

# Synchrony Financial

## Provides some incremental clarity

Reiterate Rating: NEUTRAL | PO: 43.00 USD | Price: 41.07 USD

### Confident late fee headwind will be mitigated, long-term

Synchrony Financial (SYF) expects to be able to maintain its ROA/ROE levels, without seeing a significant impact on asset levels over the long-term. In our view, this was the biggest takeaway from SYF's response to the CFPB's late fee rule being finalized. The message was consistent with prior SYF commentary, though SYF did add additional color on the mitigants it is implementing. In the near-term, there will be top-line and EPS pressure. We reiterate our Neutral rating and view risk / reward as balanced.

### Short-term pain likely; New EPS range: \$5.45-\$5.85

SYF now expects '24 EPS excluding the late fee rule impact and Pets' Best gain to be \$5.70-\$6.00. It also expects the late fee rule to result in a \$(0.15)-\$(0.25) headwind to 2024 EPS driven by \$800M lower late fees in 4Q and \$650-700M in offsets over 2-4Q. Of note, while SYF withdrew the quantitative aspects of its 2024 outlook / drivers, it said the new guide is substantially similar on a qualitative basis and it still expects broad-based purchase volume growth, 1H peak in net charge-off, etc. SYF assumes an Oct 1 implementation date.

### \$800M 4Q headwind, offset by \$650M+ in 2Q-4Q offsets

The impact from late fee changes will be lower by \$800M in 4Q. This was larger than we had expected given an approx. \$2B annual impact (75% of \$2.7B). SYF believes it will be able to offset \$650M-\$700M by implementing product, policy, and pricing changes. The net effect will be 2Q-3Q revenues increase as offsets like paper statement fees, trailing interest charges, take effect in advance of late fee cuts. In 4Q, lower late fees will drive revenues lower. SYF is also taking pricing actions and those will layer in over time.

### Motivated to offset impact sooner vs. later

SYF's mitigants include higher fees and policy changes whose benefits should be felt immediately. The interest rate changes will take longer to layer in as the back book is re-priced. Notably, SYF has not made any changes to its retailer agreements.

### Adjusting estimates; Increase PO to \$43

We adjust our '24/'25e EPS forecast to reflect updated commentary and guidance. We also tweak our PO to \$43 (\$41 prior), based on a 7x PE multiple (6.5x prior) given some additional clarity on the late fee rule and SYF's mitigation path. We view risk / reward as balanced, given execution risk and current valuation. Reiterate Neutral.

Estimates (Dec) (US\$)	2022A	2023A	2024E	2025E	2026E
EPS	6.15	5.19	5.55	6.10	7.49
GAAP EPS	6.15	5.19	7.10	6.10	7.49
EPS Change (YoY)	-16.2%	-15.6%	6.9%	9.9%	22.8%
Consensus EPS (Bloomberg)			5.55	6.32	7.20
DPS	0.90	0.96	1.00	1.00	1.00
Valuation (Dec)					
P/E	6.7x	7.9x	7.4x	6.7x	5.5x
GAAP P/E	6.7x	7.9x	5.8x	6.7x	5.5x
Dividend Yield	2.2%	2.3%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%

BofA Securities does and seeks to do business with issuers covered in its research reports. As a result, investors should be aware that the firm may have a conflict of interest that could affect the objectivity of this report. Investors should consider this report as only a single factor in making their investment decision. Refer to important disclosures on page 7 to 9. Analyst Certification on page 5. Price Objective Basis/Risk on page 5.

12667404

Timestamp: 05 March 2024 01:31PM EST

05 March 2024

#### Equity

#### Key Changes

(US\$)	Previous	Current
Price Obj.	41.00	43.00

**Mihir Bhatia**  
Research Analyst  
BofAS  
+1 415 436 3553  
[mihir.bhatia@bofa.com](mailto:mihir.bhatia@bofa.com)

**Jason Kupferberg**  
Research Analyst  
BofAS  
[jason.kupferberg@bofa.com](mailto:jason.kupferberg@bofa.com)

**Nathaniel Richam-Odoi**  
Research Analyst  
BofAS  
+1 646 855 1607  
[nate.richam-odoi@bofa.com](mailto:nate.richam-odoi@bofa.com)

**Caroline Latta**  
Research Analyst  
BofAS  
[caroline.latta@bofa.com](mailto:caroline.latta@bofa.com)

#### Stock Data

Price	41.07 USD
Price Objective	43.00 USD
Date Established	5-Mar-2024
Investment Opinion	B-2-7
52-Week Range	26.59 USD -41.38 USD
Mkt Val / Shares Out (mn)	16,709 USD / 406.8
Free Float	99.2%
Average Daily Value	180.75 USD
BofA Ticker / Exchange	SYF / NYS
Bloomberg / Reuters	SYF US / SYF.N
ROE (2024E)	0%
ESGMeter™	High

ESGMeter is not indicative of a company's future stock price performance and is not an investment recommendation or rating. ESGMeter is independent of BofA Global Research's equity investment rating, volatility risk rating, income rating, and price objective for that company. For full details, refer to "BofA ESGMeter Methodology".

