fund and the affiliated funds.

Letters of Credit

The Fund may engage in trades of commercial paper and other short-term obligations that are backed by irrevocable letters of credit issued by banks which assume the obligation for payment of principal and interest in the event of default by an issuer. Only banks the securities of which, in the opinion of the Subadviser, are of investment quality comparable to other permitted investments of the Fund may be used for letters of credit-backed investments.

Leverage

The Fund may employ "leverage" by borrowing money and using it to purchase additional securities. Leverage increases both investment opportunity and investment risk. If the investment gains on the securities purchased with borrowed money exceed the interest and other costs of borrowing, the net asset value of the Fund's shares will rise faster than would otherwise be the case. On the other hand, if the investment gains fail to cover the cost of borrowings, or if there are losses, the net asset value of the Fund's shares will decrease faster than would otherwise be the case. To reduce its borrowing, the Fund might be required to sell securities at a disadvantageous time. The Fund will incur interest expense on any money borrowed, and

the Fund may therefore have little or no investment income during periods of substantial borrowings. The Fund may leverage its assets when, in the portfolio manager's judgment, the potential benefits of the borrowing outweigh the risk and expense of the borrowing.

Loans

Loans are negotiated and underwritten by a bank or syndicate of banks and other institutional investors. The Fund may acquire an interest in loans through the primary market by acting as one of a group of lenders of a loan. The primary risk in an investment in loans is that the borrower may be unable to meet its interest and/or principal payment obligations. The occurrence of such a default with regard to a loan in which the Fund had invested would have an adverse effect on the Fund's net asset value. In addition, a sudden and significant increase in market interest rates may cause a decline in the value of these investments and in the Fund's net asset value. Other factors, such as rating downgrades, credit deterioration, or large downward movement in stock prices, a disparity in supply and demand of certain securities or market conditions that reduce liquidity could reduce the value of loans, impairing the Fund's net asset value. Loans may not be considered "securities" for certain purposes and purchasers, such as the Fund, therefore may not be entitled to rely on the anti-fraud protections of the federal securities laws.

Loans in which the Fund may invest may be collateralized or uncollateralized and senior or subordinate. Investments in uncollateralized and/or subordinate loans entail a greater risk of nonpayment than do investments in loans which hold a more senior position in the borrower's capital structure or that are secured with collateral. In the case of collateralized senior loans, however, there is no assurance that sale of the collateral would raise enough cash to satisfy the borrower's payment obligation or that the collateral can or will be liquidated. As a result, the Fund might not receive payments to which it is entitled and thereby may experience a decline in the value of its investment and its net asset value. In the event of bankruptcy, liquidation may not occur and the court may not give lenders the full benefit of their senior positions. If the terms of a senior loan do not require the borrower to pledge additional collateral, the Fund will be exposed to the risk that the value of the collateral will not at all times equal or exceed the amount of the borrower's obligations under the senior loans. To the extent that a senior loan is collateralized by stock in the borrower or its subsidiaries, such stock may lose all of its value in the event of bankruptcy of the borrower.

The Fund may also acquire an interest in loans by purchasing participations ("Participations") in and/or assignments ("Assignments") of portions of loans from third parties. By purchasing a Participation, the Fund acquires some or all of the interest of a bank or other lending institution in a loan to a borrower. Participations typically will result in the Fund's having a contractual relationship only with the lender and not the borrower. The Fund will have the right to receive payments of principal, interest and any fees to which it is entitled only from the lender selling the Participation and only upon receipt by the lender of the payments from the borrower. In connection with purchasing Participations, the Fund generally will have no right to enforce compliance by the borrower with the terms of the loan agreement relating to the loan, nor any rights of set-off against the borrower, and the Fund may not directly benefit from any collateral supporting the loan in which it has purchased the Participation. As a result, the Fund will assume the credit risk of both the borrower and the lender that is selling the Participation.

When the Fund purchases Assignments from lenders, the Fund will acquire direct rights against the borrower on the loan. However, since Assignments are arranged through private negotiations between potential assignees and assignors, the rights and obligations acquired by the Fund as the purchaser of an Assignment may differ from, and be more limited than, those held by the lender from which the Fund is purchasing the Assignments. Certain of the Participations or Assignments acquired by the Fund may involve unfunded commitments of the lenders or revolving credit facilities under which a borrower may from time to time borrow and repay amounts up to the maximum amount of the facility. In such cases, the Fund would have an obligation to advance its portion of such additional borrowings upon the terms specified in the loan documentation.

The Fund may acquire loans of borrowers that are experiencing, or are more likely to experience, financial difficulty, including loans of borrowers that have filed for bankruptcy protection. Although loans in which the Fund will invest generally will be secured by specific collateral, there can be no assurance that liquidation of such collateral would satisfy the borrower's obligation in the event of nonpayment of scheduled interest or principal, or that such collateral could be readily liquidated. In the event of bankruptcy of a borrower, the Fund could experience delays or limitations with respect to its ability to realize the benefits of the collateral securing a senior loan.

In addition, the Fund may have difficulty disposing of its investments in loans. The liquidity of such securities is limited and the Fund anticipates that such securities could be sold only to a limited number of institutional investors. The lack of a liquid secondary market could have an adverse impact on the value of such securities and on the Fund's ability to dispose of particular loans or Assignments or Participations when necessary to meet the Fund's liquidity needs or in response to a specific economic event, such as a deterioration in the creditworthiness of the borrower. The lack of a liquid secondary market for loans may also make it more difficult for the Fund to assign a value to those securities for purposes of valuing the Fund's investments and calculating its net asset value.

The issuer of a loan may offer to provide material, non-public information about the issuer to investors, such as the Fund. The Fund's portfolio manager may avoid receiving this type of information about the issuer of a loan either held by or considered for investment by the Fund, because of prohibitions on trading in securities of issuers while in possession of such information. The decision not to receive material, non-public information may place the Fund at a disadvantage, relative to other loan investors, in assessing a loan or the loan's issuer.

Market Sector Risk

To the extent the Fund may be significantly overweight or underweight in certain companies, industries or market sectors, the Fund's performance may be more sensitive to developments affecting those companies, industries or sectors.

Money Market Instruments Generally

Money market instruments are short-term IOUs issued by banks or other non-governmental issuers, the U.S. or non-U.S. governments, or state or local governments. Money market instruments generally have maturity dates of 13 months or less, and may pay interest at fixed, floating or adjustable rates, or may be issued at a discount. Money market instruments may include certificates of deposit, bankers' acceptances, variable rate demand securities (where the interest rate is reset periodically and the holder may demand payment from the issuer or another obligor at any time), preferred shares, fixed-term obligations, commercial paper (short-term unsecured debt), asset-backed commercial paper, other mortgage-backed and asset-backed securities and repurchase agreements. Asset-backed commercial paper refers to a debt security with an original term to maturity of up to 270 days that may be backed by residential and commercial mortgage loans or mortgage-backed securities or other types of receivables. Payments due on asset-backed commercial paper are supported by cash flows from underlying assets, or one or more liquidity or credit support providers, or both.

Mortgage-Backed and Other Asset-Backed Securities – Generally

An asset-backed security is a fixed income security that derives its value primarily from cash flows relating to a pool of assets. There are a number of different types of asset-backed and related securities, including mortgage-backed securities, securities backed by other pools of collateral (such as automobile loans, student loans, sub-prime mortgages, and credit card receivables), collateralized mortgage obligations, and collateralized debt obligations.

Asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities differ from conventional bonds in that principal is paid over the life of the securities rather than at maturity. As a result, payments of principal of and interest on mortgage-backed securities and asset-backed securities are made more frequently than are payments on conventional debt securities. The average life of asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities is likely to be substantially less than the original maturity of the underlying asset pools as a result of prepayments or foreclosures of mortgages, as applicable. In addition, holders of mortgage-backed securities and of certain asset-backed securities (such as asset-backed securities backed by home equity loans) may receive unscheduled payments of principal at any time representing prepayments on the underlying mortgage loans or financial assets. When the holder of the security attempts to reinvest prepayments or even the scheduled payments of principal and interest, it may receive a rate of interest that is higher or lower than the rate on the mortgage-backed security or asset-backed security originally held. To the extent that mortgage-backed securities or asset-backed securities are purchased by the Fund at a premium, mortgage foreclosures and principal prepayments may result in a loss to the extent of the premium paid. To the extent the loans underlying a security representing an interest in a pool of mortgages or other assets are prepaid, the Fund may experience a loss (if the price at which the respective security was acquired by the Fund was at a premium over par, which represents the price at which the security will be redeemed upon prepayment) or a gain (if the price at which the respective security was acquired by the Fund was at a discount from par). In addition, prepayments of such securities held by the Fund will reduce the share price of the Fund to the extent the market value of the securities at the time of prepayment exceeds their par value, and will increase the share price of the Fund to the extent the par value of the securities exceeds their market value at the time of prepayment. Prepayments may

occur with greater frequency in periods of declining interest rates because, among other reasons, it may be possible for borrowers to refinance their outstanding obligation at lower interest rates. When market interest rates increase, the market values of asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities decline. At the same time, however, refinancing slows, which lengthens the effective maturities of these securities. As a result, the negative effect of the rate increase on the market value of asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities is usually more pronounced than it is for other types of fixed income securities.

Changes in the market's perception of the mortgages or assets backing the security, the creditworthiness of the servicing agent for the loan pool, the originator of the loans, or the financial institution providing any credit enhancement, will all affect the value of an asset-backed or mortgage-backed security, as will the exhaustion of any credit enhancement.

The risks of investing in asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities ultimately depend upon the payment of the underlying loans by the individual borrowers. In its capacity as purchaser of an asset-backed security or mortgage-backed security, the Fund would generally have no recourse to the entity that originated the loans in the event of default by the borrower. The risk of non-payment is greater for asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities that are backed by pools that contain subprime loans, but a level of risk exists for all loans. Market factors adversely affecting loan repayments may include a general economic turndown and high unemployment. Mortgage-backed securities may be adversely affected by a general slowdown in the real estate market, a drop in the market prices of real estate, or an increase in interest rates resulting in higher mortgage payments by holders of adjustable rate mortgages. Developments following the onset of COVID-19 have adversely impacted the commercial real estate markets, causing the deferral of mortgage payments, renegotiated commercial mortgage loans, commercial real estate vacancies or outright mortgage defaults, and potential acceleration of macro trends such as work from home and online shopping which may negatively impact certain industries, such as brick-and-mortar retail.

Additional information regarding different types of asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities is provided below. Governmental, government-related or private entities may create pools of loan assets offering pass-through investments in addition to those described below. As new types of asset-backed or mortgage-backed securities are developed and offered to investors, the portfolio manager may, consistent with the Fund's investment objective and policies, consider making investments in such new types of securities.

Mortgage-backed securities. Mortgage-backed securities ("MBS") represent interests in pools of mortgage loans made by lenders such as savings and loan institutions, mortgage bankers, commercial banks and others, to finance purchases of homes, commercial buildings or other real estate. The individual mortgage loans are assembled for sale to investors (such as the Fund) by various governmental or government-related agencies and private organizations, such as dealers.

Government-sponsored MBS. Some government sponsored mortgage-related securities are backed by the full faith and credit of the United States. The Government National Mortgage Association ("Ginnie Mae"), the principal guarantor of such securities, is a wholly-owned United States government corporation within the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Other government-sponsored mortgage-related securities are not backed by the full faith and credit of the United States government. Issuers of such securities include Fannie Mae (formally known as the Federal National Mortgage Association) and Freddie Mac (formally known as the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation). Fannie Mae is a government-sponsored corporation which is subject to general regulation by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Pass-through securities issued by Fannie Mae are guaranteed as to timely payment of principal and interest by Fannie Mae. Freddie Mac is a stockholder-owned corporation chartered by Congress and subject to general regulation by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Participation certificates representing interests in mortgages from Freddie Mac's national portfolio are guaranteed as to the timely payment of interest and ultimate collection of principal by Freddie Mac. The U.S. government has provided financial support to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in the past, but there can be no assurances that it will support these or other government-sponsored entities in the future.

Privately issued MBS. Unlike MBS issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government or certain government-sponsored entities, MBS issued by private issuers do not have a government or government-sponsored entity guarantee, but may have credit enhancement provided by external entities such as banks or financial institutions or achieved through the structuring of the transaction itself.

In addition, MBS that are issued by private issuers are not subject to the underwriting requirements for the underlying mortgages that are applicable to those MBS that have a government or government-sponsored entity guarantee. As a result, the mortgage loans underlying private MBS may, and frequently do, have less favorable collateral, credit risk or other underwriting

characteristics than government or government-sponsored MBS and have wider variances in a number of terms including interest rate, term, size, purpose and borrower characteristics. Privately issued pools more frequently include second mortgages, high loan-to-value mortgages and manufactured housing loans. The coupon rates and maturities of the underlying mortgage loans in a private-label MBS pool may vary to a greater extent than those included in a government guaranteed pool, and the pool may include subprime mortgage loans. Subprime loans refer to loans made to borrowers with weakened credit histories or with a lower capacity to make timely payments on their loans. For these reasons, the loans underlying these securities have had in many cases higher default rates than those loans that meet government underwriting requirements.

Privately issued mortgage-backed securities are not traded on an exchange and there may be a limited market for the securities, especially when there is a perceived weakness in the mortgage and real estate market sectors. Without an active trading market, mortgage-backed securities held in the Fund's portfolio may be particularly difficult to value because of the complexities involved in assessing the value of the underlying mortgage loans.

Adjustable rate mortgage-backed securities. Adjustable rate mortgage-backed securities ("ARMBS") are pass-through securities collateralized by mortgages with adjustable rather than fixed rates. Adjustable rate mortgages eligible for inclusion in a mortgage pool generally provide for a fixed initial mortgage interest rate for a set number of scheduled monthly payments. After that schedule of payments has been completed, the interest rates of the adjustable rate mortgages are subject to periodic adjustment based on changes to a designated benchmark index.

Mortgages underlying most ARMBS may contain maximum and minimum rates beyond which the mortgage interest rate may not vary over the lifetime of the mortgage. In addition, certain adjustable rate mortgages provide for additional limitations on the maximum amount by which the mortgage interest rate may adjust for any single adjustment period. In the event that market rates of interest rise more rapidly to levels above that of the maximum rate for the adjustable rate mortgages underlying an ARMBS, the ARMBS' coupon may represent a below market rate of interest. In these circumstances, the market value of the ARMBS will likely have fallen. During periods of declining interest rates, income to the Fund derived from adjustable rate mortgages that remain in the mortgage pool underlying the ARMBS may decrease in contrast to the income on fixed rate mortgages, which will remain constant. Adjustable rate mortgages also have less potential for appreciation in value as interest rates decline than do fixed rate investments. In addition, the current yields on ARMBS may be different than market yields during interim periods between coupon reset dates.

Stripped mortgage-backed securities. Stripped mortgage-backed securities ("SMBS") are structured with two or more classes of securities that receive different proportions of the interest and principal distributions on a pool of mortgage assets. A common type of SMBS will have at least one class receiving only a small portion of the principal. In the most extreme case, one class will receive all of the interest ("IO" or interest-only class), while the other class will receive all of the principal ("PO" or principal-only class). The yield to maturity on IOs, POs and other mortgage-backed securities that are purchased at a substantial premium or discount generally are extremely sensitive not only to changes in prevailing interest rates but also to the rate of principal payments (including prepayments) on the related underlying mortgage assets, and a rapid rate of principal payments may have a material adverse effect on such securities' yield to maturity. If the underlying mortgage assets experience greater than anticipated prepayments of principal, the Fund may fail to fully recoup its initial investment in these securities even if the securities have received the highest rating by a NRSRO.

SMBS have greater volatility than other types of securities. Although SMBS are purchased and sold by institutional investors through several investment banking firms acting as brokers or dealers, the market for such securities has not yet been fully developed. Accordingly, the secondary market for SMBS may be more volatile and have lower liquidity than that for other MBS, potentially limiting the Fund's ability to buy or sell SMBS at any particular time.

Collateralized mortgage obligations. Another type of security representing an interest in a pool of mortgage loans is known as a collateralized mortgage obligation ("CMO"). CMOs represent interests in a short-term, intermediate-term or long-term portion of a mortgage pool. Each portion of the pool receives monthly interest payments, but the principal repayments pass through to the short-term CMO first and to the long-term CMO last. A CMO permits an investor to more accurately predict the rate of principal repayments. CMOs are issued by private issuers, such as broker-dealers, and by government agencies, such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Investments in CMOs are subject to the same risks as direct investments in the underlying mortgage-backed securities. In addition, in the event of a bankruptcy or other default of a broker that issued the CMO held by the Fund, the Fund could experience delays in liquidating both its position and losses. The Fund may invest in CMOs in any rating category of the recognized rating services and may invest in unrated CMOs. The Fund may also invest in "stripped" CMOs, which

represent only the income portion or the principal portion of the CMO. The values of stripped CMOs are very sensitive to interest rate changes; accordingly, these instruments present a greater risk of loss than conventional mortgage-backed securities.

Tiered index bonds. Tiered index bonds are relatively new forms of mortgage-related securities. The interest rate on a tiered index bond is tied to a specified index or market rate. So long as this index or market rate is below a predetermined "strike" rate, the interest rate on the tiered index bond remains fixed. If, however, the specified index or market rate rises above the "strike" rate, the interest rate of the tiered index bond will decrease. Thus, under these circumstances, the interest rate on a tiered index bond, like an inverse floater, will move in the opposite direction of prevailing interest rates, with the result that the price of the tiered index bond would decline and may be considerably more volatile than that of a fixed-rate bond.

Other Asset-Backed Securities – Additional Information

Similar to mortgage-backed securities, other types of asset-backed securities may be issued by agencies or instrumentalities of the U.S. government (including those whose securities are neither guaranteed nor insured by the U.S. government), foreign governments (or their agencies or instrumentalities), or non-governmental issuers. These securities include securities backed by pools of automobile loans, educational loans, home equity loans, and credit card receivables. The underlying pools of assets are securitized through the use of trusts and special purpose entities. These securities may be subject to the risks described above under "Mortgage-Backed and Other Asset-Backed Securities — Generally," including risks associated with changes in interest rates and prepayment of underlying obligations.

Certain types of asset-backed securities present additional risks that are not presented by mortgage-backed securities. In particular, certain types of asset-backed securities may not have the benefit of a security interest in the related assets. For example, many securities backed by credit card receivables are unsecured. Even when security interests are present, the ability of an issuer of certain types of asset-backed securities to enforce those interests may be more limited than that of an issuer of mortgage-backed securities. For instance, automobile receivables generally are secured by automobiles rather than by real property. Most issuers of automobile receivables permit loan servicers to retain possession of the underlying assets. In addition, because of the large number of underlying vehicles involved in a typical issue of asset-backed securities and technical requirements under state law, the trustee for the holders of the automobile receivables may not have a proper security interest in all of the automobiles. Therefore, recoveries on repossessed automobiles may not be available to support payments on these securities.

In addition, certain types of asset-backed securities may experience losses on the underlying assets as a result of certain rights provided to consumer debtors under federal and state law. In the case of certain consumer debt, such as credit card debt, debtors are entitled to the protection of a number of state and federal consumer credit laws, many of which give such debtors the right to set off certain amounts owed on their credit cards (or other debt), thereby reducing their balances due. For instance, a debtor may be able to offset certain damages for which a court has determined that the creditor is liable to the debtor against amounts owed to the creditor by the debtor on his or her credit card.

Additionally, an asset-backed security is subject to risks associated with the servicing agent's or originator's performance. For example, a servicing agent or originator's mishandling of documentation related to the underlying collateral (e.g., failure to properly document a security interest in the underlying collateral) may affect the rights of the security holders in and to the underlying collateral.

Asset-backed commercial paper. The Fund may purchase commercial paper, including asset-backed commercial paper ("ABCP") that is issued by structured investment vehicles or other conduits. These conduits may be sponsored by mortgage companies, investment banking firms, finance companies, hedge funds, private equity firms and special purpose finance entities. ABCP typically refers to a debt security with an original term to maturity of up to 270 days, the payment of which is supported by cash flows from underlying assets, or one or more liquidity or credit support providers, or both. Assets backing ABCP, which may be included in revolving pools of assets with large numbers of obligors, include credit card, car loan and other consumer receivables and home or commercial mortgages, including subprime mortgages. The repayment of ABCP issued by a conduit depends primarily on the cash collections received from the conduit's underlying asset portfolio and the conduit's ability to issue new ABCP. Therefore, there could be losses to the Fund investing in ABCP in the event of credit or market value deterioration in the conduit's underlying portfolio, mismatches in the timing of the cash flows of the underlying asset interests and the repayment obligations of maturing ABCP, or the conduit's inability to issue new ABCP. To protect investors from these risks, ABCP programs may be structured with various protections, such as credit enhancement, liquidity support, and commercial paper

stop-issuance and wind-down triggers. However there can be no guarantee that these protections will be sufficient to prevent losses to investors in ABCP.

Some ABCP programs provide for an extension of the maturity date of the ABCP if, on the related maturity date, the conduit is unable to access sufficient liquidity through the issue of additional ABCP. This may delay the sale of the underlying collateral and the Fund may incur a loss if the value of the collateral deteriorates during the extension period. Alternatively, if collateral for ABCP deteriorates in value, the collateral may be required to be sold at inopportune times or at prices insufficient to repay the principal and interest on the ABCP. ABCP programs may provide for the issuance of subordinated notes as an additional form of credit enhancement. The subordinated notes are typically of a lower credit quality and have a higher risk of default. A fund purchasing these subordinated notes will therefore have a higher likelihood of loss than investors in the senior notes.

Collateralized debt obligations. The Fund may invest in collateralized debt obligations ("CDOs"), which include collateralized bond obligations ("CBOs"), collateralized loan obligations ("CLOs") and other similarly structured securities. CDOs are types of asset-backed securities. A CBO is a trust or other special purpose entity ("SPE") which is typically backed by a diversified pool of fixed income securities (which may include high risk, below investment grade securities). A CLO is a trust or other SPE that is typically collateralized by a pool of loans, which may include, among others, domestic and non-U.S. senior secured loans, senior unsecured loans, and subordinate corporate loans, including loans that may be rated below investment grade or equivalent unrated loans. Although certain CDOs may receive credit enhancement in the form of a senior-subordinate structure, over-collateralization or bond insurance, such enhancement may not always be present, and may fail to protect the Fund against the risk of loss on default of the collateral. Certain CDOs may use derivatives contracts to create "synthetic" exposure to assets rather than holding such assets directly, which entails the risks of derivative instruments described elsewhere in this SAI. CDOs may charge management fees and administrative expenses, which are in addition to those of the Fund.

For both CBOs and CLOs, the cashflows from the SPE are split into two or more portions, called tranches, varying in risk and yield. The riskiest portion is the "equity" tranche, which bears the first loss from defaults from the bonds or loans in the SPE and serves to protect the other, more senior tranches from default (though such protection is not complete). Since it is partially protected from defaults, a senior tranche from a CBO or CLO typically has higher ratings and lower yields than its underlying securities, and may be rated investment grade. Despite the protection from the equity tranche, CBO or CLO tranches can experience substantial losses due to actual defaults, increased sensitivity to defaults due to collateral default and disappearance of protecting tranches, market anticipation of defaults, as well as investor aversion to CBO or CLO securities as a class. Interest on certain tranches of a CDO may be paid in kind (paid in the form of obligations of the same type rather than cash), which involves continued exposure to default risk with respect to such payments.

The risks of an investment in a CDO depend largely on the type of the collateral securities and the class of the CDO in which the Fund invests. Normally, CBOs, CLOs and other CDOs are privately offered and sold, and thus, are not registered under the securities laws. As a result, investments in CDOs may be characterized by the Fund as illiquid securities. However, an active dealer market may exist for CDOs, allowing a CDO to qualify for Rule 144A transactions. In addition to the normal risks associated with fixed income securities discussed elsewhere in this SAI and the Prospectus (e.g., interest rate risk and credit risk), CDOs carry additional risks including, but not limited to: (i) the possibility that distributions from collateral securities will not be adequate to make interest or other payments; (ii) the collateral may decline in value or default or its credit rating may be downgraded, if rated by a nationally recognized statistical rating organization; (iii) the Fund may invest in tranches of CDOs that are subordinate to other tranches; (iv) the complex structure of the security may not be fully understood at the time of investment and may produce disputes with the issuer or unexpected investment results; and (v) the CDO's manager may perform poorly.

Forward Roll Transactions

In a forward roll transaction, also known as a mortgage dollar roll, the Fund sells MBS for delivery in the current month and simultaneously contracts to repurchase substantially similar (same type, coupon and maturity) MBS on a specified future date. The Fund may enter into a forward roll transaction commitment with the intention of entering into an offsetting transaction whereby, rather than accepting delivery of the security on the specified future date, the Fund sells the security and then agrees to repurchase a similar security at a later time. In this case, the Fund forgoes interest on the security during the roll period and is compensated by the interest earned on the cash proceeds of the initial sale of the security and by the difference between the sale price and the lower repurchase price at the future date.

Forward roll transactions involve the risk that the market value of the securities the Fund is obligated to repurchase under the agreement may decline below the repurchase price. In the event the buyer of securities under a forward roll transaction files for bankruptcy or becomes insolvent, the Fund's use of proceeds of the forward roll transaction may be restricted pending a determination by the other party, or its trustee or receiver, whether to enforce the Fund's obligation to repurchase the securities.

Forward roll transactions may have a leveraging effect on the Fund, making the value of an investment in the Fund more volatile and increasing the Fund's overall investment exposure. Successful use of forward roll transactions may depend on the portfolio manager's ability to correctly predict interest rates and prepayments. There is no assurance that forward roll transactions can be successfully employed.

Preferred Securities

There are two basic types of preferred securities: traditional and hybrid-preferred securities. Traditional preferred securities consist of preferred stock issued by an entity taxable as a corporation. Preferred stocks, which may offer fixed or floating rate dividends, are perpetual instruments and considered equity securities. Preferred stocks are subordinated to debt instruments in a company's capital structure, in terms of priority to corporate income and claim to corporate assets, and therefore will be subject to greater credit risk than debt instruments. Alternatively, hybrid-preferred securities may be issued by corporations, generally in the form of interest-bearing notes with preferred securities characteristics, or by an affiliated trust or partnership of the corporation, generally in the form of preferred interests in subordinated debentures or similarly structured securities. The hybrid-preferred securities market consists of both fixed and adjustable coupon rate securities that are either perpetual in nature or have stated maturity dates.

Traditional Preferred Securities. Traditional preferred securities pay fixed or floating dividends to investors and have "preference" over common stock in the payment of dividends and the liquidation of a company's assets. This means that a company must pay dividends on preferred stock before paying any dividends on its common stock. In order to be payable, distributions on such preferred securities must be declared by the issuer's board of directors. Income payments on preferred securities may be cumulative, causing dividends and distributions to accumulate even if not declared by the board of directors or otherwise made payable. In such a case, all accumulated dividends must be paid before any dividend on the common stock can be paid. However, many traditional preferred stocks are non-cumulative, in which case dividends do not accumulate and need not ever be paid. There is no assurance that dividends or distributions on the traditional preferred securities in which the Fund invests will be declared or otherwise made payable. Preferred securities may also contain provisions under which payments must be stopped (i.e., stoppage is compulsory, not discretionary). The conditions under which this occurs may relate to, for instance, capitalization levels. Hence, if a company incurs significant losses that deplete retained earnings automatic payment stoppage could occur. In some cases the terms of the preferred securities provide that the issuer would be obligated to attempt to issue common shares to raise funds for the purpose of making the preferred payments. However, there is no guarantee that the issuer would be successful in placing common shares.

Preferred stockholders usually have no right to vote for corporate directors or on other matters. Shares of traditional preferred securities have a liquidation preference that generally equals the original purchase price at the date of issuance. The market value of preferred securities may be affected by, among other factors, favorable and unfavorable changes impacting the issuer or industries in which they operate, movements in interest rates and inflation, and the broader economic and credit environments, and by actual and anticipated changes in tax laws, such as changes in corporate and individual income tax rates. Because the claim on an issuer's earnings represented by traditional preferred securities may become onerous when interest rates fall below the rate payable on such securities, the issuer may redeem the securities. Thus, in declining interest rate environments in particular, the Fund's holdings of higher rate-paying fixed rate preferred securities may be reduced, and the Fund may be unable to acquire securities of comparable credit quality paying comparable rates with the redemption proceeds.

Hybrid-Preferred Securities. Hybrid-preferred securities are typically junior and fully subordinated liabilities of an issuer or the beneficiary of a guarantee that is junior and fully subordinated to the other liabilities of the guarantor. In addition, hybrid-preferred securities typically permit an issuer to defer the payment of income for eighteen months or more without triggering an event of default. Generally, the maximum deferral period is five years. Because of their subordinated position in the capital structure of an issuer, the ability to defer payments for extended periods of time without default consequences to the issuer, and certain other features (such as restrictions on common dividend payments by the issuer or ultimate guarantor when full cumulative payments on the hybrid preferred securities have not been made), these hybrid-preferred securities are often treated

as close substitutes for traditional preferred securities, both by issuers and investors. Hybrid-preferred securities have many of the key characteristics of equity due to their subordinated position in an issuer's capital structure and because their quality and value are heavily dependent on the profitability of the issuer rather than on any legal claims to specific assets or cash flows. Hybrid-preferred securities include, but are not limited to, trust preferred securities (TRUPS®); enhanced trust preferred securities (Enhanced TRUPS®); trust-originated preferred securities (TOPrS®); monthly-income preferred securities (MIPS®); quarterly-income bond securities (QUIBS®); quarterly-income debt securities (QUIDS®); quarterly-income preferred securities (QUIPS℠); corporate trust securities (CorTS®); public income notes (PINES®); and other hybrid-preferred securities. Hybrid-preferred securities are typically issued with a final maturity date. In certain instances, a final maturity date may be extended and/or the final payment of principal may be deferred at the issuer's option for a specified time without default. No redemption can typically take place unless all cumulative payment obligations have been met, although issuers may be able to engage in open-market repurchases without regard to whether all payments have been paid.

Many hybrid-preferred securities are issued by trusts or other special purpose entities established by operating companies and are not a direct obligation of an operating company. At the time the trust or special purpose entity sells such preferred securities to investors, it purchases debt of the operating company (with terms comparable to those of the trust or special purpose entity securities), and the operating company deducts for tax purposes the interest paid on the debt held by the trust or special purpose entity. The trust or special purpose entity is generally required to be treated as transparent for U.S. federal income tax purposes such that the holders of the trust preferred securities are treated as owning beneficial interests in the underlying debt of the operating company. Accordingly, payments on the hybrid-preferred securities are generally treated as interest rather than dividends for U.S. federal income tax purposes and, as such, are not eligible for the dividends-received deduction for corporate taxpayers or the reduced rates of tax that apply to qualified dividend income for non-corporate taxpayers. The trust or special purpose entity in turn is a holder of the operating company's debt and has priority with respect to the operating company's earnings and profits over the operating company's common stockholders, but is typically subordinated to other classes of the operating company's debt. Typically a preferred security has a credit rating that is lower than that of its corresponding operating company's senior debt securities.

Within the category of hybrid-preferred securities are senior debt instruments that trade in the broader preferred securities market. These debt instruments, which are sources of long-term capital for the issuers, have structural features similar to other preferred securities such as maturities ranging from 30 years to perpetuity, call features, quarterly payments, exchange listings and the inclusion of accrued interest in the trading price. Preferred securities may be subject to changes in regulations and there can be no assurance that the current regulatory treatment of preferred securities will continue.

Real Estate Investment Trusts ("REITs")

REITs are pooled investment vehicles which invest primarily in income producing real estate or real estate-related loans or interests. REITs are generally classified as equity REITs, mortgage REITs or a combination of equity and mortgage REITs. Equity REITs invest the majority of their assets directly in real property and derive income primarily from the collection of rents. Equity REITs can also realize capital gains by selling properties that have appreciated in value. Mortgage REITs invest the majority of their assets in real estate mortgages and derive income from the collection of interest payments. REITs are not taxed on income distributed to shareholders provided they comply with the applicable requirements of the Code. Debt securities issued by REITs, for the most part, are general and unsecured obligations and are subject to risks associated with REITs. Like mutual funds, REITs have expenses, including advisory and administration fees paid by certain REITs and, as a result, the Fund is indirectly subject to those fees if the Fund invests in REITs.

Investing in REITs, or in real estate linked derivative instruments linked to the value of REITs, involves certain risks, including declines in the value of the underlying real estate, risks related to general and local economic conditions, possible lack of availability of mortgage funds, overbuilding, extended vacancies of properties, increased competition, increases in property taxes and operating expenses, changes in zoning laws, losses due to costs resulting from the clean-up of environmental problems, liability to third parties for damages resulting from environmental problems, casualty or condemnation losses, limitations on rents, changes in neighborhood values and in the appeal of properties to tenants. Equity REITs may also be subject to property and casualty risks as their insurance policies may not completely recover repair or replacement of assets damaged by fires, floods, earthquakes or other natural disasters. In addition, global climate change may have an adverse effect on property and security values. A rise in sea levels or an increase in flooding could cause certain properties to lose value or become unmarketable altogether. Losses related to climate change could adversely affect the value of REITs. REITs whose underlying

assets are concentrated in properties used by a particular industry, such as healthcare, are also subject to industry-related risks. Certain "special purpose" REITs may invest their assets in specific real estate sectors, such as hotels, nursing homes or warehouses, and are therefore subject to the risks associated with adverse developments in any such sectors.

