

## US Treasury Market Daily

### The long and short of relative value

- Treasury yields rose prior to the US open, on news that the EU and UK had reached a revised Withdrawal Agreement, but reversed somewhat on weaker-than-expected housing and manufacturing data
- Since Treasury inquired about potential 20-year issuance this sector has cheapened along the curve and appears relatively cheap after adjusting for the curve. On a bond-by-bond basis, we see the biggest cheapening having occurred in the mid-2020 sector. With the 20-year discussion just beginning, we think this sector is unlikely to retrace richer any time soon
- Longer-tenor T-bills have richened significantly since the Fed announced its T-bill purchases last week, and we find short coupons have actually outperformed bills in the process
- 10-year TIPS breakevens widen after briefly tightening through the 150.5bp Sep 3 low. The momentum divergence pattern that whipsaw created above favored support in the 140s points to a maturing tightening trend. Tactically, breakevens keep a widening bias while above 152bp

#### Fixed Income Strategy

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Statistics for various on-the-run Treasury yields, curve spreads, and TIPS breakevens

		Close	1d chg (bp)	WTD chg (bp)	YTD chg (bp)	3m avg	3m low	3m high	3m pct.
Yields (%)	4wk	1.72	0.0	-2.6	-70.7	1.95	1.66	2.11	12%
	13wk	1.66	0.5	-0.5	-78.9	1.92	1.65	2.11	2%
	26wk	1.62	-0.5	-5.7	-93.0	1.88	1.62	2.09	0%
	52wk	1.59	-0.3	-7.1	-104.8	1.79	1.59	2.02	0%
	2y	1.60	1.4	-1.3	-79.3	1.62	1.39	1.89	43%
	5y	1.58	1.2	0.1	-94.0	1.55	1.31	1.86	48%
	10y	1.75	1.1	0.3	-94.4	1.71	1.46	2.08	48%
	30y	2.24	1.1	2.9	-80.4	2.20	1.94	2.61	45%
Curves (bp)	2s/5s	-2.2	-0.2	1.4	-14.7	-6.9	-13.5	-0.1	84%
	5s/10s	17.8	-0.2	0.2	-0.4	15.6	9.3	24.9	54%
	2s/10s	15.6	-0.4	1.6	-15.1	8.7	-3.7	24.8	68%
	10s/30s	48.8	0.1	2.7	14.0	48.8	43.9	55.9	40%
TIPS BEs (bp)	5y	138.7	2.9	3.7	-10.8	141.2	125.7	161.0	37%
	10y	157.8	1.2	1.7	-13.7	160.4	147.9	180.7	30%
	30y	164.0	0.9	1.6	-17.8	165.4	155.4	184.7	29%

Source: J.P. Morgan

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## Market views

Treasury yields rose prior to the US open on news that the EU and UK had reached a revised Withdrawal Agreement. It is key that Johnson has agreed to a deal, which substantially reduces the risk of a “no-deal Brexit” (see [Brexit: Come on Arlene \(apologies to Dexys\)](#), Malcolm Barr, 10/17/19). After this initial move higher, Treasury yields retraced lower, in large part driven by weaker-than-expected housing and manufacturing data, finishing approximately 1bp higher across the curve. **We remain neutral on duration here: though the market remains well-priced for a 25bp ease in October and position technicals are somewhat long, yields are broadly in the middle of their 3-month range.** Separately, the new October-maturity 5-year TIPS auction was well-received this afternoon, clearing 2.1bp through pre-auction levels, as end users took down 86.2% of the offering, slightly above the previous 3-auction average. In the aftermath, front-end TIPS breakevens closed 3-4bp wider on the day.

### What’s going on in the 20-year sector?

Last Friday Treasury released its primary dealer questionnaire ahead of the November refunding, and one question asked for commentary on the sources of demand for a potential 20-year bond. This question did not come entirely out of left field: TBAC’s work in 2017 recommended that Treasury “consider issuing a zero coupon 50-year bond, and coupon maturities between 10- and 30-years, preferably the reintroduction of the 20-year.”<sup>1</sup> Moreover, our own work has highlighted that market participants tend to favor a 20-year over an ultra-long (see [The \(ultra\) long and winding road](#), 8/29/19). Thus, with Treasury’s financing needs set to rise sharply as we head into the 2020s, we are not surprised that Treasury is considering a new maturity point along the curve, nor that it is interested in gathering feedback on a 20-year bond.