RSA: Retailer share arrangements

CFPB: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

#### Exhibit 1: Estimate changes

New vs Old EPS estimates

	New	Old
2024	\$5.55	\$5.59
2025	\$6.10	\$6.42

Source: BofA Global Research estimates

BofA GLOBAL RESEARCH  
W

# iQprofile<sup>SM</sup> Synchrony Financial

## iQmethod<sup>SM</sup> – Bus Performance\*

(US\$ Millions)	2022A	2023A	2024E	2025E	2026E
Return on Capital Employed	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Return on Equity	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Operating Margin	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Free Cash Flow	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

## iQmethod<sup>SM</sup> – Quality of Earnings\*

(US\$ Millions)	2022A	2023A	2024E	2025E	2026E
Cash Realization Ratio	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Asset Replacement Ratio	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tax Rate	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Net Debt-to-Equity Ratio	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Interest Cover	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

## Income Statement Data (Dec)

(US\$ Millions)	2022A	2023A	2024E	2025E	2026E
Sales	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
% Change	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Gross Profit	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
% Change	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
EBITDA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
% Change	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Net Interest & Other Income	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Net Income (Adjusted)</b>	<b>2,973</b>	<b>2,198</b>	<b>2,196</b>	<b>2,233</b>	<b>2,523</b>
<b>% Change</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>

## Free Cash Flow Data (Dec)

(US\$ Millions)	2022A	2023A	2024E	2025E	2026E
Net Income from Cont Operations (GAAP)	3,016	2,238	2,850	2,278	2,568
Depreciation & Amortization	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Change in Working Capital	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Deferred Taxation Charge	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other Adjustments, Net	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Capital Expenditure	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Free Cash Flow</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>
<b>% Change</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>
Share / Issue Repurchase	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cost of Dividends Paid	(442)	(407)	(396)	(367)	(338)
Change in Debt	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

## Balance Sheet Data (Dec)

(US\$ Millions)	2022A	2023A	2024E	2025E	2026E
Cash & Equivalents	10,294	14,259	10,411	10,949	11,503
Trade Receivables	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other Current Assets	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Property, Plant & Equipment	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other Non-Current Assets	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>104,564</b>	<b>117,479</b>	<b>118,035</b>	<b>122,783</b>	<b>128,700</b>
Short-Term Debt	14,191	15,982	11,245	12,737	15,003
Other Current Liabilities	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Long-Term Debt	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other Non-Current Liabilities	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>91,691</b>	<b>103,576</b>	<b>102,878</b>	<b>106,915</b>	<b>111,802</b>
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>12,873</b>	<b>13,903</b>	<b>15,157</b>	<b>15,868</b>	<b>16,898</b>
<b>Total Equity &amp; Liabilities</b>	<b>104,564</b>	<b>117,479</b>	<b>118,035</b>	<b>122,783</b>	<b>128,700</b>

\* For full definitions of iQmethod<sup>SM</sup> measures, see page 6.

## Company Sector

Financial Services-Consumer/Commercial

## Company Description

Synchrony Financial is a leading consumer financial services company & the largest provider of private label credit cards in the US based on sales volume and receivables. SYF offers private label credit cards, dual cards, commercial credit products and installment loans. The company offers its products through partner programs to retailers, local merchants, manufacturers, buying groups, associations and healthcare service providers. SYF also operates Synchrony Bank, a fast-growing online bank.

## Investment Rationale

We rate SYF Neutral. We think that SYF's profit-sharing model, strong capital levels, and an enviable merchant partner portfolio are key positives that position the company to withstand a mild recession should one arise. However, given recent relative strength and potential for headwinds from the late fee rule, we view shares as offering more balanced risk/reward.

## Stock Data

Average Daily Volume 4,400,929

## Quarterly Earnings Estimates

	2023	2024
Q1	1.35A	1.64E
Q2	1.32A	1.50E
Q3	1.48A	1.84E
Q4	1.03A	0.54E

## Litigation impacts timing

SYF expects the Chamber of Commerce and/or trade associations to file litigation against the rule. Based on information available now, SYF is assuming an October 1 implementation. If the restraining order surrounding the case is less restrictive than expected, the date could be as soon as August. The date of implementation is crucial to determining the financial impact of the rule as a later date allows more time for mitigants to take effect.

## Details on mitigation strategy

- Mitigation started in December and will continue to be executed over the next 3-4 months
- Mitigants include: APR increases, trailing interest methodology, default pricing
  - Trailing interest and default pricing have a more immediate effect
  - APR is delayed, but new accounts are on at a higher rate
  - Increasing Promotional fees for large ticket items is also an option
  - Paper statement fees
  - APR increases will be broad-based
- Small waves of Changes in terms (CIT) will go on through the entire year, but the bulk will be done within 90 days
  - Not going to change terms on cards recently acquired in the first wave
- RSA modification has not been used as a mitigation lever
  - The fundamentals of RSAs do not change
  - SYF has 18 of its 25 largest partners in contract with expirations in 2026 or beyond. These program agreements represented, in the aggregate, 94% of SYF's interest and fees on loans for the year ended December 31, 2023 and 92% of loan receivables, attributable to SYF's 25 largest programs.
- \$650-\$700M of offsets will ramp thru the year and is the sum of the 2Q-4Q mitigants
  - The exit velocity will be higher
  - SYF was unwilling to disclose the quarterly cadence but did note the mitigants increase through the year.
- \$800M in 4Q late fee impact includes lower late fees and late fee reversals.
  - Late fee reversals will reduce over time as more of the charged-off late fees are at \$8.
- Attempting to be neutral on an ROA / ROE basis
  - Includes neutrality on the partner side as well

### Guidance

- Assumes October 1, 2024 implementation



- Assumes lower purchase volumes and new accounts, mostly in 2H24
- Expenses are higher due to CIT, incremental staffing, calls and execution
- No timeline on ROE neutrality but 2025 is in the range of possible scenarios

## Price objective basis & risk

### Synchrony Financial (SYF)

Our \$43 PO is based on a 7x P/E multiple on 2025E EPS. Our multiple is on the low end of the typical trading range for SYF (6-12x), which we think is appropriate given the relatively uncertain macro backdrop and rising credit costs, execution risk on late fee mitigants, somewhat balanced by the potential for high capital returns.

