

GOLDMAN SACHS GROUP INC
Form 424B2
December 27, 2018
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Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(2)
Registration Number 333-219206

Subject to Completion. Dated December 26, 2018.

GS Finance Corp.

\$

Buffered S&P 500® Index-Linked Notes due

guaranteed by

The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.

The notes will not bear interest. The amount that you will be paid on your notes, if any, on the stated maturity date (expected to be January 15, 2020) is based on the performance of the S&P 500® Index as measured from the initial index level (set on the trade date, expected to be December 28, 2018) to each of the averaging dates (expected to be January 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, 2020). If the index return (the percentage change in the final index level, which is the arithmetic average of the closing levels of the index on each of the averaging dates, from the initial index level) is positive, the return on your notes will be the index return, **subject to the maximum upside settlement amount of \$1,100 for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes.**

If the index return is negative and the final index level is *equal to or greater than* 84.95% of the initial index level, the return on your notes will be the absolute value of the index return (*e.g.*, if the index return is -10%, your return will be +10%).

If the final index level declines by more than 15.05% from the initial index level, the return on your notes will be negative, and you will lose approximately 1.1772% of the face amount of your notes for every 1% that the final index level has declined below 84.95% of the initial index level. See page PS-4. **You could lose a significant portion of the face amount of your notes.**

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

- if the index return is *zero* or *positive* (the final index level is *equal to* or *greater than* the initial index level), the *sum* of (i) \$1,000 *plus* (ii) the *product* of (a) \$1,000 *times* (b) the index return, subject to the maximum upside settlement amount;
- if the index return is *negative* (the final index level is *less than* the initial index level) and the final index level is *equal to* or *greater than* 84.95% of the initial index level, the *sum* of (i) \$1,000 *plus* (ii) the *product* of \$1,000 *times* the absolute value of the index return; or
- if the index return is *negative* (the final index level is *less than* the initial index level) and the final index level is *less than* 84.95% of the initial index level, the sum of (i) \$1,000 *plus* (ii) the product of (a) the buffer rate of approximately 117.72% (see page PS-4) *times* (b) the sum of the index return *plus* 15.05% *times* (c) \$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-11.

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 \$960 and \$990 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 3, 2019	Original issue price:	100.00% of the face amount*
Underwriting discount:	% of the face amount*	Net proceeds to the issuer:	% of the face amount

*Accounts of certain national banks, acting as purchase agents for such accounts, have agreed with the purchase agents to pay a purchase price of % of the face amount, and as a result of such agreements, the agents with respect to sales to be made to such accounts will not receive any portion of the underwriting discount.

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

JPMorgan

Placement Agent

Pricing Supplement No. dated , 2018.

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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 \$960 and \$990 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 and should be read in

conjunction with such documents:

- 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.

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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. Also, references to the *accompanying prospectus* mean the accompanying prospectus, dated July 10, 2017, references to the *accompanying prospectus supplement* mean the accompanying prospectus supplement, dated July 10, 2017, for *Medium-Term Notes, Series E*, and references to the *accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734* mean the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734, dated July 10, 2017, in each case of *GS Finance Corp.* and *The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.* 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.

This section is meant as a summary and should be read in conjunction with the section entitled *Supplemental Terms of the Notes* on page S-16 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734. Please note that certain features described in the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734 are not applicable to the notes. This pricing supplement supersedes any conflicting provisions of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734.

Key Terms

Issuer:	GS Finance Corp.
Guarantor:	The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.
Underlier:	the S&P 500® Index (Bloomberg symbol, <i>SPX Index</i>), as published by S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC
Specified currency:	U.S. dollars (\$)
Face amount:	each note will have a face amount of \$1,000; \$ _____ in the aggregate for all the offered notes; the aggregate face amount of the offered notes may be increased if the issuer, at its sole option, decides to sell an additional amount of the offered notes on a date subsequent to the date of this pricing supplement
Denominations:	\$10,000 and integral multiples of \$1,000 in excess thereof
Purchase at amount other than face amount:	the amount we will pay you at the stated maturity date for your notes will not be adjusted based on the issue price you pay for your notes, so if you acquire notes at a premium (or discount) to face amount and hold them to the stated maturity date, it could affect your investment in a number of ways. The return on your investment in such notes will be lower (or higher) than it would have been had you purchased the notes at face amount. Also, the stated buffer level would not offer the same measure

of protection to your investment as would be the case if you had purchased the notes at face amount. Additionally, the upside cap level would be triggered at a lower (or higher) percentage return than indicated below, relative to your initial investment. See [Additional Risk Factors Specific to Your Notes](#) [If You Purchase Your Notes at a Premium to Face Amount, the Return on Your Investment Will Be Lower Than the Return on Notes Purchased at Face Amount and the Impact of Certain Key Terms of the Notes Will be Negatively Affected](#) on page PS-13 of this pricing supplement