REITs (especially mortgage REITs) are subject to interest rate risks. When interest rates decline, the value of a REIT's investment in fixed income obligations can be expected to rise. Conversely, when interest rates rise, the value of a REIT's investment in fixed-rate obligations can be expected to decline. If the REIT invests in adjustable rate debt instruments the interest rates on which are reset periodically, yields on a REIT's investments in such loans will gradually align themselves to reflect changes in market interest rates. This causes the value of such investments to fluctuate less dramatically in response to interest rate fluctuations than would investments in fixed-rate obligations. However, REIT shares can be more volatile than, and perform differently from, larger company securities since REITs tend to be small- to medium-sized companies in relation to the equity markets as a whole. REITs may have limited financial resources, may trade less frequently and in a limited volume and may be subject to more abrupt or erratic price movements than larger company securities.

REITs are dependent upon the skills of their managers and are generally not diversified. REITs may be highly leveraged, and financial covenants may affect the ability of REITs to operate effectively. REITs are generally dependent upon maintaining cash flows to repay borrowings, to cover operating costs, and to make distributions to shareholders and are subject to the risk of default by lessees and borrowers. In the event of a default by a borrower or lessee, the REIT may experience delays in enforcing its rights as a mortgagee or lessor and may incur substantial costs associated with protecting its investments. If REITs are net sellers of assets or do not reinvest principal, they are also subject to self-liquidation. In addition, REITs could possibly fail to qualify for favorable tax treatment of net income and gains under the Code or to maintain their exemptions from registration as an investment company under the 1940 Act. In the event of any such failure to qualify as a REIT under the Code, the company would be subject to corporate level taxation, significantly reducing the return to the Fund on its investment in such company.

Redemption Risk

The Fund may experience periods of heavy redemptions that could cause the Fund to liquidate its assets at inopportune times or at a loss or depressed value, particularly during periods of declining or illiquid markets. Redemption risk is greater to the extent that the Fund has investors with large shareholdings, short investment horizons, or unpredictable cash flow needs. In addition, redemption risk is heightened during periods of overall market turmoil. The redemption by one or more large shareholders of their holdings in the Fund could hurt performance and/or cause the remaining shareholders in the Fund to lose money. The Fund's redemption risk is increased if one decision maker has control of fund shares owned by separate fund shareholders, including clients or affiliates of the Fund's Manager. If the Fund is forced to liquidate its assets under unfavorable conditions or at inopportune times, the value of your investment could decline.

Repurchase Agreements

Under the terms of a typical repurchase agreement, the Fund would acquire one or more underlying debt securities from a counterparty (typically a bank or a broker-dealer), subject to the counterparty's obligation to repurchase, and the Fund to resell, the securities at an agreed-upon time and price. The Fund may enter into repurchase agreements where the underlying collateral consists entirely of cash items and/or securities of the U.S. Government, its agencies, its instrumentalities, or U.S. Government sponsored enterprises. The Fund may also enter into repurchase agreements where the underlying collateral consists of other types of securities, including securities the Fund could not purchase directly. For such repurchase agreements, the underlying securities which serve as collateral may include, but are not limited to, U.S. government securities, municipal securities, corporate debt obligations, asset-backed securities (including collateralized mortgage obligations ("CMOs")), convertible securities and common and preferred stock and may be of below investment grade quality. The repurchase price is typically greater than the purchase price paid by the Fund, thereby determining the Fund's yield. A repurchase agreement is similar to, and may be treated as, a secured loan, where the Fund loans cash to the counterparty and the loan is secured by the underlying securities as collateral. All repurchase agreements entered into by the Fund are required to be collateralized so that at all times during the term of a repurchase agreement, the value of the underlying securities is at least equal to the amount of the repurchase price. Also, the Fund or its custodian is required to have control of the collateral, which the portfolio manager believes will give the Fund a valid, perfected security interest in the collateral.

Repurchase agreements could involve certain risks in the event of default or insolvency of the counterparty, including possible delays or restrictions upon the Fund's ability to dispose of the underlying securities, the risk of a possible decline in the

value of the underlying securities during the period in which the Fund seeks to assert its right to them, the risk that there may be a limited market or no market for disposition of such underlying securities, the risk of incurring expenses associated with asserting those rights and the risk of losing all or part of the income from the agreement. The Fund will seek to mitigate these risks but there is no guarantee that such efforts will be successful. If the Fund enters into a repurchase agreement involving securities the Fund could not purchase directly, and the counterparty defaults, the Fund may become the holder of such securities. Repurchase agreements collateralized by securities other than U.S. government securities may be subject to greater risks and are more likely to have a term to maturity of longer than seven days. Repurchase agreements with a maturity of more than seven days are considered to be illiquid.

Repurchase agreements may be entered into or novated with a financial clearinghouse, which would become the Fund's counterparty. The Fund would then become subject to the rules of the clearinghouse, which may limit the Fund's rights and remedies (including recourse to collateral) or delay or restrict the rights and remedies, and expose the Fund to the risks of the clearinghouses' insolvency.

Pursuant to an exemptive order issued by the SEC, the Fund, along with other affiliated entities managed by the Manager, may transfer uninvested cash balances into one or more joint accounts for the purpose of entering into repurchase agreements secured by cash and U.S. government securities, subject to certain conditions.

Reverse Repurchase Agreements

The Fund may enter into reverse repurchase agreements. A reverse repurchase agreement has the characteristics of a secured borrowing by the Fund and creates leverage in the Fund's portfolio. In a reverse repurchase transaction, the Fund sells a portfolio instrument to another person, such as a financial institution or broker-dealer, in return for cash. At the same time, the Fund agrees to repurchase the instrument at an agreed-upon time and at a price that is greater than the amount of cash that the Fund received when it sold the instrument, representing the equivalent of an interest payment by the Fund for the use of the cash. During the term of the transaction, the Fund will continue to receive any principal and interest payments (or the equivalent thereof) on the underlying instruments.

The Fund may engage in reverse repurchase agreements as a means of raising cash to satisfy redemption requests or for other temporary or emergency purposes. Unless otherwise limited in the Fund's Prospectus or this SAI, the Fund may also engage in reverse repurchase agreements to the extent permitted by its fundamental investment policies in order to raise additional cash to be invested by the Fund's portfolio manager in other securities or instruments in an effort to increase the Fund's investment returns.

During the term of the transaction, the Fund will remain at risk for any fluctuations in the market value of the instruments subject to the reverse repurchase agreement as if it had not entered into the transaction. When the Fund reinvests the proceeds of a reverse repurchase agreement in other securities, the Fund will also be at risk for any fluctuations in the market value of the securities in which the proceeds are invested. Like other forms of leverage, this makes the value of an investment in the Fund more volatile and increases the Fund's overall investment exposure. In addition, if the Fund's return on its investment of the proceeds of the reverse repurchase agreement does not equal or exceed the implied interest that it is obligated to pay under the reverse repurchase agreement, engaging in the transaction will lower the Fund's return.

When the Fund enters into a reverse repurchase agreement, it is subject to the risk that the buyer under the agreement may file for bankruptcy, become insolvent or otherwise default on its obligations to the Fund. In the event of a default by the counterparty, there may be delays, costs and risks of loss involved in the Fund's exercising its rights under the agreement, or those rights may be limited by other contractual agreements or obligations or by applicable law.

In addition, the Fund may be unable to sell the instruments subject to the reverse repurchase agreement at a time when it would be advantageous to do so, or may be required to liquidate portfolio securities at a time when it would be disadvantageous to do so in order to make payments with respect to its obligations under a reverse repurchase agreement. This could adversely affect the Fund's strategy and result in lower fund returns.

The Fund will treat reverse repurchase agreements and similar financing transactions either (i) consistently with Section 18 of the 1940 Act by maintaining asset coverage of at least 300% of the value of such transactions or (ii) as derivatives transactions for purposes of Rule 18f-4, including, as applicable, the value-at-risk based limit on leverage risk.

Securities Lending

The Fund may lend its portfolio securities, provided that cash or equivalent collateral, equal to at least 100% of the market value of such securities, is continuously maintained by the other party with the Fund. During the pendency of the transaction, the other party will pay the Fund an amount equivalent to any dividends or interest paid on such securities, and the Fund may invest the cash collateral and earn additional income, or it may receive an agreed upon amount of interest income from the other party who has delivered equivalent collateral. These transactions are subject to termination at the option of the Fund or the other party. The Fund may pay administrative and custodial fees in connection with these transactions and may pay a negotiated portion of the interest earned on the cash or equivalent collateral to the other party or placing agent or broker. Although voting rights or rights to consent with respect to the relevant securities generally pass to the other party, the Fund will make arrangements to vote or consent with respect to a material event affecting such securities. The risks in lending portfolio securities include possible delays in recovering or the failure to recover the securities and possible loss of rights in the collateral should the borrower fail financially. The Fund runs the risk that the counterparty to a loan transaction will default on its obligation and that the value of the collateral received may decline before the Fund can dispose of it. If the Fund receives cash as collateral and invests that cash, the Fund is subject to the risk that the collateral will decline in value before the Fund must return it to the counterparty. Subject to the foregoing, loans of fund securities are effectively borrowings by the Fund and have economic characteristics similar to reverse repurchase agreements. The Fund does not currently intend to engage in securities lending, although it may engage in transactions (such as reverse repurchase agreements) which have similar characteristics.

Short Sales

Short sales are transactions in which the Fund sells a security it does not own in anticipation of a decline in the market value of the security, also known as "naked" short sales. To make delivery to the buyer, the Fund must borrow the security. The Fund is then obligated to replace the borrowed security by purchasing the same security at market price at the time of replacement. The price at such time may be more or less than the price at which the security was sold by the Fund. The lender of the security is entitled to retain the proceeds from the short sale and/or other collateral until the Fund replaces the borrowed security. Until the security is replaced, the Fund is required to pay to the lender the amount of any dividends or interest paid on shares sold short. To borrow the security, the Fund also may be required to pay a premium, which would increase the cost of the security sold.

The Fund will realize a gain if the price of a security declines between the date of the short sale and the date on which the Fund purchases a security to replace the borrowed security. On the other hand, the Fund will incur a loss if the price of the security increases between those dates. The amount of any gain will be decreased and the amount of any loss increased by any premium or interest that the Fund may be required to pay the lender. There is also a risk that a borrowed security will need to be returned to the lender on short notice. If the request for the return of a security occurs at a time when other short sellers of the security are receiving similar requests, a "short squeeze" can occur, meaning that the Fund might be compelled, at the most disadvantageous time, to replace the borrowed security with a security purchased on the open market, possibly at prices significantly in excess of the proceeds received earlier.

Short selling is a technique that may be considered speculative and involves risks beyond the initial capital necessary to secure each transaction. It should be noted that possible losses from short sales differ from those losses that could arise from a cash investment in a security because losses from a short sale may be limitless, while the losses from a cash investment in a security cannot exceed the total amount of the investment in the security.

Short Sales Against the Box. The Fund may also make short sales "against the box," meaning that at all times when a short position is open, the Fund owns an equal amount of such securities or owns securities convertible into or exchangeable, without payment of further consideration, for securities of the same issues as, and in an amount equal to, the securities sold short. Short sales "against the box" result in a "constructive sale" and may require the Fund to recognize any gain unless an exception to the constructive sale rule applies.

Small and Mid Cap Companies

Investments in securities of companies with small and medium market capitalizations may offer greater opportunity for appreciation than larger companies, but involve special risks. The securities of those companies may be subject to more abrupt fluctuations in market price and may be more sensitive to economic conditions than larger, more established companies. Small

and mid cap company stock prices may, to a degree, fluctuate independently of larger company stock prices, i.e., small and mid cap company stocks may decline in price as the prices of large company stocks rise or vice versa.

Small and mid cap companies may have newer or limited product lines, limited markets or financial resources, or they may be dependent upon a limited or inexperienced management group. In addition, securities of these companies are subject to the risk that, during certain periods, the liquidity of particular issuers or industries will shrink or disappear with little forewarning as a result of adverse economic or market conditions, or adverse investor perceptions, whether or not accurate. Securities of small and mid cap companies may not be widely traded and it may be difficult for the Fund to dispose of such securities, or receive an advantageous price.

Small and mid cap companies may require substantial additional capital to support their operations, to finance expansion or to maintain their competitive position; and may have substantial borrowings or may otherwise have a weak financial condition, and may be susceptible to bankruptcy. Transaction costs for these investments are often higher than those of larger capitalization companies. There is typically less publicly available information about small cap companies.

Some small and mid cap companies also may be relatively new issuers, which carries risks in addition to the risks of other small and mid cap companies. New issuers may be more speculative because such companies are relatively unseasoned. These companies will often be involved in the development or marketing of a new product with no established market, which could lead to significant losses.

Structured Notes and Related Instruments

"Structured" notes and other related instruments, including indexed securities, are derivative debt instruments, the interest rate or principal of which is determined by an unrelated underlying instrument (for example, a currency, security, commodity or index thereof). Structured instruments are generally privately negotiated debt obligations issued by corporations, including banks, as well as by governmental agencies and frequently are assembled in the form of medium-term notes, but a variety of forms are available and may be used in particular circumstances. The terms of such structured instruments normally provide that their principal and/or interest payments are to be adjusted upwards or downwards (but ordinarily not below zero) to reflect changes in the underlying instrument while the instruments are outstanding. As a result, the interest and/or principal payments that may be made on a structured product may vary widely. The rate of return on structured notes may be determined by applying a multiplier to the performance or differential performance of the underlying instrument or other asset(s). Application of a multiplier involves leverage that will serve to magnify the potential for gain and the risk of loss. Investment in indexed securities and structured notes involves certain risks, including the credit risk of the issuer and the normal risks of price changes in response to changes in interest rates. Further, in the case of certain indexed securities or structured notes, a decline in the underlying instrument may cause the interest rate to be reduced to zero, and any further declines in the underlying instrument may then reduce the principal amount payable on maturity. Finally, these securities may have lower liquidity than other types of securities and may be more volatile than their underlying instruments. Subordinated "structured" notes, which are subordinated to the right of payment of another class of the structured note, typically have higher yields and present greater risks than unsubordinated "structured" notes.

Subordinated Securities

Subordinated securities include securities which are subordinated or "junior" to more senior securities of the issuer, or which represent interests in pools of such subordinated or junior securities. Such securities may include so-called "high yield" or "junk" bonds (i.e., bonds that are rated below investment grade by a rating agency or that are determined by the Fund's portfolio manager to be of equivalent quality) and preferred stock. Under the terms of subordinated securities, payments that would otherwise be made to their holders may be required to be made to the holders of more senior securities, and/or the subordinated or junior securities may have junior liens, if they have any rights at all, in any collateral (meaning proceeds of the collateral are required to be paid first to the holders of more senior securities). As a result, subordinated or junior securities will be disproportionately adversely affected by a default or even a perceived decline in creditworthiness of the issuer.

Temporary Defensive Investing

The Fund may depart from its principal investment strategies in response to adverse market, economic or political conditions by taking temporary defensive positions, including by investing in any type of investment grade, government, corporate and money market instruments and short-term debt securities or holding cash without regard to any percentage

limitations. If a significant amount of the Fund's assets is used for defensive investing purposes, the Fund will be less likely to achieve its investment objective. Although the portfolio manager has the ability to take defensive positions, they may choose not to do so for a variety of reasons, even during volatile market conditions.

Trade Policy

The U.S. government has indicated its intent to alter its approach to international trade policy and, in some cases, to renegotiate or potentially terminate certain existing bilateral or multilateral trade agreements and treaties with foreign countries and has made proposals and taken actions related thereto. In addition, the U.S. government has recently imposed tariffs on certain foreign goods and has indicated a willingness to impose tariffs on imports of other products. Some foreign governments have instituted retaliatory tariffs on certain U.S. goods and have indicated a willingness to impose additional tariffs on U.S. products. Other countries have threatened retaliatory tariffs on certain U.S. products.

Global trade disruption, significant introductions of trade barriers, and bilateral trade frictions, together with any future downturns in the global economy resulting therefrom, could adversely affect the financial performance of the Fund and its investments. Trade policy may be an ongoing source of instability, potentially resulting in significant currency fluctuations and/or having other adverse effects on international markets, international trade agreements, and/or other existing cross-border cooperation arrangements (whether economic, tax, fiscal, legal, regulatory, or otherwise). To the extent trade disputes escalate globally, there could be additional significant impacts on the sectors or industries in which the Fund invests and other adverse impacts on the Fund's overall performance.

U.S. Government Securities

U.S. Government securities include (1) U.S. Treasury bills (maturity of one year or less), U.S. Treasury notes (maturity of one to ten years) and U.S. Treasury bonds (maturities generally greater than ten years); (2) obligations issued or guaranteed by U.S. Government agencies or instrumentalities which are supported by any of the following: (a) the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government (such as certificates issued by the Government National Mortgage Association ("Ginnie Mae")); (b) the right of the issuer to borrow an amount limited to a specific line of credit from the U.S. Government (such as obligations of the Federal Home Loan Banks); (c) the discretionary authority of the U.S. Government to purchase certain obligations of agencies or instrumentalities (such as securities issued by the Federal National Mortgage Association); or (d) only the credit of the agency or instrumentality (such as securities issued by the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation); and (3) obligations issued by non-governmental entities (like financial institutions) that carry direct guarantees from U.S. government agencies as part of government initiatives in response to a market crisis or otherwise. Agencies and instrumentalities of the U.S. Government include but are not limited to: Farmers Home Administration, Export-Import Bank of the United States, Federal Housing Administration, Federal Land Banks, Federal Financing Bank, Central Bank for Cooperatives, Federal Intermediate Credit Banks, Farm Credit Bank System, Federal Home Loan Banks, Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, Federal National Mortgage Association, General Services Administration, Government National Mortgage Association, Student Loan Marketing Association, United States Postal Service, Maritime Administration, Small Business Administration, Tennessee Valley Authority, Washington D.C. Armory Board and any other instrumentality established or sponsored by the U.S. Government.

In the case of obligations not backed by the full faith and credit of the United States, the Fund must look principally to the agency or instrumentality issuing or guaranteeing the obligation for ultimate repayment and may not be able to assert a claim against the United States itself in the event the agency or instrumentality does not meet its commitments. Neither the U.S. Government nor any of its agencies or instrumentalities guarantees the market value of the securities they issue. Therefore, the market value of such securities will fluctuate in response to changes in interest rates and other factors. In addition, any downgrade of the credit rating of the securities issued by the U.S. Government may result in a downgrade of securities issued by its agencies or instrumentalities, including government-sponsored entities. From time to time, uncertainty regarding the status of negotiations in the U.S. government to increase the statutory debt ceiling could increase the risk that the U.S. government may default on payments on certain U.S. government securities, cause the credit rating of the U.S. government to be downgraded, increase volatility in the stock and bond markets, result in higher interest rates, reduce prices of U.S. Treasury securities, and/or increase the costs of various kinds of debt. If a U.S. Government-sponsored entity is negatively impacted by legislative or regulatory action (or lack thereof), is unable to meet its obligations, or its creditworthiness declines, the performance of a fund that holds securities of the entity will be adversely impacted.

U.S. Treasury Obligations

U.S. Treasury obligations are direct debt obligations issued by the U.S. government. Treasury bills, with maturities normally from 4 weeks to 52 weeks, are typically issued at a discount as they pay interest only upon maturity. Treasury bills are non-callable. Treasury notes have a maturity between two and ten years and typically pay interest semi-annually, while Treasury bonds have a maturity of over ten years and pay interest semi- annually. U.S. Treasury obligations also include STRIPS, TIPS, and FRNs. STRIPS are Treasury obligations with separately traded principal and interest component parts of such obligations that are transferable through the federal book-entry system. The principal and interest components of U.S. Treasury bonds with remaining maturities of longer than ten years are eligible to be traded independently under the STRIPS program. Under the STRIPS program, the principal and interest components are separately issued through depository financial institutions, which then trade the component parts separately. Each interest payment and the principal payment becomes a separate zero-coupon security. STRIPS pay interest only at maturity. The interest component of STRIPS may be more volatile than that of U.S. Treasury bills with comparable maturities. TIPS are Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities, the principal of which increases with inflation and decreases with deflation. The inflation adjustment is based on a three month-lagged value of the non-seasonally adjusted Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers (CPI-U). TIPS entitle the holder, upon maturity, to the adjusted principal or original principal, whichever is greater, thus providing a deflation floor. TIPS pay interest twice a year, at a fixed rate. The rate is applied to the adjusted principal; so, like the principal, interest payments rise with inflation and fall with deflation. However, because the interest rate is fixed, TIPS may lose value when market interest rates increase, particularly during periods of low inflation. FRNs are floating rate notes, the interest on which is indexed to the most recent 13-week Treasury bill auction High Rate, which is the highest accepted discount rate in a Treasury bill auction.

Variable and Floating Rate Securities

Variable and floating rate securities provide for a periodic adjustment in the interest rate paid on the obligations. The terms of such obligations provide that interest rates are adjusted periodically based upon an interest rate adjustment index as provided in the respective obligations. The adjustment intervals may be regular, and range from daily up to annually, or may be event-based, such as based on a change in the prime rate.

The Fund may invest in floating rate debt instruments ("floaters") and engage in credit spread trades. The interest rate on a floater is a variable rate which is tied to another interest rate, such as a corporate bond index or U.S. Treasury bill rate. The interest rate on a floater resets periodically, typically every six months. While, because of the interest rate reset feature, floaters may provide the Fund with a certain degree of protection against rising interest rates, the Fund will participate in any declines in interest rates as well. A credit spread trade is an investment position relating to a difference in the prices or interest rates of two bonds or other securities or currencies, where the value of the investment position is determined by movements in the difference between the prices or interest rates, as the case may be, of the respective securities or currencies.

The Fund may also invest in inverse floating rate debt instruments ("inverse floaters"). The interest rate on an inverse floater resets in the opposite direction from the market rate of interest to which the inverse floater is indexed. An inverse floating rate security may exhibit greater price volatility than a fixed rate obligation of similar credit quality.

A floater may be considered to be leveraged to the extent that its interest rate varies by a magnitude that exceeds the magnitude of the change in the index rate of interest. The higher degree of leverage inherent in some floaters is associated with greater volatility in their market values.

The Fund may also invest in variable amount master demand notes, which permit the indebtedness thereunder to vary in addition to providing for periodic adjustments in the interest rate. The absence of an active secondary market with respect to particular variable and floating rate instruments could make it difficult for the Fund to dispose of a variable or floating rate note if the issuer were to default on its payment obligation or during periods that the Fund is not entitled to exercise its demand rights, and the Fund could, for these or other reasons, suffer a loss with respect to such instruments. In determining average-weighted portfolio maturity, an instrument will be deemed to have a maturity equal to either the period remaining until the next interest rate adjustment or the time the Fund can recover payment of principal as specified in the instrument, depending on the type of instrument involved.

Warrants and Rights

Warrants are instruments that give the holder the right to purchase equity securities at a specific price valid for a specified time period. Warrants are typically issued with preferred stock or bonds but can often be traded separately from the securities with which they were initially sold. Warrants may be purchased with values that vary depending on the change in value of one or more specified indexes ("index warrants"). Index warrants are generally issued by banks or other financial institutions and give the holder the right, at any time during the term of the warrant, to receive upon exercise of the warrant a cash payment from the issuer based on the value of the underlying index. Rights are similar to warrants but typically have a shorter duration than warrants and are issued directly by an issuer to existing stockholders and provide those holders the right to purchase additional shares of stock at a later date.

Warrants and rights may be considered speculative in that they have no voting rights, pay no dividends, and have no rights with respect to the assets of the issuer. The prices of warrants and rights do not necessarily move with the prices of the underlying securities. If the market price of the underlying security does not exceed the exercise price of the warrant or right plus the cost thereof before the expiration date, the Fund could sustain losses despite advantageous changes in the market price of the underlying security. Warrants and rights not exercised before their expiration date cease to have value.

Low Exercise Price Call Warrants. Low exercise price call warrants, sometimes also referred to as equity-linked participation certificates, are used to gain exposure to stocks in difficult to access local markets. These warrants typically have a strike price set where the value of the warrants will be identical to the price of the underlying stock. The value of these warrants fluctuates in line with the value of the underlying stock price and therefore, the risk and return profile of the warrants is very similar to owning the underlying securities, but the Fund may also be exposed to the risk of the counterparty that issued the warrant. These warrants have no voting rights. Dividends issued to the warrant issuer by the underlying issuer will be distributed to the warrant holders, net of any taxes or commissions imposed by the local jurisdiction in respect of the receipt of such amount. In addition, these warrants are not exchangeable into the ordinary shares of the underlying stock. These warrants are typically sold in private placement transactions and may be classified as derivative instruments.

When-Issued Securities and Forward Commitments

Securities may be purchased on a "when-issued" or "to be announced" or "forward delivery" basis. The payment obligation and the interest rate that will be received on the "when-issued" securities are fixed at the time the buyer enters into the commitment although settlement, i.e., delivery of and payment for the securities, takes place at a later date. In a "to be announced" transaction, the Fund commits to purchase securities for which all specific information is not known at the time of the trade.

Securities purchased on a "when-issued" or "forward delivery" basis are subject to changes in value based upon the market's perception of the creditworthiness of the issuer and changes, real or anticipated, in the level of interest rates. The value of these securities experiences appreciation when interest rates decline and depreciation when interest rates rise. Purchasing securities on a "when-issued" or "forward delivery" basis can involve a risk that the yields available in the market on the settlement date may actually be higher or lower than those obtained in the transaction itself.

An increase in the percentage of the Fund's assets committed to the purchase of securities on a "when-issued" basis may increase the volatility of its net asset value.

Zero Coupon, Pay-In-Kind and Deferred Interest Securities

Zero Coupon Bond. A zero coupon bond is a security that makes no fixed interest payments but instead is sold at a discount from its face value. The bond is redeemed at its face value on the specified maturity date. Zero coupon bonds may be issued as such, or they may be created by a broker who strips the coupons from a bond and separately sells the rights to receive principal and interest. The prices of zero coupon bonds tend to fluctuate more in response to changes in market interest rates than do the prices of interest-paying debt securities with similar maturities. Zero coupon bonds with a fixed maturity date of more than one year from the date of issuance will be treated as debt obligations that are issued originally at a discount for U.S. federal income tax purposes. Generally, the original issue discount ("OID") is treated as interest income and is included in the Fund's income and required to be distributed by the Fund over the term of the bond, even though payment of that amount is not received until a later time, upon partial or full repayment or disposition of the bond. The Fund may thus be required to pay out as an income distribution each year an amount which is greater than the total amount of cash the Fund actually received, and may

have to dispose of other securities, including at times when it may be disadvantageous to do so, to generate the cash necessary for the distribution of income attributable to its zero coupon bonds.

Pay-In-Kind Securities. Pay-in-kind securities are bonds which pay interest through the issuance of additional debt or equity securities. Pay-in-kind securities have characteristics similar to those of zero coupon securities, but interest on such securities may be paid in the form of obligations of the same type rather than cash. Similar to zero coupon obligations, pay-in-kind bonds also carry additional risk as holders of these types of securities realize no cash until the cash payment date unless a portion of such securities is sold and, if the issuer defaults, the Fund may obtain no return at all on its investment. The market price of pay-in-kind bonds is affected by interest rate changes to a greater extent, and therefore tends to be more volatile, than that of securities which pay interest in cash. Similar to zero coupon bonds, current U.S. federal income tax law requires the holder of pay-in-kind bonds to accrue income with respect to these securities prior to the receipt of cash payments. To maintain its qualification as a regulated investment company and avoid liability for U.S. federal income and excise taxes, the Fund may be required to distribute income accrued with respect to these securities and may have to dispose of portfolio securities under disadvantageous circumstances in order to generate cash to satisfy these distribution requirements.

Deferred Interest Bonds. Deferred interest bonds are debt obligations that generally provide for a period of delay before the regular payment of interest begins and that are issued at a significant discount from face value. The original discount approximates the total amount of interest the bonds will accrue and compound over the period until the first interest accrual date at a rate of interest reflecting the market rate of the security at the time of issuance. Although this period of delay is different for each deferred interest bond, a typical period is approximately one-third of the bond's term to maturity. Such investments benefit the issuer by mitigating its initial need for cash to meet debt service, but some also provide a higher rate of return to attract investors who are willing to defer receipt of such cash.

Zero-coupon, pay-in-kind and deferred interest securities may be subject to greater fluctuation in value and lesser liquidity in the event of adverse market conditions than comparably rated securities paying cash interest at regular interest payment periods.

MANAGEMENT

Trustees and Officers

The business and affairs of the Fund are conducted by management under the supervision and subject to the direction of its Board. The business address of each Trustee (including each Independent Trustee) is c/o Jane Trust, Franklin Templeton, 100 International Drive, 11th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. The tables below provide information about each of the Trustees and officers of the Trust.

Independent Trustees[#]:

Name and Year of Birth	Position(s) with Trust	Term of Office* and Year Service Began**	Principal Occupation(s) During the Past Five Years	Number of Funds in the Franklin Templeton Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee***	Other Board Memberships Held by Trustee During the Past Five Years
Andrew L. Breech Born 1952	Trustee	Since 1991	President, Dealer Operating Control Service, Inc. (automotive retail management) (since 1985)	48	None

Stephen R. Gross Born 1947	Trustee	Since 1986	Chairman Emeritus (since 2011) and formerly, Chairman, HLB Gross Collins, P.C. (accounting and consulting firm) (1979 to 2011); Principal, Gross Consulting Group, LLC (since 2011); CEO, Gross Capital Partners, LLC (since 2014); Chief Financial Officer, Hegemon Holdings LLC (insurance) (since 2019); formerly, CEO, Trusted CFO Solutions, LLC (2011 to 2024)	48	None
Susan M. Heilbron Born 1945	Trustee	Since 1991	Retired; formerly, President, Lacey & Heilbron (communications consulting) (1990 to 2002); General Counsel and Executive Vice President, The Trump Organization (1986 to 1990); Senior Vice President, New York State Urban Development Corporation (1984 to 1986); Associate, Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP (1980 to 1984 and 1977 to 1979)	48	None
Arnold L. Lehman Born 1944	Trustee	Since 1982	Consultant; formerly, Senior Advisor, Phillips (auction house) (2015 to 2023); Fellow Ford Foundation (2015 to 2016); Director of the Brooklyn Museum (1997 to 2015)	48	Trustee of American Federation of Arts (since 2002)
Robin J.W. Masters Born 1955	Trustee	Since 2002	Retired; formerly, Chief Investment Officer of ACE Limited (insurance) (1986 to 2000)	48	Director of HSBC Corporate Money Funds Limited, HSBC Managed Portfolios Limited and HSBC Specialist Funds Limited (since 2020); formerly, Director of Cheyne Capital International Limited (investment advisory firm) (2005 to 2020)
G. Peter O'Brien Born 1945	Trustee and Chair of the Board	Since 1999 (Chair of the Board since 2024)	Retired; Trustee Emeritus of Colgate University (since 2005); Board Member, Hill House, Inc. (residential home care) (since 1999); formerly, Board Member, Bridges School (pre-school) (2006 to 2017); Managing Director, Equity Capital Markets Group of Merrill Lynch & Co. (1971 to 1999)	48	Formerly, Director and Trustee of the Royce Family of Funds (15 funds) (2001 to 2025); Director of TICC Capital Corp. (2003 to 2017)
Thomas F. Schlafly Born 1948	Trustee	Since 1983	Chairman, The Saint Louis Brewery, LLC (brewery) (since 2012); formerly, President, The Saint Louis Brewery, Inc. (1989 to 2012); Senior Counsel (since 2017) and formerly, Partner (2009 to 2016), Thompson Coburn LLP (law firm)	48	Director, CNB St. Louis Bank (since 2020); formerly, Director, Citizens National Bank of Greater St. Louis (2006 to 2020)

Interested Trustee and Officer:

Name and Year of Birth	Position(s) with Trust	Term of Office* and Year Service Began**	Principal Occupation(s) During the Past Five Years	Number of Funds in the Franklin Templeton Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee***	Other Board Memberships Held by Trustee During the Past Five Years

Jane Trust, CFA† Born 1962	Trustee, President and Chief Executive Officer	Since 2015	Senior Vice President, Fund Board Management, Franklin Templeton (since 2020); Officer and/or Trustee/Director of 118 funds associated with FTFA or its affiliates (since 2015); President and Chief Executive Officer of FTFA (since 2015); formerly, Senior Managing Director (2018 to 2020) and Managing Director (2016 to 2018) of Legg Mason & Co., LLC ("Legg Mason & Co."); Senior Vice President of FTFA (2015)	Trustee/Director of Franklin Templeton funds consisting of 118 portfolios; Trustee of Putnam Family of Funds consisting of 99 portfolios	None

Trustees who are not "interested persons" of the Trust within the meaning of Section 2(a)(19) of the 1940 Act.

* Each Trustee serves until his or her respective successor has been duly elected and qualified or until his or her earlier death, resignation, retirement or removal.

** Indicates the earliest year in which the Trustee became a board member for a fund in the Franklin Templeton fund complex.

*** Information is for the calendar year ended December 31, 2025, except as otherwise noted.

† Ms. Trust is an "interested person" of the Trust, as defined in the 1940 Act, because of her position with FTFA and/or certain of its affiliates.