Downside risks to our price objective are an economic downturn, which could lead to elevated loan loss rates, increased defaults, higher credit costs and slower loan growth. Deteriorating economic conditions would likely hurt investor sentiment and drive valuations lower. Loss of retail partners also poses a risk to growth and earnings outlook.

Upside risks are: Consumer balance sheets continue to hold strength and credit metrics remain strong. Increased visibility in peak loss rates shifts investor sentiment. Federal reserve achieves a soft landing. Outsized capital return.

## Analyst Certification

I, Mihir Bhatia, hereby certify that the views expressed in this research report accurately reflect my personal views about the subject securities and issuers. I also certify that no part of my compensation was, is, or will be, directly or indirectly, related to the specific recommendations or view expressed in this research report.

### US - Payments, Processors, Specialty Finance and IT services Coverage Cluster

Investment rating	Company	BofA Ticker	Bloomberg symbol	Analyst
<b>BUY</b>				
	Accenture Plc	ACN	ACN US	Jason Kupferberg
	American Express Company	AXP	AXP US	Mihir Bhatia
	Block Inc	SQ	SQ US	Jason Kupferberg
	Capital One Financial	COF	COF US	Mihir Bhatia
	Enact Holdings	ACT	ACT US	Mihir Bhatia
	Essent Group	ESNT	ESNT US	Mihir Bhatia
	Fidelity National Information Services	FIS	FIS US	Jason Kupferberg
	Fiserv Inc	FI	FI US	Jason Kupferberg
	FleetCor Technologies Inc.	FLT	FLT US	Mihir Bhatia
	Flywire	FLYW	FLYW US	Jason Kupferberg
	Global Payments Inc	GPN	GPN US	Jason Kupferberg
	Jack Henry & Associates	JKHY	JKHY US	Jason Kupferberg
	Marqeta	MQ	MQ US	Cassie Chan
	Mastercard Inc	MA	MA US	Jason Kupferberg
	MGIC Investment Corp.	MTG	MTG US	Mihir Bhatia
	NMI Holdings	NMIH	NMIH US	Mihir Bhatia
	Nuvei	NVEI	NVEI US	Jason Kupferberg
	Nuvei	YNVEI	NVEI CN	Jason Kupferberg
	OneMain Holdings, Inc.	OMF	OMF US	Mihir Bhatia
	Shift4 Payments, Inc	FOUR	FOUR US	Jason Kupferberg
	Telus International	TIXT	TIXT US	Cassie Chan
	Telus International	YTIXT	TIXT CN	Cassie Chan
	Visa Inc.	V	V US	Jason Kupferberg
	WEX Inc.	WEX	WEX US	Mihir Bhatia
<b>NEUTRAL</b>				
	ADP	ADP	ADP US	Jason Kupferberg
	Affirm Holdings	AFRM	AFRM US	Jason Kupferberg
	Bread Financial Holdings Inc	BFH	BFH US	Mihir Bhatia
	DLocal	DLO	DLO US	Jason Kupferberg
	Globant SA	GLOB	GLOB US	Jason Kupferberg
	PayPal Holdings Inc	PYPL	PYPL US	Jason Kupferberg
	Synchrony Financial	SYF	SYF US	Mihir Bhatia
	Thoughtworks	TWKS	TWKS US	Jason Kupferberg
	Toast	TOST	TOST US	Jason Kupferberg



## US - Payments, Processors, Specialty Finance and IT services Coverage Cluster

Investment rating	Company	BofA Ticker	Bloomberg symbol	Analyst
	TTEC Holdings	TTEC	TTEC US	Cassie Chan
<b>UNDERPERFORM</b>				
	CGI Inc.	GIB	GIB US	Jason Kupferberg
	CGI Inc.	YGIBA	GIB/A CN	Jason Kupferberg
	Cognizant Technology Solutions	CTSH	CTSH US	Jason Kupferberg
	Coinbase	COIN	COIN US	Jason Kupferberg
	DXC Technology	DXC	DXC US	Jason Kupferberg
	EPAM Systems	EPAM	EPAM US	Jason Kupferberg
	Paychex	PAYX	PAYX US	Jason Kupferberg
	Radian Group Inc	RDN	RDN US	Mihir Bhatia
	Rocket Companies, Inc.	RKT	RKT US	Mihir Bhatia
	TaskUs	TASK	TASK US	Cassie Chan
	Western Union	WU	WU US	Jason Kupferberg
<b>RSTR</b>				
	SoFi Technologies Inc	SOFI	SOFI US	Mihir Bhatia

**iQmethod<sup>SM</sup> Measures Definitions****Business Performance**

Return On Capital Employed

Return On Equity  
Operating Margin  
Earnings Growth  
Free Cash Flow

**Quality of Earnings**

Cash Realization Ratio  
Asset Replacement Ratio  
Tax Rate  
Net Debt-To-Equity Ratio  
Interest Cover

