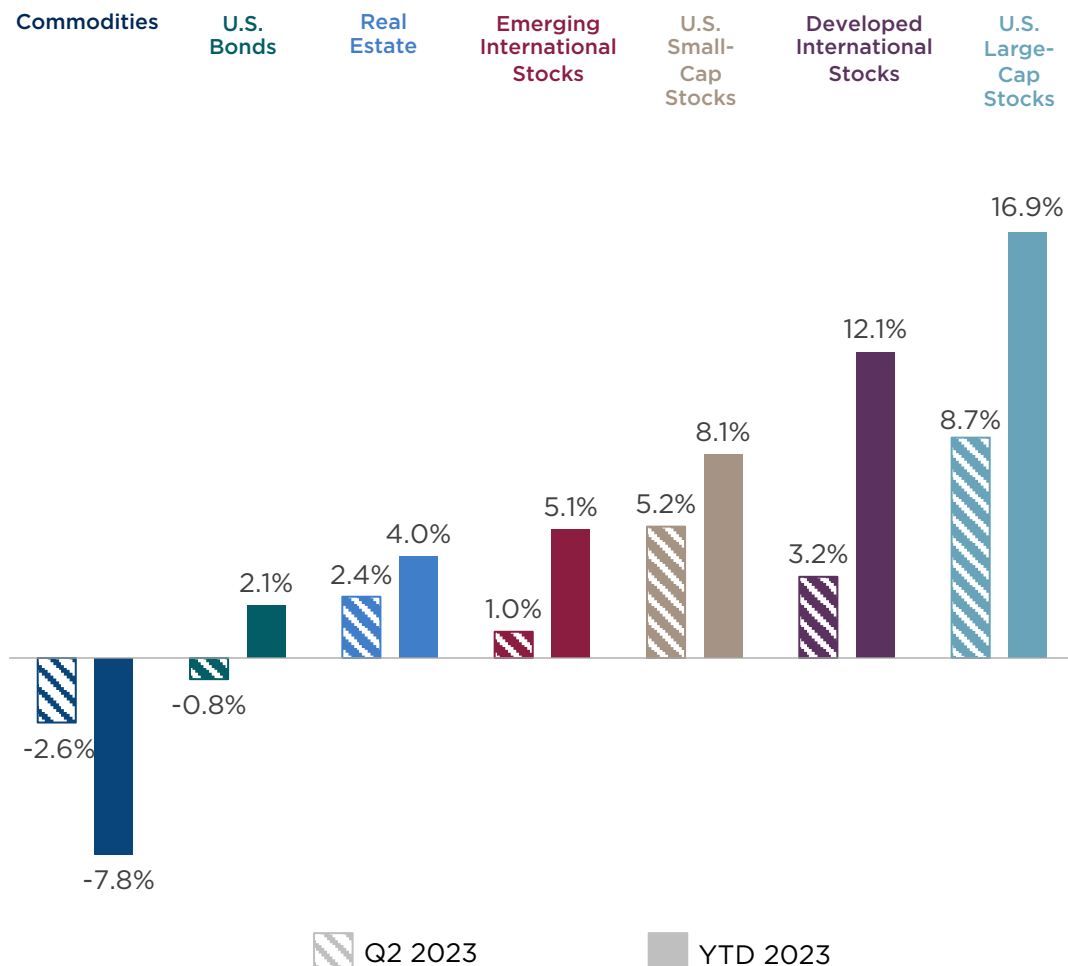


MARKET RESILIENCE

Over the past year, labor markets have remained strong despite the Fed's actions to slow the economy to combat inflation. This labor market strength has given consumers the confidence to continue spending, and the economy has continued expanding in response. In the second quarter, this economic resilience received an artificial-intelligence-fueled tailwind, sending stocks upward.

- While large- and small-cap U.S. stock indexes posted strong results, extreme dispersion exists among sectors. The technology sector soared ahead, while four sectors sit in negative territory for the year.
- Bond investors have been forced to raise their interest-rate expectations, putting downward pressure on bond prices.
- Outside the U.S., developed international stocks enjoyed strong results.
- Meanwhile, emerging market stocks have underperformed, weighed down by disappointing economic activity in China.
- Despite modest gains for the year, real estate uncertainty remains high, especially in the office and retail sectors.
- Commodities posted a second consecutive quarterly decline, with both oil and precious metals prices sinking.



