

GOLDMAN SACHS GROUP INC

Form 424B2

January 11, 2019

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Registration Statement No. 333-219206

Subject to Completion. Dated January 11, 2019.

GS Finance Corp.

\$

Buffered Financial Select Sector SPDR® Fund-Linked Notes
due

guaranteed by

The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.

The notes do not bear interest. The amount that you will be paid on your notes on the stated maturity date (expected to be April 30, 2020) is based on the performance of the Financial Select Sector SPDR® Fund (ETF) as measured from the trade date (expected to be January 25, 2019) to and including the determination date (expected to be April 27, 2020).

The return on your notes is linked to the performance of the ETF, and not to that of the Financials Select Sector Index (index) on which the ETF is based. The performance of the ETF may significantly diverge from that of the index. The ETF was reconstituted in September 2016 to generally remove exposure to companies involved in the real estate industry. Therefore, there is limited historical information regarding the reconstituted ETF.

If the final ETF level on the determination date is greater than the initial ETF level (set on the trade date), the return on your notes will be positive and will equal the ETF return, subject to the maximum settlement amount of \$1,318 for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes.

If the final ETF level declines by up to 10% from the initial ETF level, you will receive the face amount of your notes. If the final ETF level declines by more than 10% from the initial ETF level, the return on your notes will be negative and will equal the ETF return *plus* 10%. **You could lose a significant portion of the face amount of your notes.**

To determine your payment at maturity, we will calculate the ETF return, which is the percentage increase or decrease in the final ETF level from the initial ETF level. At maturity, for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes, you will receive an amount in cash equal to:

- if the ETF return is *positive* (the final ETF level is *greater than* the initial ETF level), the *sum* of (i) \$1,000 *plus* (ii) the *product* of (a) \$1,000 *times* (b) the ETF return, subject to the maximum settlement amount;
- if the ETF return is *zero* or *negative* but *not below* -10% (the final ETF level is *equal to* the initial ETF level or is *less than* the initial ETF level, but not by more than 10%), \$1,000; or
- if the ETF return is *negative* and is *below* -10% (the final ETF level is *less than* the initial ETF level by more than 10%), the *sum* of (i) \$1,000 *plus* (ii) the *product* of (a) the *sum of* the ETF return *plus* 10% *times* (b) \$1,000. **You will receive less than the face amount of your notes.**

You should read the disclosure herein to better understand the terms and risks of your investment, including the credit risk of GS Finance Corp. and The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. See page PS-12.

The estimated value of your notes at the time the terms of your notes are set on the trade date is expected to be between \$970 and \$999 per \$1,000 face amount. For a discussion of the estimated value and the price at which Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC would initially buy or sell your notes, if it makes a market in the notes, see the following page.

Original issue date:	expected to be January 30, 2019	Original issue price:	100% of the face amount
Underwriting discount:	% of the face amount	Net proceeds to the issuer:	% of the face amount

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any other regulatory body has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the accuracy or adequacy of this prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense. The notes are not bank deposits and are not insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other governmental agency, nor are they obligations of, or guaranteed by, a bank.

Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC

Pricing Supplement No. dated , 2019.

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The issue price, underwriting discount and net proceeds listed above relate to the notes we sell initially. We may decide to sell additional notes after the date of this pricing supplement, at issue prices and with underwriting discounts and net proceeds that differ from the amounts set forth above. The return (whether positive or negative) on your investment in notes will depend in part on the issue price you pay for such notes.

GS Finance Corp. may use this prospectus in the initial sale of the notes. In addition, Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC or any other affiliate of GS Finance Corp. may use this prospectus in a market-making transaction in a note after its initial sale. **Unless GS Finance Corp. or its agent informs the purchaser otherwise in the confirmation of sale, this prospectus is being used in a market-making transaction.**

Estimated Value of Your Notes

The estimated value of your notes at the time the terms of your notes are set on the trade date (as determined by reference to pricing models used by Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC (GS&Co.) and taking into account our credit spreads) is expected to be between \$970 and \$999 per \$1,000 face amount, which is less than the original issue price. The value of your notes at any time will reflect many factors and cannot be predicted; however, the price (not including GS&Co. s customary bid and ask spreads) at which GS&Co. would initially buy or sell notes (if it makes a market, which it is not obligated to do) and the value that GS&Co. will initially use for account statements and otherwise is equal to approximately the estimated value of your notes at the time of pricing, plus an additional amount (initially equal to \$ per \$1,000 face amount).