**Valuation Toolkit**

Price / Earnings Ratio  
Price / Book Value  
Dividend Yield  
Free Cash Flow Yield  
Enterprise Value / Sales

EV / EBITDA

**Numerator**

NOPAT = (EBIT + Interest Income) × (1 – Tax Rate) + Goodwill Amortization

Net Income  
Operating Profit  
Expected 5 Year CAGR From Latest Actual  
Cash Flow From Operations – Total Capex

**Numerator**

Cash Flow From Operations  
Capex  
Tax Charge  
Net Debt = Total Debt – Cash & Equivalents  
EBIT

**Numerator**

Current Share Price  
Current Share Price  
Annualised Declared Cash Dividend  
Cash Flow From Operations – Total Capex  
EV = Current Share Price × Current Shares + Minority Equity + Net Debt +  
Other LT Liabilities  
Enterprise Value

**Denominator**

Total Assets – Current Liabilities + ST Debt + Accumulated Goodwill  
Amortization  
Shareholders' Equity  
Sales  
N/A  
N/A

**Denominator**

Net Income  
Depreciation  
Pre-Tax Income  
Total Equity  
Interest Expense

**Denominator**

Diluted Earnings Per Share (Basis As Specified)  
Shareholders' Equity / Current Basic Shares  
Current Share Price  
Market Cap = Current Share Price × Current Basic Shares  
Sales  
Basic EBIT + Depreciation + Amortization

*iQmethod<sup>SM</sup>* is the set of BofA Global Research standard measures that serve to maintain global consistency under three broad headings: Business Performance, Quality of Earnings, and valuations. The key features of *iQmethod* are: A consistently structured, detailed, and transparent methodology. Guidelines to maximize the effectiveness of the comparative valuation process, and to identify some common pitfalls.

*iQdatabase<sup>®</sup>* is our real-time global research database that is sourced directly from our equity analysts' earnings models and includes forecasted as well as historical data for income statements, balance sheets, and cash flow statements for companies covered by BofA Global Research.

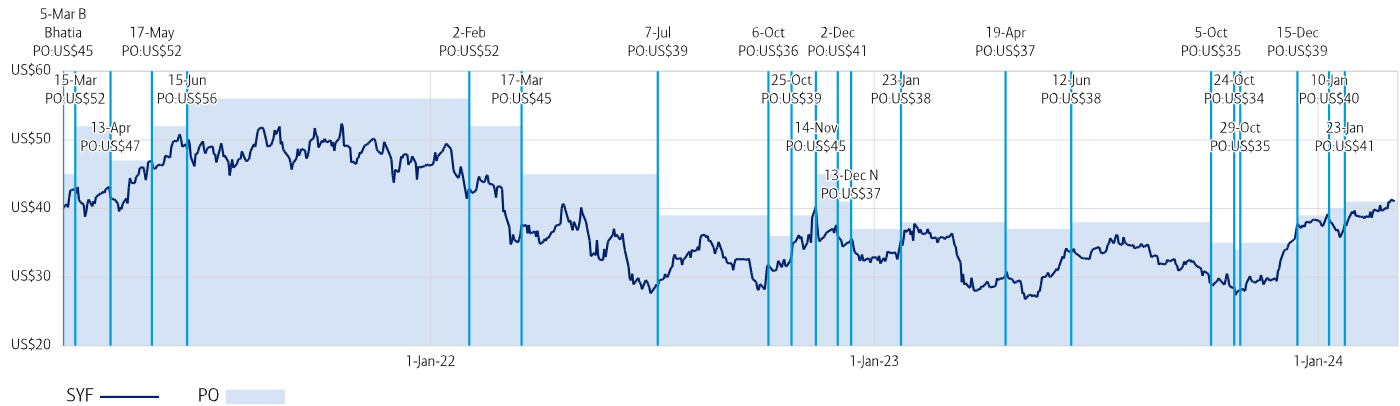
*iQprofile<sup>SM</sup>*, *iQmethod<sup>SM</sup>* are service marks of Bank of America Corporation. *iQdatabase<sup>®</sup>* is a registered service mark of Bank of America Corporation.



# Disclosures

## Important Disclosures

### Synchrony Financial (SYF) Price Chart



The Investment Opinion System is contained at the end of the report under the heading "Fundamental Equity Opinion Key". Dark grey shading indicates the security is restricted with the opinion suspended. Medium grey shading indicates the security is under review with the opinion withdrawn. Light grey shading indicates the security is not covered. Chart is current as of a date no more than one trading day prior to the date of the report.

### Equity Investment Rating Distribution: Financial Services Group (as of 31 Dec 2023)

Coverage Universe	Count	Percent	Inv. Banking Relationships <sup>R1</sup>	Count	Percent
Buy	156	53.79%	Buy	94	60.26%
Hold	72	24.83%	Hold	48	66.67%
Sell	62	21.38%	Sell	35	56.45%

### Equity Investment Rating Distribution: Global Group (as of 31 Dec 2023)

Coverage Universe	Count	Percent	Inv. Banking Relationships <sup>R1</sup>	Count	Percent
Buy	1895	53.62%	Buy	1083	57.15%
Hold	832	23.54%	Hold	454	54.57%
Sell	807	22.84%	Sell	383	47.46%

<sup>R1</sup> Issuers that were investment banking clients of BofA Securities or one of its affiliates within the past 12 months. For purposes of this Investment Rating Distribution, the coverage universe includes only stocks. A stock rated Neutral is included as a Hold, and a stock rated Underperform is included as a Sell.