Asset class returns are represented by the following indexes: Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index (U.S. bonds), S&P 500 Index (U.S. large-cap stocks), Russell 2000® (U.S. small-cap stocks), MSCI EAFE Index (international developed market stocks), MSCI Emerging Market Index (emerging market stocks), Dow Jones U.S. Real Estate Index (real estate), and Bloomberg Commodity Index (commodities).

DIGGING DEEPER: STOCKS AND BONDS

Equities

	Q2 2023	YTD 2023	Last 12 Months
U.S. Stocks	8.7%	16.9%	19.6%
• Q2 Best Sector: Technology	17.2%	42.8%	40.3%
• Q2 Worst Sector: Utilities	-2.5%	-5.7%	-3.7%
International Stocks	3.2%	12.1%	19.4%
Emerging Markets Stocks	1.0%	5.1%	2.2%

Fixed Income

	6.30.23	3.31.23	6.30.22
1-Year U.S. Treasury Yield	5.42%	4.62%	2.78%
10-Year U.S. Treasury Yield	3.84%	3.47%	3.02%
	QTD 2023	YTD 2023	Last 12 Months
10-Year U.S. Treasury Total Return	-1.91%	1.78%	-3.55%

Equities - Relative Performance by Market Capitalization and Style

Q2 2023				YTD 2023				Last 12 Months			
	Value	Blend	Growth		Value	Blend	Growth		Value	Blend	Growth
Large	4.1%	8.7%	12.8%	Large	5.1%	16.9%	29.0%	Large	11.5%	19.6%	27.1%
Mid	3.9%	4.8%	6.2%	Mid	5.2%	9.0%	15.9%	Mid	10.5%	14.9%	23.1%
Small	3.2%	5.2%	7.1%	Small	2.5%	8.1%	13.6%	Small	6.0%	12.3%	18.5%

Sources: Bloomberg, U.S. Treasury. Asset class returns are represented by the following indexes: S&P 500 Index (U.S. stocks), MSCI EAFE Index (international developed market stocks), and MSCI Emerging Markets Index (emerging market stocks). Relative performance by market capitalization and style is based upon the Russell US Style Indexes except for large-cap blend, which is based upon the S&P 500 Index.



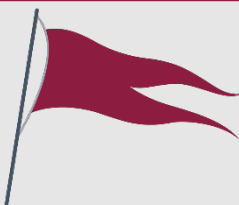
ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Uncertainty is likely to endure as key data points remain polarized. 2023 recession predictions have failed to materialize, with labor markets and consumer strength expanding the economy instead. Looking forward, tighter lending standards, higher debt burdens, and a Fed committed to 2% inflation may present the hard-landing potholes the country has avoided so far.

HEADWINDS

The Rising Cost of Debt

- As interest rates have climbed from near-zero levels, public debt burden may reach a record.
- With savings declining, many consumers face the added burden of higher interest payments on home, auto, and student loans.
- Higher interest costs may also squeeze profitability for corporations that need to refinance debt.
- With a significant portion of government debt maturing soon, refinancing at higher rates could require fiscal constraint and reinvigorate the debt ceiling debate.



Liquidity Constraints

- Liquidity fuels the economy. Yet money supply is contracting as the Fed reduces its balance sheet, the Treasury refills its reserves, and commercial banks impose stricter lending standards.

Sticky Inflation and Fed Determination

- Core inflation remains stubbornly elevated, likely resulting in additional Fed restrictions.

TAILWINDS

The Consumer

- Labor participation has not returned to pre-pandemic levels, creating historically low unemployment and steady wage growth—two underpinnings of consumer strength.
- As inflation falls from its June 2022 peak, real wage growth has supported consumer spending. Combined with excess savings and higher interest income, wage growth has partially insulated consumers from rising debt costs.



Debt Ceiling Resolution

- A debt ceiling deal reduced uncertainty and helped the U.S. avoid default, but the agreement lacked notable spending changes. The stage is set for another showdown in 2025.