Prior to , the price (not including GS&Co. s customary bid and ask spreads) at which GS&Co. would buy or sell your notes (if it makes a market, which it is not obligated to do) will equal approximately the sum of (a) the then-current estimated value of your notes (as determined by reference to GS&Co. s pricing models) plus (b) any remaining additional amount (the additional amount will decline to zero on a straight-line basis from the time of pricing through). On and after , the price (not including GS&Co. s customary bid and ask spreads) at which GS&Co. would buy or sell your notes (if it makes a market) will equal approximately the then-current estimated value of your notes determined by reference to such pricing models.

About Your Prospectus

The notes are part of the Medium-Term Notes, Series E program of GS Finance Corp. and are fully and unconditionally guaranteed by The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. This prospectus includes this pricing supplement and the accompanying documents listed below. This pricing supplement constitutes a supplement to the documents listed below, does not set forth all of the terms of your notes and therefore should be read in conjunction with such documents:

- Product supplement no. 1.738 dated July 10, 2017
- General terms supplement no. 1.734 dated July 10, 2017
- Prospectus supplement dated July 10, 2017
- Prospectus dated July 10, 2017

The information in this pricing supplement supersedes any conflicting information in the documents listed above. In addition, some of the terms or features described in the listed documents may not apply to your notes.

We refer to the notes we are offering by this pricing supplement as the offered notes or the notes. Each of the offered notes has the terms described below. Please note that in this pricing supplement, references to GS Finance Corp., we, our and us mean only GS Finance Corp. and do not include its subsidiaries or affiliates, references to The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., our parent company, mean only The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. and do not include its subsidiaries or affiliates and references to Goldman Sachs mean The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. together with its consolidated subsidiaries and affiliates, including us. The notes will be issued under the senior debt indenture, dated as of October 10, 2008, as supplemented by the First Supplemental Indenture, dated as of February 20, 2015, each among us, as issuer, The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., as guarantor, and The Bank of New York Mellon, as trustee. This indenture, as so supplemented and as further supplemented thereafter, is referred to as the GSFC 2008 indenture in the accompanying prospectus supplement. The notes will be issued in book-entry form and represented by a master global note.

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Buffered Financial Select Sector SPDR® Fund- Linked Notes due

INVESTMENT THESIS

You should be willing to forgo:

- gains greater than a maximum settlement amount of 131.8% of the face amount in exchange for a buffer against loss of principal in the event of a decline of up to 10% in the final underlier level relative to the initial underlier level.
- interest payments and risk losing a substantial portion of your investment for the potential to earn any positive underlier return up to a maximum settlement amount of 131.8% of the face amount.

Your maximum return on your notes will not be greater than 31.8%, and you could lose a substantial portion of your investment if the underlier return is less than -10%.

DETERMINING THE CASH SETTLEMENT AMOUNT

At maturity, for each \$1,000 face amount, the investor will receive (in each case as a percentage of the face amount):

- if the final underlier level is greater than 100% of the initial underlier level, 100% *plus* the underlier return, subject to a maximum settlement amount of 131.8%;
- if the final underlier level is equal to or less than 100% of the initial underlier level but greater than or equal to 90% of the initial underlier level, 100%; or
- if the final underlier level is less than 90% of the initial underlier level, 100% *minus* 1% for every 1% that the final underlier level has declined below 90% of the initial underlier level

If the final underlier level declines by more than 10% from the initial underlier level, the return on the notes will be negative and the investor could lose a substantial portion of their investment in the notes.