**FUNDAMENTAL EQUITY OPINION KEY:** Opinions include a Volatility Risk Rating, an Investment Rating and an Income Rating. **VOLATILITY RISK RATINGS**, indicators of potential price fluctuation, are: A - Low, B - Medium and C - High. **INVESTMENT RATINGS** reflect the analyst's assessment of both a stock's absolute total return potential as well as its attractiveness for investment relative to other stocks within its Coverage Cluster (defined below). Our investment ratings are: 1 - Buy stocks are expected to have a total return of at least 10% and are the most attractive stocks in the coverage cluster; 2 - Neutral stocks are expected to remain flat or increase in value and are less attractive than Buy rated stocks and 3 - Underperform stocks are the least attractive stocks in a coverage cluster. An investment rating of 6 (No Rating) indicates that a stock is no longer trading on the basis of fundamentals. Analysts assign investment ratings considering, among other things, the 0-12 month total return expectation for a stock and the firm's guidelines for ratings dispersions (shown in the table below). The current price objective for a stock should be referenced to better understand the total return expectation at any given time. The price objective reflects the analyst's view of the potential price appreciation (depreciation).

Investment rating	Total return expectation (within 12-month period of date of initial rating)	Ratings dispersion guidelines for coverage cluster <sup>R2</sup>
Buy	≥ 10%	≤ 70%
Neutral	≥ 0%	≤ 30%
Underperform	N/A	≥ 20%

<sup>R2</sup> Ratings dispersions may vary from time to time where BofA Global Research believes it better reflects the investment prospects of stocks in a Coverage Cluster.

**INCOME RATINGS**, indicators of potential cash dividends, are: 7 - same/higher (dividend considered to be secure), 8 - same/lower (dividend not considered to be secure) and 9 - pays no cash dividend. **Coverage Cluster** is comprised of stocks covered by a single analyst or two or more analysts sharing a common industry, sector, region or other classification(s). A stock's coverage cluster is included in the most recent BofA Global Research report referencing the stock.

Price Charts for the securities referenced in this research report are available on the [Price Charts website](#), or call 1-800-MERRILL to have them mailed.

BofAS or one of its affiliates acts as a market maker for the equity securities recommended in the report: Synchrony Financial.

BofAS or an affiliate was a manager of a public offering of securities of this issuer within the last 12 months: Synchrony Financial.

The issuer is or was, within the last 12 months, an investment banking client of BofAS and/or one or more of its affiliates: Synchrony Financial.

BofAS or an affiliate has received compensation from the issuer for non-investment banking services or products within the past 12 months: Synchrony Financial.

The issuer is or was, within the last 12 months, a non-securities business client of BofAS and/or one or more of its affiliates: Synchrony Financial.

BofAS or an affiliate has received compensation for investment banking services from this issuer within the past 12 months: Synchrony Financial.

BofAS or an affiliate expects to receive or intends to seek compensation for investment banking services from this issuer or an affiliate of the issuer within the next three months: Synchrony Financial.

BofAS together with its affiliates beneficially owns one percent or more of the common stock of this issuer. If this report was issued on or after the 9th day of the month, it reflects the





ownership position on the last day of the previous month. Reports issued before the 9th day of a month reflect the ownership position at the end of the second month preceding the date of the report: Synchrony Financial.

BofAS or one of its affiliates is willing to sell to, or buy from, clients the common equity of the issuer on a principal basis: Synchrony Financial.

The issuer is or was, within the last 12 months, a securities business client (non-investment banking) of BofAS and/or one or more of its affiliates: Synchrony Financial.

BofA Global Research personnel (including the analyst(s) responsible for this report) receive compensation based upon, among other factors, the overall profitability of Bank of America Corporation, including profits derived from investment banking. The analyst(s) responsible for this report may also receive compensation based upon, among other factors, the overall profitability of the Bank's sales and trading businesses relating to the class of securities or financial instruments for which such analyst is responsible.

## Other Important Disclosures

From time to time research analysts conduct site visits of covered issuers. BofA Global Research policies prohibit research analysts from accepting payment or reimbursement for travel expenses from the issuer for such visits.

Prices are indicative and for information purposes only. Except as otherwise stated in the report, for any recommendation in relation to an equity security, the price referenced is the publicly traded price of the security as of close of business on the day prior to the date of the report or, if the report is published during intraday trading, the price referenced is indicative of the traded price as of the date and time of the report and in relation to a debt security (including equity preferred and CDS), prices are indicative as of the date and time of the report and are from various sources including BofA Securities trading desks.

The date and time of completion of the production of any recommendation in this report shall be the date and time of dissemination of this report as recorded in the report timestamp.

Recipients who are not institutional investors or market professionals should seek the advice of their independent financial advisor before considering information in this report in connection with any investment decision, or for a necessary explanation of its contents.

Officers of BofAS or one or more of its affiliates (other than research analysts) may have a financial interest in securities of the issuer(s) or in related investments.

Refer to [BofA Global Research policies relating to conflicts of interest](#).