Artificial Intelligence and Productivity

- In 2022, the technology sector saw a breakthrough in artificial intelligence (AI), creating AI models that interpret, learn, and provide human-like responses faster than ever.
- AI has tremendous potential but will require significant capital to develop necessary infrastructure.

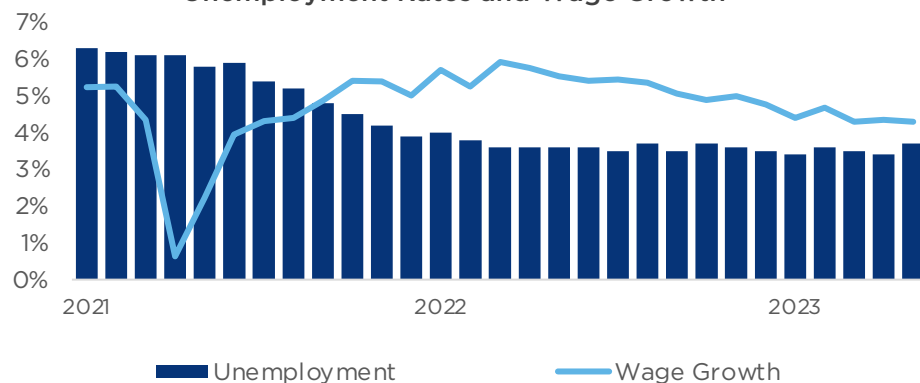
Despite consumer-driven economic resilience year-to-date, the impact of Fed policy changes does not seem fully absorbed. Given economic uncertainty, investors should remain vigilant, diversified, and prepared for ongoing volatility.



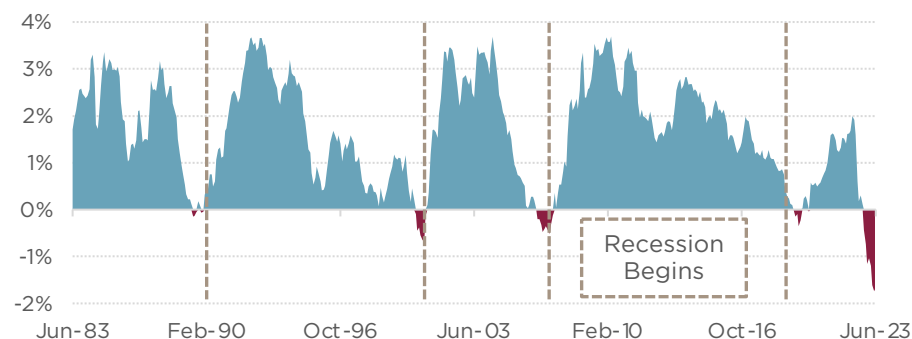
ECONOMIC RESILIENCE DEFIES RECESSION PREDICTIONS

A solid labor market with historically low unemployment has fueled wage growth and strengthened the consumer. However, indicators that have predicted past recessions are still present. The lagged effect of Fed tightening plus reduced borrowing capacity in the financial system continue to pose significant risks that may lead to deeper economic contraction.

Unemployment Rates and Wage Growth



Treasury Term Premium
10-Year Yield minus 3-Month Yield



ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

- **Labor market strength.** Although wage growth has waned from its 6 percent post-pandemic peak, it now exceeds inflation. This makes for a strong consumer and is supported by an unemployment rate much lower than the 15-year average.
- **Cooling inflation.** Time and rate hikes have moderated inflation from its 7 percent peak in June 2022. Still, core inflation—the Fed’s key indicator—remains elevated.
- **Consumer spending.** Job security, excess savings, and cooling inflation have supported consumer confidence, keeping spending, especially spending on services, at elevated levels.