Additional Officers:

Name, Year of Birth and Address	Position(s) with Trust	Term of Office* and Year Service Began**	Principal Occupation(s) During the Past Five Years
Ted P. Becker Born 1951 Franklin Templeton One Madison Avenue New York, NY 10010	Chief Compliance Officer	Since 2007	Vice President, Global Compliance of Franklin Templeton (since 2020); Chief Compliance Officer of FTFA (since 2006); Chief Compliance Officer of certain funds associated with Legg Mason & Co. or its affiliates (since 2006); formerly, Director of Global Compliance at Legg Mason (2006 to 2020); Managing Director of Compliance of Legg Mason & Co. (2005 to 2020)
Christopher Berarducci Born 1974 Franklin Templeton One Madison Avenue New York, NY 10010	Treasurer and Principal Financial Officer	Since 2014 and 2019	Vice President, Fund Administration and Reporting, Franklin Templeton (since 2020), Treasurer (since 2010) and Principal Financial Officer (since 2019) of certain funds associated with Legg Mason & Co. or its affiliates; formerly, Managing Director (2020), Director (2015 to 2020), and Vice President (2011 to 2015) of Legg Mason & Co.
Marc A. De Oliveira Born 1971 Franklin Templeton 100 First Stamford Place 6th Floor Stamford, CT 06902	Secretary and Chief Legal Officer	Since 2020	Associate General Counsel of Franklin Templeton (since 2020); Secretary and Chief Legal Officer (since 2020) and Assistant Secretary of certain funds in the Franklin Templeton fund complex (since 2006); formerly, Managing Director (2016 to 2020) and Associate General Counsel of Legg Mason & Co. (2005 to 2020)
Jeanne Kelly Born 1951 Franklin Templeton One Madison Avenue New York, NY 10010	Senior Vice President	Since 2007	U.S. Fund Board Team Manager, Franklin Templeton (since 2020); Senior Vice President of certain funds associated with Legg Mason & Co. or its affiliates (since 2007); Senior Vice President of FTFA (since 2006); President and Chief Executive Officer of LM Asset Services, LLC ("LMAS") and Legg Mason Fund Asset Management, Inc. ("LMFAM") (formerly registered investment advisers) (since 2015); formerly, Managing Director of Legg Mason & Co. (2005 to 2020), and Senior Vice President of LMFAM (2013 to 2015)
Susan Kerr Born 1949 Franklin Templeton One Madison Avenue New York, NY 10010	Chief Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Officer	Since 2013	Senior Compliance Analyst, Franklin Templeton (since 2020); Chief Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Officer of certain funds associated with Legg Mason & Co. or its affiliates (since 2013) and Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Officer (since 2012), Senior Compliance Officer (since 2011) and Assistant Vice President (since 2010) of the Distributor; formerly, Assistant Vice President of Legg Mason & Co. (2010 to 2020)
Thomas C. Mandia Born 1962 Franklin Templeton 100 First Stamford Place 6th Floor Stamford, CT 06902	Senior Vice President	Since 2020	Senior Associate General Counsel to Franklin Templeton (since 2020); Senior Vice President (since 2020) and Assistant Secretary of certain funds in the Franklin Templeton fund complex (since 2006); Secretary of FTFA (since 2006); Secretary of LMAS (since 2002) and LMFAM (formerly registered investment advisers) (since 2013); formerly, Managing Director and Deputy General Counsel of Legg Mason & Co. (2005 to 2020)

* Each officer serves until his or her respective successor has been duly elected and qualified or until his or her earlier death, resignation, retirement or removal.

** Indicates the earliest year in which the officer took such office.

Qualifications of Trustees, Board Leadership Structure and Oversight and Standing Committees

The Independent Trustees were selected to join the Board based upon the following as to each Trustee: character and integrity; service as a board member of predecessor funds and/or other Franklin Templeton (previously, Legg Mason) funds; willingness to serve and willingness and ability to commit the time necessary to perform the duties of a Trustee; such person's skills, experience, judgment, analytical ability, intelligence, and common sense; their current or previous profit and non-profit board membership; such person's considerable familiarity with the special regulatory requirements governing regulated investment companies and the special responsibilities of investment company trustees; and the Trustee's status as not being an "interested person" of the Fund, as defined in the 1940 Act. Ms. Trust was selected to join the Board based upon her investment management and risk oversight experience as an executive and portfolio manager and leadership roles with Franklin Templeton and affiliated entities. The Board also considered her character and integrity, her willingness to serve and willingness and ability to commit the time necessary to perform the duties of a Trustee, her skills, experience, judgment, analytical ability, intelligence, and common sense, her considerable familiarity with the special regulatory requirements governing regulated investment companies and the special responsibilities of investment company trustees, and her status as a representative of Franklin Templeton. Ms. Trust is an interested person of the Fund. Mr. O'Brien serves as Chair of the Board and is an Independent Trustee. Independent Trustees constitute more than 75% of the Board.

The Board believes that each Trustee's experience, qualifications, attributes or skills on an individual basis and in combination with those of the other Trustees lead to the conclusion that the Board possesses the requisite attributes and skills. The Board believes that the Trustees' ability to review critically, evaluate, question and discuss information provided to them, to interact effectively with the Manager, the Subadviser(s), other service providers, counsel and the independent registered public accounting firm, and to exercise effective business judgment in the performance of their duties support this conclusion. In addition, the following specific experience, qualifications, attributes and/or skills apply to each Trustee.

Each Trustee has served as a board member of the Fund and/or other Franklin Templeton funds for at least ten years. Mr. Breech has substantial experience as the chief executive of a private corporation. Mr. Gross has a substantial accounting background and experience as an officer, trustee and board member of various organizations. Ms. Heilbron has substantial legal background and experience, business and consulting experience, and experience as a board member of public companies. Dr. Lehman has experience as chief executive officer of major museums and other entities involved in the arts, has previously served as a lead independent trustee and board chair for certain Franklin Templeton funds and has experience as a founding director of certain Franklin Templeton funds. Ms. Masters has investment management experience as chief investment officer, as a director of an investment advisory firm and from her service on the boards of other investment companies. Mr. O'Brien has experience at senior levels of a large financial services company and has experience from his service on the boards of academic institutions and a residential home care company. Mr. Schlafly has substantial experience practicing law and also serves as the non-executive Chairman of a private corporation and as director of a bank. Ms. Trust has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust and other funds in the fund complex since 2015 and has investment management and risk oversight experience as an executive and portfolio manager and in leadership roles with Franklin Templeton (and before that, Legg Mason) and affiliated entities. References to the experience, qualifications, attributes and skills of Trustees are pursuant to requirements of the Securities and Exchange Commission, do not constitute holding out of the Board or any Trustee as having any special expertise, and shall not impose any greater responsibility or liability on any such person or on the Board.

The Board has five standing committees: the Audit Committee, the Contract Committee, the Performance Committee, the Governance Committee, and the Compensation and Nominating Committee (which is a sub-committee of the Governance Committee). Each Committee is chaired by an Independent Trustee. The Audit Committee and the Governance Committee are each composed of all of the Independent Trustees. The Contract Committee and the Performance Committee are each composed of four Independent Trustees. The Compensation and Nominating Committee is composed of three Independent Trustees. Where deemed appropriate, the Board may constitute ad hoc committees.

The Chair of the Board and the chairs of the Audit and Performance Committees work with the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust to set the agendas for Board and committee meetings. The Chair of the Board also serves as a key point person for interaction between management and the other Independent Trustees. Through the committees the Independent Trustees consider and address important matters involving the Fund, including those presenting conflicts or potential conflicts of interest for management. The Independent Trustees also regularly meet outside the presence of management and are advised by independent legal counsel. The Board has determined that its committees help ensure that the Fund has effective and independent governance and oversight. The Board also has determined that its leadership structure, in which the Chair of the

Board is not affiliated with Franklin Templeton, is appropriate. The Board also believes that its leadership structure facilitates the orderly and efficient flow of information between the Independent Trustees and management, including the Fund's Subadviser.

The Audit Committee oversees the scope of the Fund's audit, the Fund's accounting and financial reporting policies and practices and its internal controls. The Audit Committee assists the Board in fulfilling its responsibility for oversight of the integrity of the Fund's accounting, auditing and financial reporting practices, the qualifications and independence of the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm and the Fund's compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. The Audit Committee approves, and recommends to the Board for ratification, the selection, appointment, retention or termination of the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm and approves the compensation of the independent registered public accounting firm. The Audit Committee also approves all audit and permissible non-audit services provided to the Fund by the independent registered public accounting firm and all permissible non-audit services provided by the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm to the Manager and any affiliated service providers if the engagement relates directly to the Fund's operations and financial reporting.

The Contract Committee is charged with assisting the Board in requesting and evaluating such information from the Manager and the Subadviser as may reasonably be necessary to evaluate the terms of the Fund's investment management agreement, subadvisory arrangements and distribution arrangements.

The Performance Committee is charged with assisting the Board in carrying out its oversight responsibilities over the Fund and fund management with respect to investment management, objectives, strategies, policies and procedures, performance and performance benchmarks, and the applicable risk management process.

The Governance Committee is charged with overseeing Board governance and related Trustee practices, including selecting and nominating persons for election or appointment by the Board as Trustees of the Trust. The Governance Committee has formed the Compensation and Nominating Committee, the function of which is to recommend to the Board the appropriate compensation for serving as a Trustee on the Board. In addition, the Compensation and Nominating Committee is responsible for, among other things, selecting and recommending candidates to fill vacancies on the Board. The Committee may consider nominees recommended by a shareholder. In evaluating potential nominees, including any nominees recommended by shareholders, the Committee takes into consideration various factors, including, among any others it may deem relevant, character and integrity, business and professional experience, and whether the committee believes the person has the ability to apply sound and independent business judgment and would act in the interest of the Fund and its shareholders. Shareholders who wish to recommend a nominee should send recommendations to the Trust's Secretary that include all information relating to such person that is required to be disclosed in solicitations of proxies for the election of Trustees. A recommendation must be accompanied by a written consent of the individual to stand for election if nominated by the Board and to serve if elected by the shareholders.

Service providers to the Fund, primarily the Fund's Manager, the Subadviser and, as appropriate, their affiliates, have responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Fund, which includes responsibility for risk management. As an integral part of its responsibility for oversight of the Fund, the Board oversees risk management of the Fund's investment program and business affairs. Oversight of the risk management process is part of the Board's general oversight of the Fund and its service providers. The Board has emphasized to the Fund's Manager and the Subadviser the importance of maintaining vigorous risk management. The Board exercises oversight of the risk management process primarily through the Audit Committee and the Performance Committee, and through oversight by the Board itself.

The Fund is subject to a number of risks, including investment risk, counterparty risk, valuation risk, reputational risk, cybersecurity risk, risk of operational failure or lack of business continuity, and legal, compliance and regulatory risk. Risk management seeks to identify and address risks, i.e., events or circumstances that could have material adverse effects on the business, operations, shareholder services, investment performance or reputation of the Fund. The Fund's Manager and the Subadviser, the affiliates of the Manager and the Subadviser, or various service providers to the Fund employ a variety of processes, procedures and controls to identify various of those possible events or circumstances, to lessen the probability of their occurrence and/or to mitigate the effects of such events or circumstances if they do occur. Different processes, procedures and controls are employed with respect to different types of risks. Various personnel, including the Fund's and the Manager's Chief Compliance Officer and the Manager's chief risk officer, as well as personnel of the Subadviser and other service providers, such as the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm, make periodic reports to the Audit Committee, the Performance Committee or to the Board with respect to various aspects of risk management, as well as events and circumstances that have

arisen and responses thereto. The Board recognizes that not all risks that may affect the Fund can be identified, that it may not be practical or cost-effective to eliminate or mitigate certain risks, that it may be necessary to bear certain risks (such as investment-related risks) to achieve the Fund's goals, and that the processes, procedures and controls employed to address certain risks may be limited in their effectiveness. Moreover, reports received by the Trustees as to risk management matters are typically summaries of the relevant information. As a result of the foregoing and other factors, the Board's risk management oversight is subject to inherent limitations.

During the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025, the Board met 6 times, the Audit Committee met 4 times, the Governance Committee met 4 times, the Performance Committee met 4 times, the Compensation and Nominating Committee met 1 time, and the Contract Committee met 3 times.

Trustee Ownership of Securities

The following tables show the dollar range of equity securities owned by the Trustees in the Fund and other investment companies in the Franklin Templeton fund complex overseen by the Trustees as of December 31, 2025.

	Dollar Range of Equity Securities in the Fund ($)			
Name of Trustee	**Growth Portfolio**	**Mid Cap Portfolio**	**Small Cap Growth Portfolio**	**Aggregate Dollar Range of Equity Securities in All Registered Investment Companies in Franklin Templeton Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee ($)**
Independent Trustees:				
Andrew L. Breech	None	None	None	Over 100,000
Stephen R. Gross	None	None	None	Over 100,000
Susan M. Heilbron	None	None	None	Over 100,000
Arnold L. Lehman	None	None	None	Over 100,000
Robin J.W. Masters	None	None	None	Over 100,000
G. Peter O'Brien	None	None	None	Over 100,000
Thomas F. Schlafly	None	None	None	Over 100,000
Interested Trustee:				
Jane Trust	None	None	None	Over 100,000

As of December 31, 2025, none of the Independent Trustees or their immediate family members owned beneficially or of record any securities of the Manager, the Subadviser, or the Distributor of the Fund, or of a person (other than a registered investment company) directly or indirectly controlling, controlled by or under common control with the Manager, the Subadviser, or the Distributor of the Fund.

For serving as a Trustee of the Trust, each Independent Trustee receives an annual retainer plus fees for attending each regularly scheduled meeting and special Board meeting they attend in person or by telephone. Each Independent Trustee is also reimbursed for all out-of-pocket expenses relating to attendance at such meetings. Those Independent Trustees who serve in leadership positions of the Board or Board committees, and members of the Contract Committee, the Performance Committee, and the Compensation and Nominating Committee, receive additional compensation. The Board reviews the level of Trustee

compensation periodically and Trustee compensation may change from time to time. Ms. Trust, an "interested person" of the Trust, as defined in the 1940 Act, does not receive compensation from the Fund for her service as Trustee. The Fund pays its pro rata share of the fees and expenses of the Trustees based upon asset size.

Officers of the Trust receive no compensation from the Fund, although they may be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket travel expenses for attending Board meetings.

Trustee Compensation

Information regarding compensation paid to the Trustees is shown below.

	Aggregate Compensation from the Fund*($)				
Name of Trustee	**Growth Portfolio**	**Mid Cap Portfolio**	**Small Cap Growth Portfolio**	**Total Pension or Retirement Benefits Paid as Part of Fund Expenses* ($)**	**Total Compensation from Franklin Templeton Fund Complex Paid to Trustee** ($)**
Independent Trustees:					
Andrew L. Breech	914	1,721	2,630	None	504,000
Stephen R. Gross	933	1,757	2,685	None	514,500
Susan M. Heilbron	892	1,680	2,567	None	492,000
Arnold L. Lehman	883	1,663	2,540	None	487,000
Robin J.W. Masters	892	1,680	2,567	None	492,000
Ken Miller***	892	1,680	2,567	None	492,000
G. Peter O'Brien	1,011	1,903	2,908	None	780,500
Thomas F. Schlafly	883	1,663	2,540	None	487,000
Interested Trustee:					
Jane Trust†	None	None	None	None	None

* Information is for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025.
** Information is for the calendar year ended December 31, 2025.
*** Mr. Miller retired from the Board effective December 31, 2025.
† Ms. Trust is not compensated by the Trust for her services as a Trustee because of her affiliations with the Manager.

INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE PROVIDER INFORMATION

Manager

The Manager, a limited liability company organized under the laws of the State of Delaware, serves as investment manager to the Fund and provides administrative and certain oversight services to the Fund, pursuant to an investment management agreement (the "Management Agreement"). The Manager has offices at One Madison Avenue, New York, New York, 10010 and also serves as the investment manager of other Franklin Templeton funds. The Manager is an indirect, wholly-owned subsidiary of Franklin Resources, a Delaware corporation. Franklin Resources, whose principal executive offices are at One Franklin Parkway, San Mateo, California 94403, is a global investment management organization operating, together with its subsidiaries, as Franklin Templeton.

The Manager has agreed, under the Management Agreement, subject to the supervision of the Board, to provide the Fund with investment research, advice, management and supervision, furnish a continuous investment program for the Fund's portfolio of securities and other investments consistent with the Fund's investment objectives, policies and restrictions, and place orders pursuant to its investment determinations. The Manager is permitted to enter into contracts with subadvisers or subadministrators, subject to the Board's approval. The Manager has entered into subadvisory agreements, as described below.

As compensation for services performed, facilities furnished and expenses assumed by the Manager, the Fund pays the Manager a fee computed daily at an annual rate of the Fund's average daily net assets as described below. The Manager also performs administrative and management services as reasonably requested by the Fund necessary for the operation of the Fund, such as (i) supervising the overall administration of the Fund, including negotiation of contracts and fees with, and monitoring of performance and billings of, the Fund's transfer agent, shareholder servicing agents, custodian and other independent contractors or agents; (ii) providing certain compliance, fund accounting, regulatory reporting and tax reporting services; (iii) preparing or participating in the preparation of Board materials, registration statements, proxy statements and reports and other communications to shareholders; (iv) maintaining the Fund's existence; and (v) maintaining the registration or qualification of the Fund's shares under federal and state laws.

The Management Agreement will continue in effect for its initial term and thereafter from year to year, provided continuance is specifically approved at least annually (a) by the Board or by a 1940 Act Vote, and (b) in either event, by a majority of the Independent Trustees casting votes in accordance with applicable law.

The Management Agreement provides that the Manager may render services to others. The Management Agreement is terminable without penalty by the Board or by vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund on not more than 60 days' nor less than 30 days' written notice to the Manager, or by the Manager on not less than 90 days' written notice to the Fund as applicable, and will automatically terminate in the event of its assignment (as defined in the 1940 Act) by the Manager. No Management Agreement is assignable by the Trust except with the consent of the Manager.

The Management Agreement provides that the Manager, its affiliates performing services contemplated by the Management Agreement, and the partners, shareholders, directors, officers and employees of the Manager and such affiliates, will not be liable for any error of judgment or mistake of law, for any loss arising out of any investment, or for any act or omission in the execution of securities transactions for the Fund, but the Manager is not protected against any liability to the Fund to which the Manager would be subject by reason of willful misfeasance, bad faith or gross negligence in the performance of its duties or by reason of its reckless disregard of its obligations and duties under the Management Agreement.

For its services under the applicable Fund's Management Agreement, the Manager receives an investment management fee that is calculated daily and payable monthly at an annual rate according to the following schedule:

Fund	Average Daily Net Assets	Investment Management Fee Rate (% of Average Daily Net Assets)
Growth Portfolio	First $1 billion	0.750
	Next $1 billion	0.725
	Next $3 billion	0.700
	Next $5 billion	0.675
	Over $10 billion	0.650
Mid Cap Portfolio	First $1 billion	0.750
	Next $1 billion	0.700
	Next $3 billion	0.650

	Next $5 billion	0.600
	Over $10 billion	0.550
Small Cap Growth Portfolio	N/A	0.75

The table below sets forth the management fees paid by the Fund to the Manager (waived/reimbursed amounts are in parentheses), with respect to the fiscal periods indicated:

Fund	For the Fiscal Period Ended December 31,	Gross Management Fees ($)	Management Fees Waived/Expenses Reimbursed ($)	Net Management Fees (After Waivers/Expense Reimbursements) ($)
Growth Portfolio	2025	1,063,373	(560)	1,062,813
	2024	1,150,844	(905)	1,149,939
	2023	1,264,681	(914)	1,263,767
Mid Cap Portfolio	2025	1,964,315	(3,849)	1,960,466
	2024	2,012,225	(2,965)	2,009,260
	2023	1,762,995	(2,599)	1,760,396
Small Cap Growth Portfolio	2025	3,031,633	(4,112)	3,027,521
	2024	3,085,004	(3,537)	3,081,467
	2023	2,980,329	(3,153)	2,977,176

Any expense limitation arrangements in place during the Fund's past three fiscal periods can be found in the Fund's Prospectus in effect (as amended or supplemented from time to time) for such year.

Subadviser

ClearBridge Investments, LLC serves as the subadviser to the Fund (the "Subadviser") pursuant to a subadvisory agreement between the Manager and the Subadviser (the "Subadvisory Agreement"). The Subadviser has offices at One Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10010. The Subadviser is an indirect, wholly-owned subsidiary of Franklin Resources.

As compensation for its services, the Manager pays to the Subadviser a fee equal to 70% of the management fee paid to the Manager by the Fund, net of any waivers and expense reimbursements.

Western Asset Management Company, LLC, organized under the laws of the State of California ("Western Asset" and together with the Subadviser, the "Subadviser"), manages the portion of the Fund's cash and short-term instruments allocated to it pursuant to a separate subadvisory agreement between the Manager and Western Asset (the "Western Asset Agreement" and together with the Subadvisory Agreement, the "Subadvisory Agreement"). Western Asset, established in 1971, has offices at 385 East Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, California 91101 and One Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10010. Western Asset acts as investment adviser to institutional accounts, such as corporate pension plans, mutual funds and endowment funds. Western Asset is an indirect, wholly-owned subsidiary of Franklin Resources. Under the Western Asset Agreement, Western Asset is responsible, subject to the general supervision of the Manager and the Board, for the management of the portion of the Fund's cash and short term instruments allocated to it. For Western Asset's services to the Fund, the Manager, not the Fund, pays Western Asset 0.02% of the portion of the Fund's average daily net assets that are allocated to Western Asset by the Manager, net of expense waivers and reimbursements.

Under the Subadvisory Agreement, subject to the supervision of the Board and the Manager, the Subadviser regularly provides with respect to the portion of the Fund's assets allocated to it by the Manager, investment research, advice,

management and supervision; furnishes a continuous investment program for the allocated assets consistent with the Fund's investment objectives, policies and restrictions; and places orders pursuant to its investment determinations. The Subadviser may delegate to companies that the Subadviser controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with, certain of the Subadviser's duties under a Subadvisory Agreement, subject to the Subadviser's supervision, provided the Subadviser will not be relieved of its duties or obligations under the Subadvisory Agreement as a result of any delegation.

The Subadvisory Agreement will continue in effect for its initial term and thereafter from year to year provided such continuance is specifically approved at least annually (a) by the Board or by a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund (as defined in the 1940 Act), and (b) in either event, by a majority of the Independent Trustees casting votes in accordance with applicable law. The Board or a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund (as defined in the 1940 Act) may terminate the Subadvisory Agreement without penalty, in each case on not more than 60 days' nor less than 30 days' written notice to the Subadviser. The Subadviser may terminate the respective Subadvisory Agreement, on 90 days' written notice to the Fund and the Manager. The Subadvisory Agreement may be terminated upon the mutual written consent of the Manager and the Subadviser. The Subadvisory Agreement will terminate automatically in the event of assignment (as defined in the 1940 Act) by the applicable Subadviser, and shall not be assignable by the Manager without the consent of the Subadviser.

The Subadvisory Agreement provides that the Subadviser, its affiliates performing services contemplated by the Subadvisory Agreement, and the partners, shareholders, directors, officers and employees of the Subadviser and such affiliates will not be liable for any error of judgment or mistake of law, for any loss arising out of any investment, or for any act or omission in the execution of securities transactions for the Fund, but the Subadviser is not protected against any liability to the Fund or the Manager to which the Subadviser would be subject by reason of willful misfeasance, bad faith or gross negligence in the performance of its duties or by reason of its reckless disregard of its obligations and duties under the Subadvisory Agreement.

Expenses

In addition to amounts payable under the Management Agreement and the 12b-1 Plan (as discussed in this SAI), the Fund is responsible for its own expenses, including, among other things: interest; taxes; governmental fees; voluntary assessments and other expenses incurred in connection with membership in investment company organizations; organizational costs of the Fund; costs (including interest, brokerage commissions, transaction fees or charges or acquired fund fees and expenses, if any) in connection with the purchase or sale of the Fund's securities and other investments and any losses in connection therewith; fees and expenses of custodians, transfer agents, registrars, independent pricing vendors or other agents; legal expenses; loan commitment fees; expenses relating to the issuance and redemption or repurchase of the Fund's shares and servicing shareholder accounts; expenses of registering and qualifying the Fund's shares for sale under applicable federal and state law; expenses of preparing, setting in print, printing and distributing prospectuses and statements of additional information and any supplements thereto, reports, proxy statements, notices and dividends to the Fund's shareholders; costs of stationery; website costs; costs of meetings of the Board or any committee thereof, meetings of shareholders and other meetings of the Fund; Board fees; audit fees; travel expenses of officers, Trustees and employees of the Fund, if any; the Fund's pro rata portion of premiums on any fidelity bond and other insurance covering the Fund and its officers, Trustees and employees; and litigation expenses and any non-recurring or extraordinary expenses as may arise, including, without limitation, those relating to actions, suits or proceedings to which the Fund is a party and any legal obligation which the Fund may have to indemnify the Fund's Trustees and officers with respect thereto.

Management may agree to implement an expense cap, waive fees and/or reimburse operating expenses for one or more classes of shares. Any such expense caps, waived fees and/or reimbursed expenses are described in the Fund's Prospectus. The expense caps, waived fees and/or reimbursed expenses do not cover extraordinary expenses, such as (a) any expenses or charges related to litigation, derivative actions, demands related to litigation, regulatory or other government investigations and proceedings, "for cause" regulatory inspections and indemnification or advancement of related expenses or costs, to the extent any such expenses are considered extraordinary expenses for the purposes of fee disclosure in Form N-1A as the same may be amended from time to time; (b) transaction costs (such as brokerage commissions and dealer and underwriter spreads) and taxes; (c) other extraordinary expenses as determined for the purposes of fee disclosure in Form N-1A, as the same may be amended from time to time; and (d) any other exclusions enumerated in the Fund's particular expense cap. Without limiting the foregoing, extraordinary expenses are generally those that are unusual or expected to recur only infrequently, and may include such expenses, by way of illustration, as (i) expenses of the reorganization, restructuring, redomiciling or merger of the Fund or class or the acquisition of all or substantially all of the assets of another fund or class; (ii) expenses of holding, and soliciting proxies

for, a meeting of shareholders of the Fund or class (except to the extent relating to routine items such as the election of Trustees or the approval of the independent registered public accounting firm); and (iii) expenses of converting to a new custodian, transfer agent or other service provider, in each case to the extent any such expenses are considered extraordinary expenses for the purposes of fee disclosure in Form N-1A as the same may be amended from time to time. In order to implement an expense limitation, the Manager will, as necessary, waive management fees or reimburse operating expenses. However, the Manager is permitted to recapture amounts waived or reimbursed to a class during the same fiscal year if the class' total annual fund operating expenses have fallen to a level below the class's expense limitation shown in the Fund's Prospectus. In no case will the Manager recapture any amount that would result, on any particular business day of the Fund, in the class' total annual fund operating expenses exceeding such expense limitation or any other lower limit then in effect. These arrangements may be reduced or terminated under certain circumstances.

Portfolio Managers

Other Accounts Managed by the Portfolio Managers

The table below identifies the portfolio managers, the number of accounts (other than the Fund) for which the portfolio managers have day-to-day management responsibilities and the total assets in such accounts, within each of the following categories: registered investment companies, other pooled investment vehicles, and other accounts. For each category, the number of accounts and total assets in the accounts where fees are based on performance are also indicated, as applicable. Unless noted otherwise, all information is provided as of December 31, 2025.

Portfolio Managers	Type of Account	Number of Accounts Managed	Total Assets Managed (Billions) ($)	Number of Accounts Managed for which Advisory Fee is Performance-Based	Assets Managed for which Advisory Fee is Performance-Based (Billions) ($)
Growth Portfolio					
Aram E. Green	Registered Investment Companies	7	14.23	1	3.38
	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	3	0.50	None	None
	Other Accounts	34,372	18.29	None	None
Amanda Leithe	Registered Investment Companies	1	4.29	None	None
	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	None	None	None	None
	Other Accounts	33,020	16.95	None	None

Mid Cap Portfolio

Brian M. Angerame	Registered Investment Companies	3	5.25	1	3.38
	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	1	0.005	None	None
	Other Accounts	3,335	0.67	None	None
Matthew Lilling	Registered Investment Companies	3	5.25	1	3.38
	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	1	0.005	None	None
	Other Accounts	3,335	0.67	None	None

Small Cap Growth Portfolio

Jeffrey Bailin	Registered Investment Companies	3	5.71	1	3.42
	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	2	0.50	None	None
	Other Accounts	1,351	0.57	None	None
Aram E. Green	Registered Investment Companies	7	13.97	1	3.38
	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	3	0.50	None	None
	Other Accounts	34,372	18.29	None	None

Portfolio Managers Securities Ownership

The table below identifies ownership of equity securities of the Fund by the portfolio managers responsible for the day-to-day management of the Fund as of December 31, 2025. These holdings are in addition to shares held for the benefit of the portfolio manager under ClearBridge's incentive compensation program.

Portfolio Managers	Dollar Range of Ownership of Securities ($)
Growth Portfolio	
Aram E. Green	None
Amanda Leithe	None
Mid Cap Portfolio	
Brian M. Angerame	None
Matthew Lilling	None
Small Cap Growth Portfolio	
Jeffrey Bailin	None
Aram E. Green	None

Potential Conflicts of Interest

In this subsection and the next subsection titled "Portfolio Manager Compensation Structure", "Subadviser" refers to ClearBridge Investments, LLC.

Potential conflicts of interest may arise when the Fund's portfolio managers also have day-to-day management responsibilities with respect to one or more other funds or other accounts, as is the case for the Fund's portfolio managers.

The Subadviser and the Fund have adopted compliance policies and procedures that are designed to address various conflicts of interest that may arise for the Subadviser and the individuals that each employs. For example, the Subadviser seeks to minimize the effects of competing interests for the time and attention of portfolio managers by assigning portfolio managers to manage funds and accounts that share a similar investment style. The Subadviser has also adopted trade allocation procedures that are designed to facilitate the fair allocation of investment opportunities among multiple funds and accounts. There is no guarantee, however, that the policies and procedures adopted by the Subadviser and the Fund will be able to detect and/or prevent every situation in which an actual or potential conflict may appear. These potential conflicts include:

Allocation of Limited Time and Attention. A portfolio manager who is responsible for managing multiple funds and/or accounts may devote unequal time and attention to the management of those funds and/or accounts. The effects of this potential conflict may be more pronounced where funds and/or accounts overseen by a particular portfolio manager have different investment strategies.

Allocation of Investment Opportunities. If a portfolio manager identifies an investment opportunity that may be suitable for multiple funds and/or accounts, the opportunity may be allocated among these several funds or accounts, which may limit a fund's ability to take full advantage of the investment opportunity. The Subadviser has adopted policies and procedures to ensure that all accounts, including the Fund, are treated equitably.

Pursuit of Differing Strategies. At times, a portfolio manager may determine that an investment opportunity may be appropriate for only some of the funds and/or accounts for which he or she exercises investment responsibility, or may decide that certain of the funds and/or accounts should take differing positions with respect to a particular security. In these cases, the portfolio manager may place separate transactions for one or more funds or accounts which may affect the market price of the security or the execution of the transaction, or both, to the detriment or benefit of one or more other funds and/or accounts.

Selection of Broker/Dealers. In addition to executing trades, some broker/dealers provide brokerage and research services (as those terms are defined in Section 28(e) of the 1934 Act), which may result in the payment of higher brokerage fees than might have otherwise been available. These services may be more beneficial to certain funds or accounts than to others. For this reason, the Subadviser has formed a brokerage committee that reviews, among other things, the allocation of brokerage to broker/dealers, best execution and soft dollar usage.

Variation in Compensation. A conflict of interest may arise where the financial or other benefits available to the portfolio manager differ among the funds and/or accounts that he or she manages. If the structure of the manager's management fee (and the percentage paid to the Subadviser) differs among funds and/or accounts (such as where certain funds or accounts pay higher management fees or performance-based management fees), the portfolio manager might be motivated to help certain funds and/or accounts over others.

The portfolio manager might be motivated to favor funds and/or accounts in which he or she has an interest or in which the manager and/or its affiliates have interests. Similarly, the desire to maintain assets under management or to enhance the portfolio manager's performance record or to derive other rewards, financial or otherwise, could influence the portfolio manager in affording preferential treatment to those funds and/or accounts that could most significantly benefit the portfolio manager.

Portfolio Manager Compensation Structure

The Subadviser's portfolio managers participate in a competitive compensation program that is designed to attract and retain outstanding investment professionals and closely align the interests of its investment professionals with those of its clients and overall firm results. The total compensation program includes a significant incentive component that rewards high performance standards, integrity, and collaboration consistent with the firm's values. Portfolio manager compensation is reviewed and modified each year as appropriate to reflect changes in the market and to ensure the continued alignment with the goals stated above. The Subadviser's portfolio managers and other investment professionals receive a combination of base compensation and discretionary compensation, comprising a cash incentive award and deferred incentive plans described below.

Base salary compensation. Base salary is fixed and primarily determined based on market factors and the experience and responsibilities of the investment professional within the firm.

Discretionary compensation. In addition to base compensation managers may receive discretionary compensation.

Discretionary compensation can include:

- Cash Incentive Award
- The Subadviser's Deferred Incentive Plan (CDIP)—a mandatory program that typically defers 15% of discretionary year-end compensation into the Subadviser's managed products. For portfolio managers, one-third of this deferral tracks the performance of their primary managed product, one-third tracks the performance of a composite portfolio of the firm's new product and one-third can be elected to track the performance of one or more of the Subadviser's managed funds. Consequently, portfolio managers can have two-thirds of their CDIP award tracking the performance of their primary managed products. For centralized research analysts, two-thirds of their deferral is elected to track the performance of one of more of Subadviser's managed funds, while one-third tracks the performance of the new product composite. The Subadviser then makes a company investment in the proprietary managed funds equal to the deferral amounts by fund. This investment is a company asset held on the balance sheet and paid out to the employees in the shares subject to vesting requirements.
- Franklin Resources Restricted Stock Deferral—a mandatory program that typically defers 5% of discretionary year-end compensation into Franklin Resources restricted stock. The award is paid out to employees in shares subject to vesting requirements.