**"BofA Securities" includes BofA Securities, Inc. ("BofAS") and its affiliates. Investors should contact their BofA Securities representative or Merrill Global Wealth Management financial advisor if they have questions concerning this report or concerning the appropriateness of any investment idea described herein for such investor. "BofA Securities" is a global brand for BofA Global Research.**

### Information relating to Non-US affiliates of BofA Securities and Distribution of Affiliate Research Reports:

BofAS and/or Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated ("MLPF&S") may in the future distribute, information of the following non-US affiliates in the US (short name: legal name, regulator): Merrill Lynch (South Africa): Merrill Lynch South Africa (Pty) Ltd., regulated by The Financial Service Board; MLI (UK): Merrill Lynch International, regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA); BofASE (France): BofA Securities Europe SA is authorized by the Autorité de Contrôle Prudentiel et de Résolution (ACPR) and regulated by the ACPR and the Autorité des Marchés Financiers (AMF). BofA Securities Europe SA ("BofASE") with registered address at 51, rue La Boétie, 75008 Paris is registered under no 842 602 690 RCS Paris. In accordance with the provisions of French Code Monétaire et Financier (Monetary and Financial Code), BofASE is an établissement de crédit et d'investissement (credit and investment institution) that is authorised and supervised by the European Central Bank and the Autorité de Contrôle Prudentiel et de Résolution (ACPR) and regulated by the ACPR and the Autorité des Marchés Financiers. BofASE's share capital can be found at [www.bofamli.com/BofASEdisclaimer](http://www.bofamli.com/BofASEdisclaimer); BofA Europe (Milan): Bank of America Europe Designated Activity Company, Milan Branch, regulated by the Bank of Italy, the European Central Bank (ECB) and the Central Bank of Ireland (CBI); BofA Europe (Frankfurt): Bank of America Europe Designated Activity Company, Frankfurt Branch regulated by BaFin, the ECB and the CBI; BofA Europe (Madrid): Bank of America Europe Designated Activity Company, Sucursal en España, regulated by the Bank of Spain, the ECB and the CBI; Merrill Lynch (Australia): Merrill Lynch Equities (Australia) Limited, regulated by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission; Merrill Lynch (Hong Kong): Merrill Lynch (Asia Pacific) Limited, regulated by the Hong Kong Securities and Futures Commission (HKSF); Merrill Lynch (Singapore): Merrill Lynch (Singapore) Pte Ltd, regulated by the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS); Merrill Lynch (Canada): Merrill Lynch Canada Inc, regulated by the Canadian Investment Regulatory Organization; Merrill Lynch (Mexico): Merrill Lynch Mexico, SA de CV, Casa de Bolsa, regulated by the Comisión Nacional Bancaria y de Valores; Merrill Lynch (Argentina): Merrill Lynch Argentina SA, regulated by Comisión Nacional de Valores; BofAS Japan: BofA Securities Japan Co., Ltd., regulated by the Financial Services Agency; Merrill Lynch (Seoul): Merrill Lynch International, LLC Seoul Branch, regulated by the Financial Supervisory Service; Merrill Lynch (Taiwan): Merrill Lynch Securities (Taiwan) Ltd., regulated by the Securities and Futures Bureau; BofAS India: BofA Securities India Limited, regulated by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI); Merrill Lynch (Israel): Merrill Lynch Israel Limited, regulated by Israel Securities Authority; Merrill Lynch (DIFC): Merrill Lynch International (DIFC Branch), regulated by the Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA); Merrill Lynch (Brazil): Merrill Lynch S.A. Corretora de Títulos e Valores Mobiliários, regulated by Comissão de Valores Mobiliários; Merrill Lynch KSA Company: Merrill Lynch Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Company, regulated by the Capital Market Authority.

This information has been approved for publication and is distributed in the United Kingdom (UK) to professional clients and eligible counterparties (as each is defined in the rules of the FCA and the PRA) by MLI (UK), which is authorized by the PRA and regulated by the FCA and the PRA - details about the extent of our regulation by the FCA and PRA are available from us on request; has been approved for publication and is distributed in the European Economic Area (EEA) by BofASE (France), which is authorized by the ACPR and regulated by the ACPR and the AMF; has been considered and distributed in Japan by BofAS Japan, a registered securities dealer under the Financial Instruments and Exchange Act in Japan, or its permitted affiliates; is issued and distributed in Hong Kong by Merrill Lynch (Hong Kong) which is regulated by HKSF; is issued and distributed in Taiwan by Merrill Lynch (Taiwan); is issued and distributed in India by BofAS India; and is issued and distributed in Singapore to institutional investors and/or accredited investors (each as defined under the Financial Advisers Regulations) by Merrill Lynch (Singapore) (Company Registration No 198602883D). Merrill Lynch (Singapore) is regulated by MAS. Merrill Lynch Equities (Australia) Limited (ABN 65 006 276 795), AFS License 235132 (MLEA) distributes this information in Australia only to 'Wholesale' clients as defined by s.761G of the Corporations Act 2001. With the exception of Bank of America N.A., Australia Branch, neither MLEA nor any of its affiliates involved in preparing this information is an Authorised Deposit-Taking Institution under the Banking Act 1959 nor regulated by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority. No approval is required for publication or distribution of this information in Brazil and its local distribution is by Merrill Lynch (Brazil) in accordance with applicable regulations. Merrill Lynch (DIFC) is authorized and regulated by the DFSA. Information prepared and issued by Merrill Lynch (DIFC) is done so in accordance with the requirements of the DFSA conduct of business rules. BofA Europe (Frankfurt) distributes this information in Germany and is regulated by BaFin, the ECB and the CBI. BofA Securities entities, including BofA Europe and BofASE (France), may outsource/delegate the marketing and/or provision of certain research services or aspects of research services to other branches or members of the BofA Securities group. You may be contacted by a different BofA Securities entity acting for and on behalf of your service provider where permitted by applicable law. This does not change your service provider. Please refer to the [Electronic Communications Disclaimers](#) for further information.