KEY TERMS

Issuer:	GS Finance Corp.
Guarantor:	The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.
Underlier:	The Financial Select Sector SPDR® Fund (current Bloomberg symbol: XLF UP Equity)
Face Amount:	\$ in the aggregate; each note will have a face amount equal to \$1,000
Trade Date:	Expected to be January 25, 2019
Settlement Date:	Expected to be January 30, 2019
Determination Date:	Expected to be April 27, 2020
Stated Maturity Date:	Expected to be April 30, 2020
Initial Underlier Level:	To be determined on the trade date
Final Underlier Level:	The closing level of the underlier on the determination date
Underlier Return:	The <i>quotient</i> of (i) the final underlier level <i>minus</i> the initial underlier level <i>divided by</i> (ii) the initial underlier level, expressed as a positive or negative percentage
Upside Participation Rate:	100%
Buffer Level:	90% of the initial underlier level (equal to an underlier return of -10%)
Buffer Amount:	10%
Buffer Rate:	100%
Maximum Settlement Amount:	\$1,318
Cap Level:	131.8% of the initial underlier level
CUSIP/ISIN:	40056ETK4 / US40056ETK46

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Hypothetical Final Underlier Level (as Percentage of Initial Underlier Level)	Hypothetical Cash Settlement Amount (as Percentage of Face Amount)
150.000%	131.800%
131.800%	131.800%
120.000%	120.000%
110.000%	110.000%
100.000%	100.000%
98.000%	100.000%
95.000%	100.000%
91.000%	100.000%
90.000%	100.000%
50.000%	60.000%
25.000%	35.000%
0.000%	10.000%

RISKS

Please read the section entitled "Additional Risk Factors Specific to Your Notes" of this pricing supplement as well as the risks and considerations described in the accompanying prospectus dated July 10, 2017, in the accompanying prospectus supplement dated July 10, 2017, under "Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Underlier-Linked Notes" in the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738 dated July 10, 2017, and under "Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Notes" in the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734 dated July 10, 2017.

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS

(Terms From Pricing Supplement No. Incorporated Into Master Note No. 2)

These terms and conditions relate to pricing supplement no. dated , 2019 of GS Finance Corp. and The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. with respect to the issuance by GS Finance Corp. of its Buffered Financial Select Sector SPDR® Fund-Linked Notes due and the guarantee thereof by The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.

The provisions below are hereby incorporated into master note no. 2, dated August 22, 2018. References herein to this note shall be deemed to refer to this security in such master note no. 2, dated August 22, 2018. Certain defined terms may not be capitalized in these terms and conditions even if they are capitalized in master note no. 2, dated August 22, 2018. Defined terms that are not defined in these terms and conditions shall have the meanings indicated in such master note no. 2, dated August 22, 2018, unless the context otherwise requires.

CUSIP / ISIN: 40056ETK4 / US40056ETK46

Company (Issuer): GS Finance Corp.

Guarantor: The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.

Underlier: the Financial Select Sector SPDR® Fund (current Bloomberg symbol: XLF UP Equity), or any successor underlier, as it may be modified, replaced or adjusted from time to time as provided herein

Underlying index: the Financials Select Sector Index

Face amount: \$ in the aggregate on the original issue date; the aggregate face amount may be increased if the company, at its sole option, decides to sell an additional amount on a date subsequent to the trade date.

Authorized denominations: \$1,000 or any integral multiple of \$1,000 in excess thereof

Principal amount: On the stated maturity date, the company will pay, for each \$1,000 of the outstanding face amount, an amount, if any, in cash equal to the cash settlement amount.