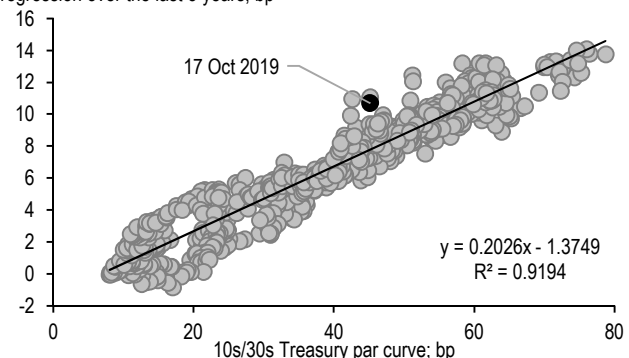
**Exhibit 1: The 20-year sector has cheapened along the curve over the past week, and now sits at its cheapest levels since mid-2017...**

10s/20s/30s par Treasury butterfly; bp



**Exhibit 2: The 20-year sector has cheapened along the curve over the past week, and now sits at its cheapest levels since mid-2017...**

10s/20s/30s Treasury par butterfly regressed on 10s/30s Treasury par curve (bp), regression over the last 3 years; bp



Nevertheless, this caught market participants by surprise, as the line of questioning from Treasury prior to this questionnaire indicated Treasury was once again resurrecting the idea of an ultra-long bond. As a result, the 20-year sector has

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/sm0071.aspx>

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North America Fixed Income Strategy  
US Treasury Market Daily  
17 October 2019

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underperformed recently: **Exhibit 1** shows that the 20-year sector has cheapened more than 1bp over the past week on the 10s/20s/30s butterfly and now sits at its cheapest levels since mid-2017. Naturally, supply alone does not explain the behavior of the 20-year sector along the curve: the 10s/20s/30s butterfly tends to be directional with the curve: the 20-year sector tends to outperform as the 10s/30s curve flattens, and vice versa, and the curve has explained more than 90% of the variation in this butterfly over the last 3 years (**Exhibit 2**). **Currently the 20-year sector appears more than 3bp cheap to the wings after adjusting for curve shape and has not appeared this cheap at any point over the last 3 years. Thus, it seems that the 20-year sector is discounting the risk that Treasury introduces a 20-year point along the curve.**

**Exhibit 3: Broadly speaking, most bonds around the 20-year sector have cheapened relative to the curve over the past week, particularly bonds maturing in 2040**

Yield errors, weekly changes, and 6-month statistics for Treasury bonds in the 2036-2041 sector; bp except where otherwise indicated

Maturity	Yield error	1wk chg	6m high	6m low	Percentile
Feb-36s	-2.6	0.2	-0.4	-3.0	3%
Feb-37s	-4.0	0.1	-1.9	-4.4	2%
May-37s	-3.3	0.3	-2.1	-3.8	15%
Feb-38s	-2.2	0.2	-1.4	-2.9	46%
May-38s	-1.8	0.1	-1.4	-2.8	76%
Feb-39s	-0.6	0.1	0.2	-1.5	69%
May-39s	-0.3	0.1	0.5	-1.1	68%
Aug-39s	-0.6	0.2	0.1	-1.4	66%
Nov-39s	0.4	0.4	0.8	-0.4	77%
Feb-40s	0.3	0.2	0.5	-0.5	82%
May-40s	1.3	0.4	1.4	0.2	99%
Aug-40s	1.2	0.2	1.3	0.3	98%
Nov-40s	1.8	0.4	2.3	0.9	98%
Feb-41s	1.4	0.1	1.8	0.5	94%
May-41s	1.8	-0.2	2.0	1.2	72%
Aug-41s	1.7	-0.4	2.4	1.3	40%
Nov-41s	1.5	-0.4	2.2	0.8	70%