This information has been prepared and issued by BofAS and/or one or more of its non-US affiliates. The author(s) of this information may not be licensed to carry on regulated activities in your jurisdiction and, if not licensed, do not hold themselves out as being able to do so. BofAS and/or MLPF&S is the distributor of this information in the US and accepts full responsibility for information distributed to BofAS and/or MLPF&S clients in the US by its non-US affiliates. Any US person receiving this information and wishing to effect any transaction in any security discussed herein should do so through BofAS and/or MLPF&S and not such foreign affiliates. Hong Kong recipients of this information should contact Merrill Lynch (Asia Pacific) Limited in respect of any matters relating to dealing in securities or provision of specific advice on securities or any other matters arising from, or in connection with, this information. Singapore recipients of this information should contact Merrill Lynch (Singapore) Pte Ltd in respect of any matters arising from, or in connection with, this information. For clients that are not accredited investors, expert investors or institutional investors Merrill Lynch (Singapore) Pte Ltd accepts full responsibility for the contents of this information distributed to such clients in Singapore.

### General Investment Related Disclosures:

Taiwan Readers: Neither the information nor any opinion expressed herein constitutes an offer or a solicitation of an offer to transact in any securities or other financial instrument. No part of this report may be used or reproduced or quoted in any manner whatsoever in Taiwan by the press or any other person without the express written consent of BofA Securities.

This document provides general information only, and has been prepared for, and is intended for general distribution to, BofA Securities clients. Neither the information nor any opinion expressed constitutes an offer or an invitation to make an offer, to buy or sell any securities or other financial instrument or any derivative related to such securities or instruments (e.g., options, futures, warrants, and contracts for differences). This document is not intended to provide personal investment advice and it does not take into account the specific investment objectives, financial situation and the particular needs of, and is not directed to, any specific person(s). This document and its content do not constitute, and should not be considered to constitute, investment advice for purposes of ERISA, the US tax code, the Investment Advisers Act or otherwise. Investors should seek financial advice regarding the appropriateness of investing in financial instruments and implementing investment strategies discussed or recommended in this document and should understand that statements regarding future prospects



may not be realized. Any decision to purchase or subscribe for securities in any offering must be based solely on existing public information on such security or the information in the prospectus or other offering document issued in connection with such offering, and not on this document.

Securities and other financial instruments referred to herein, or recommended, offered or sold by BofA Securities, are not insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and are not deposits or other obligations of any insured depository institution (including, Bank of America, N.A.). Investments in general and, derivatives, in particular, involve numerous risks, including, among others, market risk, counterparty default risk and liquidity risk. No security, financial instrument or derivative is suitable for all investors. Digital assets are extremely speculative, volatile and are largely unregulated. In some cases, securities and other financial instruments may be difficult to value or sell and reliable information about the value or risks related to the security or financial instrument may be difficult to obtain. Investors should note that income from such securities and other financial instruments, if any, may fluctuate and that price or value of such securities and instruments may rise or fall and, in some cases, investors may lose their entire principal investment. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. Levels and basis for taxation may change.

This report may contain a short-term trading idea or recommendation, which highlights a specific near-term catalyst or event impacting the issuer or the market that is anticipated to have a short-term price impact on the equity securities of the issuer. Short-term trading ideas and recommendations are different from and do not affect a stock's fundamental equity rating, which reflects both a longer term total return expectation and attractiveness for investment relative to other stocks within its Coverage Cluster. Short-term trading ideas and recommendations may be more or less positive than a stock's fundamental equity rating.

BofA Securities is aware that the implementation of the ideas expressed in this report may depend upon an investor's ability to "short" securities or other financial instruments and that such action may be limited by regulations prohibiting or restricting "shortselling" in many jurisdictions. Investors are urged to seek advice regarding the applicability of such regulations prior to executing any short idea contained in this report.

Foreign currency rates of exchange may adversely affect the value, price or income of any security or financial instrument mentioned herein. Investors in such securities and instruments, including ADRs, effectively assume currency risk.

BofA or one of its affiliates is a regular issuer of traded financial instruments linked to securities that may have been recommended in this report. BofAS or one of its affiliates may, at any time, hold a trading position (long or short) in the securities and financial instruments discussed in this report.

BofA Securities, through business units other than BofA Global Research, may have issued and may in the future issue trading ideas or recommendations that are inconsistent with, and reach different conclusions from, the information presented herein. Such ideas or recommendations may reflect different time frames, assumptions, views and analytical methods of the persons who prepared them, and BofA Securities is under no obligation to ensure that such other trading ideas or recommendations are brought to the attention of any recipient of this information. In the event that the recipient received this information pursuant to a contract between the recipient and BofAS for the provision of research services for a separate fee, and in connection therewith BofAS may be deemed to be acting as an investment adviser, such status relates, if at all, solely to the person with whom BofAS has contracted directly and does not extend beyond the delivery of this report (unless otherwise agreed specifically in writing by BofAS). If such recipient uses the services of BofAS in connection with the sale or purchase of a security referred to herein, BofAS may act as principal for its own account or as agent for another person. BofAS is and continues to act solely as a broker-dealer in connection with the execution of any transactions, including transactions in any securities referred to herein.