**Supplemental discussion of U.S.
federal income tax
consequences:**

you will be obligated pursuant to the terms of the notes in the absence of a change in law, an administrative determination or a judicial ruling to the contrary to characterize each note for all tax purposes as a pre-paid derivative contract in respect of the underlier, as described under

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Supplemental Discussion of U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences herein. Pursuant to this approach, it is the opinion of Sidley Austin LLP that upon the sale, exchange or maturity of your notes, it would be reasonable for you to recognize capital gain or loss equal to the difference, if any, between the amount of cash you receive at such time and your tax basis in your notes.

Cash settlement amount (on the stated maturity date):

for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes, we will pay you on the stated maturity date an amount in cash equal to:

- if the final underlier level is *equal to* or *greater than* the initial underlier level, the *sum* of (i) \$1,000 *plus* (ii) the *product* of (a) \$1,000 *times* (b) the underlier return, subject to the maximum upside settlement amount; or
- if the final underlier level is *less than* the initial underlier level but *greater than* or *equal to* the buffer level, the *sum* of (i) \$1,000 *plus* (ii) the *product* of \$1,000 *times* the absolute underlier return; or
- if the final underlier level is *less than* the buffer level, the *sum* of (i) \$1,000 *plus* (ii) the *product* of (a) \$1,000 *times* (b) the buffer rate *times* (c) the *sum* of the underlier return *plus* the buffer amount.

Initial underlier level (to be set on the trade date):

Final underlier level:

the arithmetic average of the closing levels of the underlier on each of the averaging dates, except in the limited circumstances described under Supplemental Terms of the Notes Consequences of a Market Disruption Event or a Non-Trading Day on page S-23 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734 and subject to adjustment as provided under Supplemental Terms of the Notes Discontinuance or Modification of an Underlier on page S-27 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734

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

Absolute underlier return:

the absolute value of the underlier return, expressed as a percentage (e.g., a -10% underlier return will equal a +10% absolute underlier return)

Upside cap level:

110% of the initial underlier level

Maximum upside settlement amount:

\$1,100

Buffer level:

84.95% of the initial underlier level

Buffer amount:

15.05%

Buffer rate:

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the *quotient* of the initial underlier level *divided* by the buffer level, which equals approximately 117.72%

Trade date:

expected to be December 28, 2018

**Original issue date (settlement date)
(to be set on the trade date):**

expected to be January 3, 2019

**Determination date (to be set on the
trade date):**

the final averaging date, expected to be January 10, 2020, subject to adjustment as described under Supplemental Terms of the Notes Averaging Dates on page S-18 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734

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Stated maturity date (to be set on the trade date):	expected to be January 15, 2020, subject to adjustment as described under Supplemental Terms of the Notes Stated Maturity Date on page S-16 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734
Averaging dates (to be set on the trade date):	expected to be January 6, 2020, January 7, 2020, January 8, 2020, January 9, 2020 and January 10, 2020, each subject to postponement as described under Supplemental Terms of the Notes Averaging Dates on page S-18 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734
No interest:	the offered notes will not bear interest
No listing:	the offered notes will not be listed on any securities exchange or interdealer quotation system
No redemption:	the offered notes will not be subject to redemption right or price dependent redemption right
Closing level:	as described under Supplemental Terms of the Notes Special Calculation Provisions Closing Level on page S-31 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734
Business day:	as described under Supplemental Terms of the Notes Special Calculation Provisions Business Day on page S-30 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734
Trading day:	as described under Supplemental Terms of the Notes Special Calculation Provisions Trading Day on page S-31 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734
Use of proceeds and hedging:	as described under Use of Proceeds and Hedging on page S-94 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734
ERISA:	as described under Employee Retirement Income Security Act on page S-95 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734
Supplemental plan of distribution; conflicts of interest:	<p>as described under Supplemental Plan of Distribution on page S-96 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734 and Plan of Distribution Conflicts of Interest on page 78 of the accompanying prospectus; GS Finance Corp. estimates that its share of the total offering expenses, excluding underwriting discounts and commissions, will be approximately \$.</p> <p>GS Finance Corp. expects to agree to sell to Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC (GS&Co.), and GS&Co. expects to agree to purchase from GS Finance Corp., the aggregate face amount of the offered notes specified on the front cover of this pricing supplement. GS&Co. proposes initially to offer the notes to the public at the original issue price set forth on the cover page of this pricing supplement, and to certain securities dealers at such price less a concession not in excess of % of the face amount. Accounts of certain national banks, acting as purchase agents for such accounts, have agreed with the purchase agents to pay a purchase price of % of the face amount, and as a result of such agreements, the agents with respect to sales to be made to such accounts will not receive any portion of the underwriting discount set forth on the front cover page of this pricing supplement from GS&Co. GS&Co. is an affiliate of GS Finance Corp. and The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. and, as such, will have a conflict of interest in this offering of notes within the meaning of Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. (FINRA) Rule 5121. Consequently, this offering of notes will be conducted in compliance with the provisions of FINRA Rule 5121. GS&Co. will not be permitted to sell notes in this offering to an account over which it exercises discretionary authority without the prior specific written approval of the account holder.</p>

