

Core Plus Total Return ETF Strategy

Second Quarter 2025

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# **Richard Bernstein Advisors**

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# **Firm Overview**



# **About RBA**

RBA Overview	Distribution and Partners	RBA Difference
<ul> <li>Utilize a unique top-down, macro approach to investing that focuses on profits, liquidity, and sentiment</li> <li>Offer long-only Multi-Asset, Global Equity, and Fixed Income strategies</li> <li>AUM of over \$16.6 billion (as of 6/30/2025 including assets-under-advisement)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>▶ RBA         Multi-Asset, Global Equity and Fixed         Income Retail SMAs, and Institutional         Accounts     </li> <li>▶ Eaton Vance         Subadvisor, Open-end Mutual Funds     </li> <li>▶ First Trust         Income-Oriented &amp; Thematic Equity         Unit Trusts, US Equity SMA, and</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Transparency         Provide frequent portfolio updates and offer regular direct access to senior investment team     </li> <li>Daily Liquidity         Highly liquid portfolios that have no lockups/gates     </li> <li>Competitive Fees         Offer attractive and competitive fee     </li> </ul>
► Attractive risk-adjusted returns over longer time horizons	Thematic ETF  • iM Global Partner	γ
► Founded in 2009, RBA has over a 10- year track record	UCITS Funds, and Global Distribution Support	



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### **Experienced Investment Committee**



Richard Bernstein, CEO and CIO
Industry experience: 44 years. RBA experience: 16 years.
Formerly Chief Investment Strategist at BofA Merrill Lynch.
BA, Hamilton College, MBA, New York University.



Michael Contopoulos, Deputy CIO
Industry experience: 26 years. RBA experience: 4 years.
Formerly Chief Investment Strategist at Anchorage Capital & Head of Leveraged Finance Strategy at BofA Merrill Lynch.
BA, Columbia University, MBA, New York University.



Matthew Griswold, CFA, Director of Investments and Risk Management Industry experience: 35 years. RBA experience: 15 years.

Formerly Portfolio Manager at State Street Global Advisors.
BS, Carnegie Mellon University.

perience: 15 years. creet Global Advisors.

Lisa Kirschner, Director of Research and Chairperson of Investment Committee

Industry experience: 31 years. RBA experience: 15 years.
Formerly Senior Director at BofA Merrill Lynch.
Indiana University.



Henry Timmons, CFA, Director of ETFs

Industry experience: 22 years. RBA experience: 14 years.

Formerly Portfolio Manager and Quantitative Analyst at GMO LLC.
BS and MEng, Cornell University. MBA, Cornell University's SC
Johnson College of Business.



Matt Poterba, CFA, Senior Analyst

Industry experience: 13 years. RBA experience: 11 years.
Formerly Associate Analyst at NERA Economic Consulting.
BA, Hamilton College.



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Malvika Dhingra, Portfolio Analyst

Industry experience: 3 years. RBA experience: 3 years. Formerly Analyst at PricewaterhouseCoopers.

BA, University of Delhi, MS, Duke University's Fuqua School of Business.

**Average Industry Experience: 25 Years Average RBA Experience: 11 Years** 

# **RBA AUM/AUA\***

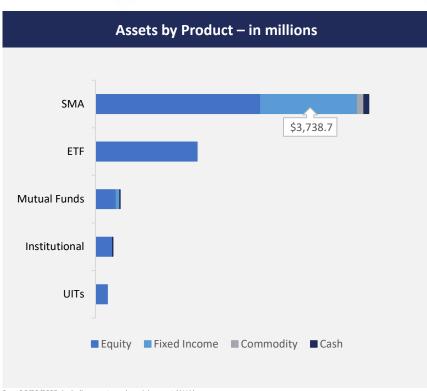


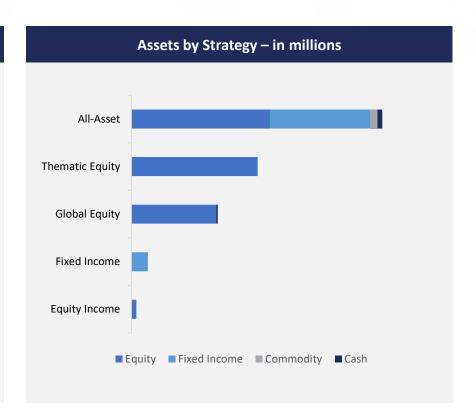




<sup>\*</sup>as of 6/30/2025, including assets under advisement (AUA).