Cash settlement amount:

- if the final underlier level is *greater than or equal to* the cap level, the maximum settlement amount;
- if the final underlier level is *greater than* the initial underlier level but *less than* the cap level, the *sum* of (1) \$1,000 *plus* (2) the *product* of (i) \$1,000 *times* (ii) the upside participation rate *times* (iii) the underlier return;
- if the final underlier level is *equal to or less than* the initial underlier level but *greater than or equal to* the buffer level, \$1,000; or
- if the final underlier level is *less than* the buffer level, the *sum* of (1) \$1,000 *plus* (2) the product of (i) \$1,000 *times* (ii) the buffer rate *times* (iii) the *sum* of the underlier return *plus* the buffer amount

Initial underlier level (set on the trade date):

Final underlier level: the closing level of the underlier on the determination date, subject to adjustment as provided in Consequences of a market disruption event or non-trading day and Discontinuance or modification of the underlier below

Cap level: 131.8% of the initial underlier level

Maximum settlement amount: \$1,318

Upside participation rate: 100%

Underlier return: the *quotient* of (1) the final underlier level *minus* the initial underlier level *divided by* (2) the

initial underlier level, expressed as a percentage

Buffer level: 90% of the initial underlier level

Buffer rate: 100%

Buffer amount: 10%

Trade date: expected to be January 25, 2019

Original issue date (set on the trade date): expected to be January 30, 2019

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Determination date (set on the trade date): expected to be April 27, 2020, unless the calculation agent determines that a market disruption event occurs or is continuing on such day or such day is not a trading day. In that event, the determination date will be the first following trading day on which the calculation agent determines that a market disruption event does not occur and is not continuing. However, the determination date will not be postponed to a date later than the originally scheduled stated maturity date or, if the originally scheduled stated maturity date is not a business day, later than the first business day after the originally scheduled stated maturity date. If a market disruption event occurs or is continuing on the day that is the last possible determination date or such last possible day is not a trading day, that day will nevertheless be the determination date.

Stated maturity date (set on the trade date): expected to be April 30, 2020, unless that day is not a business day, in which case the stated maturity date will be postponed to the next following business day. The stated maturity date will also be postponed if the determination date is postponed as described under Determination date above. In such a case, the stated maturity date will be postponed by the same number of business day(s) from but excluding the originally scheduled determination date to and including the actual determination date.

Closing level: for any given trading day, the closing sale price or last reported sale price, regular way, for the underlier, on a per-share or other unit basis:

- on the principal national securities exchange on which that underlier is listed for trading on that day, or
- if the underlier is not listed on any national securities exchange on that day, on any other U.S. national market system that is the primary market for the trading of that underlier. If the underlier is not listed or traded as described above, then the closing level for the underlier on any day will be the average, as determined by the calculation agent, of the bid prices for the underlier obtained from as many dealers in the underlier selected by the calculation agent as will make those bid prices available to the calculation agent. The number of dealers need not exceed three and may include the calculation agent or any of its or the company's affiliates.

The closing level is subject to adjustment as described under Anti-dilution adjustments below.

Trading day: a day on which (i) the exchange on which the underlier has its primary listing is open for trading and (ii) the price of one share of the underlier is quoted by the exchange on which such underlier has its primary listing

Successor underlier: any substitute underlier approved by the calculation agent as a successor underlier as provided under Discontinuance or modification of the underlier below

Underlier investment advisor: at any time, the person or entity, including any successor investment advisor, that serves as an investment advisor to the underlier as then in effect

Underlier stocks: at any time, the stocks that comprise the underlier as then in effect, after giving effect to any additions, deletions or substitutions

Market disruption event: With respect to any given trading day, any of the following will be a market disruption event with respect to the underlier:

- a suspension, absence or material limitation of trading in the underlier on its primary market for more than two consecutive hours of trading or during the one-half hour before the close of trading in that market, as determined by the calculation agent in its sole discretion,
- a suspension, absence or material limitation of trading in option or futures contracts relating to the underlier in the primary market for those contracts for more than two consecutive hours of trading or during the one-half hour before the close of trading in that market, as determined by the calculation agent in its sole discretion, or
- the underlier does not trade on what was the primary market for the underlier, as determined by the calculation agent in its sole discretion,

and, in the case of any of these events, the calculation agent determines in its sole discretion that the event could materially interfere with the ability of the company or any of its affiliates or a similarly situated person to unwind all or a material portion of a hedge that could be effected with respect to this note.