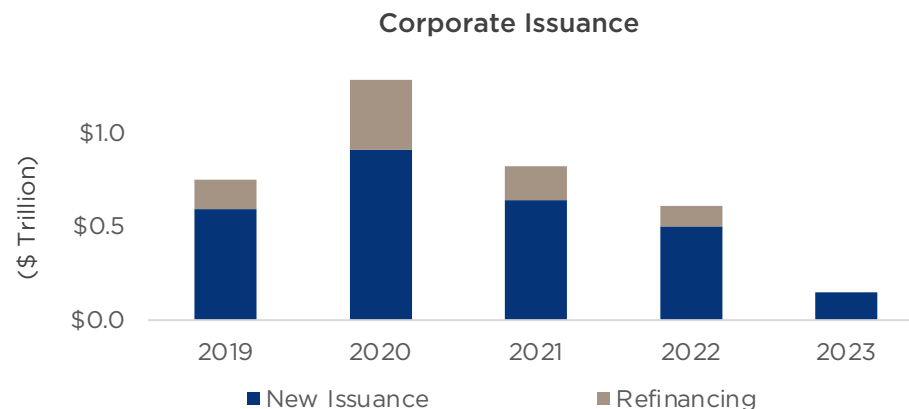
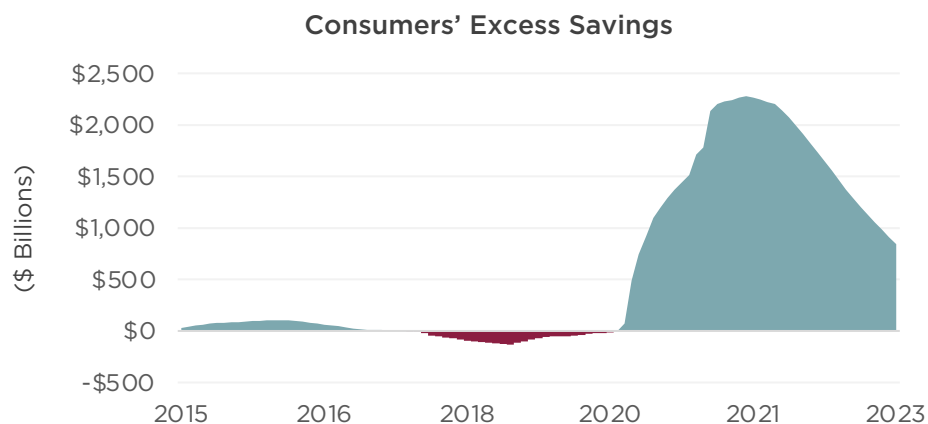
RECESSION SIGNALS

- **Inverted yield curve.** Historically, investors willing to accept a lower rate on longer-maturity Treasuries has been a harbinger of a weakening economy and a consistent recession predictor.
- **Contracting money supply.** With less money available in the financial system, consumers and companies may slow borrowing.
- **Tighter lending standards.** Recent banking system stress could lead to stricter lending standards. Combined with interest rate hikes, this could constrain economic growth.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Bloomberg, CAPTRUST Research. Data as of June 30, 2023.

INTEREST INCOME VS. INTEREST EXPENSE

The Fed is aggressively raising interest rates to slow the economy and ease inflation. In theory, these moves encourage saving by paying people and institutions higher returns on unspent balances, and they discourage borrowing by raising the cost of debt. However, these measures can also support short-term economic activity, depending on the balance sheets of various savers and borrowers.



BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES FOR CONSUMERS

- **Excess savings.** Due to limited spending and fiscal support, consumers accumulated nearly \$2.3 trillion in excess savings after the pandemic. Although these balances have been declining, nearly \$800 billion remains. If invested in safe, liquid securities, these savings can earn more than 5 percent thanks to the Fed's rate-hiking program.
- **Demographics.** Nearly 70 percent of household net worth is held by individuals age 55 or older. These consumers generally have more assets that benefit from higher interest income, less debt subject to higher interest expense, and less need to save.