We expect to deliver the notes against payment therefor in New York,

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New York on January 3, 2019. Under Rule 15c6-1 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, trades in the secondary market generally are required to settle in two business days, unless the parties to any such trade expressly agree otherwise. Accordingly, purchasers who wish to trade notes on any date prior to two business days before delivery will be required to specify alternative settlement arrangements to prevent a failed settlement.

We have been advised by GS&Co. that it intends to make a market in the notes. However, neither GS&Co. nor any of our other affiliates that makes a market is obligated to do so and any of them may stop doing so at any time without notice. No assurance can be given as to the liquidity or trading market for the notes.

Calculation agent:	GS&Co.
CUSIP no.:	40056EPN2
ISIN no.:	US40056EPN21
FDIC:	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

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Additional Terms Specific to Your Notes

You should read this pricing supplement together with the prospectus dated July 10, 2017, the prospectus supplement dated July 10, 2017 and the general terms supplement no. 1,734 dated July 10, 2017. You may access these documents on the SEC website at sec.gov as follows (or if such address has changed, by reviewing our filings for the relevant date on the SEC website):

Prospectus dated July 10, 2017:

<https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/886982/000119312517224447/d356650d424b2.htm>

Prospectus supplement dated July 10, 2017:

<https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/886982/000119312517224493/d393410d424b2.htm>

General terms supplement no. 1,734 dated July 10, 2017:

<https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/886982/000119312517224511/d420249d424b2.htm>

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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 are intended merely to illustrate the impact that the various hypothetical underlier levels on the averaging dates 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; no one can predict what the underlier level will be on any day throughout the life of your notes, and no one can predict what the underlier level will be on any averaging date. 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 examples 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-11 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 cap level:	110% of the initial underlier level	
Maximum upside settlement amount:		\$1,100
Buffer level	84.95% of the initial underlier level	
Buffer rate	approximately 117.72%	
Buffer amount		15.05%
Neither a market disruption event nor a non-trading day occurs on any of the originally scheduled averaging dates		

No change in or affecting any of the underlier stocks or the method by which the underlier sponsor calculates the underlier

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 or the absolute underlier return, as applicable, and the amount that we will pay on your notes, if any, 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.

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For these reasons, the actual performance of the underlier over the life of your notes, as well as the amount payable at maturity, if any, 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.

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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 or 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 (expressed as a percentage of the initial 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 (expressed as a percentage of the initial underlier level) and the assumptions noted above.

Hypothetical Final Underlier Level (as Percentage of Initial Underlier Level)	Hypothetical Cash Settlement Amount (as Percentage of Face Amount)
150.000%	110.000%
140.000%	110.000%
125.000%	110.000%
110.000%	110.000%
106.000%	106.000%
103.000%	103.000%
100.000%	100.000%
95.000%	105.000%
90.000%	110.000%
84.950%	115.050%
75.000%	88.287%
50.000%	58.858%
25.000%	29.429%
0.000%	0.000%

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 approximately 29.429% 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 face amount and held them to the stated maturity date, you would lose approximately 70.571% of your investment (if you purchased your notes at a premium to face amount you would lose a correspondingly higher percentage of your investment).

If, for example, the final underlier level were determined to be 95.000% of the initial underlier level, the absolute underlier return would be 5.000% and the cash settlement amount that we would deliver on your notes at maturity would be 105.000% of the face amount of your notes, as shown in the table above.

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If, for example, the final underlier level were determined to be 150.000% of the initial underlier level, the cash settlement amount that we would deliver on your notes at maturity would be capped at the maximum upside settlement amount (expressed as a percentage of the face amount), or 110.000% for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes, as shown in the table above. As a result, if you held your notes to the stated maturity date, you would not benefit from any increase in the final underlier level over 110.000% of the initial underlier level.