# RBA manages \$3.7 Billion in Fixed Income Assets\*







<sup>\*</sup>as of 6/30/2025, including assets under advisement (AUA).

### **RBA Digital Presence**

#### **Insights and Webinars**

RBA market analysis and commentary includes

- ► Monthly Insights, Quick Insights, Fixed Income Insights, Research Insights & ETF Insights
- ► Quarterly Webinars







Quarterly webinars draw 2K+ Investment Professionals



\*as of 6/30/2025.



### **RBA's Unique Multi-Asset Investment Strategy**

#### **Investment Approach Investment Process** ▶ RBA has unparalleled experience in equity, fixed income and asset Profit Cycles, Not Economic Cycles, Drive Financial Markets allocation. ▶ Utilize in-house macro research to PEAK assess profits, liquidity, and sentiment. **FAVOR FAVOR** - Small-caps - Large-caps - Value RISING ► RBA drives alpha through asset - Stable growth - Cyclical sectors - Defensive sectors **PROFIT CYCLE** selection, size, style, sector, rating, - Lower quality - Higher quality - Discounted dividend duration and geography, and not - Secure dividend yield and bond vield through individual stock selection. - Low beta - High beta - Developed markets - Emerging markets TROUGH ► History of positioning shows RBA's thinking is non-consensus. ► Conservative risk-balanced Stock / Bond Selection approach to total returns. Style Geography Commodities Size Sector Duration ▶ All mandates are global go-anywhere.

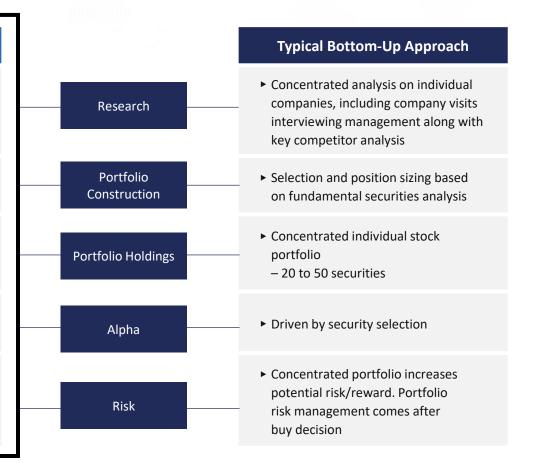


### RBA Top Down - vs. - Typical Bottom Up

#### **RBA's Top-Down Approach**

- ► Extensive array of macro, sentiment, profit, and valuation indicators that have been developed and honed over 30 years
- Quantitative selection process used to gain customized exposures
- Utilize optimizer to build a large and diversified risk-weighted portfolio: 200 to 450 securities (5-30 ETFs)
- ► Driven by macro themes, size, style, sector and geographic allocations
- Large portfolio minimizes individual stock selection risk. Optimization incorporates risk management into buy decisions

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# **Richard Bernstein Advisors**



# **Separately Managed Account ETF Portfolios**



### **Go Anywhere SMAs**

#### **Core Plus Total Return SMA Portfolio Highlights**

- "Go-anywhere" ETF based fixed income allocation strategies that invest across fixed income market segments
- Prioritization is total return with a secondary mandate of generating income
- Managing within risk parameters will be a focus of our approach
- ► Over time, and under normal market conditions, the portfolios should consistently be invested in a mix of quality/maturity/asset classes to pursue our objective
- Strategic policy guidelines are in place to provide an additional layer of risk-management

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#### **Flexible Asset Allocations**

Cash

- ▶ Fixed Income
  - Domestic
  - Foreign
  - Investment grade
  - High-yield
  - Corporate
  - Government
  - Municipal
  - Agency
  - Inflation-linked
  - Mortgage-backed
  - Interest rate hedging



#### **Investment Process**

### **Top-Down Macro Assessment**

#### **Risk Assessment**

### **Strategic Policy Guidelines**

#### **▶** Fundamentals

- Proprietary default and expected loss analysis
- Cash flow and Earnings
- Leverage/Coverage

#### ► Liquidity:

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- Central bank analysis
- Issuance trends
- Lending standards/Market access

#### ► Sentiment/Valuation:

- Structural long-term sentiment
- Valuation of market segments
- Relative upside/downside

- Diversification is based on correlation of assets within the portfolio, rather than the number of assets
  - Review risk of opportunistic asset allocation targets within different interest rate and default scenarios
- ► Capital Market Assumptions
  - Utilize duration, convexity, rating and relative pricing datasets

- ► Guidelines provide an additional layer of risk management
  - Normal tactical deviations will be within 30% of Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index
  - <= 50% non-U.S.