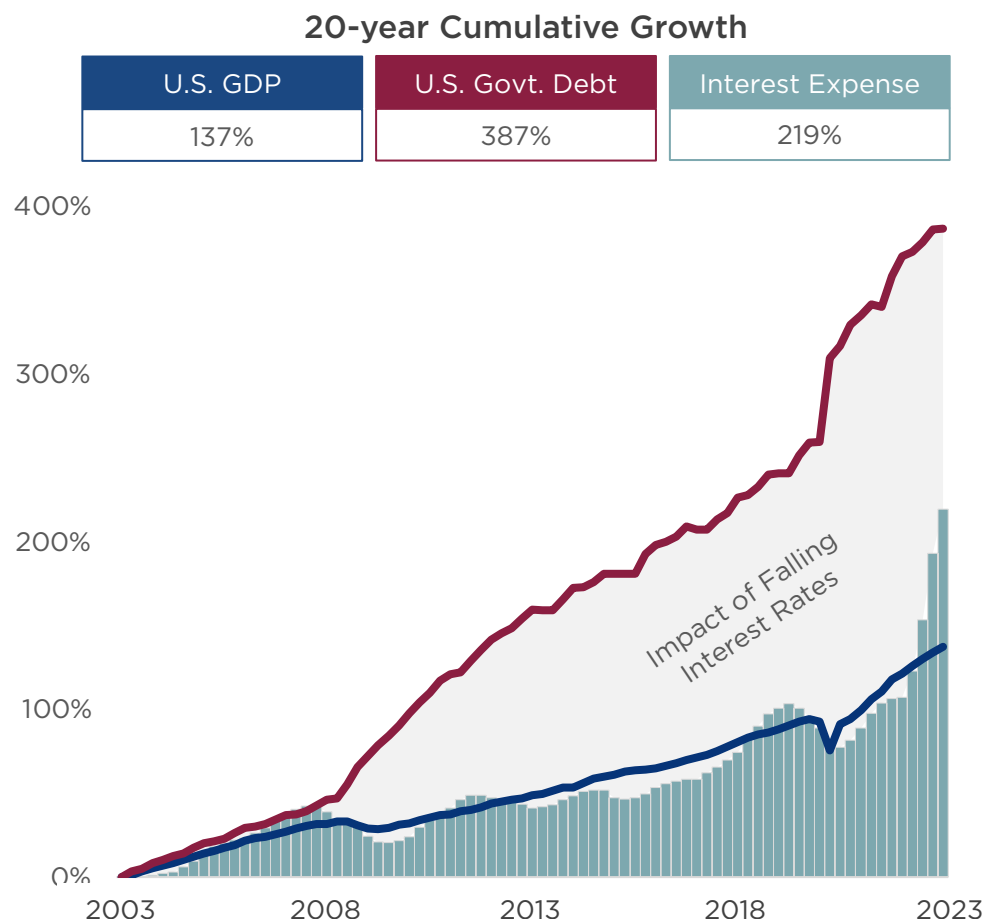
BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES FOR CORPORATIONS

- **Corporate debt issuance.** Companies issued a record \$1 trillion in debt at near-zero rates in 2020. Issuance accelerated in early 2022 before rate hikes began. Corporate balance sheets have been buoyed by elevated cash balances and cheap debt, partially insulating them from the rising cost of debt capital.
- **Maturing corporate debt.** This insulation may be short-lived for some, with nearly \$3.5 trillion in debt maturing by 2024. Assuming interest rates remain elevated, corporate interest expenses will rise, creating a more difficult environment for companies that have depended on cheap capital.

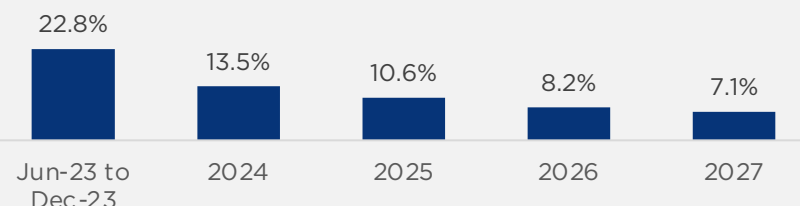
Sources: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Bloomberg, Dealogic, CAPTRUST Research. Data as of June 30, 2023.

RIISING GOVERNMENT INTEREST EXPENSE

Government spending composed more than 17% of first-quarter gross domestic product (GDP). Discretionary spending was already under pressure with the passage of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023. However, a more significant headwind could come from rising interest rate costs, further reducing the impact of government spending on future GDP.