Several factors are considered by the Subadviser's Senior Management when determining discretionary compensation for portfolio managers. These include but are not limited to:

- Investment performance. A portfolio manager's compensation is linked to the pre-tax investment performance of the fund/accounts managed by the portfolio manager. Investment performance is calculated for 1-, 3-, and 5-year periods measured against the applicable product benchmark (e.g., a securities index and, with respect to a fund, the benchmark set forth in the Fund's Prospectus) and relative to applicable industry peer groups. The greatest weight is generally placed on 3- and 5-year performance.
- Appropriate risk positioning that is consistent with the Subadviser's investment philosophy and the Investment Committee/CIO approach to generation of alpha.
- Overall firm profitability and performance.
- Amount and nature of assets managed by the portfolio manager.
- Contributions for asset retention, gathering and client satisfaction.

- Contribution to mentoring, coaching and/or supervising.
- Contribution and communication of investment ideas in the Subadviser's Investment Committee meetings and on a day to day basis.
- Market compensation survey research by independent third parties.

Custodian and Transfer Agent

The Fund has entered into an agreement with The Bank of New York Mellon ("BNY Mellon"), 240 Greenwich Street, New York, New York 10286, to serve as custodian of the Fund. BNY Mellon, among other things, maintains a custody account or accounts in the name of the Fund, receives and delivers all assets for the Fund upon purchase and upon sale or maturity, collects and receives all income and other payments and distributions on account of the assets of the Fund and makes disbursements on behalf of the Fund. BNY Mellon neither determines the Fund's investment policies nor decides which securities the Fund will buy or sell. For its services, BNY Mellon receives a monthly fee based upon the daily average market value of securities held in custody and also receives securities transaction charges, including out-of-pocket expenses. The Fund may also periodically enter into arrangements with other qualified custodians with respect to certain types of securities or other transactions such as repurchase agreements or derivatives transactions. BNY Mellon may also act as the Fund's securities lending agent and in that case would receive a share of the income generated by such activities.

Franklin Templeton Investor Services, LLC ("Investor Services") is the Fund's shareholder servicing agent and acts as the Fund's transfer agent and dividend-paying agent. Investor Services is located at 3344 Quality Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-7313. Please send all correspondences relating to the Fund to Investor Services at P.O. Box 33030, St. Petersburg, FL 33733-8030.

Under the terms of its servicing contract with the Fund, Investor Services may receive a fee for servicing Fund shareholder accounts. The Fund also will reimburse Investor Services for certain out-of-pocket expenses necessarily incurred in servicing the shareholder accounts in accordance with the terms of its servicing contract with the Fund.

Fund Counsel

Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP, located at One Federal Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02110, serves as legal counsel to the Trust and the Fund.

Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 100 East Pratt Street, Suite 2600, Baltimore, Maryland 21202, serves as the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm.

PORTFOLIO TRANSACTIONS AND BROKERAGE

Portfolio Transactions

Pursuant to the Subadvisory Agreement and subject to the general supervision of the Board and in accordance with the Fund's investment objectives and strategies, the Subadviser is responsible for the execution of the Fund's portfolio transactions with respect to assets allocated to the Subadviser. The Subadviser is authorized to place orders pursuant to its investment determinations for the Fund either directly with the issuer or with any broker or dealer, foreign currency dealer, futures commission merchant or others selected by it.

In certain instances, there may be securities that are suitable as an investment for the Fund as well as for one or more of the other clients of the Subadviser. Investment decisions for the Fund and for the Subadviser's other clients are made with a view to achieving their respective investment objectives. It may develop that a particular security is bought or sold for only one client even though it might be held by, or bought or sold for, other clients. Likewise, a particular security may be bought for one or more clients when one or more clients are selling the same security. Some simultaneous transactions are inevitable when several clients receive investment advice from the same investment adviser, particularly when the same security is suitable for the investment objectives of more than one client. When two or more clients are simultaneously engaged in the purchase or sale of the same security, the securities are allocated among clients in a manner believed to be equitable to each. It is recognized that in some cases this system could adversely affect the price of or the size of the position obtainable in a security for the Fund. When purchases or sales of the same security for the Fund and for other portfolios managed by the Subadviser occur

contemporaneously, the purchase or sale orders may be aggregated in order to obtain any price advantages available to large volume purchases or sales.

Transactions on stock exchanges and other agency transactions involve the payment of negotiated brokerage commissions by the Fund. Transactions in foreign securities often involve the payment of brokerage commissions that may be higher than those in the United States. Fixed income securities are generally traded on a net basis (i.e., without a commission) through dealers acting as principal for their own account and not as brokers. This means that a dealer makes a market for securities by offering to buy at one price and selling the security at a slightly higher price. The difference between the prices is known as a "spread." Other portfolio transactions may be executed through brokers acting as agents and the Fund will pay a spread or commission in connection with such transactions. The cost of securities purchased from underwriters includes an underwriting commission, concession or a net price. The Fund may also purchase securities directly from the issuer. The aggregate brokerage commissions paid by the Fund for the three most recent fiscal years or periods, as applicable, are set forth below under "Aggregate Brokerage Commissions Paid."

Brokerage and Research Services

The general policy of the Subadviser in selecting brokers and dealers is to obtain the best results achievable in the context of a number of factors which are considered both in relation to individual trades and broader trading patterns. The Fund may not always pay the lowest commission or spread available. Rather, in placing orders on behalf of the Fund, the Subadviser also takes into account other factors bearing on the overall quality of execution, such as size of the order, difficulty of execution, the reliability of the broker/dealer, the competitiveness of the price and the commission, the research services received and whether the broker/dealer commits its own capital.

In connection with the selection of such brokers or dealers and the placing of such orders, subject to applicable law, brokers or dealers may be selected who also provide brokerage and research services (as those terms are defined in Section 28(e) of the 1934 Act) to the Fund and/or the other accounts over which the Subadviser or its affiliates exercise investment discretion. The Subadviser is authorized to pay a broker or dealer that provides such brokerage and research services a commission for executing a portfolio transaction for the Fund which is in excess of the amount of commission another broker or dealer would have charged for effecting that transaction if the Subadviser determines in good faith that such amount of commission is reasonable in relation to the value of the brokerage and research services provided by such broker or dealer. Investment research services include information and analysis on particular companies and industries as well as market or economic trends and portfolio strategy, market quotations for portfolio evaluations, analytical software and similar products and services. If a research service also assists the Subadviser in a non-research capacity (such as bookkeeping or other administrative functions), then only the percentage or component that provides assistance to the Subadviser in the investment decision making process may be paid in commission dollars. This determination may be viewed in terms of either that particular transaction or the overall responsibilities that the Subadviser and its affiliates have with respect to accounts over which they exercise investment discretion. The Subadviser may also have arrangements with brokers pursuant to which such brokers provide research services to the Subadviser in exchange for a certain volume of brokerage transactions to be executed by such brokers. While the payment of higher commissions increases the Fund's costs, the Subadviser does not believe that the receipt of such brokerage and research services significantly reduces its expenses as Subadviser. Arrangements for the receipt of research services from brokers (so-called "soft dollar" arrangements) may create conflicts of interest. Although the Subadviser is authorized to use soft dollar arrangements in order to obtain research services, it is not required to do so, and the Subadviser may not be able or may choose not to use soft dollar arrangements because of regulatory restrictions, operational considerations or for other reasons.

Research services furnished to the Subadviser by brokers that effect securities transactions for the Fund may be used by the Subadviser in servicing other investment companies and accounts which the Subadviser manages. Similarly, research services furnished to the Subadviser by brokers that effect securities transactions for other investment companies and accounts which the Subadviser manages may be used by the Subadviser in servicing the Fund. Not all of these research services are used by the Subadviser in managing any particular account, including the Fund.

Firms that provide research and brokerage services to the Subadviser may also promote the sale of the Fund or other pooled investment vehicles advised by the Subadviser, and the Subadviser and/or its affiliates may separately compensate them for doing so. Such brokerage business is placed on the basis of brokerage and research services provided by the firm and is not based on any sales of the Fund or other pooled investment vehicles advised by the Subadviser.

The Fund contemplates that, consistent with the policy of obtaining the best net results, brokerage transactions may be conducted through "affiliated broker/dealers," as defined in the 1940 Act. The Fund's Board has adopted procedures in accordance with Rule 17e-1 under the 1940 Act to ensure that all brokerage commissions paid to such affiliates are reasonable and fair in the context of the market in which such affiliates operate. For the three most recent fiscal periods (as applicable), the Fund did not pay any brokerage commission to its affiliates.

Aggregate Brokerage Commissions Paid

The table below shows the aggregate brokerage commissions paid by the Fund during the periods indicated.

Fund	For the Fiscal Period Ended December 31,	Aggregate Brokerage Commissions Paid ($)
Growth Portfolio	2025*	16,733
	2024	36,320
	2023	21,072
Mid Cap Portfolio	2025	83,401
	2024	108,762
	2023	99,494
Small Cap Growth Portfolio	2025	147,292
	2024**	161,976
	2023	68,912

* The decrease in aggregate brokerage commissions paid between the fiscal periods December 31, 2025 and December 31, 2024 was due to a decrease in the total value of portfolio transactions during the fiscal period ended December 31, 2025.

** The increase in aggregate brokerage commissions paid between the fiscal periods December 31, 2023 and December 31, 2024 was due to increased portfolio turnover and Fund redemption activity, as well as a repositioning of the Fund's portfolio during the fiscal period ended December 31, 2024.

The table below shows the amount of transactions (if any) for the most recent fiscal period that were directed to firms that provided research services and the commissions paid on such transactions.

Fund	Total Amount of Brokerage Transactions Related to Research Services ($)	Total Commissions Paid on Transactions Related to Research Services ($)
Growth Portfolio	62,156,996	11,951
Mid Cap Portfolio	150,956,561	58,273
Small Cap Growth Portfolio	205,164,413	87,658

Securities of Regular Broker/Dealers

As of December 31, 2025, the value of the Fund's holdings of the securities of its regular broker/dealers (as defined in Rule 10b-1 under the 1940 Act) were as follows:

Fund	Broker/Dealer	Type of Security Owned D=Debt E=Equity	Market Value (000's) ($)
Growth Portfolio	JP Morgan Securities LLC	E	1,269
Mid Cap Portfolio	JP Morgan Securities LLC	E	6,729
Small Cap Growth Portfolio	JP Morgan Securities LLC	E	2,806

Portfolio Turnover

For reporting purposes, the Fund's portfolio turnover rate is calculated by dividing the lesser of purchases or sales of portfolio securities for the fiscal year by the monthly average of the value of the portfolio securities owned by the Fund during the fiscal year. In determining such portfolio turnover, all securities whose maturities at the time of acquisition were one year or less are excluded. A 100% portfolio turnover rate would occur, for example, if all of the securities in the Fund's investment portfolio (other than short-term money market securities) were replaced once during the fiscal year.

In the event that portfolio turnover increases, this increase necessarily results in correspondingly greater transaction costs which must be paid by the Fund. To the extent the portfolio trading results in recognition of net short-term capital gains, shareholders that hold their shares in a taxable account will generally be taxed on distributions of such gains at ordinary tax rates.

Portfolio turnover will not be a limiting factor should the Subadviser deem it advisable to purchase or sell securities.

Fund	For the Fiscal Period Ended 2025 (%)	For the Fiscal Period Ended 2024 (%)
Growth Portfolio	23	23
Mid Cap Portfolio	36	35
Small Cap Growth Portfolio	37	36

SHARE OWNERSHIP

Principal Shareholders

As of March 31, 2026, to the knowledge of the Trust, the following shareholders owned of record or beneficially 5% or more of the outstanding shares of the classes of the Fund as set forth below:

Class	Name and Address	Percent of Class (%)
Growth Portfolio		
I	METLIFE INSURANCE CO USA SHAREHOLDER ACCOUNTING DEPT ATTN TERRENCE SANTRY 125 HIGH ST BOSTON MA 02110-2704	57.56

Class	Name and Address	Percent of Class (%)
I	JP MORGAN CHASE BANK NA FBO INTELLIGENT VARIABLE UNIV LIFE TEACHERS INSURANCE ANNUITY ASSOC SEPARATE ACCOUNT VA-5 8500 ANDREW CARNEGIE BLVD CHARLOTTE NC 282628500	30.95
II	THE LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY 1300 S CLINTON ST FORT WAYNE IN 46802-3506	50.14
II	SECURITY BENEFIT LIFE INS CO FBO SBL VARIFLEX Q NAVISYS 1 SW SECURITY BENEFIT PL TOPEKA KS 66636-1000	11.44
II	SECURITY BENEFIT LIFE INSURANCE CO-FBO UNBUNDLED C/O VARIABLE ANNUITY DEPT 1 SECURITY BENEFIT PL TOPEKA KS 66636-1000	10.79
II	GENWORTH LIFE & ANNUITY INS CO ATTN VARIABLE ACCOUNTING DEPT 6620 W BROAD ST BLDG 3 5TH FL RICHMOND VA 23230-1721	6.05
Mid Cap Portfolio		
I	THE LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY 1300 S CLINTON ST FORT WAYNE IN 46802-3506	75.06
I	METLIFE INSURANCE CO USA SHAREHOLDER ACCOUNTING DEPT ATTN TERRENCE SANTRY 125 HIGH ST BOSTON MA 02110-2704	17.74
II	THE LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY 1300 S CLINTON ST FORT WAYNE IN 46802-3506	40.94
II	PROTECTIVE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY PO BOX 2606 BIRMINGHAM AL 35202-2606	21.56

Class	Name and Address	Percent of Class (%)
II	MIDLAND NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE CO SEPARATE ACCOUNT C 8300 MILLS CIVIC PKWY WEST DES MOINES IA 502663833	10.85
II	PACIFIC SELECT EXEC SEPARATE ACCOUNT OF PACIFIC LIFE 700 NEWPORT CENTER DR NEWPORT BEACH CA 92660-6307	10.65
Small Cap Growth Portfolio		
I	METLIFE INSURANCE CO USA 125 HIGH ST BOSTON MA 02110-2704	23.25
I	METLIFE INSURANCE CO USA SHAREHOLDER ACCOUNTING DEPT 125 HIGH ST BOSTON MA 02110-2704	13.47
I	PROTECTIVE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY PO BOX 2606 BIRMINGHAM AL 35202-2606	11.70
I	NATIONWIDE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY NWVLI4 C/O IPO PORTFOLIO ACCOUNTING PO BOX 182029 COLUMBUS OH 43218-2029	5.67
I	PRINCIPAL LIFE INSURANCE CO CUST. FBO PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE VARIABLE UNIVERSAL LIFE II ATTN INDIVIDUAL LIFE ACCOUNTING 711 HIGH STREET DES MOINES, IA 50392	5.07
II	METLIFE INSURANCE CO USA 125 HIGH ST BOSTON MA 02110-2704	32.16
II	MINNESOTA LIFE 400 ROBERT ST N SAINT PAUL MN 55101-2037	13.79
II	JEFFERSON NATIONAL LIFE INS CO ATTN SEPARATE ACCOUNTS 10350 ORMSBY PARK PL STE 600 LOUISVILLE KY 40223-6175	12.34

Class	Name and Address	Percent of Class (%)
II	PROTECTIVE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY PO BOX 2606 BIRMINGHAM AL 35202-2606	11.10
II	NATIONWIDE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY C/O IPO PORTFOLIO ACCOUNTING NWVAII PO BOX 182029 COLUMBUS OH 432182029	6.44
II	MIDLAND NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE CO SEPARATE ACCOUNT C 8300 MILLS CIVIC PKWY WEST DES MOINES IA 502663833	5.54
II	NATIONWIDE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY C/O IPO PORTFOLIO ACCOUNTING P.O. BOX 182029 COLUMBUS, OH 43218-2029	5.30

Shareholders who own 25% or more of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund or who are otherwise deemed to "control" the Fund may be able to determine or significantly influence the outcome of matters submitted to a vote of the Fund's shareholders. Thus, the Participating Insurance Companies listed below are technically deemed to be in control of the Fund. Nevertheless, with respect to any Fund shareholder meeting, a Participating Insurance Company is required to solicit and accept timely voting instructions from its contract owners in accordance with the procedures set forth in the prospectus for the applicable contract issued by the insurance company and to the extent required by law.

Fund	Name and Address	Percent of Fund (%)
Growth Portfolio	METLIFE INSURANCE CO USA SHAREHOLDER ACCOUNTING DEPT ATTN TERRENCE SANTRY 125 HIGH ST BOSTON MA 02110-2704	40.12
Mid Cap Portfolio	THE LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY 1300 S CLINTON ST FORT WAYNE IN 46802-3506	56.62

As of March 31, 2026, the Trustees and officers of the Trust, as a group, owned less than 1% of the outstanding shares of each class of the Fund.

DISTRIBUTOR

Franklin Distributors, LLC, an indirect, wholly-owned broker/dealer subsidiary of Franklin Resources, located at One Franklin Parkway, San Mateo, CA 94403-1906, serves as the sole and exclusive distributor of the Fund pursuant to a written agreement (as amended, the "Distribution Agreement").

Under the Distribution Agreement, the Distributor is appointed as principal underwriter and distributor in connection with the offering and sale of shares of the Fund. The Distributor offers the shares on an agency or "best efforts" basis under which the Fund issues only the number of shares actually sold. Shares of the Fund are continuously offered by the Distributor.

The Distribution Agreement is renewable from year to year with respect to the Fund if approved (a) by the Board or by a vote of a majority of the Fund's outstanding voting securities, and (b) by the affirmative vote of a majority of Trustees who are not parties to such agreement or interested persons of any party by votes cast in person at a meeting called for such purpose.

The Distribution Agreement is terminable with respect to the Fund without penalty by the Board or by vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund, or by the Distributor, on not less than 60 days' written notice to the other party (unless the notice period is waived by mutual consent). The Distribution Agreement will automatically and immediately terminate in the event of its assignment.

The Distributor may be deemed to be an underwriter for purposes of the 1933 Act. Dealer reallowances, if any, are described in the Fund's Prospectus.

The Distributor, the Manager, their affiliates and their personnel have interests in promoting sales of Franklin Templeton funds, including remuneration, fees and profitability relating to services to and sales of the funds. Associated persons of the Manager, the Distributor or their affiliates (including wholesalers registered with the Distributor) may receive additional compensation related to the sale of individual Franklin Templeton funds or categories of Franklin Templeton funds. The Manager, the Subadviser, and their advisory or other personnel may also benefit from increased amounts of assets under management.

Service Agents also may benefit from the sales of shares of funds sold by the Distributor. For example, in connection with such sales, Service Agents may receive compensation from the Fund (with respect to the Fund as a whole or a particular class of shares) and/or from the Manager, the Distributor, and/or their affiliates, as further described below. The structure of these compensation arrangements, as well as the amounts paid under such arrangements, vary and may change from time to time. In addition, new compensation arrangements may be negotiated at any time. The compensation arrangements described in this section are not mutually exclusive, and a single Service Agent may receive multiple types of compensation.

The Distributor has agreements in place with Service Agents defining how much each firm will be paid for the sale of the Fund from sales charges, if any, paid by Fund shareholders and from 12b-1 Plan fees, if any, paid to the Distributor by the Fund. These Service Agents then pay their employees or associated persons who sell such fund shares from the sales charges and/or fees they receive. The Service Agent, and/or its employees or associated persons may receive a payment when a sale is made and will, in most cases, continue to receive ongoing payments while you are invested in the Fund. In other cases, the Distributor may retain all or a portion of such fees and sales charges.

In addition, the Distributor, the Manager and/or certain of their affiliates may make additional payments (which are often referred to as "revenue sharing" payments) to the Service Agents from their past profits and other available sources, including profits from their relationships with the Fund. Revenue sharing payments are a form of compensation paid to a Service Agent in addition to the sales charges paid by Fund shareholders or 12b-1 Plan fees paid by the Fund. The Manager, the Distributor and/or certain of its affiliates may revise the terms of any existing revenue sharing arrangement and may enter into additional revenue sharing arrangements with other Service Agents.

Revenue sharing arrangements are intended, among other things, to foster the sale of Fund shares and/or to compensate financial services firms for assisting in marketing or promotional activities in connection with the sale of Fund shares. In exchange for revenue sharing payments, the Manager and the Distributor generally expect to receive the opportunity for the Fund to be sold through the Service Agents' sales forces or to have access to third-party platforms or other marketing programs, including but not limited to mutual fund "supermarket" platforms or other sales programs. To the extent that Service Agents receiving revenue sharing payments sell more shares of the Fund, the Manager and the Distributor and/or their affiliates benefit from the increase in Fund assets as a result of the fees they receive from the Fund. The Distributor, FTFA or their affiliates consider revenue sharing arrangements based on a variety of factors and services to be provided.

Revenue sharing payments are usually calculated based on a percentage of Fund sales and/or Fund assets attributable to a particular Service Agent. Payments are at times based on other criteria or factors such as, for example, a fee per each transaction. Specific payment formulas are negotiated based on a number of factors, including, but not limited to, reputation in the industry, ability to attract and retain assets, target markets, customer relationships and scope and quality of services

provided. In addition, the Distributor, the Manager and/or certain of their affiliates may pay flat fees on a one-time or irregular basis for the initial set-up of the Fund on a Service Agent's systems, participation or attendance at a Service Agent's meetings, or for other reasons. Furthermore, the Distributor, the Manager and/or certain of their affiliates at times pay certain education and training costs of Service Agents (including, in some cases, travel expenses) to train and educate the personnel of the Service Agents. In addition, the Distributor, the Manager and/or certain of their affiliates at times may provide access to technology and other tools and support services that facilitate the marketing and promotion of investment management portfolios sponsored by Franklin Templeton and/or its affiliates. It is likely that Service Agents that execute portfolio transactions for the Fund will include those firms with which the Manager, the Distributor and/or certain of their affiliates have entered into revenue sharing arrangements.

The Fund generally pays the transfer agent for certain recordkeeping and administrative services. In addition, the Fund may pay Service Agents for certain recordkeeping, administrative, sub-accounting and networking services. These services include maintenance of shareholder accounts by the firms, such as recordkeeping and other activities that otherwise would be performed by the Fund's transfer agent. Administrative fees may be paid to a firm that undertakes, for example, shareholder communications on behalf of the Fund. Networking services are services undertaken to support the electronic transmission of shareholder purchase and redemption orders through the National Securities Clearing Corporation ("NSCC"). These payments are generally based on either (1) a percentage of the average daily net assets of Fund shareholders serviced by a Service Agent or (2) a fixed dollar amount for each account serviced by a Service Agent. The Distributor, the Manager and/or their affiliates may make all or a portion of these payments.

In addition, the Fund reimburses the Distributor for NSCC fees that are invoiced to the Distributor as the party to the agreement with NSCC for the administrative services provided by NSCC to the Fund and its shareholders. These services include transaction processing and settlement through Fund/SERV, electronic networking services to support the transmission of shareholder purchase and redemption orders to and from Service Agents, and related recordkeeping provided by NSCC to the Fund and its shareholders.

If your Fund shares are purchased through a retirement plan, the Distributor, the Manager or certain of their affiliates at times also make similar payments to those described in this section to the plan's recordkeeper or an affiliate.

Revenue sharing payments, as well as the other types of compensation arrangements described in this section, create an incentive for Service Agents and their employees or associated persons to recommend the Fund over other investments or sell shares of the Fund to customers and in doing so may create conflicts of interest between the firms' financial interests and the interests of their customers. The total amount of these payments is substantial, may be substantial to any given recipient and may exceed the costs and expenses incurred by the recipient for any Fund-related marketing or shareholder servicing activities.

As of December 31, 2025, the Distributor, the Manager or their affiliates made revenue sharing payments to the Service Agents listed below (or their affiliates or successors). It is possible that each Service Agent listed is not receiving payments with respect to each fund sold by the Distributor. This list of intermediaries will change over time, and any additions, modifications or deletions thereto that have occurred since December 31, 2025 are not reflected.

ADP Retirement Services
Allianz Life Insurance Company
Allstate Life Insurance Company
American Enterprise Investment Services Inc.
American General Life Insurance Co of DE
American General Life Insurance Co.
American United Life Insurance Company
Ameriprise Financial, Inc
Ameritas Life Insurance Corporation
Annuity Investors Life Insurance Company
Ascensus, Inc.
Atria Wealth Solutions
AuguStar Life Insurance Company
Avantax Investment Services, Inc.
Axelus Financial
Benjamin F. Edwards & Company, Inc.
BlackRock Inc
Brighthouse Financial
Brighthouse Life Insurance Company
Brighthouse Life Insurance Company of NY
CAIS LLC
Cambridge Investment Research, Inc
Cetera Financial Group
Charles Schwab & Co.
Citigroup Global Markets Inc.
Citizens Securities, Inc.
CMFG Life Insurance Company
Columbia ThreadNeedle
Commonwealth Annuity & Life Insurance Company
Commonwealth Financial Network

Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company
Delaware Life Insurance Co
Deutsche Bank
Edward D. Jones & Co., L.P.
Empower Annuity Insurance Company of America
Empower Life & Annuity Insurance Company of New York
Equitable Advisors, LLC
Equitable Life Insurance Company
Fidelity Investments
First Allmerica Financial Life Insurance Company
First Security Benefit Life Insurance and Annuity Company of NY
Forethought Life Insurance Company
Genworth Life & Annuity Insurance Company
Genworth Life Insurance Company of NY
Guardian Insurance & Annuity Company
Integrity Life Insurance Company
Janney Montgomery Scott LLC
Kestra Investment Services, LLC
Lincoln Investment Planning, Inc.
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company
LPL Financial LLC
Members Life Insurance Company
MetLife Insurance Company USA
Midland National
Minnesota Life Insurance Company
MONY Life Insurance Company of America (Equitable)
Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC
Nassau Life Insurance Company
National Integrity Life Insurance Company
National Security Life & Annuity Company
Nationwide Life Insurance Company
Northwestern Mutual Investment Svcs LLC
Osaic Wealth, Inc.
Pacific Life Insurance Company
PCS Retirement
PHL Variable Insurance Company
Phoenix Life Insurance Company
Primerica
Principal Life Insurance Company
Protective Life and Annuity Insurance Company
Pruco Life Insurance
Pruco Life Insurance Company of NJ
Raymond James & Associates, Inc.
RBC Capital Markets LLC
ReliaStar Life Insurance Company of NY
Riversource Life Insurance Company of New York
Rockefeller Capital
Sanctuary Wealth
Security Benefit Life Insurance Company
Stifel Financial Corporation
Symetra Life Insurance Company
Talcott Resolution Life Insurance Company
Corebridge Insurance Company of Bermuda, Ltd
Delaware Life Insurance Co of NY
DWC-The 401(K) Experts
Empire Fidelity Investments Life
Empower Financial Services
Envestnet
Equitable Financial Life Insurance
Everlake Services Company
Fidelity Investments Life Insurance Co
First Command
Forethought Distributors, LLC
FTMF Consulting
Genworth Life Insurance
Goldman Sachs
Hantz Financial Services
J.P. Morgan Securities LLC
John Hancock
Lincoln Benefit Life Company
Lincoln Life & Annuity Company of NY
Lincoln Retirement Services Co
Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company
Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith, Inc.
Metropolitan Life Insurance Company
Midland National Life Insurance Company
MML Investors Services, LLC
MONY Life Insurance Company of America (Protective Life)
MSCS
National Financial Services LLC
National Life Insurance Company
Nationwide Financial Services, Inc.
New York Life Insurance and Annuity Corporation
Osaic Services, Inc
Pacific Life and Annuity Company
Paychex Securities Corp
Pershing
Phoenix Life & Annuity Company
PNC Investments LLC
Principal Financial Services
Principal National Life Insurance Company
Protective Life Insurance Company
Pruco Life Insurance Company of AZ
Prudential Insurance Company of America
Raymond James Financial Services, Inc.
ReliaStar Life Insurance Company
Riversource Life Insurance Company
Robert W. Baird & Co., Inc.
Sammons Financial Network
Securian Financial Group, Inc
Standard Insurance Company
SunAmerica Annuity and Life Assurance Company
Talcott Resolution Life and Annuity Insurance Company
TFS Securities, Inc.

The Guardian Insurance & Annuity Company, Inc.
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans
TIAA-CREF Life Insurance Company
Transamerica Financial Life Insurance Company
Transamerica Premier Life Insurance Company
UBS Financial Services, Inc.
USI Consulting Group
Vanguard Marketing Corporation
Voya Financial Advisors, LLC
Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC
Western National Life Insurance Company
The Variable Annuity Life Insurance Company (VALIC)
TIAA-CREF Individual & Institutional Services, LLC
TIFIN Wealth
Transamerica Life Insurance Company
U.S. Bancorp Investments
United States Life Insurance Co in the City of NY
(fka First SunAmerica)
Valor Financial Securities, LLC
Venerable Insurance and Annuity Company
Voya Retirement Insurance and Annuity Company
Wells Fargo Clearing Services, LLC
Wilton Reassurance Life Company of New York

The Distributor, the Manager or their affiliates may also pay fees, from their own assets, to Service Agents for providing other distribution-related services as well as recordkeeping, administrative, subaccounting, and networking services (or portions thereof), and other shareholder or administrative services in connection with investments in the Fund. These payments may be considered revenue sharing payments. The Service Agents receiving such payments may not be listed above.

You should assume that your Service Agent receives revenue sharing payments and/or other compensation described in this SAI. Please contact your Service Agent for details about any payments it (and its employees) may receive from the Fund and/or from the Distributor, the Manager and/or their affiliates. You should review your Service Agent's disclosure and/or talk to your Service Agent to obtain more information on how this compensation may have influenced your Service Agent's recommendation of the Fund.

Dealer Commissions and Concessions

From time to time, the Distributor or the Manager, at its expense, may provide compensation or promotional incentives ("concessions") to dealers that sell or arrange for the sale of shares of the Fund or a managed account strategy of which the Fund is part. Such concessions provided by the Distributor or the Manager may include financial assistance to dealers in connection with preapproved conferences or seminars, sales or training programs for invited registered representatives and other employees, payment for travel expenses, including lodging, incurred by registered representatives and other employees for such seminars or training programs, seminars for the public, advertising and sales campaigns regarding one or more funds, and/or other dealer-sponsored events. From time to time, the Distributor or the Manager may make expense reimbursements for special training of a dealer's registered representatives and other employees in group meetings or to help pay the expenses of sales contests. Other concessions may be offered to the extent not prohibited by applicable laws or any self-regulatory agency, such as the FINRA.

Services and Distribution Plan

The Trust, on behalf of the Fund, has adopted a 12b-1 Plan in accordance with Rule 12b-1 under the 1940 Act with respect to Class II shares of the Fund. Under the 12b-1 Plan, the Fund may pay a monthly distribution fee at an annual rate not to exceed 0.25% of the average daily net assets of Class II shares.

The Fund will provide the Board with periodic reports of amounts expended under the 12b-1 Plan and the purposes for which such expenditures were made. Fees under the 12b-1 Plan may be used to make payments to the Distributor, a Participating Insurance Company, or other eligible parties (for purposes of this section, each a "Servicing Party") with respect to expenses related to Class II shares of the Fund for advertising, marketing or other promotional activity, including the preparation of materials intended for use within a Participating Insurance Company, and payments for preparation, printing, and distribution of prospectuses, statements of additional information and reports for recipients other than existing Policyholders. The Fund also may make payments to a Servicing Party for providing personal service or the maintenance of contract accounts. The amounts paid to each recipient may vary based upon certain factors, including, among other things, the levels of sales of Class II shares and/or shareholder services; provided, however, that the fees paid to a recipient with respect to Class II shares of the Fund that may be used to cover expenses primarily intended to result in the sale of Class II shares, or that may be used to cover expenses primarily intended for personal service and/or maintenance of contract accounts, may not exceed the maximum amounts, if any,

as may from time to time be permitted for such services under FINRA Conduct Rule 2341 or any successor rule, in each case as amended or interpreted by FINRA.

Since fees paid under the 12b-1 Plan are not tied directly to expenses incurred by the Servicing Party, the amount of the fees paid by Class II shares of the Fund during any year may be more or less than actual expenses incurred by the Servicing Party. This type of distribution fee arrangement is characterized by the staff of the SEC as being of the "compensation variety" (in contrast to "reimbursement" arrangements by which a distributor's payments are directly linked to its expenses). Thus, even if the Servicing Party's expenses exceed the fees provided for by the 12b-1 Plan, the Fund will not be obligated to pay more than those fees and, if expenses incurred by the Servicing Party are less than the fees paid to the Servicing Party, they will realize a profit.

The 12b-1 Plan recognizes that various service providers to the Fund, such as the Manager, may make payments for distribution, marketing or sales-related expenses out of their own resources of any kind, including profits or payments received from the Fund for other purposes, such as management fees. The 12b-1 Plan provides that, to the extent that such payments might be deemed to be indirect financing of any activity primarily intended to result in the sale of Class II shares of the Fund within the context of Rule 12b-1, the payments are deemed to be authorized by the 12b-1 Plan.

Under its terms, the 12b-1 Plan continues in effect for successive annual periods, provided continuance is specifically approved at least annually by vote of the Board, including a majority of the Independent Trustees who have no direct or indirect financial interest in the operation of the 12b-1 Plan or in any agreements related to it ("Qualified Trustees"). The 12b-1 Plan may not be amended to increase the amount of the service and distribution fees without approval of the outstanding voting securities of Class II shares of the Fund, and all amendments of the 12b-1 Plan also must be approved by the Trustees, including the Qualified Trustees, in the manner described above. The 12b-1 Plan may be terminated with respect to Class II shares of the Fund at any time, by the Fund without penalty, by vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of Class II shares of the Fund (as defined in the 1940 Act), or by vote of a majority of the Qualified Trustees.