#### **Asset Allocation Decisions**

Emerging vs. Developed

High Quality vs. Low Quality

Maturity

Sovereign vs. Corporate Bonds

Long vs. Short Duration

Investment grade vs. High Yield



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### **ETF Selection & Implementation Process**

#### **ETF Portfolio Selection & Construction**

#### Quantitative screening with qualitative review ( >200 ETF universe )

- ▶ Prefer AUM > \$100 million
- ► Prefer trading history > 1 year
- ► Liquidity: ETF share volume + underlying basket volume
- ► Bid/Ask spread
- ► Legal structure

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Construction methodology

- Discount / premium to NAV
- Sponsor reputation and transparency
- Exposure: fit to targeted market segments: region, style, sector, credit quality, duration, etc.
- ► Minimize fees relative to market-segment peers
- ► Minimize tracking error relative to market-segment peers

# **Resulting In**

#### **ETF Portfolios**

- ► Typically 5-30 ETFs
- Maximize contribution from topdown macro-economic views
- Minimize portfolio risk through asset class portfolio risk measurement
- Minimize credit-specific risk through usage of ETFs



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# **Richard Bernstein Advisors**



# RBA Core Plus Total Return ETF Strategy



#### **Fixed Income Core Plus Portfolio Construction**

#### **Portfolio Construction**

- ► Strategic and Tactical Top down and bottom-up research process to determine strategic and tactical direction of risk
- ► Cyclical vs Defensive High quality vs low quality, credit vs. rate risk
- ► **Duration** Relative and absolute duration targeting based on macro indicators, liquidity and rate cycles
- ► Sector/Region Fundamental and macro models to determine optimal asset class and region allocations
- ► Yield Curve Rich/Cheap analysis across maturities and asset classes based on fundamental and historical relative value analysis
- ► Valuation Quantitative techniques and scenario analysis to determine upside/downside



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### **Strategic Policy Guidelines**

▶ Benchmark: Bloomberg US Aggregate Bond Index

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- ► Exposure guardrails are +/- 30% of benchmark weights for fixed income sectors: Corporates, Treasuries, Mortgages, Municipals
- ▶ Allocation Ranges: US Fixed Income 0%-100%, Non-US Fixed Income 0%-50%, Cash 0%-30%

Asset Class	Long-Term "Neutral" Asset Allocation	Allocation Ranges	Current Allocation as of 6/30/2025	
Total Fixed Income	100%	100%	99.2%	
US Fixed Income		20% - 100%	99.2%	
Non-US Fixed Income		0% - 50%	0.0%	
Total Cash/Other (Commodities, Currencies, etc.)	0%	0% - 30%	0.8%	
Cash		0% - 30%	0.8%	

Source: Richard Bernstein Advisors LLC, Bloomberg. Percent of total net assets. Allocations are subject to change due to active management. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.



### **Portfolio Snapshot: Asset Allocation**

### Asset Allocation as of 6/30/2025

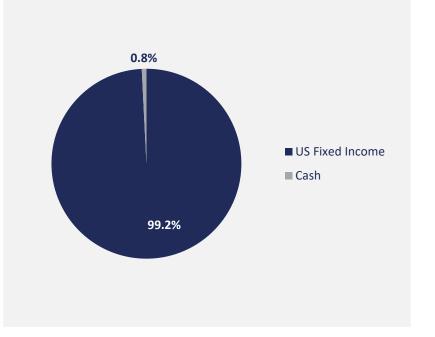
#### Fixed Income (99.2% = Equalweight)\*

- Overweight
  - Securitized/Mortgages, Long & Short-Term Nominal Treasuries
- Underweight

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- Investment Grade Corporates, Non-US Sovereign Debt

Cash & Equivalents (0.8% = Equalweight)\*



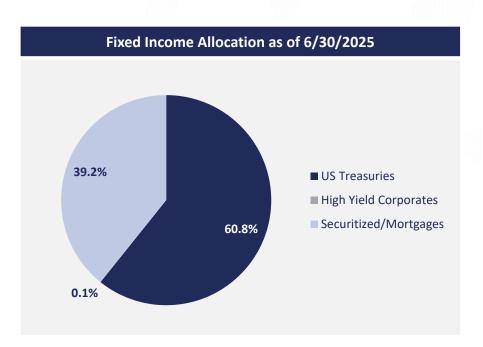


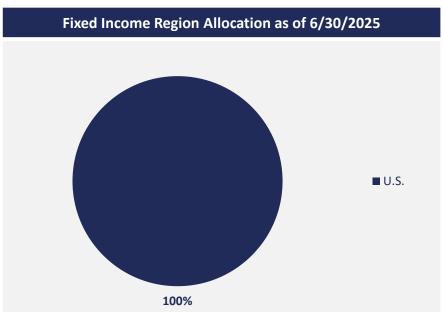
<sup>\*</sup>Overweight, equalweight and underweight are in comparison to our long-term strategic allocation policy.