Percent of Marketable Treasurys Maturing in the Next Five Years



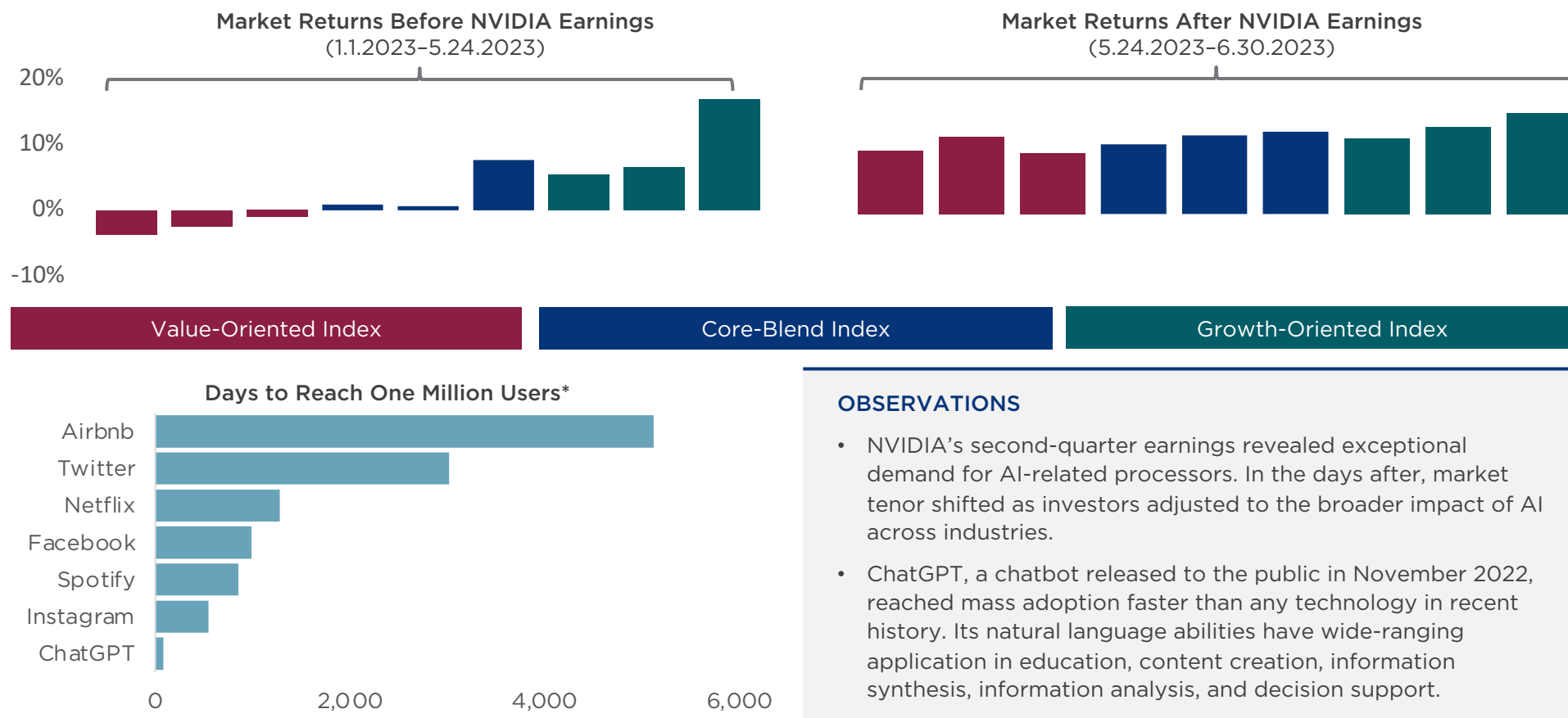
OBSERVATIONS

- Since 2003, government debt has increased nearly three times as fast as GDP. However, due to falling interest rates, growth in interest expense has generally aligned with growth in GDP.
- Recently, rising rates have driven interest expense significantly above GDP growth, a trend that is likely to continue with more than 60% of marketable Treasurys maturing in the next five years.
- As interest expense on historical debt continues to take a bigger bite out of the government's budget, additional fiscal responsibility will be required elsewhere, creating headwinds for future economic activity.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of the Treasury, CAPTRUST Research. Data as of June 30, 2023.

REGISTERS KEEP RINGING WITH JOBS, SAVINGS

In late 2022, the technology sector saw a breakthrough in large language models (LLMs). LLMs allow artificial intelligence (AI) to learn and respond in conversational language. On May 24, NVIDIA, which makes processors that power AI technology, reported second-quarter sales 57% higher than expectations, unleashing a fervor of AI-related excitement. Although mass adoption is distant, the potential of AI has companies across sectors investing in related technology and infrastructure, providing support for economic growth.