Source: J.P. Morgan

We can observe this at a more micro RV level as well. **Exhibit 3** shows yield errors for Treasury bonds in the 2036-2041 sector, along with their week-over-week changes and statistics on these yield errors over the past 6 months. **The exhibit shows that most of the bonds in this sector have cheapened relative to our par curve over the past week. Of note, the most decisive cheapening has occurred in the mid- to late-2040 sector, where these bonds are trading at or close to their cheapest levels of the past 6 months relative to our fitted curve.** This make sense to us: Treasury's financing needs begin to increase sharply in late 2020, as the borrowing capacity it gained from large increases to 2- and 3-year notes auction sizes made in 2018 starts to fade. We tend to agree and think that any potential 20-year would not be introduced before the second half of 2020. Overall, we think this question is but the opening salvo in the discussion of a potential 20-year bond: if dealer feedback indicates there would be strong demand for this security, we think TBAC would likely be tasked with a charge on this topic at some point in early 2020. **Thus, though the 20-year sector appears cheap along the curve, and bonds in**

**the 2040 sector in particular offer value, we think they are likely to remain cheap until the Treasury comes to an ultimate decision on this maturity point.**

## What's happening to short coupon/T-bill spreads?

Additionally, last Friday the FOMC also announced plans to purchase Treasury bills to maintain ample reserve balances at or above the level that prevailed in early September 2019. While T-bills are abundant at the moment, as net issuance is forecast to remain positive through late November, we continue to think the Fed will have more difficulty in sourcing T-bills in December and January when issuance turns seasonally negative (see [US Treasury Market Daily](#), 10/11/19). Given that the New York Fed has already begun these purchases at an initial pace of \$60bn per month, we think it is worthwhile to explore how T-bill and short coupon valuations (an alternative to T-bills for short-end investors) have evolved. We observe that T-bills have richened over the past month, especially 6- and 12-month bills which look more than 2 standard deviations rich relative to their 1-month average (**Exhibit 4**). We are not surprised that longer-tenor bills have outperformed: the money market fund community tends not to own many longer-maturity bills, and given their relative cheapness, the Fed is likely to focus its purchases in these securities.

**Exhibit 4: Bills have richened over the past month, especially 6- and 12-month bills...**

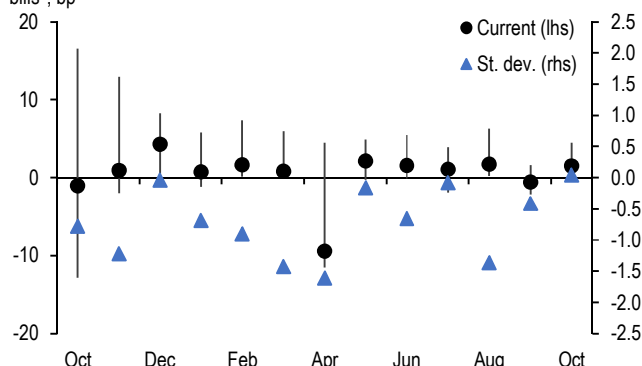
1-month statistics for T-bill spreads to OIS; bp

	Current	1m chg	1m avg	1m min	1m max	1m z-score
1m	-2.4	-15.3	-3.8	-14.2	15.5	0.2
2m	2.0	-12.8	2.7	-5.4	14.8	-0.1
3m	2.9	-8.2	6.1	-0.5	15.8	-0.7
6m	6.5	-14.2	17.2	6.5	26.4	-2.1
12m	11.9	-17.9	24.3	11.9	32.4	-2.3

Source: J.P. Morgan

**Exhibit 5: ...but short coupons have actually outperformed T-bills in the process**

1-month statistics for Treasury coupon matched-maturity OIS spread versus closest maturity T-bill matched-maturity OIS spread using only original 12-month bills\*; bp



\*Statistics for the latest 12-month bill issued in October 2019 are starting 10/3/19

Source: J.P. Morgan

**Interestingly, we also find that short coupons have generally outperformed T-bills in this process (Exhibit 5).** We think there are a couple of reasons for this. **First**, the Fed's mandate to purchase bills has created a greater bid for short duration assets, and with purchases set to consume much of the net new supply of bills in coming months, short coupons function as an attractive alternative asset. **Second**, **Exhibit 6** shows that dealer inventories of bills are substantially lower than inventories of short-term coupons, which are more than 2 standard deviations above their 5-year average. This glut of collateral has allowed short coupons to trade cheap to OIS in the recent past, but with bill purchases expected to take a significant amount of paper out of the money markets, it is perhaps unsurprising to see spreads collapse in this sector. **Heading into year end, with Fed purchases in full swing, T-bill issuance turning negative, and repo likely to come become less abundant, short coupons are likely to remain a viable alternative for short-end investors; thus, we think there is limited room for coups to cheapen from current levels.**