The following service and distribution fees were incurred by the Fund pursuant to the 12b-1 Plan in effect during the fiscal period ended December 31, 2025:

Fund/Class	Service and Distribution Fees Incurred ($)	Service and Distribution Fees Waived/Reimbursed ($)
Growth Portfolio		
Class II	102,299	0
Mid Cap Portfolio		
Class II	383,395	0
Small Cap Growth Portfolio		
Class II	344,815	0

For the fiscal period ended December 31, 2025, the Distributor incurred distribution expenses for advertising, printing and mailing prospectuses, support service and overhead expenses and compensation to Service Agents and third parties as expressed in the following table. The Distributor may have made revenue sharing payments in addition to the expenses shown here.

Fund/Class	Third Party Fees ($)	Financial Consultant Compensation (Amortized) ($)	Marketing ($)	Printing ($)	Total Expenses ($)
Growth Portfolio					
Class II	102,299	0	11,316	0	113,615
Mid Cap Portfolio					
Class II	383,395	0	74,241	0	457,636
Small Cap Growth Portfolio					
Class II	344,815	0	64,415	0	409,230

AVAILABILITY OF THE FUND

Investment in the Fund is available only to owners of VA contracts and VLI policies issued by Participating Insurance Companies through their separate accounts and certain qualified plans and to qualified fund of funds, whose investors consist solely of such separate accounts and/or qualified pension and retirement plans. It is possible that in the future it may become disadvantageous for the separate accounts of both VA contracts and VLI policies to be invested simultaneously in the Fund. However, the Trust does not currently foresee any disadvantages to the owners of the different Policies which are funded by such separate accounts. The Board monitors events for the existence of any material irreconcilable conflict between or among such owners, and each Participating Insurance Company will take whatever remedial action may be necessary to resolve any such conflict. Such action could include the sale of Fund shares by one or more of the Participating Insurance Company separate accounts which fund these contracts, which could have adverse consequences to the Fund. Material irreconcilable conflicts could result from, for example: (i) changes in state insurance laws; (ii) changes in U.S. federal income tax laws; or (iii) differences in voting instructions between those given by owners of VA contracts and those given by owners of VLI policies. If the Board were to conclude that separate series of the Trust should be established for VA contracts and VLI policies, each Participating Insurance Company would bear the attendant expenses. Should this become necessary, Policyholders would presumably no longer have the economies of scale resulting from a larger combined mutual fund.

PURCHASE OF SHARES

The Fund offers its shares to Participating Insurance Companies and qualified retirement and pension plans ("Plans") on a continuous basis. The offering price per share of the Fund is equal to the NAV per share at the time of purchase. Individuals may not place orders directly with the Fund.

Investors should read this SAI and the Fund's current Prospectus along with the prospectus of the separate account of the Participating Insurance Company or information provided by their Plan. See the prospectus of the separate account of the Participating Insurance Company or the relevant Plan documents for more information on the purchase of Fund shares and with respect to the availability for investment in the Fund.

The offering of shares of the Fund may be suspended from time to time and the Fund reserves the right to reject any purchase order. In addition to cash, the Fund may accept securities as payment for Fund shares at the applicable NAV. Generally, the Fund will only consider accepting securities to increase its holdings in a portfolio security or if the Manager determines that the offered securities are a suitable investment for the Fund and in a sufficient amount for efficient management.

Sales Charges and Surrender Charges

The Fund does not assess any sales charges, either when shares are sold or redeemed. Surrender charges may be assessed under the Policies as described in the applicable separate account prospectus. Mortality and expense risk fees and other charges are also described in that prospectus.

The Fund has created separate classes of shares, designated as Class I and Class II shares. Class II shares are sold without an initial sales charge but are subject to an annual distribution fee of 0.25% of the daily net assets of the Class.

REDEMPTION OF SHARES

The right of redemption may be suspended or the date of payment postponed:

i. for any period during which the NYSE is closed (other than for customary weekend and holiday closings);

ii. when trading in the markets the Fund normally utilizes is restricted, or an emergency exists, as determined by the SEC, so that disposal of the Fund's investments or determination of NAV is not reasonably practicable; or

iii. for such other periods as the SEC by order may permit for protection of the Fund's shareholders.

The Fund may also suspend or postpone the recordation of the transfer of its shares upon the occurrence of any of the foregoing conditions.

Fund shares may be redeemed by VA contracts and VLI policies issued by Participating Insurance Companies through their separate accounts and certain qualified plans. Individuals may not place redemption orders directly with the Fund. It is the responsibility of the Participating Insurance Company and the qualified plans to properly transmit redemption requests in accordance with applicable requirements. Owners of VA contracts, VLI policies and qualified plan participants should consult their Participating Insurance Company or plan sponsor in this regard. Redemption requests will be effected at the NAV of the Fund next determined after receipt of redemption instructions by the Fund, through its agent, in proper form and in accordance with applicable requirements. The value of the shares redeemed may be more or less than their original cost, depending on the Fund's then-current NAV.

Redemptions In Kind

The Fund reserves the right, under certain conditions, to honor any request for a redemption by making payment in whole or in part by delivering securities valued in accordance with the procedures described under "Share price" in the Fund's Prospectus. Because redemption in kind may be used at times of unusual illiquidity in the markets, these valuation methods may include fair value estimations. If payment is made in securities, a shareholder should expect to incur brokerage expenses in converting those securities into cash, and the market price of those securities will be subject to fluctuation until they are sold. The securities delivered may not be representative of the entire Fund portfolio, may represent only one issuer or a limited number of issuers and may be securities that the Fund would otherwise sell. The Fund will not use securities to pay redemptions by the Distributor or other affiliated persons of the Fund, except as permitted by law, SEC rules or orders, or interpretive guidance from the SEC staff or other proper authorities.

The Fund reserves the right to pay redemption proceeds by giving the separate account or qualified plan shares of underlying funds. The shares that the separate account or qualified plan receives will be valued at the NAV per share of the class of the underlying fund held by the Fund on the day of the redemption. If the separate account or qualified plan later decides to redeem the underlying fund shares, those shares will be redeemed at the next-determined NAV per share of the class of the underlying fund that the separate account or qualified plan holds, which may be more or less than the value on the date of the separate account's or qualified plan's redemption from the Fund. A separate account or qualified plan may pay transaction costs to dispose of the Fund shares.

VALUATION OF SHARES

The NAV per share of each class of the Fund is generally calculated as of the close of regular trading (normally 4:00 p.m., Eastern time) on each day on which the NYSE is open. As of the date of this SAI, the NYSE is normally open for trading every weekday except in the event of an emergency or for the following holidays (or the days on which they are observed): New

Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth National Independence Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Because of the differences in distribution fees and class specific expenses, the per share NAV of each class of the Fund will differ. Please see the Fund's Prospectus for a description of the procedures used by the Fund in valuing its assets.

PROXY VOTING GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

The Manager delegates to the Subadviser the responsibility for voting proxies for the Fund through its contracts with the Subadviser. The Subadviser may use its own proxy voting policies and procedures to vote proxies of the Fund if the Fund's Board reviews and approves the use of those policies and procedures. Accordingly, the Manager does not expect to have proxy-voting responsibility for the Fund.

Should the Manager become responsible for voting proxies for any reason, such as the inability of the Subadviser to provide investment advisory services, the Manager shall utilize the proxy voting guidelines established by the most recent Subadviser to vote proxies until a new subadviser is retained and the use of its proxy voting policies and procedures is authorized by the Board. In the case of a material conflict between the interests of the Manager (or its affiliates if such conflict is known to persons responsible for voting at the Manager) and any fund, the Board of Directors of the Manager shall consider how to address the conflict and/or how to vote the proxies. The Manager shall maintain records of all proxy votes in accordance with applicable securities laws and regulations.

The Manager shall be responsible for gathering relevant documents and records related to proxy voting from the Subadviser and providing them to the Fund as required for the Fund to comply with applicable rules under the 1940 Act. The Manager shall also be responsible for coordinating the provision of information to the Board with regard to the proxy voting policies and procedures of the Subadviser, including the actual proxy voting policies and procedures of the Subadviser, changes to such policies and procedures, and reports on the administration of such policies and procedures.

The Subadviser's proxy voting policies and procedures govern in determining how proxies relating to the Fund's portfolio securities are voted. A copy of the proxy voting policies and procedures is attached as Appendix A to this SAI. Information regarding how the Fund voted proxies (if any) relating to portfolio securities during the most recent twelve month period ended June 30 is available without charge (1) by calling 877-6LM-FUND/656-3863, (2) on www.franklintempleton.com/prospectus (click on the name of the Fund), and (3) on the SEC's website at http://www.sec.gov.

DISCLOSURE OF PORTFOLIO HOLDINGS

The Fund's Board has adopted policies and procedures (the "policy") developed by the Manager with respect to the disclosure of the Fund's portfolio securities and any ongoing arrangements to make available information about the Fund's portfolio securities. The Manager believes the policy is in the best interests of the Fund and its shareholders and that it strikes an appropriate balance between the desire of investors for information about fund portfolio holdings and the need to protect the Fund from potentially harmful disclosures.

General Rules/Website Disclosure

The policy provides that information regarding the Fund's portfolio holdings may be shared at any time with employees of the Manager, the Fund's Subadviser and other affiliated parties involved in the management, administration or operations of the Fund (referred to as fund-affiliated personnel). With respect to non-money market funds, the Fund's complete list of holdings (including the size of each position) may be made available to investors, potential investors, third parties and Franklin Templeton personnel that are not fund-affiliated personnel (i) upon the filing of portfolio holdings reports in accordance with SEC rules, provided that such filings are not made until 15 calendar days following the end of the period covered by the applicable holdings report or (ii) no sooner than 8 business days after month end, provided that such information has been made available through public disclosure. Typically, public disclosure is achieved by required filings with the SEC and/or posting the information to the Fund's Internet site that is accessible by the public, or through public release by a third party vendor.

The Fund currently discloses its complete portfolio holdings 14 calendar days after month-end. The Fund discloses this information on the Fund's website: www.franklintempleton.com/prospectus (click on the name of the Fund).

Ongoing Arrangements

Under the policy, the Fund may release portfolio holdings information on a regular basis to a custodian, sub-custodian, fund accounting agent, proxy voting provider, rating agency or other vendor or service provider for a legitimate business purpose, where the party receiving the information is under a duty of confidentiality, including a duty to prohibit the sharing of non-public information with unauthorized sources and trading upon non-public information. The Fund may enter into other ongoing arrangements for the release of portfolio holdings information, but only if such arrangements serve a legitimate business purpose and are with a party who is subject to a confidentiality agreement and restrictions on trading upon non-public information. None of the Fund, Franklin Templeton or any other affiliated party may receive compensation or any other consideration in connection with such arrangements. Ongoing arrangements to make available information about the Fund's portfolio securities will be reviewed at least annually by the Fund's Board.

Set forth below is a list, as of December 1, 2025, of those parties with whom the Manager, on behalf of the Fund, has authorized ongoing arrangements that include the release of portfolio holdings information in accordance with the policy, as well as the maximum frequency of the release under such arrangements, and the minimum length of the lag, if any, between the date of the information and the date on which the information is disclosed. The ongoing arrangements may vary for each party, and it is possible that not every party will receive information for the Fund. The parties identified below as recipients are service providers, fund rating agencies, consultants and analysts.

Recipient	Frequency	Delay Before Dissemination
Barclays Bank PLC	Daily	None
Bloomberg AIM	Daily	None
Bloomberg L.P.	Daily	None
Bloomberg Portfolio Analysis	Daily	None
Brown Brothers Harriman	Daily	None
Charles River	Daily	None
Citco	Daily	None
Eagle Investment Systems Corp	Daily	None
Emerging Portfolio Fund Research, Inc. (EPFR), an Informa Company	Monthly	None
Enfusion Systems	Daily	None
ENSO LP	Daily	None
eVestment Alliance	Quarterly	8-10 Days
FactSet	Daily	None
HSBC Global Asset Management	Daily	None
Institutional Shareholder Services	Daily	None
ITG	Daily	None
Kailash Concepts	Monthly	None
Middle Office Solutions, LLC	Daily	None
Morgan Stanley Capital Inc.	Daily	None
Morningstar	Daily	None

NaviSite, Inc.	Daily	None
StarCompliance	Daily	None
State Street Bank and Trust Company	Daily	None
STP Investments	Daily	None
SunGard/Protegent (formerly Dataware)	Daily	None
The Bank of New York Mellon	Daily	None
The Northern Trust Company	Daily	None
The Northern Trust Melbourne	Daily	None
Thomson	Semi-annually	None
Thomson Reuters	Daily	None
VPD Financial Software Consulting	Daily	None
Wilshire Analytics (Axiom and Compass)	Daily	None

Portfolio holdings information for the Fund may also be released from time to time pursuant to ongoing arrangements with the following parties:

Recipient	**Frequency**	**Delay Before Dissemination**
Broadridge	Daily	None
Deutsche Bank	Monthly	6-8 Business Days
DST International plc (DSTi)	Daily	None
Electra Information Systems	Daily	None
Fidelity	Quarterly	5 Business Days
Fitch	Monthly	6-8 Business Days
Frank Russell	Monthly	1 Day
Glass Lewis & Co.	Daily	None
Informa Investment Solutions	Quarterly	8-10 Days
Interactive Data Corp	Daily	None
Liberty Hampshire	Weekly and Month End	None
RBC Investor and Treasury Services	Daily	None
S&P (Rating Agency)	Weekly Tuesday Night	1 Business Day
SunTrust	Weekly and Month End	None

Excluded from the lists of ongoing arrangements set forth above are ongoing arrangements where either (i) the disclosure of portfolio holdings information occurs concurrently with or after the time at which the portfolio holdings information is included in a public filing with the SEC that is required to include the information, or (ii) the Fund's portfolio holdings information is made available no earlier than the day next following the day on which the Fund makes the information available

on its website, as disclosed in the Fund's Prospectus. The approval of the Fund's Chief Compliance Officer, or designee, must be obtained before entering into any new ongoing arrangement or altering any existing ongoing arrangement to make available portfolio holdings information, or with respect to any exceptions from the policy.

Release of Limited Portfolio Holdings Information

In addition to the ongoing arrangements described above, the Fund's complete or partial list of holdings (including size of positions) may be released to another party on a one-time basis, provided the party receiving the information has executed a non-disclosure and confidentiality agreement and provided that the specific release of information has been approved by the Fund's Chief Compliance Officer or designee as consistent with the policy. By way of illustration and not of limitation, release of non-public information about the Fund's portfolio holdings may be made (i) to a proposed or potential adviser or Subadviser(s) or other investment manager asked to provide investment management services to the Fund, or (ii) to a third party in connection with a program or similar trade.

In addition, the policy permits the release to investors, potential investors, third parties and Franklin Templeton personnel that are not fund-affiliated personnel of limited portfolio holdings information in other circumstances, including:

- The Fund's top ten securities, current as of month-end, and the individual size of each such security position may be released at any time following month-end with simultaneous public disclosure.
- The Fund's top ten securities positions (including the aggregate but not individual size of such positions) may be released at any time with simultaneous public disclosure.
- A list of securities (that may include fund holdings together with other securities) followed by an investment professional (without position sizes or identification of particular funds) may be disclosed to sell-side brokers at any time for the purpose of obtaining research and/or market information from such brokers.
- A trade in process may be discussed only with counterparties, potential counterparties and others involved in the transaction (i.e., brokers and custodians).
- The Fund's sector weightings, yield and duration (for fixed income and money market funds), performance attribution (e.g., analysis of the Fund's out-performance or underperformance of its benchmark based on its portfolio holdings) and other summary and statistical information that does not include identification of specific portfolio holdings may be released, even if non-public, if such release is otherwise in accordance with the policy's general principles.
- A small number of the Fund's portfolio holdings (including information that the Fund no longer holds a particular holding) may be released, but only if the release of the information could not reasonably be seen to interfere with current or future purchase or sales activities of the Fund and is not contrary to law.
- The Fund's portfolio holdings may be released on an as-needed basis to its legal counsel, counsel to its Independent Trustees and its independent public accounting firm, in required regulatory filings or otherwise to governmental agencies and authorities.

Exceptions to the Policy

The Fund's Chief Compliance Officer, or designee, may, as is deemed appropriate, approve exceptions from the policy. Exceptions are granted only after a thorough examination and consultation with the Manager's legal department, as necessary. Exceptions from the policy are reported annually to the Fund's Board.

Limitations of Policy

The Fund's portfolio holdings policy is designed to prevent sharing of portfolio information with third parties that have no legitimate business purpose for accessing the information. The policy may not be effective to limit access to portfolio holdings information in all circumstances, however. For example, the Manager or the Subadviser may manage accounts other than the Fund that have investment objectives and strategies similar to those of the Fund. Because these accounts, including the Fund, may be similarly managed, portfolio holdings may be similar across the accounts. In that case, an investor in another account managed by the Manager or the Subadviser may be able to infer the portfolio holdings of the Fund from the portfolio holdings in that investor's account.

THE TRUST

The certificate of trust to establish the Trust was filed with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation of Maryland on October 4, 2006. The Fund is a series of the Trust. On April 30, 2007, the Fund was redomiciled as a series of the Trust. Prior thereto, the Fund was a series of Legg Mason Partners Variable Portfolios IV, a Massachusetts business trust. Prior to the reorganization of each of Growth Portfolio and Mid Cap Portfolio as a series of Legg Mason Partners Variable Portfolios IV, each of Growth Portfolio and Mid Cap Portfolio was a series of Legg Mason Partners Variable Portfolios III, Inc., a Maryland corporation. Prior to the reorganization of Small Cap Growth Portfolio as a series of Legg Mason Partners Variable Portfolios IV, Small Cap Growth Portfolio was a series of Legg Mason Partners Variable Portfolios I, Inc., a Maryland corporation.

Prior to November 2, 2009, Growth Portfolio was named "Legg Mason Partners Variable Aggressive Growth Portfolio." Prior to April 29, 2013, Growth Portfolio was named "Legg Mason ClearBridge Variable Aggressive Growth Portfolio." Prior to May 1, 2024, Growth Portfolio was named "ClearBridge Variable Aggressive Growth Portfolio." Prior to November 2, 2009, Mid Cap Portfolio was named "Legg Mason Partners Variable Mid Cap Core Portfolio." Prior to April 29, 2013, Mid Cap Portfolio was named "Legg Mason ClearBridge Variable Mid Cap Core Portfolio." Prior to April 29, 2016, Mid Cap Portfolio was named "ClearBridge Variable Mid Cap Core Portfolio." Prior to November 2, 2009, Small Cap Growth Portfolio was named "Legg Mason Partners Variable Small Cap Growth Portfolio." Prior to April 29, 2013, Small Cap Growth Portfolio was named "Legg Mason ClearBridge Variable Small Cap Growth Portfolio."

The Trust is a Maryland statutory trust. A Maryland statutory trust is an unincorporated business association that is established under, and governed by, Maryland law. Maryland law provides a statutory framework for the powers, duties, rights and obligations of the trustees and shareholders of a statutory trust, while the more specific powers, duties, rights and obligations of the trustees and the shareholders are determined by the trustees as set forth in a trust's declaration of trust. The Trust's Declaration of Trust (the "Declaration") provides that by becoming a shareholder of the Fund, each shareholder shall be expressly held to have agreed to be bound by the provisions of the Declaration and any other governing instrument of the Trust, such as the by-laws of the Trust, which contain additional rules governing the conduct of the business of the Trust.

Some of the more significant provisions of the Declaration are summarized below. The following summary is qualified in its entirety by reference to the applicable provisions of the Declaration.

Shareholder Voting

Under the Declaration, the Trustees have broad authority to direct the business and affairs of the Trust. The Declaration provides for shareholder voting as required by the 1940 Act or other applicable laws but otherwise permits, consistent with Maryland law, actions by the Trustees without seeking the consent of shareholders. For example, the Trustees are empowered to amend the Declaration or authorize the merger or consolidation of the Trust into another trust or entity, reorganize the Trust or any series or class into another trust or entity or a series or class of another entity, sell all or substantially all of the assets of the Trust or any series or class to another entity, or a series or class of another entity, terminate the Trust or any series or class, or adopt or amend the by-laws of the Trust, in each case without shareholder approval if the 1940 Act would not require such approval.

The Fund is not required to hold an annual meeting of shareholders, but the Fund will call special meetings of shareholders whenever required by the 1940 Act or by the terms of the Declaration. The Declaration provides for "dollar-weighted voting" which means that a shareholder's voting power is determined, not by the number of shares he or she owns, but by the dollar value of those shares determined on the record date. All shareholders of record of all series and classes of the Trust vote together, except where required by the 1940 Act to vote separately by series or by class, or when the Trustees have determined that a matter affects only the interests of one or more series or classes of shares. There is no cumulative voting on any matter submitted to a vote of the shareholders.

Election and Removal of Trustees

The Declaration provides that the Trustees may establish the number of Trustees and that vacancies on the Board may be filled by the remaining Trustees, except when election of Trustees by the shareholders is required under the 1940 Act. When a vote of shareholders is required to elect Trustees, the Declaration provides that such Trustees shall be elected by a plurality of votes cast by shareholders at a meeting at which a quorum is present. The Declaration also provides that a mandatory retirement

age may be set by action of two-thirds of the Trustees and that Trustees may be removed, with or without cause, by a vote of shareholders holding two-thirds of the voting power of the Trust, or by a vote of two-thirds of the remaining Trustees. The provisions of the Declaration relating to the election and removal of Trustees may not be amended without the approval of two-thirds of the Trustees.

Amendments to the Declaration

The Trustees are authorized to amend the Declaration without the vote of shareholders, but no amendment may be made that impairs the exemption from personal liability granted in the Declaration to persons who are or have been shareholders, Trustees, officers or, employees of the Trust or that limits the rights to indemnification, advancement of expenses or insurance provided in the Declaration with respect to actions or omissions of persons entitled to indemnification, advancement of expenses or insurance under the Declaration prior to the amendment.

Issuance and Redemption of Shares

The Fund may issue an unlimited number of shares for such consideration and on such terms as the Trustees may determine. All shares offered pursuant to the Prospectus of the Fund, when issued, will be fully paid and non-assessable. Shareholders are not entitled to any appraisal rights with respect to their shares and, except as the Trustees may determine, shall have no preemptive, conversion, exchange or similar rights. The Fund may involuntarily redeem a shareholder's shares upon certain conditions as may be determined by the Trustees, including, for example, if the shareholder fails to provide the Fund with identification required by law, or if the Fund is unable to verify the information received from the shareholder. Additionally, as discussed below, shares may be redeemed in connection with the closing of small accounts.

Disclosure of Shareholder Holdings

The Declaration specifically requires shareholders, upon demand, to disclose to the Fund such information with respect to their ownership of shares of the Fund, whether direct or indirect, as the Trustees may deem necessary in order to comply with various laws or regulations or for such other purpose as the Trustees may decide. The Fund may disclose such ownership information if required by law or regulation, or as the Trustees otherwise decide.

Small Accounts

The Declaration provides that the Fund may close out a shareholder's account by redeeming all of the shares in the account if the account falls below a minimum account size (which may vary by class) that may be set by the Trustees from time to time. Alternately, the Declaration permits the Fund to assess a fee for small accounts (which may vary by class) and redeem shares in the account to cover such fees, or convert the shares into another share class that is geared to smaller accounts.

Series and Classes

The Declaration provides that the Trustees may establish series and classes in addition to those currently established and that the Trustees may determine the rights and preferences, limitations and restrictions, including qualifications for ownership, conversion and exchange features, minimum purchase and account size, expenses and charges, and other features of the series and classes. The Trustees may change any of those features, terminate any series or class, combine series with other series in the Trust, combine one or more classes of a series with another class in that series or convert the shares of one class into shares of another class.

Each share of the Fund, as a series of the Trust, represents an interest in the Fund only and not in the assets of any other series of the Trust.

Shareholder, Trustee and Officer Liability

The Declaration provides that shareholders are not personally liable for the obligations of the Fund and requires the Fund to indemnify a shareholder against any loss or expense claimed solely because of the shareholder's being or having been a shareholder. The Fund will assume the defense of any claim against a shareholder for personal liability at the request of the shareholder. The Declaration further provides that a Trustee acting in his or her capacity as a Trustee is not personally liable to any person, other than the Trust or its shareholders, in connection with the affairs of the Trust. Each Trustee is required to perform his or her duties in good faith and in a manner he or she believes to be in the best interests of the Trust. All actions and

omissions of Trustees are presumed to be in accordance with the foregoing standard of performance, and any person alleging the contrary has the burden of proving that allegation.

The Declaration limits a Trustee's liability to the Trust or any shareholder to the fullest extent permitted under current Maryland law by providing that a Trustee is liable to the Trust or its shareholders for monetary damages only (a) to the extent that it is proved that he or she actually received an improper benefit or profit in money, property, or services or (b) to the extent that a judgment or other final adjudication adverse to the Trustee is entered in a proceeding based on a finding in the proceeding that the Trustee's action, or failure to act, was the result of active and deliberate dishonesty and was material to the cause of action adjudicated in the proceeding. The Declaration requires the Trust to indemnify any persons who are or who have been Trustees, officers or employees of the Trust to the fullest extent permitted by law against liability and expenses in connection with any claim or proceeding in which he or she is involved by virtue of having been a Trustee, officer or employee. Subject to applicable federal law, expenses related to the defense against any claim to which indemnification may apply shall be advanced by the Trust upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the recipient of those expenses to repay the advanced amount if it is ultimately found that he or she is not entitled to indemnification. In making any determination as to whether a person has engaged in conduct for which indemnification is not available, or as to whether there is reason to believe that such person ultimately will be found entitled to indemnification, such person shall be afforded a rebuttable presumption that he or she did not engage in conduct for which indemnification is not available.

The Declaration provides that any Trustee who serves as chair of the Board, a member or chair of a committee of the Board, lead independent Trustee, audit committee financial expert, or in any other similar capacity will not be subject to any greater standard of care or liability because of such position.

Derivative Actions

The Declaration provides a detailed process for the bringing of derivative actions by shareholders in order to permit legitimate inquiries and claims while avoiding the time, expense, distraction, and other harm that can be caused to the Fund or its shareholders as a result of spurious shareholder demands and derivative actions. Prior to bringing a derivative action, a demand by no fewer than three unrelated shareholders must be made on the Trustees. The Declaration details information, certifications, undertakings and acknowledgements that must be included in the demand. The Trustees are not required to consider a demand that is not submitted in accordance with the requirements contained in the Declaration. The Declaration also requires that, in order to bring a derivative action, the complaining shareholders must be joined in the action by shareholders owning, at the time of the alleged wrongdoing, at the time of demand, and at the time the action is commenced, shares representing at least 5% of the voting power of the affected funds. The Trustees have a period of 90 days, which may be extended for an additional period not to exceed 60 days, to consider the demand. If a majority of the Trustees who are considered independent for the purposes of considering the demand determine that a suit should be maintained, then the Trust will commence the suit and the suit will proceed directly and not derivatively. If a majority of the independent Trustees determines that maintaining the suit would not be in the best interests of the Fund, the Trustees are required to reject the demand and the complaining shareholders may not proceed with the derivative action unless the shareholders are able to sustain the burden of proof to a court that the decision of the Trustees not to pursue the requested action was not consistent with the standard of performance required of the Trustees in performing their duties. If a demand is rejected, the complaining shareholders will be responsible for the costs and expenses (including attorneys' fees) incurred by the Trust in connection with the consideration of the demand, if, in the judgment of the independent Trustees, the demand was made without reasonable cause or for an improper purpose. If a derivative action is brought in violation of the Declaration, the shareholders bringing the action may be responsible for the Fund's costs, including attorneys' fees.

The Declaration further provides that the Fund shall be responsible for payment of attorneys' fees and legal expenses incurred by a complaining shareholder only if required by law, and any attorneys' fees that the Fund is obligated to pay shall be calculated using reasonable hourly rates. The Declaration also requires that actions by shareholders against the Trust or the Fund be brought only in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland (Baltimore Division), or if such action may not be brought in that court, then such action shall be brought in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City and that the right to jury trial be waived to the fullest extent permitted by law.

The Declaration further provides that no provision of the Declaration will be effective to require a waiver of compliance with any provision of the 1933 Act, the 1934 Act or the 1940 Act, or of any valid rule, regulation or order of the Commission thereunder.

TAXES

The following is a summary of certain material U.S. federal (and, where noted, state and local) income tax considerations affecting the Fund and its shareholders. This discussion is very general and does not address all the potential U.S. federal income tax consequences that may be applicable to the Fund or to all categories of investors, some of which may be subject to special tax rules. This summary is based upon the Code, its legislative history, Treasury regulations (including temporary and proposed regulations), published rulings, and court decisions, each as of the date of this SAI and all of which are subject to change, possibly with retroactive effect, which could affect the continuing accuracy of this discussion. This discussion assumes that each shareholder holds its shares of the Fund as capital assets for U.S. federal income tax purposes. Current and prospective shareholders are urged to consult their own tax professionals with respect to the specific U.S. federal, state, local, and non-U.S. tax consequences of investing in the Fund.

Tax Treatment of the Fund

The Fund has elected to be treated, and intends to qualify each year, as a "regulated investment company" under Subchapter M of the Code. To qualify as such, the Fund must, among other things: (a) derive at least 90% of its gross income in each taxable year from dividends, interest, payments with respect to certain securities loans, gains from the sale or other disposition of stock, securities or foreign currencies, other income (including, but not limited to, gains from options, futures, or forward contracts) derived with respect to its business of investing in such stock, securities or currencies, and net income derived from interests in "qualified publicly traded partnerships" (*i.e.*, partnerships (x) the interests in which are traded on an established securities market or are readily tradable on a secondary market or the substantial equivalent thereof, and (y) that derive less than 90% of their income from sources described in this subparagraph (a) other than qualified publicly traded partnerships); and (b) diversify its holdings so that, at the end of each quarter of the Fund's taxable year, (i) at least 50% of the market value of the Fund's assets consists of cash, securities of other regulated investment companies, U.S. government securities, and other securities, with such other securities limited, in respect of any one issuer, to an amount not greater than 5% of the value of the Fund's assets and not more than 10% of the outstanding voting securities of such issuer and (ii) not more than 25% of the value of the Fund's assets is invested, including through corporations in which the Fund owns a 20% or larger voting stock interest, (x) in the securities (other than U.S. government securities or securities of other regulated investment companies) of any one issuer, (y) in the securities (other than the securities of other regulated investment companies) of any two or more issuers that the Fund controls and that are treated as engaged in the same, similar, or related trades or businesses, or (z) in the securities of one or more "qualified publicly traded partnerships," which generally include master limited partnerships.

In general, for purposes of the 90% gross income test described above, income derived from a partnership will be treated as qualifying income only to the extent such income is attributable to items of income of the partnership which would be qualifying income if realized directly by the Fund. However, 100% of the net income derived from an interest in a qualified publicly traded partnership will be treated as qualifying income. In general, qualified publicly traded partnerships will be treated as partnerships for U.S. federal income tax purposes because they meet a passive income requirement under the Code. In addition, although in general the passive loss rules of the Code do not apply to regulated investment companies, such rules do apply to a regulated investment company with respect to items attributable to interests in qualified publicly traded partnerships. The Fund's investments in partnerships, if any, including in qualified publicly traded partnerships, may result in the Fund being subject to U.S. federal, state, local, or non-U.S. income, franchise, or withholding tax liabilities.

For purposes of the diversification test described above, the term "outstanding voting securities of such issuer" will include the equity securities of a qualified publicly traded partnership. Also, for purposes of the diversification test, the identification of the issuer (or, in some cases, issuers) of a particular Fund investment can depend on the terms and conditions of that investment. In some cases, identification of the issuer (or issuers) is uncertain under current law, and an adverse determination or future guidance by the IRS with respect to issuer identification for a particular type of investment may adversely affect the Fund's ability to meet the diversification test.

As a regulated investment company, the Fund will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax on the portion of its taxable investment income and capital gains that it distributes to its shareholders, provided that it satisfies a minimum distribution requirement. To satisfy the minimum distribution requirement, the Fund must distribute to its shareholders at least the sum of (i) 90% of its "investment company taxable income" (*i.e.*, generally, its taxable income other than the excess of its net long-term capital gain over its net short-term capital loss, plus or minus certain other adjustments, and calculated without regard to the

deduction for dividends paid), and (ii) 90% of its net tax-exempt income for the taxable year. The Fund will be subject to income tax at the regular corporate tax rate on any taxable income or gains that it does not distribute to its shareholders.

If, for any taxable year, the Fund were to fail to qualify as a regulated investment company under the Code or were to fail to meet the distribution requirement, it would be taxed in the same manner as an ordinary corporation, and distributions to its shareholders would not be deductible by the Fund in computing its taxable income. Moreover, if the Fund were to fail to qualify as a regulated investment company in any year, it would be required to pay out its earnings and profits accumulated in that year in order to qualify again as a regulated investment company. If the Fund were to fail to meet the income, diversification, or distribution test described above, the Fund could in some cases cure such failure, including by paying a Fund-level tax, paying interest, making additional distributions, or disposing of certain assets. In particular, if in the first instance, the Fund does not satisfy the diversification test as of a particular quarter end, it will have up to 30 days after that quarter end to adjust its holdings in order to comply with the test retroactively. Portfolio transactions executed by the Fund in order to comply with the diversification test will increase the Fund's portfolio turnover and trading costs. If the Fund were to fail to qualify as a regulated investment company for a period greater than two taxable years, the Fund would generally be required to recognize any net built-in gains with respect to certain of its assets upon a disposition of such assets within five years of qualifying as a regulated investment company in a subsequent year.