Source: Richard Bernstein Advisors LLC, Bloomberg. Percent of total net assets. Allocations are subject to change due to active management.

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

# **Portfolio Snapshot: Fixed Income & Region Allocation**

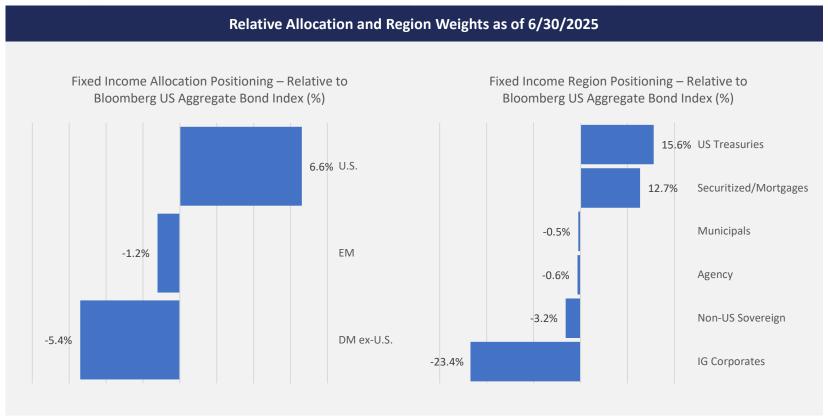




Source: Richard Bernstein Advisors LLC, Bloomberg. Allocations are subject to change due to active management. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Weightings are calculated on a fixed-income-only basis.



### Portfolio Snapshot: Fixed Income & Region Allocation



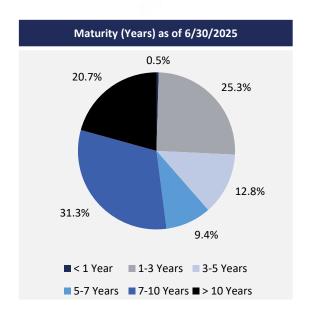
Source: Richard Bernstein Advisors LLC, Bloomberg. Weightings are calculated on an fixed-income-only basis. Allocations are subject to change due to active management. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Benchmark: Bloomberg US Aggregate Bond Index.

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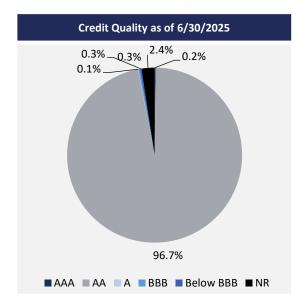


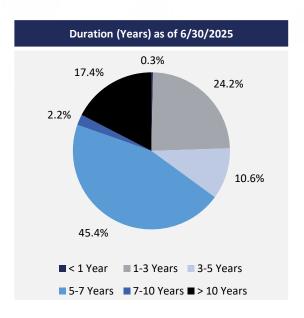
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### Portfolio Snapshot: Maturity, Credit Quality and Duration



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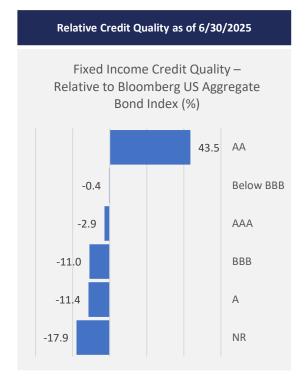
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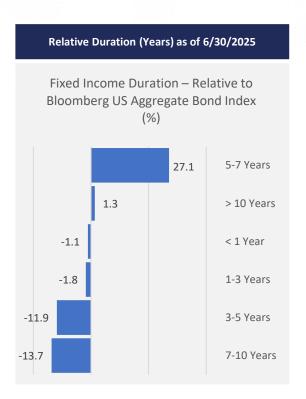


### Portfolio Snapshot: Maturity, Credit Quality and Duration



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Source: Richard Bernstein Advisors LLC, Bloomberg. Allocations are subject to change due to active management. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Weightings are calculated on a fixed-income-only basis.