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#### Exhibit 6: Dealer inventories of bills are low, while short-term coupons appear to be in abundance

Primary dealer positions in Treasuries, 3-month change, and 5-year statistics; \$bn, except for z-score

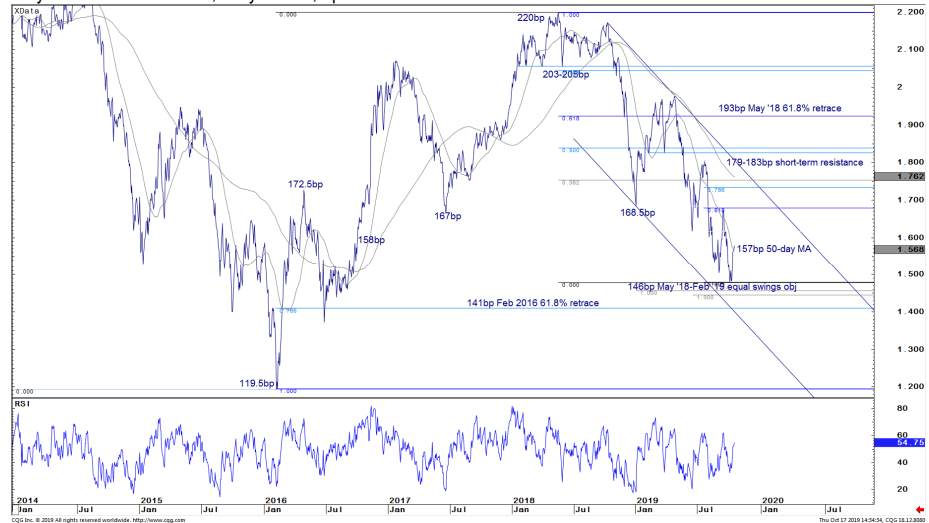
Maturity	Last	3m chg	5y avg	5y min	5y max	5y z-score
T-bills	24	13	17	-2	41	0.9
<2y	83	-11	28	-7	97	2.4
2-3y	7	-5	-1	-16	21	1.0
3-6y	33	-12	18	-9	53	1.2
6-7y	13	-5	10	-6	27	0.4
7-11y	9	2	2	-18	22	1.1
>11y	36	-7	25	8	48	1.1
TIPS	14	0	8	-1	16	1.5
FRNS	7	-5	5	-1	13	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>-30</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>1.7</b>

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of New York

## Technical highlights

Exhibit 7: 10-year TIPS breakevens widen after briefly tightening through the 150.5bp Sep 3 low. The momentum divergence pattern that whipsaw created above favored support in the 140s points to a maturing tightening trend. Tactically, the market keeps a widening bias while above 152bp

10-year TIPS Breakevens, daily closes; bp



Source: J.P. Morgan, CQG

The **10-year TIPS breakevens** widening trend probes the first layer of short-term resistance at the **157bp** 50-day MA and recent hourly pivots near **160bp** (Exhibit 6). The latest advance unfolds after the recent tightening from the **167bp** Sep 16 high reversed just through the **150.5bp** Sep 3 trough and produced positive momentum divergences with the early-Oct lows on the daily and weekly time frames. The setup points to a maturing tightening trend. Unfortunately, the late-Sep/early-Aug price whipsaw hit the stop level for our widening trade strategy. Tactically, the renewed widening trend stays in gear while above **152bp**. The Sep rebound high stalled just below the **168bp** Jul 61.8% retrace. Medium-term resistance remains clustered at the **176.5bp** 200-day MA, **177bp** May 2018 38.2% retrace, **180bp** Jul wide, and **181bp**

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17 October 2019

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Oct 2018 channel. We suspect that area will cap the market for a while. More substantial chart resistance rests near **200bp**. On the downside, the **148-148.5bp** Oct 3/9 lows held favored support at the **146bp** May 2018-Feb 2019 equal swings objective, **144bp** Apr-Jul equal swings target, and **141bp** Feb 2016 78.6% retrace.