If a regulated investment company were to fail to distribute in a calendar year at least the sum of (i) 98% of its ordinary income for that year and (ii) 98.2% of its capital gain net income (*i.e.*, the excess of all gains from sales or exchanges of capital assets over the losses from such sales or exchanges) for the one-year period ending October 31 of that year (or November 30 or December 31 of that year if the regulated investment company is permitted to elect and so elects), it would be subject to a 4% nondeductible excise tax. However, the Code includes an exception to this excise tax for certain regulated investment companies held only by segregated asset accounts of life insurance companies funding variable contracts and certain other permitted shareholders. The Fund anticipates that it will qualify for this exception and, accordingly, does not expect to be subject to this excise tax. There can be no assurance that the Fund will be able to qualify for such exception. In determining its net capital gain (*i.e.*, net realized long-term capital gains in excess of net realized short-term capital losses, including any capital loss carryforwards), its taxable income, and its earnings and profits, a regulated investment company generally is permitted to elect to treat part or all of any post-October capital loss (defined as any net capital loss attributable to the portion of the taxable year after October 31, or if there is no such loss, the net long-term capital loss or net short-term capital loss attributable to such portion of the taxable year), or late-year ordinary loss (generally, the sum of its (i) net ordinary loss from the sale, exchange or other taxable disposition of property, attributable to the portion of the taxable year after October 31 and its (ii) other net ordinary loss attributable to the portion of the taxable year after December 31) as if incurred in the succeeding taxable year.

The Fund intends to comply with the separate diversification requirements of Section 817(h) of the Code, which apply to insurance company separate accounts and must be complied with to ensure the tax-advantaged status of certain insurance policies and annuity contracts funded by those insurance company separate accounts. These requirements are in addition to the diversification requirements imposed on the Fund by the 1940 Act and Subchapter M of the Code. If all the beneficial interests in the Fund are held by one or more insurance company separate accounts and certain other eligible holders, the diversification requirements of Section 817(h) of the Code may be applied by taking into account the assets of the Fund, rather than treating the interest in the Fund as a separate investment of each separate account investing in the Fund. To comply with Treasury regulations promulgated under Section 817(h) of the Code, assuming such look-through treatment applies, the Fund intends to diversify its investments so that on the last day of each calendar quarter or within 30 days after such day no more than 55% of the value of its assets is represented by any one investment, no more than 70% is represented by any two investments, no more than 80% is represented by any three investments and no more than 90% is represented by any four investments. Generally, all securities of the same issuer are treated as a single investment. For the purposes of Section 817(h) of the Code, obligations of the U.S. Treasury and of each U.S. government agency or instrumentality are treated as securities of separate issuers, and all securities of the same issuer, all interests in the same real property project, and all interests in the same "commodity" are each treated as a single investment. The regulations promulgated under Section 817 of the Code generally define the term "commodity" as any type of personal property other than a cash item or a security. In certain situations, an alternative set of diversification rules may be available to be satisfied as well. If the contract owner is considered the owner of the securities underlying the applicable separate account, income and gains produced by those securities would be included currently in the contract owner's gross income, including in future years. The Fund may sell its shares directly to separate accounts established and maintained by insurance companies for the purpose of funding variable annuity and variable life insurance contracts, to

certain qualified pension and retirement plans, and to other regulated investment companies whose shares are generally offered only to such separate accounts and pension and retirement plans. If the Fund should fail to comply with the diversification requirements, should fail to ensure that its shares are held only by the types of investors described above, should fail to meet the investor control requirements, or should fail to qualify as a "regulated investment company" under the Code, it is possible that separate accounts invested in the Fund would not be treated as adequately diversified, that contracts and policies funded by those separate accounts would not be treated as annuity or life insurance contracts under the Code, that all income and gain earned in past years and currently inside the policies and contracts would be taxed currently to the holders, and that future income and gain inside the policies and contracts would be subject to taxation as ordinary income. See the contract or policy prospectus for information regarding the U.S. federal income tax treatment of distributions to separate accounts and of the holders of the contracts or policies.

Tax Treatment of the Fund's Investments

The Fund's transactions in zero coupon securities, foreign currencies, forward contracts, options, and futures contracts (including options and futures contracts on foreign currencies), if any, will be subject to special provisions of the Code (including provisions relating to "hedging transactions" and "straddles") that, among other things, may affect the character of gains and losses realized by the Fund (*i.e.*, may affect whether gains or losses are ordinary or capital), accelerate recognition of income to the Fund, and defer Fund losses. These rules could therefore affect the character, amount, and timing of distributions to shareholders. These provisions also (a) will require the Fund to "mark to market" certain types of the positions in its portfolio (*i.e.*, require the Fund to treat all unrealized gains and losses with respect to those positions as though they were realized at the end of each year) and (b) may cause the Fund to recognize income prior to or without receiving cash with which to pay dividends or make distributions in amounts necessary to satisfy the distribution requirements for avoiding income and excise taxes. In order to distribute this income and avoid a tax at the Fund level, the Fund might be required to sell portfolio securities that it might otherwise have continued to hold, potentially resulting in additional taxable gain or loss.

As a result of entering into swap contracts, if any, the Fund may make or receive periodic net payments. The Fund may also make or receive a payment when a swap is terminated prior to maturity through an assignment of the swap or other closing transaction. Periodic net payments will generally constitute ordinary income or deductions, while termination of a swap will generally result in capital gain or loss (which will be a long-term capital gain or loss if the Fund has been a party to the swap for more than one year). With respect to certain types of swaps, the Fund may be required to recognize currently income or loss with respect to future payments on such swaps or may elect under certain circumstances to mark such swaps to market annually for tax purposes as ordinary income or loss.

Any investments by the Fund in so-called "section 1256 contracts," such as regulated futures contracts, most foreign currency forward contracts traded in the interbank market, and non-equity options written or purchased by the Fund on U.S. exchanges (including options on broad-based equity indices and debt securities), are subject to special tax rules. Any section 1256 contracts held by the Fund at the end of its taxable year (and, for purposes of the 4% excise tax, on certain later dates as prescribed under the Code) are required to be marked to their market value, and any unrealized gain or loss on those positions will be included in the Fund's income as if each position had been sold for its fair market value at the end of the taxable year. The resulting gain or loss will be combined with any gain or loss realized by the Fund from positions in section 1256 contracts closed during the taxable year. Provided such positions were held as capital assets and were neither part of a "hedging transaction" nor part of a "straddle," 60% of the resulting net gain or loss will be treated as long-term capital gain or loss, and 40% of such net gain or loss will be treated as short-term capital gain or loss, regardless of the period of time the positions were actually held by the Fund. Section 1256 contracts do not include any interest rate swap, currency swap, basis swap, interest rate cap, interest rate floor, commodity swap, equity swap, equity index swap, credit default swap, or similar agreement.

In general, option premiums received by the Fund are not immediately included in the income of the Fund. Instead, the premiums are recognized when the option contract expires, the option is exercised by the holder, or the Fund transfers or otherwise terminates the option (e.g., through a closing transaction). If a call option written by the Fund is exercised and the Fund sells or delivers the underlying security, the Fund generally will recognize capital gain or loss equal to (a) the sum of the strike price and the option premium received by the Fund minus (b) the Fund's basis in the security. Such gain or loss generally will be short-term or long-term depending upon the holding period of the underlying security. If securities are purchased by the Fund pursuant to the exercise of a put option written by it, the Fund generally will subtract the premium received for purposes of computing its cost basis in the securities purchased. Gain or loss arising in respect of a termination of the Fund's obligation

under an option other than through the exercise of the option will be short-term gain or loss depending on whether the premium income received by the Fund is greater or less than the amount paid by the Fund (if any) in terminating the transaction. Thus, for example, if an option written by the Fund expires unexercised, the Fund generally will recognize short-term gain equal to the premium received.

In general, gain or loss on a short sale is recognized when the Fund closes the sale by delivering the borrowed property to the lender, not when the borrowed property is sold. Gain or loss from a short sale is generally considered as capital gain or loss to the extent that the property used to close the short sale constitutes a capital asset in the Fund's hands. Except with respect to certain situations where the property used by the Fund to close a short sale has a long-term holding period on the date of the short sale, special rules generally treat the gains on short sales as short-term capital gains. These rules may also terminate the running of the holding period of "substantially identical property" held by the Fund. Moreover, a loss on a short sale will be treated as a long-term capital loss if, on the date of the short sale, "substantially identical property" has been held by the Fund for more than one year.

The Fund may purchase debt obligations with original issue discount ("OID"), market discount, or acquisition discount. Some debt obligations with a fixed maturity date of more than one year from the date of issuance (and all zero-coupon debt obligations with a fixed maturity date of more than one year from the date of issuance) will be treated as debt obligations that are issued with OID. Generally, the amount of the OID is treated as interest income and is included in taxable income (and is accordingly required to be distributed by the Fund) over the term of the debt security, even though payment of that amount is not received until a later time, usually when the debt security matures. Periodic adjustments for inflation in the principal value of inflation-indexed bonds also may be treated as OID that is includible in the Fund's gross income on a current basis.

Some debt obligations with a fixed maturity date of more than one year from the date of issuance that are acquired in the secondary market may be treated as having "market discount." Very generally, market discount is the excess of the stated redemption price of a debt obligation (or in the case of an obligation issued with OID, its "revised issue price") over the purchase price of such obligation. Under the Code, generally, any gain recognized on the disposition of, and any partial payment of principal on, a debt security having market discount is treated as ordinary income to the extent the gain, or principal payment, does not exceed the "accrued market discount" on such debt security. Alternatively, the Fund may elect to accrue market discount currently, in which case the Fund will be required to include the accrued market discount in the Fund's income (as ordinary income) and thus distribute it over the term of the debt security, even though payment of that amount is not received until a later time, upon partial or full repayment or disposition of the debt security. If the Fund elects to accrue market discount currently, the rate at which the market discount accrues, and thus is included in the Fund's income, will depend upon which of the permitted accrual methods the Fund elects.

Some debt obligations with a fixed maturity date of one year or less from the date of issuance that are acquired by the Fund may be treated as having OID or, in certain cases, "acquisition discount" (very generally, the excess of the stated redemption price over the purchase price). The Fund will be required to include the OID or acquisition discount in income (as ordinary income) and thus distribute it over the term of the debt security, even though payment of that amount is not received until a later time, upon partial or full repayment or disposition of the debt security. The rate at which OID or acquisition discount accrues, and thus is included in the Fund's income, will depend upon which of the permitted accrual methods the Fund elects.

Because the OID, market discount, or acquisition discount earned by the Fund in a taxable year may exceed the total amount of cash interest the Fund receives from the relevant debt obligations, the Fund may have to dispose of one or more of its investments, including at a time when it is not advantageous to do so, and use the proceeds thereof to make distributions in amounts necessary to satisfy the distribution requirements. The Fund may realize capital gains or losses from such dispositions, which would increase or decrease the Fund's investment company taxable income and/or net capital gain.

In addition, payment-in-kind securities held by the Fund, if any, will give rise to income which is required to be distributed and is taxable even though the Fund receives no interest payment in cash on the security during the year.

Very generally, where the Fund purchases a bond at a price that exceeds the redemption price at maturity (*i.e.*, a premium), the premium is amortizable over the remaining term of the bond. In the case of a taxable bond, if the Fund makes an election applicable to all such bonds it purchases, which election is irrevocable without consent of the IRS, the Fund reduces the current taxable income from the bond by the amortized premium and reduces its tax basis in the bond by the amount of such offset; upon the disposition or maturity of such bonds acquired on or after January 4, 2013, the Fund is permitted to deduct any

remaining premium allocable to a prior period. In the case of a tax-exempt bond, tax rules require the Fund to reduce its tax basis by the amount of amortized premium.

The Fund may invest in debt obligations that are in the lowest rating categories or are unrated, including debt obligations of issuers not currently paying interest or that are in default. Investments in debt obligations that are at risk of or in default present special tax issues for the Fund. Tax rules are not entirely clear about issues such as when the Fund may cease to accrue interest, OID or market discount, when and to what extent deductions may be taken for bad debts or worthless securities, and how payments received on obligations in default should be allocated between principal and income. These and other related issues will be addressed by the Fund when, as, and if it invests in such securities, in order to seek to ensure that it distributes sufficient income to preserve its eligibility for treatment as a regulated investment company and does not become subject to U.S. federal income or excise tax.

A portion of the interest paid or accrued on high yield obligations may not (and interest paid on debt obligations, if any, that are considered for tax purposes to be payable in the equity of the issuer or a related party will not) be deductible to the issuer. If a portion of the interest paid or accrued on certain high yield discount obligations is not deductible by the issuer, that portion will be treated as a dividend for purposes of the corporate dividends-received deduction. In such cases, if the issuer of the high yield discount obligations is a domestic corporation, dividend payments by the Fund may be eligible for the dividends-received deduction to the extent of the deemed dividend portion of such accrued interest.

The Fund may be required to treat amounts as taxable income or gain, subject to the distribution requirements referred to above, even though no corresponding amounts of cash are received concurrently, as a result of (1) mark-to-market rules, constructive sale rules or rules applicable to passive foreign investment companies ("PFICs"), to partnerships or trusts in which the Fund invests or to certain options, futures, or forward contracts, or "appreciated financial positions," (2) the inability to obtain cash distributions or other amounts due to currency controls or restrictions on repatriation imposed by a non-U.S. country with respect to the Fund's investments (including through depositary receipts) in issuers in such country, or (3) tax rules applicable to debt obligations acquired with OID, including zero-coupon or deferred payment bonds and pay-in-kind debt obligations, or to market discount if the Fund elects to accrue such market discount currently. In order to distribute this income and avoid a tax on the Fund, the Fund might be required to liquidate portfolio securities that it might otherwise have continued to hold, potentially resulting in additional taxable gain or loss. The Fund might also meet the distribution requirements by borrowing the necessary cash, thereby incurring interest expenses.

Non-U.S. Investments

Dividends, interest or other income (including, in some cases, capital gains) received by the Fund from investments in non-U.S. securities may be subject to withholding and other taxes imposed by non-U.S. countries. Even if the Fund is entitled to seek a refund in respect of such taxes, it may choose not to. Tax conventions between certain countries and the United States may reduce or eliminate such taxes in some cases. The Fund does not expect to be eligible to elect to pass non-U.S. taxes through to its shareholders, who therefore will not be entitled to credits or deductions on their own tax returns for non-U.S. taxes paid by the Fund. Non-U.S. taxes paid by the Fund may reduce the return from the Fund's investments.

Under certain circumstances, if the Fund receives a refund of non-U.S. taxes paid in respect of a prior year, the value of Fund shares could be affected or any foreign tax credits or deductions passed through to shareholders in respect of the Fund's non-U.S. taxes for the current year could be reduced.

Under Section 988 of the Code, gains or losses attributable to fluctuations in exchange rates between the time the Fund accrues income or receivables or expenses or other liabilities denominated in a foreign currency and the time the Fund actually collects such income or pays such liabilities are generally treated as ordinary income or ordinary loss. Similarly, gains or losses on foreign currency, foreign currency forward contracts, certain foreign currency options or futures contracts and the disposition of debt securities denominated in foreign currency, to the extent attributable to fluctuations in exchange rates between the acquisition and disposition dates, are also treated as ordinary income or loss unless the Fund were to elect otherwise.

Passive Foreign Investment Companies. If the Fund purchases equity interests (including certain interests treated as equity interests) in non-U.S. entities treated as PFICs for U.S. federal income tax purposes, and does not timely make certain elections, it may be subject to U.S. federal income tax on a portion of any "excess distribution" or gain from the disposition of

such shares even if such income is distributed as a taxable dividend by the Fund to its shareholders. Additional charges in the nature of interest may be imposed on the Fund in respect of deferred taxes arising from such distributions or gains.

In general, a PFIC is any non-U.S. corporation in which (i) 75% or more of the gross income for the taxable year is passive income, or (ii) the average percentage of the assets (generally by value, but by adjusted tax basis in certain cases) that produce, or are held for the production of, passive income is at least 50%. Generally, passive income for this purpose means dividends, interest (including income equivalent to interest), royalties, rents, annuities, the excess of gains over losses from certain property transactions and commodities transactions, income from certain notional principal contracts, and foreign currency gains. Passive income for this purpose does not include certain types of passive income excepted by the Code and other guidance.

If the Fund were to invest in a PFIC and timely elect to treat the PFIC as a "qualified electing fund" under the Code for the first year of its holding period in the PFIC stock, in lieu of the foregoing requirements, the Fund would generally be required to include in income each year a portion of the ordinary earnings and net capital gains of the qualified electing fund, even if not distributed to the Fund. The Fund might have to distribute such amounts to satisfy the 90% distribution requirement and to avoid imposition of the 4% excise tax. In order to distribute this income and avoid a tax at the Fund level, the Fund might be required to liquidate portfolio securities that it might otherwise have continued to hold, potentially resulting in additional taxable gain or loss. In order to make the "qualified electing fund" election, the Fund would be required to obtain certain annual information from the PFICs in which it invests, which may be difficult or impossible to obtain.

If the Fund were to invest in a PFIC and make a mark-to-market election, the Fund would be treated as if it had sold and repurchased its stock in that PFIC at the end of each year. In such case, the Fund would report any such gains as ordinary income and would deduct any such losses as ordinary losses to the extent of previously recognized gains. Such an election must be made separately for each PFIC owned by the Fund and, once made, would be effective for all subsequent taxable years of the Fund, unless revoked with the consent of the IRS. By making the election, the Fund could potentially ameliorate the adverse tax consequences with respect to its ownership of shares in a PFIC, but in any particular year might be required to recognize income in excess of the distributions it receives from PFICs and its proceeds from dispositions of PFIC stock. The Fund might have to distribute such excess income and gain to satisfy the 90% distribution requirement and to avoid imposition of the 4% excise tax. In order to distribute this income and avoid a tax at the Fund level, the Fund might be required to liquidate portfolio securities that it might otherwise have continued to hold, potentially resulting in additional taxable gain or loss.

No Capital Loss Carryforwards

As of December 31, 2025, Growth Portfolio, Mid Cap Portfolio and Small Cap Growth Portfolio had no unused capital loss carryforwards.

Taxation of Non-U.S. Shareholders

Under legislation commonly known as "FATCA," the Fund is required to withhold 30% of certain ordinary dividends it pays to shareholders that fail to meet prescribed information reporting or certification requirements. In general, no such withholding will be required with respect to a U.S. person or non-U.S. individual that timely provides the certifications required by the Fund or its agent on a valid IRS Form W-9 or applicable IRS Form W-8, respectively. Shareholders potentially subject to withholding include foreign financial institutions ("FFIs"), such as non-U.S. investment funds, and non-financial foreign entities ("NFFEs"). To avoid withholding under FATCA, an FFI generally must enter into an information sharing agreement with the IRS in which it agrees to report certain identifying information (including name, address, and taxpayer identification number) with respect to its U.S. account holders (which, in the case of an entity shareholder, may include its direct and indirect U.S. owners), and an NFFE generally must identify and provide other required information to the Fund or other withholding agent regarding its U.S. owners, if any. Such non-U.S. shareholders also may fall into certain exempt, excepted or deemed compliant categories as established by regulations and other guidance. A non-U.S. shareholder in a country that has entered into an intergovernmental agreement with the U.S. to implement FATCA will be exempt from FATCA withholding provided that the shareholder and the applicable foreign government comply with the terms of such agreement.

A non-U.S. entity that invests in the Fund will need to provide the Fund with documentation properly certifying the entity's status under FATCA in order to avoid FATCA withholding.

Non-U.S. investors should consult their own tax professionals regarding the impact of these requirements on their investment in the Fund.

CODES OF ETHICS

Pursuant to Rule 17j-1 under the 1940 Act, the Fund, the Manager, the Subadviser and the Distributor each has adopted a code of ethics that permits its personnel to invest in securities for their own accounts, including securities that may be purchased or held by the Fund. All personal securities transactions by employees must adhere to the requirements of the codes of ethics. Copies of the codes of ethics applicable to personnel of the Fund, the Manager, the Subadviser, the Distributor and the Independent Trustees are on file with the SEC.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Fund's audited annual financial statements for the fiscal period ended December 31, 2025, including the accompanying notes and the report of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, as filed on Form N-CSR, are incorporated by reference into this SAI (https://www.sec.gov/ix?doc=/Archives/edgar/data/0001176343/000113322826001910/cvgp-efp22466_ncsr.htm https://www.sec.gov/ix?doc=/Archives/edgar/data/0001176343/000113322826001897/cvmcp-efp22463_ncsr.htm https://www.sec.gov/ix?doc=/Archives/edgar/data/1176343/000113322826002063/cvscgp-efp22481_ncsr.htm). These audited financial statements are available free of charge upon request by calling the Fund at 877-6LM-FUND/656-3863.

Appendix A

Proxy Voting Policies

CLEARBRIDGE INVESTMENTS

PROXY VOTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

AMENDED AS OF MARCH 3, 2026

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CLEARBRIDGE INVESTMENTS

Proxy Voting Policies and Procedures

I. TYPES OF ACCOUNTS FOR WHICH CLEARBRIDGE VOTES PROXIES

ClearBridge votes proxies for each client for which it has investment discretion unless the investment management agreement provides that the client or other authorized party (e.g., a trustee or named fiduciary of a plan) is responsible for voting proxies.

II. GENERAL GUIDELINES

In voting proxies, we are guided by general fiduciary principles. Our goal is to act prudently, solely in the best interest of the beneficial owners of the accounts we manage. We attempt to provide for the consideration of all factors that could affect the value of the investment and will vote proxies in the manner that we believe will be consistent with efforts to maximize shareholder values.

III. HOW CLEARBRIDGE VOTES

Appendix A attached hereto sets forth certain stated positions. In the case of a proxy issue for which there is a stated position, we generally vote in accordance with the stated position. In the case of a proxy issue for which there is a list of factors set forth in Appendix A that we consider in voting on such issue, we consider those factors and vote on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the general principles set forth above. In the case of a proxy issue for which there is no stated position or list of factors that we consider in voting on such issue, we vote on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the general principles set forth above. We may utilize an external service provider to provide us with information and/or a recommendation with regard to proxy votes but we are not required to follow any such recommendations. The use of an external service provider does not relieve us of our responsibility for the proxy vote.

For routine matters, we usually vote according to our policy or the external service provider's recommendation, although we are not obligated to do so and each individual portfolio management team may vote contrary to our policy or the recommendation of the external service provider. If a matter is non-routine, e.g., management's recommendation is different than that of the external service provider and ClearBridge is a significant holder or it is a significant holding for ClearBridge, the issues will be highlighted to the appropriate investment teams. Different investment teams may vote differently on the same issue, depending upon their assessment of clients' best interests.

ClearBridge's policies are reviewed annually and its proxy voting process is overseen and coordinated by its Proxy Committee.

IV. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

In furtherance of ClearBridge's goal to vote proxies in the best interests of clients, ClearBridge follows procedures designed to identify and address material conflicts that may arise between ClearBridge's interests and those of its clients before voting proxies on behalf of such clients.

A. Procedures for Identifying Conflicts of Interest

ClearBridge relies on the following to seek to identify conflicts of interest with respect to proxy voting:

1. ClearBridge's employees are periodically reminded of their obligation (i) to be aware of the potential for conflicts of interest on the part of ClearBridge with respect to voting of proxies on behalf of client accounts both as a result of their personal relationships or personal or business relationships relating to ClearBridge or another Franklin Resources, Inc. ("Franklin") business unit, including broker dealers, clients, vendors, employee directorships, joint ventures, outside director relationships and distributor relationships and (ii) to bring conflicts of interest of which they become aware to the attention of ClearBridge's Chief Compliance Officer.

2. On a quarterly basis, ClearBridge Compliance obtains (i) a list of all ClearBridge client relationships that have historically accounted for or are projected to account for greater than 1% of ClearBridge's net revenues from ClearBridge Finance Team; (ii) a list of ClearBridge's vendors from ClearBridge Vendor Management Team; and (iii) a list of approved broker dealers with whom ClearBridge enters into trades on behalf of client accounts from ClearBridge Brokerage Committee.

3. As a general matter, ClearBridge takes the position that relationships between a non-ClearBridge affiliated manager of Franklin and an issuer (e.g., investment management relationship between an issuer and a non-ClearBridge Franklin affiliated manager) do not present a conflict of interest for ClearBridge in voting proxies with respect to such issuer because ClearBridge operates as an independent business unit from other Franklin affiliated managers and because of the existence of informational barriers between ClearBridge and such other Franklin affiliated managers. As noted above, ClearBridge employees are under an obligation to bring such conflicts of interest, including conflicts of interest which may arise because of an attempt by another Franklin manager of a business unit, or non-ClearBridge Franklin officer or employee, to influence proxy voting by ClearBridge to the attention of ClearBridge Compliance.

4. Franklin may, from time to time, provide a list of issuers to ClearBridge that it deems to have material business or vendor relationships with Franklin and, therefore, present a material conflict of interest for the entire Franklin organization, including without limitation ClearBridge ("Firm Level Conflicted Issuers"). The Firm Level Conflicted Issuers list is based upon Franklin's internal analyses of client, distributor, broker dealer, and vendor lists, information periodically gathered by Franklin from directors and officers, and information Franklin derives from other sources, including public filings.

5. A list of issuers with respect to which ClearBridge has a potential conflict of interest in voting proxies on behalf of client accounts based on the above criteria will be maintained by ClearBridge Compliance. ClearBridge will not vote proxies relating to such issuers until it has been determined that the conflict of interest is not material or a method for resolving the conflict of interest has been agreed upon and implemented, as described below.

B. Procedures for Assessing Materiality of Conflicts of Interest and for Addressing Material Conflicts of Interest

1. ClearBridge maintains a Proxy Committee which, among other things, reviews and addresses conflicts of interest brought to its attention. The Proxy Committee is comprised of such ClearBridge personnel, as are designated from time to time. The current members of the Proxy Committee are set forth in the Proxy Committee Charter.

2. All conflicts of interest identified pursuant to the procedures outlined in Section IV. A. must be brought to the attention of the Proxy Committee for resolution. A proposal that will be voted in accordance with a stated ClearBridge position on such issue or that the portfolio managers wish to vote against management even if there is no stated position on such issue in the voting guidelines does not need to be brought to the attention of the Proxy Committee for a conflict of interest review because ClearBridge's position is that any conflict of interest issues are resolved by voting in accordance with pre-determined voting guidelines or against such issuer's management. At no time shall ClearBridge amend its stated voting position shortly before a particular vote in connection with a specific issuer simply for the purpose of avoiding the requirements of these Conflicts of Interest procedures.

3. The Proxy Committee will determine whether a conflict of interest is material. A conflict of interest will be considered material to the extent that it is determined that such conflict is likely to influence, or appear to influence, ClearBridge's decision-making in voting the proxy. All materiality determinations will be based on an assessment of the particular facts and circumstances, except in the case of Firm Level Conflicted Issuers, which are always deemed to present material conflicts of interest.

   Material conflicts of interest could arise in a variety of situations, including, but not limited to, circumstances in which ClearBridge has:

(i) a material business relationship with an issuer or proponent;

(ii) direct or indirect pecuniary interest in an issuer or proponent; or

(iii) significant personal or family relationship with an issuer or proponent.

A written record of all materiality determinations made by the Proxy Committee will be maintained by ClearBridge's Chief Compliance Officer and proxy voting personnel.

4. If it is determined by the Proxy Committee that a conflict of interest is not material, ClearBridge may vote proxies notwithstanding the existence of the conflict.

5. If it is determined by the Proxy Committee that a conflict of interest is material, the Proxy Committee will determine an appropriate method to resolve such conflict of interest before the proxy affected by the conflict of interest is voted. Such determination shall be based on the particular facts and circumstances, including the importance of the proxy issue, the nature of the conflict of interest, etc. Such methods may include:

- disclosing the conflict to clients and obtaining their consent before voting;
- suggesting to clients that they engage another party to vote the proxy on their behalf;
- in the case of a conflict of interest resulting from a particular employee's personal relationships, removing such employee from the decision-making process with respect to such proxy vote, ensuring appropriate information barriers are in place with respect to such employee and evaluating the proposal to ensure that it is voted in what the Proxy Committee believes to be the best long-term economic interests of its clients; or
- as it relates to Firm Level Conflicted Issuers or other issuers that are determined to present material conflicts of interest due to ClearBridge's client, business or vendor relationships, such other method as is deemed appropriate given the particular facts and circumstances, including the importance of the proxy issue, the nature of the conflict of interest, and any other relevant factors.

A written record of the method used to resolve a material conflict of interest by the Proxy Committee shall be maintained by ClearBridge's Chief Compliance Officer and the proxy voting personnel.

C. Third Party Proxy Voting Firm - Conflicts of Interest

With respect to a third-party proxy voting firm described herein, the Proxy Committee will periodically review and assess such firm's policies, procedures and practices with respect to the disclosure and handling of conflicts of interest.

V. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A. When Votes May Not be Cast

In certain situations, ClearBridge may determine not to vote proxies on behalf of a client because ClearBridge believes that the expected benefit to the client of voting shares is outweighed by countervailing considerations. Examples of situations in which ClearBridge may determine not to vote proxies on behalf of a client include:

Share Blocking

Proxy voting in certain countries requires "share blocking." This means that shareholders wishing to vote their proxies must deposit their shares shortly before the date of the meeting (e.g. one week) with a designated depositary. During the blocking period, shares that will be voted at the meeting cannot be sold until the meeting has taken place and the shares have been returned to client accounts by the designated depositary. In deciding whether to vote shares subject to share blocking, ClearBridge will consider and weigh, based on the particular facts and circumstances, the expected benefit to clients of voting in relation to the detriment to clients of not being able to sell such shares during the applicable period.

Securities on Loan

Certain clients of ClearBridge, such as an institutional client or a mutual fund for which ClearBridge acts as a sub-adviser, may engage in securities lending with respect to the securities in their accounts. ClearBridge typically does not direct or oversee such securities lending activities. To the extent feasible and practical under the circumstances, ClearBridge will request that the client recall shares that are on loan so that such shares can be voted if ClearBridge believes that the expected benefit to the client of voting such shares outweighs the detriment to the client of recalling such shares (e.g., foregone income). The ability to timely recall shares for proxy voting purposes typically is not entirely within the control of ClearBridge and requires the cooperation of the client and its other service providers. Under certain circumstances, the recall of shares in time for such shares to be voted may not be possible due to applicable proxy voting record dates and administrative considerations.

B. Split Votes in Sub-Custodial Accounts (Non-US Markets)

In some non-US markets, where shares across multiple client accounts maybe he held in a joint sub-custodial account, split voting by a manager in such sub-custodial account may not be allowed. In those instances, ClearBridge will vote all shares in accordance with the pre-determined proxy voting guidelines, or if there is no voting policy established in this policy on the particular topic or issue, in accordance with the recommendations of the portfolio manager responsible for the client accounts holding the greatest number of shares of the relevant issuer.

C. Voting Agreements

From time to time, client accounts may be invested in securities of privately held issuers acquired in unregistered private placement transactions. Such privately held issuers may require investors to enter into written voting agreements that require the clients to vote with management or in a specified manner on certain types of proposals as a condition to participate in the offering. In those instances where clients are subject to voting agreements, ClearBridge will not vote such issuers' proxies pursuant to this Proxy Voting Policy and will cast votes consistent with the requirements of such voting agreements as long as those agreements terminate upon the private securities becoming public. For the avoidance of doubt, this exception to our policy applies only with respect to shares obtained in a private offering and if a client is subject to a voting agreement in connection with such offering, the voting agreement will have no impact on how ClearBridge votes proxies with respect to publicly held shares of that same issuer that the client may own, if any, which will be voted pursuant to this policy.

VI. DISCLOSURE OF PROXY VOTING

ClearBridge employees may not disclose to others outside of ClearBridge (including employees of other Franklin business units) how ClearBridge intends to vote a proxy absent prior approval from ClearBridge's Chief Compliance Officer, except that a ClearBridge investment professional may disclose to a third party (other than an employee of another Franklin business unit) how s/he intends to vote without obtaining prior approval from ClearBridge's Chief Compliance Officer if (1) the disclosure is intended to facilitate a discussion of publicly available information by ClearBridge personnel with a representative of a company whose securities are the subject of the proxy, and (2) ClearBridge has voting power with respect to less than 5% of the outstanding common stock of the company.

If a ClearBridge employee receives a request to disclose ClearBridge's proxy voting intentions to, or is otherwise contacted by, another person outside of ClearBridge (including an employee of another Franklin business unit or an existing ClearBridge client or its designated agent or representative) in connection with an upcoming proxy voting matter, he/she should immediately notify ClearBridge's Chief Compliance Officer and not share any information regarding proxy voting intentions with such persons without obtaining the Chief Compliance Officer's prior approval.

If a portfolio manager wants to take a public stance with regards to a proxy, s/he must consult with ClearBridge's Chief Compliance Officer before making or issuing a public statement.

VII. RECORDKEEPING AND OVERSIGHT

ClearBridge shall maintain the following records relating to proxy voting:

- a copy of these policies and procedures;
- a copy of each proxy form (as voted);
- a copy of each proxy solicitation (including proxy statements) and related materials with regard to each vote;
- documentation relating to the identification and resolution of conflicts of interest;
- any documents created by ClearBridge that were material to a proxy voting decision or that memorialized the basis for that decision; and
- a copy of each written client request for information on how ClearBridge voted proxies on behalf of the client, and a copy of any written response by ClearBridge to any (written or oral) client request for information on how ClearBridge voted proxies on behalf of the requesting client.