# **Portfolio ETF Holdings**

Holdings as of 6/30/2025				
	ETF Name		Ticker	Portfolio Weight %
	Janus Henderson Mortgage-Backed Secu	rities ETF	JMBS	38.6
SPDR Portfolio Short Term Treasury ETF		SPTS	23.5	
SPDR Portfolio Intermediate Term Treasury ETF		SPTI	19.5	
iShares 10-20 Year Treasury Bond ETF		TLH	17.3	
SPDR Bloomberg 1-3 Month T-Bill ETF		BIL	1.0	



Allocations are subject to change due to active management.





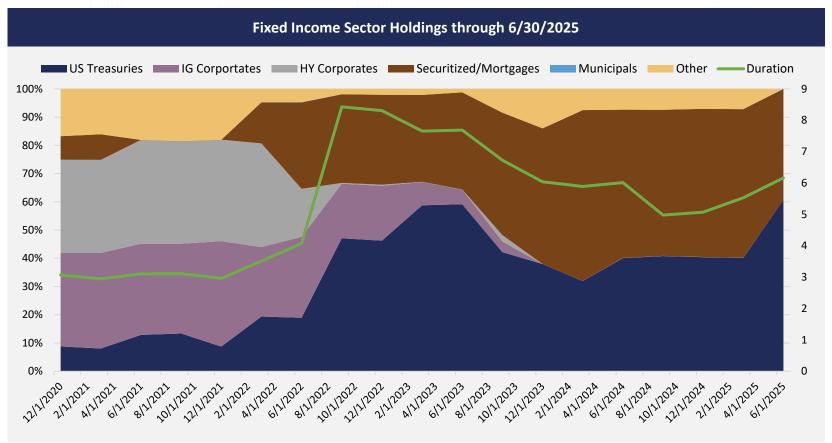
### **Fixed Income Characteristics**

Characteristics as of 6/30/2025			
Characteristics	Allocation	Benchmark	
Effective Duration (Years)	6.2	6.0	
Average Maturity (Years)	7.4	8.3	
Average Coupon Rate (%)	3.5	3.5	
Yield to Maturity (%)	4.5	4.5	

Source: Richard Bernstein Advisors LLC, Bloomberg,. Percent of total net assets. Allocations are subject to change due to active management. Benchmark: Bloomberg US Aggregate Bond Index.

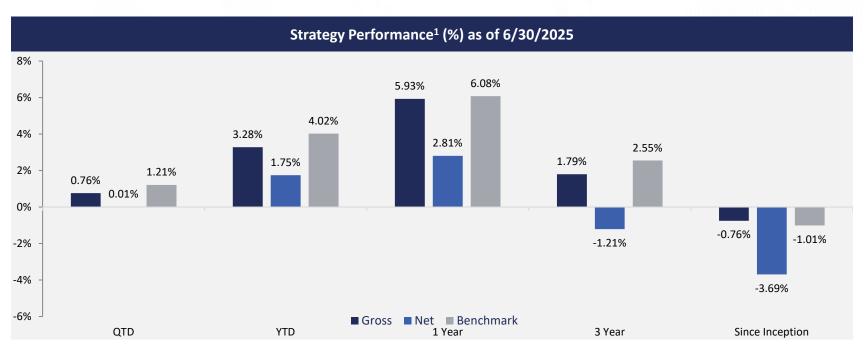


### **Historical Fixed Income Sector Holdings**



Source: Richard Bernstein Advisors LLC, Bloomberg. Weightings are calculated on a fixed-income only basis. Allocations are subject to change due to active management.





Annual Returns	2024	2023	2022	2021
RBA Core Plus Total Return ETF Strategy (Gross)	2.09%	4.85%	-13.80%	0.73%
RBA Core Plus Total Return ETF Strategy (Net)*	-0.92%	1.76%	-16.38%	-2.25%
Benchmark**	1.25%	5.53%	-13.01%	-1.54%

Based on monthly data. Source: Richard Bernstein Advisors LLC, Morningstar. Inception December 23, 2020. For investment minimums, please contact your financial advisor. See "Index Descriptions" at end of document. 

¹Returns greater than 1 year are annualized.