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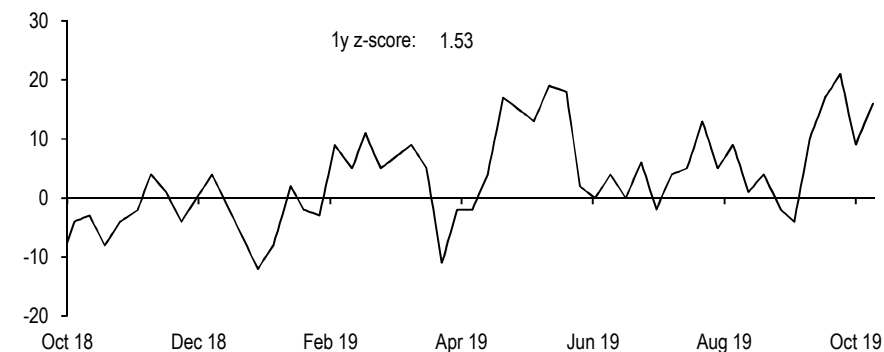
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# Appendix: Position technicals overview

## Exhibit A1: J.P. Morgan Treasury Client Survey

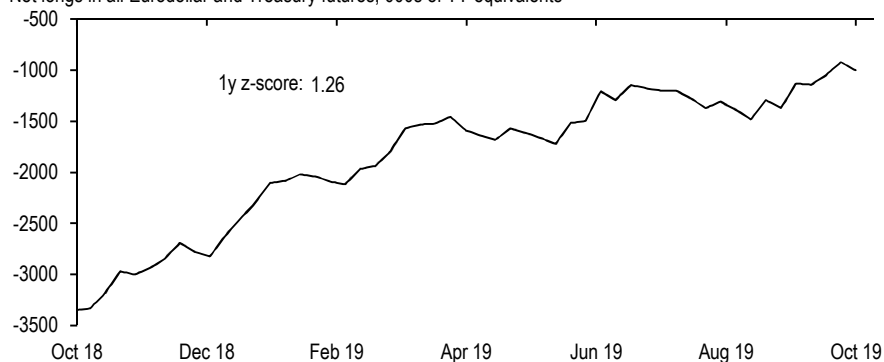
Net longs; %



Source: J.P. Morgan

## Exhibit A2: CFTC non-commercial positions

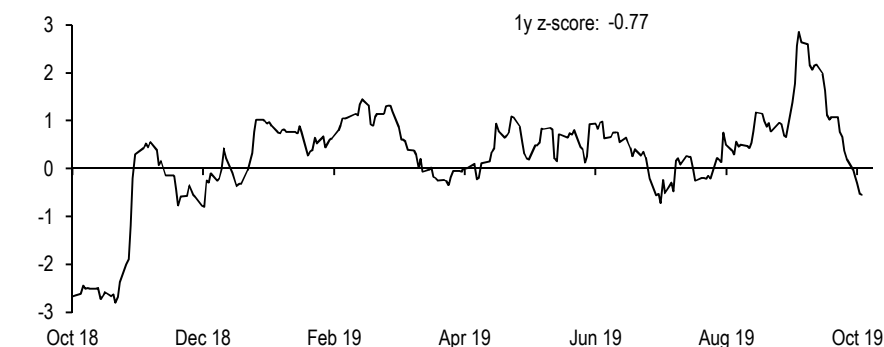
Net longs in all Eurodollar and Treasury futures; 000s of TY equivalents



Source: CFTC

## Exhibit A3: CTA exposure to 10-year Treasuries

Partial beta with respect to the J.P. Morgan US 7-10Y bond index in our model for CTA returns\*



\* Model is a 1-month regression of daily excess returns on the CTA index versus daily excess returns on 1) J.P. Morgan US 7-10Y bond index, 2) J.P. Morgan ex-US Global Bond Index, 3) S&P500 index, 4) J.P. Morgan global cash index, and 5) Goldman Sachs Commodities Index