Such records shall be maintained and preserved in an easily accessible place for a period of not less than six years from the end of the fiscal year during which the last entry was made on such record, the first two years in an appropriate office of the ClearBridge adviser.

To the extent that ClearBridge is authorized to vote proxies for a United States Registered Investment Company, ClearBridge shall maintain such records as are necessary to allow such fund to comply with its recordkeeping, reporting and disclosure obligations under applicable laws, rules and regulations.

In lieu of keeping copies of proxy statements, ClearBridge may rely on proxy statements filed on the EDGAR system as well as on third party records of proxy statements and votes cast if the third party provides an undertaking to provide the documents promptly upon request.

APPENDIX A

VOTING POLICY

These are policy guidelines that can always be superseded, subject to the duty to act solely in the best interest of the beneficial owners of accounts, by the investment management professionals responsible for the account holding the shares being voted. There may be occasions when different investment teams vote differently on the same issue. In addition, in the case of Taft-Hartley clients, ClearBridge will comply with a client direction to vote proxies in accordance with Institutional Shareholder Services' (ISS) PVS Proxy Voting Guidelines, which ISS represents to be fully consistent with AFL-CIO guidelines.

A. Election of Directors

1. Voting on Director Nominees in Uncontested Elections.

    a. We withhold our vote from a director nominee who:

    - attended less than 75 percent of the company's board and committee meetings without a valid excuse (illness, service to the nation/local government, work on behalf of the company);
    - received more than 50 percent withheld votes of the shares cast at the previous board election, and the company has failed to address the issue as to why;

- is a member of the company's audit committee, when excessive non-audit fees were paid to the auditor, or there are chronic control issues and an absence of established effective control mechanisms;
- is a member of the company's compensation committee if the compensation committee ignore a say on pay proposal that a majority of shareholders opposed;

b. We vote on a case-by-case basis in the following circumstances:

- *Significant Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emitters*. We will vote on a case-by-case basis with respect to the Chair of the board and the Chair of the responsible committee in the case of companies that are significant GHG emitters but are not taking the minimum steps needed to understand, assess, and mitigate risks related to climate change to the company and the larger economy. Minimum steps include detailed disclosure of climate-related risks, such as the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD); and, at this time, "appropriate" GHG emissions reductions targets (i.e., short-term and medium-term GHG reduction targets).
- *Nominating Committee Members*. We will vote on a case-by-case basis with respect to director nominees who are members of the company's nominating committee and there is no gender diversity or ethnic/racial diversity on the board (or those currently proposed for election to the board do not meet that criteria).
- *Board Independence*. We will vote on a case-by-case basis with respect to non-independent members of the board who are up for re-election and the chair of the board's nominating committee if the board is not comprised of a majority of independent directors. This also applies to situations where board independence is not in line with local market regulations or best practices.
- *Director Independence*. We will vote on a case-by-case basis with respect to an independent member of the board whose independence is not in line with local best practices and market-specific governance frameworks (e.g., listing standards, governance codes, laws and regulations).
- *Overboarding*. We will vote on a case-by-case basis with respect to a member of the board who is up for re-election and sits on five or more unaffiliated public company boards.

c. We vote for all other director nominees.

2. Chairman and CEO is the Same Person.

   We vote on a case-by-case basis on shareholder proposals that would require the positions of the Chairman and CEO to be held by different persons. We would generally vote FOR such a proposal unless there are compelling reasons to vote against the proposal, including:

   - Designation of a lead director
   - Majority of independent directors (supermajority)
   - All independent key committees
   - Size of the company (based on market capitalization)
   - Established governance guidelines
   - Company performance

3. Majority of Independent Directors

a. We vote for shareholder proposals that request that the board be comprised of a majority of independent directors. Generally, that would require that the director have no connection to the company other than the board seat. In determining whether an independent director is truly independent (e.g. when voting on a slate of director candidates), we consider certain factors including, but not necessarily limited to, the following: whether the director or his/her company provided professional services to the company or its affiliates either currently or in the past year; whether the director has any transactional relationship with the company; whether the director is a significant customer or supplier of the company; whether the director is employed by a foundation or university that received significant grants or endowments from the company or its affiliates; and whether there are interlocking directorships.

b. We vote for shareholder proposals that request that the board audit, compensation and/or nominating committees include independent directors exclusively.

4. Stock Ownership Requirements

   We vote against shareholder proposals requiring directors to own a minimum amount of company stock in order to qualify as a director, or to remain on the board.

5. Term of Office

   We vote against shareholder proposals to limit the tenure of independent directors.

6. Director and Officer Indemnification and Liability Protection

   a. Subject to subparagraphs b., c., and d. below, we vote for proposals concerning director and officer indemnification and liability protection.

   b. We vote for proposals to limit and against proposals to eliminate entirely director and officer liability for monetary damages for violating the duty of care.

   c. We vote against indemnification proposals that would expand coverage beyond just legal expenses to acts, such as negligence, that are more serious violations of fiduciary obligations than mere carelessness.

   d. We vote for only those proposals that provide such expanded coverage noted in subparagraph c. above in cases when a director's or officer's legal defense was unsuccessful if: (1) the director was found to have acted in good faith and in a manner that he reasonably believed was in the best interests of the company, and (2) if only the director's legal expenses would be covered.

7. Director Qualifications

   a. We vote case-by-case on proposals that establish or amend director qualifications. Considerations include how reasonable the criteria are and to what degree they may preclude dissident nominees from joining the board.

   b. We vote against shareholder proposals requiring two candidates per board seat.

B. Proxy Contests

1. Voting for Director Nominees in Contested Elections

   We vote on a case-by-case basis in contested elections of directors. Considerations include: chronology of events leading up to the proxy contest; qualifications of director nominees (incumbents and dissidents); for incumbents, whether the board is comprised of a majority of outside directors; whether key committees (i.e.: nominating, audit, compensation) comprise solely of independent outsiders; discussion with the respective portfolio manager(s).

2. Reimburse Proxy Solicitation Expenses

We vote on a case-by-case basis on proposals to provide full reimbursement for dissidents waging a proxy contest. Considerations include: identity of persons who will pay solicitation expenses; cost of solicitation; percentage that will be paid to proxy solicitation firms.

C. Auditors

1. Ratifying Auditors

   We vote for proposals to ratify auditors, unless an auditor has a financial interest in or association with the company, and is therefore not independent; or there is reason to believe that the independent auditor has rendered an opinion that is neither accurate nor indicative of the company's financial position or there is reason to believe the independent auditor has not followed the highest level of ethical conduct. Specifically, we will vote to ratify auditors if the auditors only provide the company audit services and such other audit-related and non-audit services the provision of which will not cause such auditors to lose their independence under applicable laws, rules and regulations.

2. Financial Statements and Director and Auditor Reports

   We generally vote for management proposals seeking approval of financial accounts and reports and the discharge of management and supervisory board members, unless there is concern about the past actions of the company's auditors or directors.

3. Remuneration of Auditors

   We vote for proposals to authorize the board or an audit committee of the board to determine the remuneration of auditors, unless there is evidence of excessive compensation relative to the size and nature of the company.

4. Indemnification of Auditors

   We vote against proposals to indemnify auditors.

D. Proxy Contest Defenses

1. Board Structure: Staggered vs. Annual Elections

   a. We vote against proposals to classify the board.

   b. We vote for proposals to repeal classified boards and to elect all directors annually.

2. Shareholder Ability to Remove Directors

   a. We vote against proposals that provide that directors may be removed only for cause.

   b. We vote for proposals to restore shareholder ability to remove directors with or without cause.

   c. We vote against proposals that provide that only continuing directors may elect replacements to fill board vacancies.

   d. We vote for proposals that permit shareholders to elect directors to fill board vacancies.

3. Cumulative Voting

   a. If plurality voting is in place for uncontested director elections, we vote for proposals to permit or restore cumulative voting.

   b. If majority voting is in place for uncontested director elections, we vote against cumulative voting.

   c. If plurality voting is in place for uncontested director elections, and proposals to adopt both cumulative voting and majority voting are on the same slate, we vote for majority voting and against cumulative voting.

4. Majority Voting

We vote for non-binding and/or binding resolutions requesting that the board amend a company's by-laws to stipulate that directors need to be elected with an affirmative majority of the votes cast, provided that it does not conflict with the state law where the company is incorporated. In addition, all resolutions need to provide for a carve-out for a plurality vote standard when there are more nominees than board seats (i.e. contested election). In addition, ClearBridge strongly encourages companies to adopt a post-election director resignation policy setting guidelines for the company to follow to promptly address situations involving holdover directors.

5. Shareholder Ability to Call Special Meetings

    a. We vote against proposals to restrict or prohibit shareholder ability to call special meetings.

    b. We vote for proposals that provide shareholders with the ability to call special meetings, taking into account a minimum ownership threshold of 10 percent (and investor ownership structure, depending on bylaws).

6. Shareholder Ability to Act by Written Consent

    a. We vote against proposals to restrict or prohibit shareholder ability to take action by written consent.

    b. We vote for proposals to allow or make easier shareholder action by written consent.

7. Shareholder Ability to Alter the Size of the Board

    a. We vote for proposals that seek to fix the size of the board.

    b. We vote against proposals that give management the ability to alter the size of the board without shareholder approval.

8. Advance Notice Proposals

    We vote on advance notice proposals on a case-by-case basis, giving support to those proposals which allow shareholders to submit proposals as close to the meeting date as reasonably possible and within the broadest window possible.

9. Amendment of By-Laws

    a. We vote against proposals giving the board exclusive authority to amend the by-laws.

    b. We vote for proposals giving the board the ability to amend the by-laws in addition to shareholders.

10. Article Amendments (not otherwise covered by ClearBridge Proxy Voting Policies and Procedures).

We review on a case-by-case basis all proposals seeking amendments to the articles of association.

We vote for article amendments if:

- shareholder rights are protected;
- there is negligible or positive impact on shareholder value;
- management provides adequate reasons for the amendments; and
- the company is required to do so by law (if applicable).

E. Tender Offer Defenses

1. Poison Pills

    a. We vote for shareholder proposals that ask a company to submit its poison pill for shareholder ratification.

b. We vote on a case-by-case basis on shareholder proposals to redeem a company's poison pill. Considerations include: when the plan was originally adopted; financial condition of the company; terms of the poison pill.

c. We vote on a case-by-case basis on management proposals to ratify a poison pill. Considerations include: sunset provision - poison pill is submitted to shareholders for ratification or rejection every 2 to 3 years; shareholder redemption feature -10% of the shares may call a special meeting or seek a written consent to vote on rescinding the rights plan.

2. Fair Price Provisions

a. We vote for fair price proposals, as long as the shareholder vote requirement embedded in the provision is no more than a majority of disinterested shares.

b. We vote for shareholder proposals to lower the shareholder vote requirement in existing fair price provisions.

3. Greenmail

a. We vote for proposals to adopt anti-greenmail charter or bylaw amendments or otherwise restrict a company's ability to make greenmail payments.

b. We vote on a case-by-case basis on anti-greenmail proposals when they are bundled with other charter or bylaw amendments.

4. Unequal Voting Rights

a. We vote against dual class exchange offers.

b. We vote against dual class re-capitalization.

5. Supermajority Shareholder Vote Requirement to Amend the Charter or Bylaws

a. We vote against management proposals to require a supermajority shareholder vote to approve charter and bylaw amendments.

b. We vote for shareholder proposals to lower supermajority shareholder vote requirements for charter and bylaw amendments.

6. Supermajority Shareholder Vote Requirement to Approve Mergers

a. We vote against management proposals to require a supermajority shareholder vote to approve mergers and other significant business combinations.

b. We vote for shareholder proposals to lower supermajority shareholder vote requirements for mergers and other significant business combinations.

7. White Knight/Squire Placements

We vote for shareholder proposals to require approval of blank check preferred stock issues.

F. Miscellaneous Governance Provisions

1. Confidential Voting

a. We vote for shareholder proposals that request corporations to adopt confidential voting, use independent tabulators and use independent inspectors of election as long as the proposals include clauses for proxy contests as follows: in the case of a contested election, management is permitted to request that the dissident group honor its confidential voting policy. If the dissidents agree, the policy remains in place. If the dissidents do not agree, the confidential voting policy is waived.

b. We vote for management proposals to adopt confidential voting subject to the proviso for contested elections set forth in sub-paragraph B.1. above.

2. Equal Access

We vote for shareholder proposals that would allow significant company shareholders equal access to management's proxy material in order to evaluate and propose voting recommendations on proxy proposals and director nominees, and in order to nominate their own candidates to the board.

3. Bundled Proposals

We vote on a case-by-case basis on bundled or "conditioned" proxy proposals. In the case of items that are conditioned upon each other, we examine the benefits and costs of the packaged items. In instances when the joint effect of the conditioned items is not in shareholders' best interests and therefore not in the best interests of the beneficial owners of accounts, we vote against the proposals. If the combined effect is positive, we support such proposals.

4. Shareholder Advisory Committees

We vote on a case-by-case basis on proposals to establish a shareholder advisory committee. Considerations include: rationale and cost to the firm to form such a committee. We generally vote against such proposals if the board and key nominating committees are comprised solely of independent/outside directors.

5. Other Business

We vote for proposals that seek to bring forth other business matters.

6. Adjourn Meeting

We vote on a case-by-case basis on proposals that seek to adjourn a shareholder meeting in order to solicit additional votes.

7. Lack of Information

We vote against proposals if a company fails to provide shareholders with adequate information upon which to base their voting decision.

G. Capital Structure

1. Common Stock Authorization

a. We vote on a case-by-case basis on proposals to increase the number of shares of common stock authorized for issue, except as described in paragraph 2 below.

b. Subject to paragraph 3, below we vote for the approval requesting increases in authorized shares if the company meets certain criteria:

- Company has already issued a certain percentage (i.e. greater than 50%) of the company's allotment.
- The proposed increase is reasonable (i.e. less than 150% of current inventory) based on an analysis of the company's historical stock management or future growth outlook of the company.

c. We vote on a case-by-case basis, based on the input of affected portfolio managers, if holding is greater than 1% of an account.

2. Stock Distributions: Splits and Dividends

We vote on a case-by-case basis on management proposals to increase common share authorization for a stock split, provided that the split does not result in an increase of authorized but unissued shares of more than 100% after giving effect to the shares needed for the split.

3. Reverse Stock Splits

   We vote for management proposals to implement a reverse stock split, provided that the reverse split does not result in an increase of authorized but unissued shares of more than 100% after giving effect to the shares needed for the reverse split.

4. Blank Check Preferred Stock

   a. We vote against proposals to create, authorize or increase the number of shares with regard to blank check preferred stock with unspecified voting, conversion, dividend distribution and other rights.

   b. We vote for proposals to create "declawed" blank check preferred stock (stock that cannot be used as a takeover defense).

   c. We vote for proposals to authorize preferred stock in cases where the company specifies the voting, dividend, conversion, and other rights of such stock and the terms of the preferred stock appear reasonable.

   d. We vote for proposals requiring a shareholder vote for blank check preferred stock issues.

5. Adjust Par Value of Common Stock

   We vote for management proposals to reduce the par value of common stock.

6. Preemptive Rights

   a. We vote on a case-by-case basis for shareholder proposals seeking to establish them and consider the following factors:

      - Size of the Company.
      - Characteristics of the size of the holding (holder owning more than 1% of the outstanding shares).
      - Percentage of the rights offering (rule of thumb less than 5%).

   b. We vote on a case-by-case basis for shareholder proposals seeking the elimination of pre-emptive rights.

7. Debt Restructuring

   We vote on a case-by-case basis for proposals to increase common and/or preferred shares and to issue shares as part of a debt-restructuring plan. Generally, we approve proposals that facilitate debt restructuring.

8. Share Repurchase Programs

   We vote for management proposals to institute open-market share repurchase plans in which all shareholders may participate on equal terms.

9. Dual-Class Stock

   We vote for proposals to eliminate dual-class structures, unless a company has a stated policy that stipulates that the dual class structure will be eliminated in a period not to exceed 5 years from its initial public offering.

10. Issue Stock for Use with Rights Plan

We vote against proposals that increase authorized common stock for the explicit purpose of implementing a shareholder rights plan (poison pill).

11. Debt Issuance Requests

    When evaluating a debt issuance request, the issuing company's present financial situation is examined. The main factor for analysis is the company's current debt-to-equity ratio, or gearing level. A high gearing level may incline markets and financial analysts to downgrade the company's bond rating, increasing its investment risk factor in the process. A gearing level up to 100 percent is considered acceptable.

    We vote for debt issuances for companies when the gearing level is between zero and 100 percent.

    We view on a case-by-case basis proposals where the issuance of debt will result in the gearing level being greater than 100 percent. Any proposed debt issuance is compared to industry and market standards.

12. Financing Plans

We generally vote for the adopting of financing plans if we believe they are in the best economic interests of shareholders.

H. Executive and Director Compensation

In general, we vote for executive and director compensation plans, with the view that viable compensation programs reward the creation of stockholder wealth by having high payout sensitivity to increases in shareholder value. Certain factors, however, such as repricing underwater stock options without shareholder approval, would cause us to vote against a plan. Additionally, in some cases we would vote against a plan deemed unnecessary.

1. OBRA-Related Compensation Proposals

   a. Amendments that Place a Cap on Annual Grant or Amend Administrative Features

      We vote for plans that simply amend shareholder-approved plans to include administrative features or place a cap on the annual grants any one participant may receive to comply with the provisions of Section 162(m) of the Internal Revenue Code.

   b. Amendments to Added Performance-Based Goals

      We vote for amendments to add performance goals to existing compensation plans to comply with the provisions of Section 162(m) of the Internal Revenue Code.

   c. Amendments to Increase Shares and Retain Tax Deductions Under OBRA

      We vote for amendments to existing plans to increase shares reserved and to qualify the plan for favorable tax treatment under the provisions of Section 162(m) the Internal Revenue Code.

   d. Approval of Cash or Cash-and-Stock Bonus Plans

   We vote for cash or cash-and-stock bonus plans to exempt the compensation from taxes under the provisions of Section 162(m) of the Internal Revenue Code.

2. Expensing of Options

   We vote for proposals to expense stock options on financial statements.

3. Shareholder Proposals to Limit Executive and Director Pay

   a. We vote on a case-by-case basis on all shareholder proposals that seek additional disclosure of executive and director pay information. Considerations include: cost and form of disclosure. We vote for such proposals if additional disclosure is relevant to shareholder's needs and would not put the company at a competitive disadvantage relative to its industry.

b. We vote on a case-by-case basis on all other shareholder proposals that seek to limit executive and director pay.

We have a policy of voting to reasonably limit the level of options and other equity-based compensation arrangements available to management to reasonably limit shareholder dilution and management compensation. For options and equity-based compensation arrangements, we vote FOR proposals or amendments that would result in the available awards being less than 10% of fully diluted outstanding shares (i.e. if the combined total of shares, common share equivalents and options available to be awarded under all current and proposed compensation plans is less than 10% of fully diluted shares). In the event the available awards exceed the 10% threshold, we would also consider the % relative to the common practice of its specific industry (e.g. technology firms). Other considerations would include, without limitation, the following:

- Compensation committee comprised of independent outside directors
- Maximum award limits
- Repricing without shareholder approval prohibited
- 3-year average burn rate for company
- Plan administrator has authority to accelerate the vesting of awards
- Shares under the plan subject to performance criteria

4. Golden Parachutes

   While we generally vote for shareholder proposals to have golden parachutes submitted for shareholder ratification, due to the variability of the language used in the proposals, we vote on a case-by-case basis on all proposals to ratify, introduce or cancel golden parachutes. Considerations include, but are not limited to: the amount should not exceed 3 times average base salary plus guaranteed benefits; golden parachute should be less attractive than an ongoing employment opportunity with the firm.

5. Golden Coffins

   a. We vote for shareholder proposals that request a company not to make any death benefit payments to senior executives' estates or beneficiaries, or pay premiums in respect to any life insurance policy covering a senior executive's life ("golden coffin"). We carve out benefits provided under a plan, policy or arrangement applicable to a broader group of employees, such as offering group universal life insurance.

   b. We vote for shareholder proposals that request shareholder approval of survivor benefits for future agreements that, following the death of a senior executive, would obligate the company to make payments or awards not earned.

6. Anti-Tax Gross-up Policy

   a. We vote for proposals that ask a company to adopt a policy whereby it will not make, or promise to make, any tax gross-up payment to its senior executives, except for tax gross-ups provided pursuant to a plan, policy, or arrangement applicable to management employees of the company generally, such as relocation or expatriate tax equalization policy; we also vote for proposals that ask management to put gross-up payments to a shareholder vote.

   b. We vote against proposals where a company will make, or promise to make, any tax gross-up payment to its senior executives without a shareholder vote, except for tax gross-ups provided pursuant to a plan, policy, or arrangement applicable to management employees of the company generally, such as relocation or expatriate tax equalization policy.

7. Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs)

We vote for proposals that request shareholder approval in order to implement an ESOP or to increase authorized shares for existing ESOPs, except in cases when the number of shares allocated to the ESOP is "excessive" (i.e., generally greater than five percent of outstanding shares).

8. Employee Stock Purchase Plans

    a. We vote for qualified plans where all of the following apply:

        - The purchase price is at least 85 percent of fair market value
        - The offering period is 27 months or less
        - The number of shares allocated to the plan is five percent or less of outstanding shares

    If the above do not apply, we vote on a case-by-case basis.

    b. We vote for non-qualified plans where all of the following apply:

        - All employees of the company are eligible to participate (excluding 5 percent or more beneficial owners)
        - There are limits on employee contribution (ex: fixed dollar amount)
        - There is a company matching contribution with a maximum of 25 percent of an employee's contribution
        - There is no discount on the stock price on purchase date (since there is a company match)

    If the above do not apply, we vote against the non-qualified employee stock purchase plan.

9. 401(k) Employee Benefit Plans

    We vote for proposals to implement a 401(k) savings plan for employees.

10. Stock Compensation Plans

    a. We vote for stock compensation plans which provide a dollar-for-dollar cash for stock exchange.

    b. We vote on a case-by-case basis for stock compensation plans which do not provide a dollar-for-dollar cash for stock exchange using a quantitative model.

11. Directors Retirement Plans

    a. We vote against retirement plans for non-employee directors.

    b. We vote for shareholder proposals to eliminate retirement plans for non-employee directors.

12. Management Proposals to Reprice Options

    We vote against management proposals seeking approval to reprice options.

13. Shareholder Proposals Regarding Executive and Director Pay

    a. We vote against shareholder proposals seeking to set absolute levels on compensation or otherwise dictate the amount or form of compensation.

    b. We vote against shareholder proposals requiring director fees be paid in stock only.

    c. We vote against shareholder proposals to eliminate vesting of options and restricted stock on change of control.

    d. We vote for shareholder proposals to put option repricing to a shareholder vote.

    e. We vote for shareholder proposals that call for a non-binding advisory vote on executive pay ("say-on-pay"). Company boards would adopt a policy giving shareholders the opportunity at each annual

meeting to vote on an advisory resolution to ratify the compensation of the named executive officers set forth in the proxy statement's summary compensation table.

f. We vote "annual" for the frequency of say-on-pay proposals rather than once every two or three years.

g. We vote on a case-by-case basis for all other shareholder proposals regarding executive and director pay, taking into account company performance, pay level versus peers, pay level versus industry, and long term corporate outlook.

14. Management Proposals on Executive Compensation

For non-binding advisory votes on executive officer compensation, when management and the external service provider agree, we vote for the proposal. When management and the external service provider disagree, the proposal becomes a refer item. In the case of a Refer item, the factors under consideration will include the following:

- Company performance over the last 1, 3, and 5-year periods on a total shareholder return basis
- Performance metrics for short- and long-term incentive programs
- CEO pay relative to company performance (is there a misalignment)
- Tax gross-ups to senior executives
- Change-in-control arrangements
- Presence of a clawback provision, ownership guidelines, or stock holding requirements for senior executives

15. Stock Retention / Holding Period of Equity Awards

We vote on a case-by-case basis on shareholder proposals asking companies to adopt policies requiring senior executives to retain all or a significant (>50 percent) portion of their shares acquired through equity compensation plans, either:

- While employed and/or for one to two years following the termination of their employment; or
- For a substantial period following the lapse of all other vesting requirements for the award, with ratable release of a portion of the shares annually during the lock-up period

The following factors will be taken into consideration:

- Whether the company has any holding period, retention ratio, or named executive officer ownership requirements currently in place
- Actual stock ownership of the company's named executive officers
- Policies aimed at mitigating risk taking by senior executives
- Pay practices at the company that we deem problematic

I. State/Country of Incorporation

1. Voting on State Takeover Statutes

a. We vote for proposals to opt out of state freeze-out provisions.

b. We vote for proposals to opt out of state disgorgement provisions.

2. Voting on Re-incorporation Proposals

We vote on a case-by-case basis on proposals to change a company's state or country of incorporation. Considerations include: reasons for re-incorporation (i.e. financial, restructuring, etc.); advantages/benefits for change (i.e. lower taxes); compare the differences in state/country laws governing the corporation.

3. Control Share Acquisition Provisions

    a. We vote against proposals to amend the charter to include control share acquisition provisions.

    b. We vote for proposals to opt out of control share acquisition statutes unless doing so would enable the completion of a takeover that would be detrimental to shareholders.

    c. We vote for proposals to restore voting rights to the control shares.

    d. We vote for proposals to opt out of control share cashout statutes.

J. Mergers and Corporate Restructuring

1. Mergers and Acquisitions

    a. We vote on a case-by-case basis on mergers and acquisitions. Considerations include: benefits/advantages of the combined companies (i.e. economies of scale, operating synergies, increase in market power/share, etc.); offer price (premium or discount); change in the capital structure; impact on shareholder rights.

2. Corporate Restructuring

    a. We vote on a case-by-case basis on corporate restructuring proposals involving minority squeeze outs and leveraged buyouts. Considerations include: offer price, other alternatives/offers considered and review of fairness opinions.

3. Spin-offs

    a. We vote on a case-by-case basis on spin-offs. Considerations include the tax and regulatory advantages, planned use of sale proceeds, market focus, and managerial incentives.

4. Asset Sales

    a. We vote on a case-by-case basis on asset sales. Considerations include the impact on the balance sheet/working capital, value received for the asset, and potential elimination of diseconomies.

5. Liquidations

    a. We vote on a case-by-case basis on liquidations after reviewing management's efforts to pursue other alternatives, appraisal value of assets, and the compensation plan for executives managing the liquidation.

6. Appraisal Rights

    a. We vote for proposals to restore, or provide shareholders with, rights of appraisal.

7. Changing Corporate Name

    a. We vote for proposals to change the “corporate name”, unless the proposed name change bears a negative connotation.

8. Conversion of Securities

    a. We vote on a case-by-case basis on proposals regarding conversion of securities. Considerations include the dilution to existing shareholders, the conversion price relative to market value, financial issues, control issues, termination penalties, and conflicts of interest.

9. Stakeholder Provisions

a. We vote against proposals that ask the board to consider non-shareholder constituencies or other non-financial effects when evaluating a merger or business combination.

K. Social and Environmental Issues

When considering environmental and social (E&S) proposals, we have an obligation to vote proxies in the best interest of our clients, considering both shareholder value as well as societal impact.

1. Sustainability Reporting

   a. We vote for proposals seeking greater disclosure on the company's environmental, social & governance policies and practices;

   b. We vote for proposals that would require companies whose annual revenues are at least $5 billion to prepare a sustainability report. All others will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

2. Diversity

   a. We vote for proposals supporting nomination of most qualified candidates, inclusive of a diverse pool of women and people of color, to the Board of Directors and senior management levels;

   b. We vote for proposals requesting comprehensive disclosure on board diversity;

   c. We vote for proposals requesting comprehensive disclosure on employee diversity;

   d. We vote for proposals requesting comprehensive reports on gender and racial pay disparity;

3. Climate Risk Disclosure

   a. We vote for climate proposals that are not overly prescriptive seeking more disclosure on financial, physical or regulatory risks related to climate change and/or how the company measures and manages such risks;

   b. We vote for climate proposals that are not overly prescriptive requesting a report/disclosure of goals on GHG emissions reduction targets from company operations and/or products;

4. Case-by-case E&S proposals (examples):

   a. Animal welfare policies;

   b. Human rights and related company policies;

   c. Talent acquisition and retention policies; we generally support proposals that enable a company to recruit, support and retain talent in a globally competitive world;

   d. Operations in high-risk or sensitive areas;

   e. Product integrity and marketing; and

   f. Proposals asking a company to conduct an independent racial equity and/or civil rights audit.

L. Miscellaneous

1. Charitable Contributions

   We vote against proposals to eliminate, direct or otherwise restrict charitable contributions.

2. Political Contributions

We will vote in favor of non-binding proposals for reports on corporate lobbying and political contributions.

In general, we vote on a case-by-case basis on other shareholder proposals pertaining to political contributions. In determining our vote on political contribution proposals we consider, among other things, the following:

- Does the company have a political contributions policy publicly available
- How extensive is the disclosure on these documents
- What oversight mechanisms the company has in place for approving/reviewing political contributions and expenditures
- Does the company provide information on its trade association expenditures
- Total amount of political expenditure by the company in recent history

3. Operational Items

   a. We vote against proposals to provide management with the authority to adjourn an annual or special meeting absent compelling reasons to support the proposal.

   b. We vote against proposals to reduce quorum requirements for shareholder meetings below a majority of the shares outstanding unless there are compelling reasons to support the proposal.

   c. We vote for by-law or charter changes that are of a housekeeping nature (updates or corrections).

   d. We vote for management proposals to change the date/time/location of the annual meeting unless the proposed change is unreasonable.

   e. We vote against shareholder proposals to change the date/time/location of the annual meeting unless the current scheduling or location is unreasonable.

   f. We vote against proposals to approve other business when it appears as voting item.

4. Routine Agenda Items

   In some markets, shareholders are routinely asked to approve:

   - the opening of the shareholder meeting
   - that the meeting has been convened under local regulatory requirements
   - the presence of a quorum
   - the agenda for the shareholder meeting
   - the election of the chair of the meeting
   - regulatory filings
   - the allowance of questions
   - the publication of minutes
   - the closing of the shareholder meeting

   We generally vote for these and similar routine management proposals.

5. Allocation of Income and Dividends

   We generally vote for management proposals concerning allocation of income and the distribution of dividends, unless the amount of the distribution is consistently and unusually small or large.

6. Stock (Scrip) Dividend Alternatives

   a. We vote for most stock (scrip) dividend proposals.

   b. We vote against proposals that do not allow for a cash option unless management demonstrates that the cash option is harmful to shareholder value.

ClearBridge has determined that portfolio holdings that are registered investment companies, particularly closed end investment companies, raise special policy issues making specific voting guidelines frequently inapplicable. To the extent that ClearBridge has proxy voting authority with respect to shares of registered investment companies, ClearBridge shall vote such shares in the best interest of client accounts and subject to the general fiduciary principles set forth herein without regard to the specific voting guidelines set forth in Appendix A, A. through L.

The voting policy guidelines set forth herein will be reviewed annually and may be changed by ClearBridge's Proxy Committee in its sole discretion.

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Appendix B

Credit Ratings

DESCRIPTION OF RATINGS

The ratings of Moody's Investors Service, Inc., S&P Global Ratings and Fitch Ratings represent their opinions as to the quality of various debt obligations. It should be emphasized, however, that ratings are not absolute standards of quality. Consequently, debt obligations with the same maturity, coupon and rating may have different yields while debt obligations of the same maturity and coupon with different ratings may have the same yield. As described by the rating agencies, ratings are generally given to securities at the time of issuances. While the rating agencies may from time to time revise such ratings, they undertake no obligation to do so.

Moody's Investors Service, Inc. Global Rating Scales

Credit ratings are assigned on Moody's global long-term and short-term rating scales and are forward-looking opinions of the relative credit risks of financial obligations issued by non-financial corporates, financial institutions, structured finance vehicles, project finance vehicles, and public sector entities. Moody's defines credit risk as the risk that an entity may not meet its contractual financial obligations as they come due and any estimated financial loss in the event of default or impairment. The contractual financial obligations[1] addressed by Moody's ratings are those that call for, without regard to enforceability, the payment of an ascertainable amount, which may vary based upon standard sources of variation (e.g., floating interest rates), by an ascertainable date. Moody's rating addresses the issuer's ability to obtain cash sufficient to service the obligation, and its willingness to pay.[2] Moody's ratings do not address non-standard sources of variation in the amount of the principal obligation (e.g., equity indexed), absent an express statement to the contrary in a press release accompanying an initial rating.[3] Long-term ratings are assigned to issuers or obligations with an original maturity of eleven months or more and reflect both on the likelihood of a default or impairment on contractual financial obligations and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default or impairment. Short-term ratings are assigned to obligations with an original maturity of thirteen months or less and reflect both on the likelihood of a default or impairment on contractual financial obligations and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default or impairment.[4, 5, 6] Moody's issues ratings at the issuer level and instrument level on both the long-term scale and the short-term scale. Typically, ratings are made publicly available although private and unpublished ratings may also be assigned.[7]

Moody's differentiates structured finance ratings from fundamental ratings (i.e., ratings on nonfinancial corporate, financial institution, and public sector entities) on the global long-term scale by adding (sf) to all structured finance ratings.[8] The addition of (sf) to structured finance ratings should eliminate any presumption that such ratings and fundamental ratings at the same letter grade level will behave the same.

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1 In the case of impairments, there can be a financial loss even when contractual obligations are met.

2 In some cases the relevant credit risk relates to a third party, in addition to, or instead of the issuer. Examples include credit-linked notes and guaranteed obligations.