Sources: Bloomberg, Statista, Our World in Data, CAPTRUST Research. Data as of June 30, 2023. Indexes represented include the Russell 2000, Russell Mid-Cap, and Russell 1000 Value, Core, and Growth, respectively.

*Days to Reach One Million Users is adjusted for number of internet users using a base year of 1999.

ASSET CLASS RETURNS

Period Ending 6.30.23 | Q2 23

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Q2 2023
Real Estate 28.48%	Real Estate 8.69%	Real Estate 17.77%	Small-Cap Stocks 38.82%	Real Estate 30.38%	Strategic Opportunities 2.86%	Small-Cap Stocks 21.31%	International Equities 27.77%	Cash 1.87%	Large-Cap Stocks 31.43%	Large-Cap Stocks 20.96%	Real Estate 38.99%	Cash 1.46%	Large-Cap Stocks 16.68%
Small-Cap Stocks 26.85%	Fixed Income 7.84%	International Equities 17.39%	Mid-Cap Stocks 34.76%	Large-Cap Stocks 13.24%	Real Estate 2.14%	Mid-Cap Stocks 13.80%	Large-Cap Stocks 21.69%	Fixed Income 0.01%	Mid-Cap Stocks 30.54%	Small-Cap Stocks 19.96%	Large-Cap Stocks 26.45%	Strategic Opportunities 0.85%	International Equities 9.86%
Mid-Cap Stocks 25.48%	Large-Cap Stocks 1.50%	Mid-Cap Stocks 17.28%	Large-Cap Stocks 33.11%	Mid-Cap Stocks 13.22%	Large-Cap Stocks 0.92%	Large-Cap Stocks 12.05%	Mid-Cap Stocks 18.52%	Strategic Opportunities -0.49%	Real Estate 28.92%	Mid-Cap Stocks 17.10%	Mid-Cap Stocks 22.58%	Fixed Income -13.01%	Mid-Cap Stocks 9.01%
Large-Cap Stocks 16.10%	Cash 0.10%	Large-Cap Stocks 16.42%	International Equities 15.78%	Fixed Income 5.97%	Fixed Income 0.55%	Real Estate 7.56%	Small-Cap Stocks 14.65%	Real Estate -4.03%	Small-Cap Stocks 25.52%	International Equities 11.13%	Small-Cap Stocks 14.82%	International Equities -15.57%	Small-Cap Stocks 8.09%
International Equities 11.60%	Mid-Cap Stocks -1.55%	Small-Cap Stocks 16.35%	Strategic Opportunities 3.58%	Small-Cap Stocks 4.89%	Cash 0.05%	International Equities 5.01%	Real Estate 9.84%	Large-Cap Stocks -4.78%	International Equities 22.13%	Fixed Income 7.51%	International Equities 8.29%	Mid-Cap Stocks -17.32%	Real Estate 4.04%
Fixed Income 6.54%	Strategic Opportunities -3.71%	Fixed Income 4.22%	Real Estate 2.47%	Strategic Opportunities 0.79%	Mid-Cap Stocks -2.44%	Fixed Income 2.65%	Fixed Income 3.54%	Mid-Cap Stocks -9.06%	Fixed Income 8.72%	Strategic Opportunities 2.72%	Strategic Opportunities 2.10%	Large-Cap Stocks -19.13%	Cash 2.25%
Cash 0.13%	Small-Cap Stocks -4.18%	Strategic Opportunities 0.88%	Cash 0.07%	Cash 0.03%	Small-Cap Stocks -4.41%	Cash 0.33%	Strategic Opportunities 3.40%	Small-Cap Stocks -11.01%	Strategic Opportunities 4.37%	Cash 0.67%	Cash 0.05%	Small-Cap Stocks -20.44%	Fixed Income 2.09%
Strategic Opportunities -0.12%	International Equities -13.33%	Cash 0.11%	Fixed Income -2.02%	International Equities -3.44%	International Equities -5.25%	Strategic Opportunities 0.31%	Cash 0.86%	International Equities -13.78%	Cash 2.28%	Real Estate -5.29%	Fixed Income -1.54%	Real Estate -25.17%	Strategic Opportunities 0.26%