<sup>\*</sup>Net performance reflects the deduction of an assumed 3.00% annual fee. See performance disclosure for further information.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Benchmark 100% Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

#### **Performance Disclosure**

The performance was calculated by Richard Bernstein Advisors LLC (the "Adviser") for the Core Plus Total Return ETF Strategy ("Strategy") as described below. The Strategy's asset allocation recommendations are subject to guideline allocation limitations at the major asset class level (i.e., fixed income and cash) that may change over time.

The Strategy has an inception date of December 23, 2020. The Strategy seeks to generate superior risk-adjusted returns as compared to the aggregate bond universe over a full market cycle by employing a top-down style to construct a global tactical asset allocation portfolio. Accounts in this Strategy obtain desired exposure via ETF vehicles.

The Strategy benchmark is 100% Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index. The benchmark is rebalanced daily.

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Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Performance is shown in USD and includes reinvestment of dividends and other earnings. Results are shown on a "gross" and "net" basis. Gross-of-fee returns are reduced by actual trading costs incurred and platform fees but are before deduction of any advisory or other fees. Net performance reflects the deduction of an assumed 3.00% annual fee rate which is intended to equal or exceed the combined maximum advisory program fees and maximum investment management fees charged to advisory platform clients. Returns are calculated by applying the assumed annual fee rate to the gross monthly returns. This combined fee will normally include all charges for trading costs, portfolio management fees, custody and other administrative fees. Actual fees may vary depending on the individual sponsor's fee. Investment management fees are negotiated directly with advisory program sponsors. Fees are negotiable where circumstances warrant. Taxes have not been deducted.

Index and portfolio data herein have been supplied by outside sources, including, Richard Bernstein Advisors LLC, and are believed to be reliable as of the date indicated. The source for ETF returns is Richard Bernstein Advisors LLC. The source for risk measures is Morningstar.



# Distribution

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# **Important Information**

### **Index Descriptions**

The following descriptions, while believed to be accurate, are in some cases abbreviated versions of more detailed or comprehensive definitions available from the sponsors or originators of the respective indices. Anyone interested in such further details is free to consult each such sponsor's or originator's website.

Past performance of an index is no guarantee of future results. Unless otherwise stated, index returns do not reflect the effect of any applicable sales charges, commissions, expenses, taxes or leverage, as applicable. It is not possible to invest directly in an index. Historical performance of the index illustrates market trends and does not represent the past or future performance of the models.

Each index reflects an unmanaged universe of securities without any deduction for advisory fees or other expenses that would reduce actual returns, as well as the reinvestment of all income and dividends. An actual investment in the securities included in the index would require an investor to incur transaction costs, which would lower the performance results. **Indices are not actively managed and investors cannot invest directly in an index.** 

US Fixed Income: Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Index: An unmanaged index that tracks domestic investment-grade bonds, including corporate, government, and mortgage-backed securities.

Investments in foreign instruments or currencies can involve greater risk and volatility than U.S. investments because of adverse market, economic, political, regulatory, geopolitical or other conditions. In emerging countries, these risks may be more significant. The value of commodities investments will generally be affected by overall market movements and factors specific to a particular industry or commodity, including weather, embargoes, tariffs, or health, political, international and regulatory developments. An imbalance in supply and demand in the income market may result in valuation uncertainties and greater volatility, less liquidity, widening credit spreads and a lack of price transparency in the market. As interest rates rise, the value of certain income investments is likely to decline. Investments in income securities may be affected by changes in the creditworthiness of the issuer and are subject to the risk of non-payment of principal and interest. The value of income securities also may decline because of real or perceived concerns about the issuer's ability to make principal and interest payments. Smaller companies are generally subject to greater price fluctuations, limited liquidity, higher transaction costs and higher investment risk than larger, established companies. Derivatives instruments can be used to take both long and short positions, be highly volatile, result in economic leverage (which can magnify losses), and involve risks in addition to the risks of the underlying instrument on which the derivative is based, such as counterparty, correlation and liquidity risk. If a counterparty is unable to honor its commitments, the value may decline and/or the portfolio could experience delays in the return of collateral or other assets held by the counterparty.

The views expressed in this presentation are those of (portfolio manager/team) and are current only through the date stated and are not intended as investment advice or a recommendation to purchase or sell specific securities. These opinions may change at any time without notice, and there is no assurance that any securities discussed herein will remain in an account at the time you receive this report. While every effort has been made to verify the information contained herein, we make no representations as to its accuracy. It should not be assumed that any of the securities or transactions listed were or will be profitable. Actual portfolio holdings will vary for each client, and there is no guarantee that a particular client's account will hold any or all of the securities mentioned. It is not possible to invest directly in an Index.

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