The following events will not be market disruption events:

- a limitation on the hours or numbers of days of trading, but only if the limitation results from an announced change in the regular business hours of the relevant market, and

- a decision to permanently discontinue trading in option or futures contracts relating to the underlier.

For this purpose, an absence of trading in the primary securities market on which shares of the underlier are traded, or on which option or futures contracts, if available, relating to the underlier are traded, will not include any time when that

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market is itself closed for trading under ordinary circumstances. In contrast, a suspension or limitation of trading in shares of the underlier or in option or futures contracts, if available, relating to the underlier in the primary market for the underlier or those contracts, by reason of:

- a price change exceeding limits set by that market,
- an imbalance of orders relating to the shares of the underlier or those contracts, or
- a disparity in bid and ask quotes relating to the shares of the underlier or those contracts,

will constitute a suspension or material limitation of trading in shares of the underlier or those contracts in that market.

Consequences of a market disruption event or a non-trading day: If a market disruption event occurs or is continuing on a day that would otherwise be the determination date or such day is not a trading day, then the determination date will be postponed as described under **Determination date** above.

If the calculation agent determines that the closing level of the underlier that must be used to determine the cash settlement amount is not available on the postponed determination date because of a market disruption event, a non-trading day or for any other reason (except as described under **Discontinuance or modification of the underlier** below), the calculation agent will nevertheless determine the closing level of the underlier based on its assessment, made in its sole discretion, of the level of the underlier on that day.

Discontinuance or modification of the underlier: If the underlier is delisted from the exchange on which the underlier has its primary listing and the underlier investment advisor or anyone else publishes a substitute underlier that the calculation agent determines is comparable to the underlier and approves as a successor underlier, or if the calculation agent designates a substitute underlier, then the calculation agent will determine the amount payable on the stated maturity date by reference to such successor underlier.

If the calculation agent determines that the underlier is delisted or withdrawn from the exchange on which the underlier has its primary listing and there is no successor underlier, the calculation agent will determine the amount payable on the stated maturity date by a computation methodology that the calculation agent determines will as closely as reasonably possible replicate the underlier.

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If the calculation agent determines that the underlier, the underlier stocks or the method of calculating the underlier is changed at any time in any respect including any split or reverse split of the underlier, a material change in the investment objective of the underlier and any addition, deletion or substitution and any reweighting or rebalancing of the underlier and whether the change is made by the underlier investment advisor under its existing policies or following a modification of those policies, is due to the publication of a successor underlier, is due to events affecting one or more of the underlier stocks or their issuers or is due to any other reason then the calculation agent will be permitted (but not required) to make such adjustments in the underlier or the method of its calculation as it believes are appropriate to ensure that the final underlier level, used to determine the amount payable on the stated maturity date, is equitable.

All determinations and adjustments to be made by the calculation agent with respect to the underlier may be made by the calculation agent in its sole discretion. The calculation agent is not obligated to make any such adjustments.

Anti-dilution adjustments: The calculation agent will have discretion to adjust the closing level of the underlier if certain events occur (including those described above under Discontinuance or modification of the underlier). In the event that any event other than a delisting or withdrawal from the relevant exchange occurs, the calculation agent shall determine whether and to what extent an adjustment should be made to the level of the underlier or any other term. The calculation agent shall have no obligation to make an adjustment for any such event.

Calculation agent: Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC (GS&Co.)

Tax characterization: The holder, on behalf of itself and any other person having a beneficial interest in this note, hereby agrees with the company (in the absence of a change in law, an administrative determination or a judicial ruling to the contrary) to characterize this note for all U.S. federal income tax purposes as a pre-paid derivative contract in respect of the underlier.

Overdue principal rate: the effective Federal Funds rate

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The following examples are provided for purposes of illustration only. They should not be taken as an indication or prediction of future investment results and merely are intended to illustrate the impact that the various hypothetical underlier levels on the determination date could have on the cash settlement amount at maturity assuming all other variables remain constant.