#### **BofA ESGMeter Methodology:**

ESGMeter is a proprietary metric based on quantitative analysis and fundamental analyst inputs that reflects our assessment of a company's Environmental, Social and Governance-related attributes. The ESGMeter is intended to indicate a company's likelihood of experiencing stronger financial stability (higher return on equity and lower earnings and price volatility) over the next three years relative to peer group. There are three ESGMeter levels - Low, Medium, and High - which indicate whether a company has attributes most likely to translate into superior financial stability (in the case of a High level) or weaker financial stability (in the case of a Low level) over the next three years relative to its peer group. A Medium level suggests that a company exhibits ESG characteristics that are likely associated with financial stability results in line with its peer group over the next three years. Full details of our methodology, financial stability definition and disclaimers are available at [BofA ESGMeter methodology](#). ESGMeter is not indicative of a company's future stock price performance and is not an investment recommendation or rating. ESGMeter is independent of the BofA Global Research fundamental equity analyst's investment rating, volatility risk rating, income rating or price objective for that company.

#### **Copyright and General Information:**

Copyright 2024 Bank of America Corporation. All rights reserved. iQDatabase® is a registered service mark of Bank of America Corporation. This information is prepared for the use of BofA Securities clients and may not be redistributed, retransmitted or disclosed, in whole or in part, or in any form or manner, without the express written consent of BofA Securities. BofA Global Research information is distributed simultaneously to internal and client websites and other portals by BofA Securities and is not publicly-available material. Any unauthorized use or disclosure is prohibited. Receipt and review of this information constitutes your agreement not to redistribute, retransmit, or disclose to others the contents, opinions, conclusion, or information contained herein (including any investment recommendations, estimates or price targets) without first obtaining express permission from an authorized officer of BofA Securities.

Materials prepared by BofA Global Research personnel are based on public information. Facts and views presented in this material have not been reviewed by, and may not reflect information known to, professionals in other business areas of BofA Securities, including investment banking personnel. BofA Securities has established information barriers between BofA Global Research and certain business groups. As a result, BofA Securities does not disclose certain client relationships with, or compensation received from, such issuers. To the extent this material discusses any legal proceeding or issues, it has not been prepared as nor is it intended to express any legal conclusion, opinion or advice. Investors should consult their own legal advisers as to issues of law relating to the subject matter of this material. BofA Global Research personnel's knowledge of legal proceedings in which any BofA Securities entity and/or its directors, officers and employees may be plaintiffs, defendants, co-defendants or co-plaintiffs with or involving issuers mentioned in this material is based on public information. Facts and views presented in this material that relate to any such proceedings have not been reviewed by, discussed with, and may not reflect information known to, professionals in other business areas of BofA Securities in connection with the legal proceedings or matters relevant to such proceedings.

This information has been prepared independently of any issuer of securities mentioned herein and not in connection with any proposed offering of securities or as agent of any issuer of any securities. None of BofAS or any of its affiliates or their research analysts has any authority whatsoever to make any representation or warranty on behalf of the issuer(s). BofA Global Research policy prohibits research personnel from disclosing a recommendation, investment rating, or investment thesis for review by an issuer prior to the publication of a research report containing such rating, recommendation or investment thesis.

Any information relating to the tax status of financial instruments discussed herein is not intended to provide tax advice or to be used by anyone to provide tax advice. Investors are urged to seek tax advice based on their particular circumstances from an independent tax professional.

The information herein (other than disclosure information relating to BofA Securities and its affiliates) was obtained from various sources and we do not guarantee its accuracy. This information may contain links to third-party websites. BofA Securities is not responsible for the content of any third-party website or any linked content contained in a third-party website. Content contained on such third-party websites is not part of this information and is not incorporated by reference. The inclusion of a link does not imply any endorsement by or any affiliation with BofA Securities. Access to any third-party website is at your own risk, and you should always review the terms and privacy policies at third-party websites before submitting any personal information to them. BofA Securities is not responsible for such terms and privacy policies and expressly disclaims any liability for them.

All opinions, projections and estimates constitute the judgment of the author as of the date of publication and are subject to change without notice. Prices also are subject to change without notice. BofA Securities is under no obligation to update this information and BofA Securities ability to publish information on the subject issuer(s) in the future is subject to applicable quiet periods. You should therefore assume that BofA Securities will not update any fact, circumstance or opinion contained herein.

Subject to the quiet period applicable under laws of the various jurisdictions in which we distribute research reports and other legal and BofA Securities policy-related restrictions on the publication of research reports, fundamental equity reports are produced on a regular basis as necessary to keep the investment recommendation current.

Certain outstanding reports or investment opinions relating to securities, financial instruments and/or issuers may no longer be current. Always refer to the most recent research report relating to an issuer prior to making an investment decision.

In some cases, an issuer may be classified as Restricted or may be Under Review or Extended Review. In each case, investors should consider any investment opinion relating to such issuer (or its security and/or financial instruments) to be suspended or withdrawn and should not rely on the analyses and investment opinion(s) pertaining to such issuer (or its securities and/or financial instruments) nor should the analyses or opinion(s) be considered a solicitation of any kind. Sales persons and financial advisors affiliated with BofAS or any of its affiliates may not solicit purchases of securities or financial instruments that are Restricted or Under Review and may only solicit securities under Extended Review in accordance with firm policies.

Neither BofA Securities nor any officer or employee of BofA Securities accepts any liability whatsoever for any direct, indirect or consequential damages or losses arising from any use of this information.