3 Because the number of possible features or structures is limited only by the creativity of issuers, Moody's cannot comprehensively catalogue all the types of non-standard variation affecting financial obligations, but examples include equity indexed principal values and cash flows, prepayment penalties, and an obligation to pay an amount that is not ascertainable at the inception of the transaction.

4 For certain preferred stock and hybrid securities in which payment default events are either not defined or do not match investors' expectations for timely payment, long-term and short-term ratings reflect the likelihood of impairment and financial loss in the event of impairment.

5 Debts held on the balance sheets of official sector institutions – which include supranational institutions, central banks and certain government-owned or controlled banks – may not always be treated the same as debts held by private investors and lenders. When it is known that an obligation is held by official sector institutions as well as other investors, a rating (short-term or long-term) assigned to that obligation reflects only the credit risks faced by non-official sector investors.

6 Where grace periods are disproportionately long relative to the stated maturity, Moody's may choose not to rate the Instrument. This is particularly relevant in the commercial paper market where maturities may be 30 days or less with strong investor expectation of prompt payment.

7 For information on how to obtain a Moody's credit rating, including private and unpublished credit ratings, please see Moody's Investors Service Products. Please note that Moody's always reserves the right to choose not to assign or maintain a credit rating for its own business reasons.

8 Like other global scale ratings, (sf) ratings reflect both the likelihood of a default and the expected loss suffered in the event of default. Ratings are assigned based on a rating committee's assessment of a security's expected loss rate (default probability multiplied by expected loss severity), and may be subject to the constraint that the final expected loss rating assigned would not be more than a certain number of notches, typically three to five notches, above the rating that would be assigned based on an assessment of default probability alone. The magnitude of this constraint may vary with the level of the rating, the seasoning of the transaction, and the uncertainty around the assessments of expected loss and probability of default.

The (sf) indicator for structured finance security ratings indicates that otherwise similarly rated structured finance and fundamental securities may have different risk characteristics. Through its current methodologies, however, Moody's aspires to achieve broad expected equivalence in structured finance and fundamental rating performance when measured over a long period of time.

Description of Moody's Investors Service, Inc.'s Global Long-Term Ratings:

Aaa—Obligations rated Aaa are judged to be of the highest quality, subject to the lowest level of credit risk.

Aa—Obligations rated Aa are judged to be of high quality and are subject to very low credit risk.

A—Obligations rated A are judged to be upper-medium grade and are subject to low credit risk.

Baa—Obligations rated Baa are judged to be medium-grade and subject to moderate credit risk and as such may possess certain speculative characteristics.

Ba—Obligations rated Ba are judged to be speculative and are subject to substantial credit risk.

B—Obligations rated B are considered speculative and are subject to high credit risk.

Caa—Obligations rated Caa are judged to be speculative of poor standing and are subject to very high credit risk.

Ca—Obligations rated Ca are highly speculative and are likely in, or very near, default, with some prospect of recovery of principal and interest.

C—Obligations rated C are the lowest rated and are typically in default, with little prospect for recovery of principal or interest.

Note: *Moody's appends numerical modifiers 1, 2, and 3 to each generic rating classification from Aa through Caa. The modifier 1 indicates that the obligation ranks in the higher end of its generic rating category; the modifier 2 indicates a mid-range ranking; and the modifier 3 indicates a ranking in the lower end of that generic rating category. Additionally, a "(hyb)" indicator is appended to all ratings of hybrid securities issued by banks, insurers, finance companies, and securities firms.**

** By their terms, hybrid securities allow for the omission of scheduled dividends, interest, or principal payments, which can potentially result in impairment if such an omission occurs. Hybrid securities may also be subject to contractually allowable write-downs of principal that could result in impairment. Together with the hybrid indicator, the long-term obligation rating assigned to a hybrid security is an expression of the relative credit risk associated with that security.*

Description of Moody's Investors Service, Inc.'s Global Short-Term Ratings:

P-1—Ratings of Prime-1 reflect a superior ability to repay short-term debt obligations.

P-2—Ratings of Prime-2 reflect a strong ability to repay short-term debt obligations.

P-3—Ratings of Prime-3 reflect an acceptable ability to repay short-term debt obligations.

NP—Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Not Prime do not fall within any of the Prime rating categories.

Description of Moody's Investors Service, Inc.'s US Municipal Ratings:

US Municipal Short-Term Debt and Demand Obligation Ratings:

Moody's uses the global short-term Prime rating scale for commercial paper issued by US municipalities and nonprofits. These commercial paper programs may be backed by external letters of credit or liquidity facilities, or by an issuer's self-liquidity.

For other short-term municipal obligations, Moody's uses one of two other short-term rating scales, the Municipal Investment Grade (MIG) and Variable Municipal Investment Grade (VMIG) scales discussed below.

MIG Ratings:

Moody's uses the MIG scale for US municipal cash flow notes, bond anticipation notes and certain other short-term obligations, which typically mature in three years or less.

MIG 1—This designation denotes superior credit quality. Excellent protection is afforded by established cash flows, highly reliable liquidity support, or demonstrated broad-based access to the market for refinancing.

MIG 2—This designation denotes strong credit quality. Margins of protection are ample, although not as large as in the preceding group.

MIG 3—This designation denotes acceptable credit quality. Liquidity and cash-flow protection may be narrow, and market access for refinancing is likely to be less well-established.

SG—This designation denotes speculative grade credit quality. Debt instruments in this category may lack sufficient margins of protection.

VMIG Ratings:

For variable rate demand obligations (VRDOs), Moody's assigns both a long-term rating and a short-term payment obligation rating. The long-term rating addresses the issuer's ability to meet scheduled principal and interest payments. The short-term payment obligation rating addresses the ability of the issuer or the liquidity provider to meet any purchase price payment obligation resulting from optional tenders ("on demand") and/or mandatory tenders of the VRDO. The short-term payment obligation rating uses the VMIG scale. Transitions of VMIG ratings with conditional liquidity support differ from transitions of Prime ratings reflecting the risk that external liquidity support will terminate if the issuer's long-term rating drops below investment grade.

For VRDOs, Moody's typically assigns a VMIG rating if the frequency of the payment obligation is less than every three years. If the frequency of the payment obligation is less than three years, but the obligation is payable only with remarketing proceeds, the VMIG short-term rating is not assigned and it is denoted as "NR". Industrial development bonds in the US where the obligor is a corporate may carry a VMIG rating that reflects Moody's view of the relative likelihood of default and loss. In these cases, liquidity assessment is based on the liquidity of the corporate obligor.

VMIG 1—This designation denotes superior credit quality. Excellent protection is afforded by the superior short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections.

VMIG 2—This designation denotes strong credit quality. Good protection is afforded by the strong short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections.

VMIG 3—This designation denotes acceptable credit quality. Adequate protection is afforded by the satisfactory short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections.

SG—This designation denotes speculative-grade credit quality. Demand features rated in this category may be supported by a liquidity provider that does not have a sufficiently strong short-term rating or may lack the structural or legal protections.

Description of Moody's Investors Service, Inc.'s National Scale Long-Term Ratings:

Moody's long-term National Scale Ratings (NSRs) are opinions of the relative creditworthiness of issuers and financial obligations within a particular country. NSRs are not designed to be compared among countries; rather, they address relative credit risk within a given country. Moody's assigns national scale ratings in certain local capital markets in which investors have found the global rating scale provides inadequate differentiation among credits or is inconsistent with a rating scale already in common use in the country.

In each specific country, the last two characters of the rating indicate the country in which the issuer is located or the financial obligation was issued (e.g., Aaa.ke for Kenya).

Long-Term NSR Scale

Aaa.n Issuers or issues rated Aaa.n demonstrate the strongest creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

Aa.n Issuers or issues rated Aa.n demonstrate very strong creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

A.n Issuers or issues rated A.n demonstrate above-average creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

Baa.n Issuers or issues rated Baa.n demonstrate average creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

Ba.n Issuers or issues rated Ba.n demonstrate below-average creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

B.n Issuers or issues rated B.n demonstrate weak creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

Caa.n Issuers or issues rated Caa.n demonstrate very weak creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

Ca.n Issuers or issues rated Ca.n demonstrate extremely weak creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

C.n Issuers or issues rated C.n demonstrate the weakest creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

Note: Moody's appends numerical modifiers 1, 2, and 3 to each generic rating classification from Aa through Caa. The modifier 1 indicates that the obligation ranks in the higher end of its generic rating category; the modifier 2 indicates a mid-range ranking; and the modifier 3 indicates a ranking in the lower end of that generic rating category.

Description of S&P Global Ratings' Long-Term Issue Credit Ratings:

Issue credit ratings are based, in varying degrees, on S&P Global Ratings' analysis of the following considerations:

- The likelihood of payment—the capacity and willingness of the obligor to meet its financial commitments on an obligation in accordance with the terms of the obligation;
- The nature and provisions of the financial obligation, and the promise S&P Global Ratings imputes; and
- The protection afforded by, and relative position of, the financial obligation in the event of a bankruptcy, reorganization, or other arrangement under the laws of bankruptcy and other laws affecting creditors' rights.

An issue rating is an assessment of default risk but may incorporate an assessment of relative seniority or ultimate recovery in the event of default. Junior obligations are typically rated lower than senior obligations, to reflect lower priority in bankruptcy, as noted above. (Such differentiation may apply when an entity has both senior and subordinated obligations, secured and unsecured obligations, or operating company and holding company obligations.)

AAA—An obligation rated "AAA" has the highest rating assigned by S&P Global Ratings. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is extremely strong.

AA—An obligation rated "AA" differs from the highest-rated obligations only to a small degree. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is very strong.

A—An obligation rated "A" is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher-rated categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is still strong.

BBB—An obligation rated "BBB" exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to weaken the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

BB, B, CCC, CC, and C—Obligations rated "BB", "B", "CCC", "CC", and "C" are regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. "BB" indicates the least degree of speculation and "C" the highest. While such obligations will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposure to adverse conditions.

BB—An obligation rated "BB" is less vulnerable to nonpayment than other speculative issues. However, it faces major ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions that could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

B—An obligation rated "B" is more vulnerable to nonpayment than obligations rated "BB", but the obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions will likely impair the obligor's capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

CCC—An obligation rated "CCC" is currently vulnerable to nonpayment and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation. In the event of adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, the obligor is not likely to have the capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

CC—An obligation rated "CC" is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment.

The "CC" rating is used when a default has not yet occurred but S&P Global Ratings expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.

C—An obligation rated "C" is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment, and the obligation is expected to have lower relative seniority or lower ultimate recovery compared with obligations that are rated higher.

D—An obligation rated "D" is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the "D" rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless S&P Global Ratings believes that such payments will be made within the next five business days in the absence of a stated grace period or within the earlier of the stated grace period or the next 30 calendar days. The "D" rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. A rating on an obligation is lowered to "D" if it is subject to a distressed debt restructuring.

Note: The ratings from "AA" to "CCC" may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the rating categories.

Description of S&P Global Ratings' Short-Term Issue Credit Ratings:

A-1—A short-term obligation rated "A-1" is rated in the highest category by S&P Global Ratings. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is strong. Within this category, certain obligations are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on these obligations is extremely strong.

A-2—A short-term obligation rated "A-2" is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher rating categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is satisfactory.

A-3—A short-term obligation rated "A-3" exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to weaken an obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

B—A short-term obligation rated "B" is regarded as vulnerable and has significant speculative characteristics. The obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments; however, it faces major ongoing uncertainties that could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments.

C—A short-term obligation rated "C" is currently vulnerable to nonpayment and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

D—A short-term obligation rated "D" is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the "D" rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless S&P Global Ratings believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. The "D" rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of a similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual

certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. A rating on an obligation is lowered to "D" if it is subject to a distressed debt restructuring.

Description of S&P Global Ratings' Municipal Short-Term Note Ratings:

An S&P Global Ratings U.S. municipal note rating reflects S&P Global Ratings' opinion about the liquidity factors and market access risks unique to the notes. Notes due in three years or less will likely receive a note rating. Notes with an original maturity of more than three years will most likely receive a long-term debt rating. In determining which type of rating, if any, to assign, S&P Global Ratings' analysis will review the following considerations:

- Amortization schedule—the larger the final maturity relative to other maturities, the more likely it will be treated as a note; and
- Source of payment—the more dependent the issue is on the market for its refinancing, the more likely it will be treated as a note.

SP-1—Strong capacity to pay principal and interest. An issue determined to possess a very strong capacity to pay debt service is given a plus (+) designation.

SP-2—Satisfactory capacity to pay principal and interest, with some vulnerability to adverse financial and economic changes over the term of the notes.

SP-3—Speculative capacity to pay principal and interest.

D—"D" is assigned upon failure to pay the note when due, completion of a distressed debt restructuring, or the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions.

Description of S&P Global Ratings' Long-Term Issuer Credit Ratings

AAA An obligor rated "AAA" has extremely strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. "AAA" is the highest issuer credit rating assigned by S&P Global Ratings.

AA An obligor rated "AA" has very strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. It differs from the highest-rated obligors only to a small degree.

A An obligor rated "A" has strong capacity to meet its financial commitments but is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligors in higher-rated categories.

BBB An obligor rated "BBB" has adequate capacity to meet its financial commitments. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to weaken the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments.

BB, B, CCC, and CC Obligors rated "BB", "B", "CCC", and "CC" are regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. "BB" indicates the least degree of speculation and "CC" the highest. While such obligors will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposure to adverse conditions.

BB An obligor rated "BB" is less vulnerable in the near term than other lower-rated obligors. However, it faces major ongoing uncertainties and exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions that could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments.

B An obligor rated "B" is more vulnerable than the obligors rated "BB", but the obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions will likely impair the obligor's capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitments.

CCC An obligor rated "CCC" is currently vulnerable and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions to meet its financial commitments.

CC An obligor rated "CC" is currently highly vulnerable. The "CC" rating is used when a default has not yet occurred but S&P Global Ratings expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.

SD and D An obligor is rated "SD" (selective default) or "D" if S&P Global Ratings considers there to be a default on one or more of its financial obligations, whether long- or short-term, including rated and unrated obligations but excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital or in nonpayment according to terms. A "D" rating is assigned when S&P Global Ratings believes that the default will be a general default and that the obligor will fail to pay all or substantially all of its obligations as they come due. An "SD" rating is assigned when S&P Global Ratings believes that the obligor has selectively defaulted on a specific issue or class of obligations but it will continue to meet its payment obligations on other issues or classes of obligations in a timely manner. A rating on an obligor is lowered to "D" or "SD" if it is conducting a distressed debt restructuring.

Ratings from "AA" to "CCC" may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the rating categories.

Description of S&P Global Ratings' Short-Term Issuer Credit Ratings

A-1 An obligor rated "A-1" has strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. It is rated in the highest category by S&P Global Ratings. Within this category, certain obligors are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments is extremely strong.

A-2 An obligor rated "A-2" has satisfactory capacity to meet its financial commitments. However, it is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligors in the highest rating category.

A-3 An obligor rated "A-3" has adequate capacity to meet its financial obligations. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to weaken the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments.

B An obligor rated "B" is regarded as vulnerable and has significant speculative characteristics. The obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments; however, it faces major ongoing uncertainties that could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments.

C An obligor rated "C" is currently vulnerable to nonpayment that would result in an "SD" or "D" issuer rating and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions to meet its financial commitments.

SD and D An obligor is rated "SD" (selective default) or "D" if S&P Global Ratings considers there to be a default on one or more of its financial obligations, whether long- or short-term, including rated and unrated obligations but excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital or in nonpayment according to terms. A "D" rating is assigned when S&P Global Ratings believes that the default will be a general default and that the obligor will fail to pay all or substantially all of its obligations as they come due. An "SD" rating is assigned when S&P Global Ratings believes that the obligor has selectively defaulted on a specific issue or class of obligations but it will continue to meet its payment obligations on other issues or classes of obligations in a timely manner. A rating on an obligor is lowered to "D" or "SD" if it is conducting a distressed debt restructuring.

Description of S&P Global Ratings' Dual Ratings:

Dual ratings may be assigned to debt issues that have a put option or demand feature. The first component of the rating addresses the likelihood of repayment of principal and interest as due, and the second component of the rating addresses only the demand feature. The first component of the rating can relate to either a short-term or long-term transaction and accordingly use either short-term or long-term rating symbols. The second component of the rating relates to the put option and is assigned a short-term rating symbol (for example, "AAA/A-1+" or "A-1+/A-1"). With U.S. municipal short-term demand debt, the U.S. municipal short-term note rating symbols are used for the first component of the rating (for example, "SP-1+/A-1+").

Description of S&P Global Ratings' Active Qualifiers:

S&P Global Ratings uses the following qualifiers that limit the scope of a rating. The structure of the transaction can require the use of a qualifier such as a "p" qualifier, which indicates the rating addresses the principal portion of the obligation only. A qualifier appears as a suffix and is part of the rating.

Federal deposit insurance limit: "L" qualifier. Ratings qualified with "L" apply only to amounts invested up to federal deposit insurance limits.

Principal: "p" qualifier. This suffix is used for issues in which the credit factors, the terms, or both that determine the likelihood of receipt of payment of principal are different from the credit factors, terms, or both that determine the likelihood of receipt of interest on the obligation. The "p" suffix indicates that the rating addresses the principal portion of the obligation only and that the interest is not rated.

Preliminary ratings: "prelim" qualifier. Preliminary ratings, with the "prelim" suffix, may be assigned to obligors or obligations, including financial programs, in the circumstances described below. Assignment of a final rating is conditional on the receipt by S&P Global Ratings of appropriate documentation. S&P Global Ratings reserves the right not to issue a final rating. Moreover, if a final rating is issued, it may differ from the preliminary rating.

- Preliminary ratings may be assigned to obligations, most commonly structured and project finance issues, pending receipt of final documentation and legal opinions.
- Preliminary ratings may be assigned to obligations that will likely be issued upon the obligor's emergence from bankruptcy or similar reorganization, based on late-stage reorganization plans, documentation, and discussions with the obligor. Preliminary ratings may also be assigned to the obligors. These ratings consider the anticipated general credit quality of the reorganized or post-bankruptcy issuer as well as attributes of the anticipated obligation(s).
- Preliminary ratings may be assigned to entities that are being formed or that are in the process of being independently established when, in S&P Global Ratings' opinion, documentation is close to final. Preliminary ratings may also be assigned to the obligations of these entities.
- Preliminary ratings may be assigned when a previously unrated entity is undergoing a well-formulated restructuring, recapitalization, significant financing, or other transformative event, generally at the point that investor or lender commitments are invited. The preliminary rating may be assigned to the entity and to its proposed obligation(s). These preliminary ratings consider the anticipated general credit quality of the obligor, as well as attributes of the anticipated obligation(s), assuming successful completion of the transformative event. Should the transformative event not occur, S&P Global Ratings would likely withdraw these preliminary ratings.
- A preliminary recovery rating may be assigned to an obligation that has a preliminary issue credit rating.

Termination structures: "t" qualifier. This symbol indicates termination structures that are designed to honor their contracts to full maturity or, should certain events occur, to terminate and cash settle all their contracts before their final maturity date.

Counterparty instrument rating: "cir" qualifier. This symbol indicates a counterparty instrument rating (CIR), which is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an issuer in a securitization structure with respect to a specific financial obligation to a counterparty (including interest rate swaps, currency swaps, and liquidity facilities). The CIR is determined on an ultimate payment basis; these opinions do not take into account timeliness of payment.

Description of Fitch Ratings' Corporate Finance Obligations:

Ratings of individual securities or financial obligations of a corporate issuer address relative vulnerability to default on an ordinal scale. In addition, for financial obligations in corporate finance, a measure of recovery given default on that liability is also included in the rating assessment. This notably applies to covered bonds ratings, which incorporate both an indication of the probability of default and of the recovery given a default of this debt instrument. On the contrary, ratings of debtor-in-possession (DIP) obligations incorporate the expectation of full repayment.

The relationship between the issuer scale and obligation scale assumes a generic historical average recovery. Individual obligations can be assigned ratings higher, lower, or the same as that entity's issuer rating or Issuer Default Rating (IDR), based on their relative ranking, relative vulnerability to default or based on explicit Recovery Ratings.

As a result, individual obligations of entities, such as corporations, are assigned ratings higher, lower, or the same as that entity's issuer rating or IDR, except DIP obligation ratings that are not based off an IDR and senior tranches of Enhanced Equipment Trust Certificates, for which IDRs are secondary dependencies, as Fitch focuses primarily on structure, collateral and legal protection.

At the lower end of the ratings scale, Fitch publishes explicit Recovery Ratings in many cases to complement issuer and obligation ratings.

AAA: Highest Credit Quality. "AAA" ratings denote the lowest expectation of credit risk. They are assigned only in cases of exceptionally strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is highly unlikely to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.

AA: Very High Credit Quality. "AA" ratings denote expectations of very low credit risk. They indicate very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.

A: High Credit Quality. "A" ratings denote expectations of low credit risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.

BBB: Good Credit Quality. "BBB" ratings indicate that expectations of credit risk are currently low. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.

BB: Speculative. "BB" ratings indicate an elevated vulnerability to credit risk, particularly in the event of adverse changes in business or economic conditions over time; however, business or financial alternatives may be available to allow financial commitments to be met.

B: Highly Speculative. "B" ratings indicate that material credit risk is present.

CCC: Substantial Credit Risk. "CCC" ratings indicate that substantial credit risk is present.

CC: Very High Levels of Credit Risk. "CC" ratings indicate very high levels of credit risk.

C: Exceptionally High Levels of Credit Risk. "C" indicates exceptionally high levels of credit risk.

The ratings of corporate finance obligations are linked to IDRs (or sometimes Viability Ratings for banks and non-bank financial institutions) by i) recovery expectations, including as often indicated by Recovery Ratings assigned in the case of low speculative grade issuers and ii) for banks and non-bank financial institutions an assessment of nonperformance risk relative to the risk captured in the IDR or Viability Ratings (e.g. in respect of certain hybrid securities).

For performing obligations, the obligation rating represents the risk of default including the effect of expected recoveries on the credit risk should a default occur.

If the obligation rating is higher than the rating of the issuer, this indicates above average recovery expectations in the event of default. If the obligations rating is lower than the rating of the issuer, this indicates low expected recoveries should default occur.

Ratings in the categories of "CCC", "CC" and "C" can also relate to obligations or issuers that are in default. In this case, the rating does not opine on default risk but reflects the recovery expectation only.

Description of Fitch Ratings' Issuer Default Ratings:

Rated entities in several sectors, including financial and non-financial corporations, sovereigns, insurance companies and some sectors within public finance, are generally assigned IDRs. IDRs are also assigned to certain entities or enterprises in global infrastructure, project finance and public finance. IDRs opine on an entity's relative vulnerability to default – including by way of a distressed debt exchange (DDE) – on financial obligations. The threshold default risk addressed by the IDR is generally that of the financial obligations whose non-payment would best reflect the uncured failure of that entity. As such, IDRs also address relative vulnerability to bankruptcy, administrative receivership or similar concepts.

In aggregate, IDRs provide an ordinal ranking of issuers based on the agency's view of their relative vulnerability to default, rather than a prediction of a specific percentage likelihood of default.

AAA: Highest Credit Quality. "AAA" ratings denote the lowest expectation of default risk. They are assigned only in cases of exceptionally strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is highly unlikely to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.

AA: Very High Credit Quality. "AA" ratings denote expectations of very low default risk. They indicate very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.

A: High Credit Quality. "A" ratings denote expectations of low default risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.

BBB: Good Credit Quality. "BBB" ratings indicate that expectations of default risk are currently low. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.

BB: Speculative. "BB" ratings indicate an elevated vulnerability to default risk, particularly in the event of adverse changes in business or economic conditions over time; however, business or financial flexibility exists that supports the servicing of financial commitments.

B: Highly Speculative. "B" ratings indicate that material default risk is present, but a limited margin of safety remains. Financial commitments are currently being met; however, capacity for continued payment is vulnerable to deterioration in the business and economic environment.

CCC: Substantial Credit Risk. Default is a real possibility.

CC: Very High Levels of Credit Risk. Very low margin for safety. Default of some kind appears probable.

C: Near Default. A default or default-like process has begun, or for a closed funding vehicle, payment capacity is irrevocably impaired. Conditions that are indicative of a "C" category rating for an issuer include:

- The issuer has entered into a grace or cure period following non-payment of a material financial obligation;
- The formal announcement by the issuer or their agent of a distressed debt exchange ("DDE");
- A closed financing vehicle where payment capacity is irrevocably impaired such that it is not expected to pay interest and/or principal in full during the life of the transaction, but where no payment default is imminent

RD: Restricted Default. "RD" ratings indicate an issuer that in Fitch's opinion has experienced:

- An uncured payment default or DDE on a bond, loan or other material financial obligations, but has not entered into bankruptcy filing, administration, receivership, liquidation, or other formal winding-up procedure, and
- Has not otherwise ceased operating.

  This would include:
  - The selective payment default on a specific class or currency of debt;
  - The uncured expiry of any applicable original grace period, cure period or default forbearance period following a payment default on a bank loan, capital markets security or other material financial obligation;

D: Default. "D" ratings indicate an issuer that in Fitch's opinion has entered into bankruptcy filings, administration, receivership, liquidation or other formal winding-up procedure or which has otherwise ceased business.

Default ratings are not assigned prospectively to entities or their obligations; within this context, non-payment on an instrument that contains a deferral feature or grace period will generally not be considered a default until after the expiration of the deferral or grace period, unless a default is otherwise driven by bankruptcy or other similar circumstance, or by a distressed debt exchange.

In all cases, the assignment of a default rating reflects the agency's opinion as to the most appropriate rating category consistent with the rest of its universe of ratings and may differ from the definition of default under the terms of an issuer's financial obligations or local commercial practice.

Description of Fitch Ratings' Structured Finance Long-Term Obligation Ratings:

Ratings of structured finance obligations on the long-term scale consider the obligations' relative vulnerability to default. These ratings are typically assigned to an individual security or tranche in a transaction and not to an issuer.

AAA: Highest Credit Quality.

"AAA" ratings denote the lowest expectation of default risk. They are assigned only in cases of exceptionally strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is highly unlikely to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.

AA: Very High Credit Quality.

"AA" ratings denote expectations of very low default risk. They indicate very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.

A: High Credit Quality.

"A" ratings denote expectations of low default risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.

BBB: Good Credit Quality.

"BBB" ratings indicate that expectations of default risk are currently low. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.

BB: Speculative.

"BB" ratings indicate an elevated vulnerability to default risk, particularly in the event of adverse changes in business or economic conditions over time.

B: Highly Speculative.

"B" ratings indicate that material default risk is present, but a limited margin of safety remains. Financial commitments are currently being met; however, capacity for continued payment is vulnerable to deterioration in the business and economic environment.

CCC: Substantial Credit Risk.

Very low margin for safety. Default is a real possibility.

CC: Very High Levels of Credit Risk.

Default of some kind appears probable.

C: Exceptionally High Levels of Credit Risk.

Default appears imminent or inevitable.

D: Default.

Indicates a default. Default generally is defined as one of the following:

- Failure to make payment of principal and/or interest under the contractual terms of the rated obligation;
- Bankruptcy filings, administration, receivership, liquidation or other winding-up or cessation of the business of an issuer/obligor; or
- Distressed exchange of an obligation, where creditors were offered securities with diminished structural or economic terms compared with the existing obligation to avoid a probable payment default.

Description of Fitch Ratings' Country Ceilings Ratings:

Country Ceilings are expressed using the symbols of the long-term issuer primary credit rating scale and relate to sovereign jurisdictions also rated by Fitch on the IDR scale. They reflect the agency's judgment regarding the risk of capital and exchange controls being imposed by the sovereign authorities that would prevent or materially impede the private sector's ability

to convert local currency into foreign currency and transfer to non-resident creditors — transfer and convertibility (T&C) risk. They are not ratings but expressions of a cap for the foreign currency issuer ratings of most, but not all, issuers in a given country. Intervention through capital or currency controls where an issuer is prevented comprehensively by its own government from paying out on cross-border bonds, held by investors both inside and outside its borders, would typically lead to a T&C default.

Description of Fitch Ratings' Sovereigns, Public Finance and Global Infrastructure Obligations:

Ratings of public finance obligations, infrastructure and project finance obligations on the long-term scale, structured finance and fund finance obligations only consider the obligations' relative vulnerability to default.

In limited cases in U.S. public finance, where Chapter 9 of the Bankruptcy Code provides reliably superior prospects for ultimate recovery to local government obligations that benefit from a statutory lien on revenues, Fitch reflects this in a security rating with limited notching above the IDR. Recovery expectations can also be reflected in a security rating in the U.S. during the pendency of a bankruptcy proceeding under the Code if there is sufficient visibility on potential recovery prospects.

Recovery Ratings are only assigned to infrastructure and project finance obligations, to indicate likely recovery prospects upon request. They are assessed in parallel to instrument ratings and typically do not influence the obligation rating, which remains premised on vulnerability to default.

AAA: Highest Credit Quality. "AAA" ratings denote the lowest expectation of default risk. They are assigned only in cases of exceptionally strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is highly unlikely to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.

AA: Very High Credit Quality. "AA" ratings denote expectations of very low default risk. They indicate very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.

A: High Credit Quality. "A" ratings denote expectations of low default risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.

BBB: Good Credit Quality. "BBB" ratings indicate that expectations of default risk are currently low. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.

BB: Speculative. "BB" ratings indicate an elevated vulnerability to default risk, particularly in the event of adverse changes in business or economic conditions over time.

B: Highly Speculative. "B" ratings indicate that material default risk is present, but a limited margin of safety remains. Financial commitments are currently being met; however, capacity for continued payment is vulnerable to deterioration in the business and economic environment.

CCC: Substantial Credit Risk. Very low margin for safety. Default is a real possibility.

CC: Very High Levels of Credit Risk. Default of some kind appears probable.

C: Exceptionally High Levels of Credit Risk. Default appears imminent or inevitable.

D: Default. Indicates a default. Default generally is defined as one of the following:

- Failure to make payment of principal and/or interest under the contractual terms of the rated obligation;
- Bankruptcy filings, administration, receivership, liquidation or other winding-up or cessation of the business of an issuer/obligor where payment default on an obligation is a virtual certainty; or
- Distressed exchange of an obligation, where creditors were offered securities with diminished structural or economic terms compared with the existing obligation to avoid a probable payment default.

Notes: In U.S. public finance, obligations may be pre-refunded, where funds sufficient to meet the requirements of the respective obligations are placed in an escrow account. When obligation ratings are maintained based on the escrowed funds and their structural elements, the ratings carry the suffix "pre" (e.g. "AAApre", "AA+pre").

Structured Finance Defaults

Imminent default, categorized under "C", typically refers to the occasion where a payment default has been intimated by the issuer and is all but inevitable. This may, for example, be where an issuer has missed a scheduled payment but (as is typical) has a grace period during which it may cure the payment default. Another alternative would be where an issuer has formally announced a distressed debt exchange, but the date of the exchange still lies several days or weeks in the immediate future.

Additionally, in structured finance transactions, where analysis indicates that an instrument is irrevocably impaired such that it is not expected to pay interest and/or principal in full in accordance with the terms of the obligation's documentation during the life of the transaction, but where no payment default in accordance with the terms of the documentation is imminent, the obligation will typically be rated in the "C" category.

Structured Finance Write-downs

Where an instrument has experienced an involuntary and, in the agency's opinion, irreversible write-down of principal (i.e. other than through amortization, and resulting in a loss to the investor), a credit rating of "D" will be assigned to the instrument. Where the agency believes the write-down may prove to be temporary (and the loss may be written up again in future if and when performance improves), then a credit rating of "C" will typically be assigned. Should the write-down then later be reversed, the credit rating will be raised to an appropriate level for that instrument. Should the write-down later be deemed as irreversible, the credit rating will be lowered to "D".

Notes:

In the case of structured finance, while the ratings do not address the loss severity given default of the rated liability, loss severity assumptions on the underlying assets are nonetheless typically included as part of the analysis. Loss severity assumptions are used to derive pool cash flows available to service the rated liability.

The suffix "sf" denotes an issue that is a structured finance transaction.

Description of Fitch Ratings' Short-Term Ratings Assigned to Issuers and Obligations:

A short-term issuer or obligation rating is based in all cases on the short-term vulnerability to default of the rated entity and relates to the capacity to meet financial obligations in accordance with the documentation governing the relevant obligation. Short-term deposit ratings may be adjusted for loss severity. Short-Term Ratings are assigned to obligations whose initial maturity is viewed as "short term" based on market convention (a long-term rating can also be used to rate an issue with short maturity). Typically, this means a timeframe of up to 13 months for corporate, sovereign, and structured obligations, and up to 36 months for obligations in U.S. public finance markets.

F1: Highest Short-Term Credit Quality. Indicates the strongest intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments; may have an added "+" to denote any exceptionally strong credit feature.

F2: Good Short-Term Credit Quality. Good intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments.

F3: Fair Short-Term Credit Quality. The intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments is adequate.

B: Speculative Short-Term Credit Quality. Minimal capacity for timely payment of financial commitments, plus heightened vulnerability to near term adverse changes in financial and economic conditions.

C: High Short-Term Default Risk. Default is a real possibility.

RD: Restricted Default. Indicates an entity that has defaulted on one or more of its financial commitments, although it continues to meet other financial obligations. Typically applicable to entity ratings only.

D: Default. Indicates a broad-based default event for an entity, or the default of a short-term obligation.