The examples below are based on a range of final underlier levels that are entirely hypothetical; the underlier level on any day throughout the life of the notes, including the final underlier level on the determination date, cannot be predicted. The underlier has been highly volatile in the past meaning that the underlier level has changed considerably in relatively short periods and its performance cannot be predicted for any future period.

The information in the following examples reflects hypothetical rates of return on the offered notes assuming that they are purchased on the original issue date at the face amount and held to the stated maturity date. If you sell your notes in a secondary market prior to the stated maturity date, your return will depend upon the market value of your notes at the time of sale, which may be affected by a number of factors that are not reflected in the table below, such as interest rates, the volatility of the underlier, the creditworthiness of GS Finance Corp., as issuer, and the creditworthiness of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., as guarantor. In addition, the estimated value of your notes at the time the terms of your notes are set on the trade date (as determined by reference to pricing models used by GS&Co.) is less than the original issue price of your notes. For more information on the estimated value of your notes, see *Additional Risk Factors Specific to Your Notes – The Estimated Value of Your Notes At the Time the Terms of Your Notes Are Set On the Trade Date (as Determined By Reference to Pricing Models Used By GS&Co.) Is Less Than the Original Issue Price Of Your Notes* on page PS-12 of this pricing supplement. The information in the examples also reflects the key terms and assumptions in the box below.

Key Terms and Assumptions

Face amount	\$1,000
Upside participation rate	100%
Cap level	131.8% of the initial underlier level
Maximum settlement amount	\$1,318
Buffer level	90% of the initial underlier level
Buffer rate	100%
Buffer amount	10%

Neither a market disruption event nor a non-trading day occurs on the originally scheduled determination date

No change in or affecting the underlier, any of the underlier stocks or the policies of the underlier's investment advisor or the method by which the underlying index sponsor calculates the underlying index

Notes purchased on original issue date at the face amount and held to the stated maturity date

Moreover, we have not yet set the initial underlier level that will serve as the baseline for determining the underlier return and the amount that we will pay on your notes at maturity. We will not do so until the trade date. As a result, the actual initial underlier level may differ substantially from the underlier level prior to the trade date.

For these reasons, the actual performance of the underlier over the life of your notes, as well as the amount payable at maturity may bear little relation to the hypothetical examples shown below or to the historical underlier levels shown elsewhere in this pricing supplement. For information about the historical levels of the underlier during recent periods, see "The Underlier - Historical Closing Levels of the Underlier" below. Before investing in the offered notes, you should consult publicly available information to determine the levels of the underlier between the date of this pricing supplement and the date of your purchase of the offered notes.

Also, the hypothetical examples shown below do not take into account the effects of applicable taxes. Because of the U.S. tax treatment applicable to your notes, tax liabilities could affect the after-tax rate of return on your notes to a comparatively greater extent than the after-tax return on the underlier stocks.

The levels in the left column of the table below represent hypothetical final underlier levels and are expressed as percentages of the initial underlier level. The amounts in the right column represent the hypothetical cash settlement amounts, based on the corresponding hypothetical final underlier level, and are expressed as percentages of the face amount of a note (rounded to the nearest one-thousandth of a percent). Thus, a hypothetical cash settlement amount of 100.000% means that the value of the cash payment that we would deliver for each \$1,000 of the outstanding face amount of the offered notes on the stated maturity date would equal 100.000% of the face amount of a note, based on the corresponding hypothetical final underlier level and the assumptions noted above.

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Hypothetical Final Underlier Level	Hypothetical Cash Settlement Amount
(as Percentage of Initial Underlier Level)	(as Percentage of Face Amount)
150.000%	131.800%
131.800%	131.800%
120.000%	120.000%
110.000%	110.000%
100.000%	100.000%
98.000%	100.000%
95.000%	100.000%
91.000%	100.000%
90.000%	100.000%
50.000%	60.000%
25.000%	35.000%
0.000%	10.000%

If, for example, the final underlier level were determined to be 25.000% of the initial underlier level, the cash settlement amount that we would deliver on your notes at maturity would be 35.000% of the face amount of your notes, as shown in the table above. As a result, if you purchased your notes on the original issue date at the fa