Source: Bloomberg, SG, J.P. Morgan

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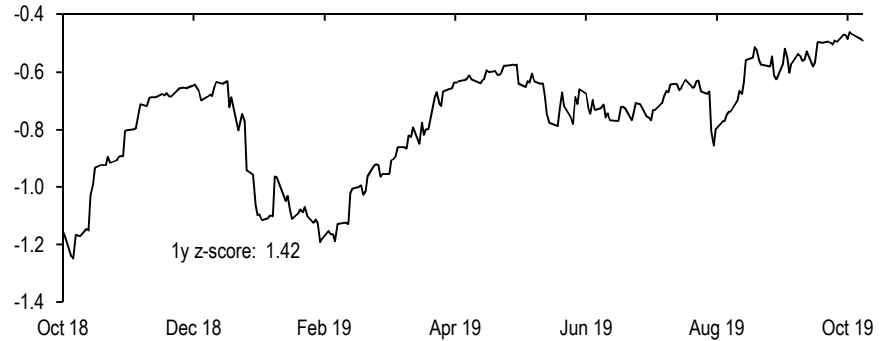
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#### Exhibit A4: Active Core Bond Fund\* Managers' exposure to 10-year Treasuries

Partial beta with respect to 10-year US Treasury yields in our model for active bond fund excess returns\*\*

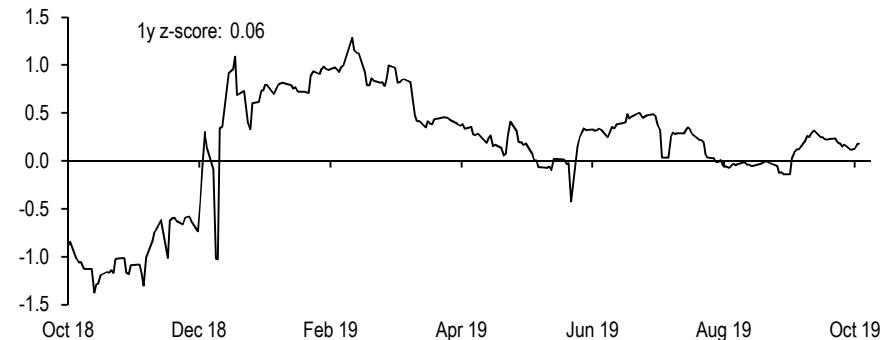


\* The core bond fund index is comprised of the 20 largest (by assets under management) actively-managed US core bond funds

\*\* Model is a 3-month regression of daily excess returns on the bond fund index versus daily changes in 1) 10-year US Treasury yields, 2) 5s/30s Treasury curve, 3) constant-maturity 5-year CDX.IG spread, 4) MBS Libor option-adjusted spread, and 5) 3Mx10Y swaption volatility; Source: Bloomberg, J.P. Morgan

#### Exhibit A5: Macro Hedge Fund exposure to 10-year Treasuries

Partial beta with respect to the J.P. Morgan US 7-10Y bond index in our model for macro hedge fund returns\*

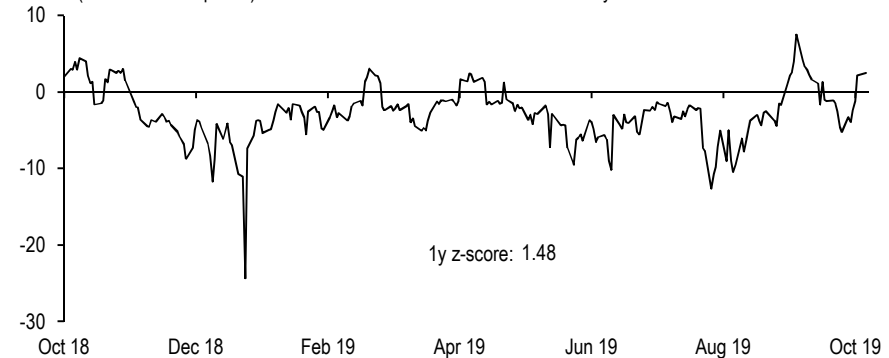


\* Model is a six-week regression of daily excess returns on the HFRX Macro/CTA index versus daily excess returns on 1) J.P. Morgan US 7-10Y bond index, 2) J.P. Morgan ex-US Global Bond Index, 3) S&P 500 equity index, 4) MSCI G7 ex-US equity index, 5) J.P. Morgan global cash index, and 6) Goldman Sachs Commodities Index.

Source: Bloomberg, HFR, J.P. Morgan

#### Exhibit A6: T-note dollar weighed Put/Call ratio

The total (OI \* settlement prices) of the individual T-note future Puts divided by the same calculation for Calls



Source: CFTC, Bloomberg, CQG, CME, J.P. Morgan



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