Source: Markov Processes, Inc., Bloomberg, Mobius

Small-Cap Stocks (Russell 2000 Index)
Mid-Cap Stocks (Russell Mid-Cap Index)
Large-Cap Stocks (Russell 1000 Index)

Real Estate (Dow Jones U.S. Real Estate Index)
Strategic Opportunities (HFRX Absolute Return Index)
Cash (Merrill Lynch 3-Month Treasury Bill)

International Equities (ACWI Ex-U.S. Index)
Fixed Income (Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index)

The information contained in this report is from sources believed to be reliable but is not warranted by CAPTRUST to be accurate or complete.



REEVALUATING DEBT

Debt is often inevitable, sometimes required, and can even be preferred. It can also be categorized as more favorable or less favorable. More favorable debt tends to be *collateralized*, may help generate income, or can help an individual acquire an appreciating investment. Less favorable debt tends to have higher interest rates, may be *uncollateralized*, or may be collateralized by a depreciating asset. Reevaluating debt benefits your overall financial plan by helping you find opportunities to optimize both types of debt.

<div> <div>MORE FAVORABLE</div> <div>LESS FAVORABLE</div> </div>	TYPE OF DEBT	OBSERVATIONS
	Mortgages	Considered favorable because it is backed by the value of the property, which can appreciate. This type of loan often has lower interest rates than other loans. Interest may be tax-deductible.
	Lines of Credit	Also known as <i>secured non-purpose debt</i> , these loans can also be backed by appreciating assets or help you make an investment. Interest may be tax-deductible.
	Student Loans	Although these loans are unsecured, they can have favorable interest rates and allow you to invest in yourself and your future earnings potential via higher education. Interest may be tax-deductible.
	Margin Loans	Depending on interest rates, this type of loan can offer easy access to capital or help bridge liquidity needs but can also increase risk. Interest may be tax-deductible.
	Business Ownership	Investing in a business can have higher risk and higher reward. Loans can help accelerate your investment but may also increase risk. Interest may be tax-deductible.
	Car Loans	This type of loan often has a higher interest rate. Although this loan is secured, cars tend to depreciate over time.
	Credit Cards	This loan can be favorable if paid off each month and you take advantage of rewards programs. But if not paid off, interest rates are higher, and credit card debt may impact your credit score.
	Personal Loans	Retail unsecured loans, such as paycheck advances, tend to have high interest rates. Some other types, like intra-family loans or other personal loans, may have benefits.

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CHECKLIST FOR MANAGING DEBT

Debt management is an important part of many financial plans, helping people avoid the potentially negative consequences of less favorable debt while leveraging more favorable debt. Below is a checklist to assist you in organizing and managing your debt. Please consult with your advisor to ensure your strategy is appropriate for your unique financial situation.



TAKE AN INVENTORY OF YOUR DEBT

Clarify which debts are more vs. less favorable. Also review the interest rate and monthly payments for each obligation.



RESTRUCTURE DEBT

Consider consolidating high interest rate debt into low interest rate debt, if possible. Also consider consolidating uncollateralized debt into a more favorable type.



DETERMINE YOUR MONTHLY DEBT LOAD

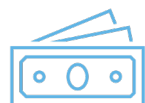
Determine how much of your income is going to pay down debt. The standard is to use no more than 28% of gross monthly income for mortgage payments and to keep total debt payments below 36% of monthly income.



EVALUATE DEBT-REDUCING STRATEGIES

Two popular strategies to consider are:

1. *Debt avalanche.* Pay off balances with the highest interest rates first.
2. *Debt snowball.* Pay off the lowest balances first.



REEVALUATE SPENDING

Review your monthly expenses to see if there is anything you can eliminate or reduce. One key to paying off debt is to limit further liabilities.



CHECK CREDIT REPORTS ANNUALLY

Checking your credit report regularly from the three credit reporting agencies—Equifax, Experian, and Transunion—helps protect you against fraud and allows you to be more aware of what lenders may see. There are also multiple mobile apps to help you monitor your credit.

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