The cash settlement amounts shown above are entirely hypothetical; they are based on market prices for the underlier stocks that may not be achieved on the averaging dates and on assumptions that may prove to be erroneous. The actual market value of your notes on the stated maturity date or at any other time, including any time you may wish to sell your notes, may bear little relation to the hypothetical cash settlement amounts shown above, and these amounts should not be viewed as an indication of the financial return on an investment in the offered notes. The hypothetical cash settlement amounts on notes held to the stated maturity date in the examples above assume you purchased your notes at their face amount and have not been adjusted to reflect the actual issue price you pay for your notes. The return on your investment (whether positive or negative) in your notes will be affected by the amount you pay for your notes. If you purchase your notes for a price other than the face amount, the return on your investment will differ from, and may be significantly lower than, the hypothetical returns suggested by the above examples. Please read *Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Notes – The Market Value of Your Notes May Be Influenced by Many Unpredictable Factors* in the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734.

Payments on the notes are economically equivalent to the amounts that would be paid on a combination of other instruments. For example, payments on the notes are economically equivalent to a combination of an interest-bearing bond bought by the holder and one or more options entered into between the holder and us (with one or more implicit option premiums paid over time). The discussion in this paragraph does not modify or affect the terms of the notes or the U.S. federal income tax treatment of the notes, as described elsewhere in this pricing supplement.

We cannot predict the actual final underlier level or what the market value of your notes will be on any particular trading day, nor can we predict the relationship between the underlier level and the market value of your notes at any time prior to the stated maturity date. The actual amount that you will receive, if any, at maturity and the rate of return on the offered notes will depend on the actual initial underlier level, which we will set on the trade date, and the actual final underlier level determined by the calculation agent as described above. Moreover, the assumptions on which the hypothetical returns are based may turn out to be inaccurate. Consequently, the amount of cash to be paid in respect of your notes, if any, on the stated maturity date may be very different from the information reflected in the examples above.

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ADDITIONAL RISK FACTORS SPECIFIC TO YOUR NOTES

An investment in your notes is subject to the risks described below, as well as the risks and considerations described in the accompanying prospectus, in the accompanying prospectus supplement and under Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Notes in the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734. You should carefully review these risks and considerations as well as the terms of the notes described herein and in the accompanying prospectus, the accompanying prospectus supplement and the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734. Your notes are a riskier investment than ordinary debt securities. Also, your notes are not equivalent to investing directly in the underlier stocks, i.e., the stocks comprising the underlier to which your notes are linked. You should carefully consider whether the offered notes are suited to your particular circumstances.

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

The original issue price for your notes exceeds the estimated value of your notes as of the time the terms of your notes are set on the trade date, as determined by reference to GS&Co.'s pricing models and taking into account our credit spreads. Such estimated value on the trade date is set forth above under Estimated Value of Your Notes ; after the trade date, the estimated value as determined by reference to these models will be affected by changes in market conditions, the creditworthiness of GS Finance Corp., as issuer, the creditworthiness of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., as guarantor, and other relevant factors. The price at which GS&Co. would initially buy or sell your notes (if GS&Co. makes a market, which it is not obligated to do), and the value that GS&Co. will initially use for account statements and otherwise, also exceeds the estimated value of your notes as determined by reference to these models. As agreed by GS&Co. and the distribution participants, this excess (i.e., the additional amount described under Estimated Value of Your Notes) will decline to zero on a straight line basis over the period from the date hereof through the applicable date set forth above under Estimated Value of Your Notes. Thereafter, if GS&Co. buys or sells your notes it will do so at prices that reflect the estimated value determined by reference to such pricing models at that time. The price at which GS&Co. will buy or sell your notes at any time also will reflect its then current bid and ask spread for similar sized trades of structured notes.

In estimating the value of your notes as of the time the terms of your notes are set on the trade date, as disclosed above under Estimated Value of Your Notes , GS&Co.'s pricing models consider certain variables, including principally our credit spreads, interest rates (forecasted, current and historical rates), volatility, price-sensitivity analysis and the time to maturity of the notes. These pricing models are proprietary and rely in part on certain assumptions about future events, which may prove to be incorrect. As a result, the actual value you would receive if you sold your notes in the secondary market, if any, to others may differ, perhaps materially, from the estimated value of your notes determined by reference to our models due to, among other things, any differences in pricing models or assumptions used by others. See Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Notes The Market Value of Your Notes May Be Influenced by Many Unpredictable Factors in the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734.

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The difference between the estimated value of your notes as of the time the terms of your notes are set on the trade date and the original issue price is a result of certain factors, including principally the underwriting discount and commissions, the expenses incurred in creating, documenting and marketing the notes, and an estimate of the difference between the amounts we pay to GS&Co. and the amounts GS&Co. pays to us in connection with your notes. We pay to GS&Co. amounts based on what we would pay to holders of a non-structured note with a similar maturity. In return for such payment, GS&Co. pays to us the amounts we owe under your notes.

In addition to the factors discussed above, the value and quoted price of your notes at any time will reflect many factors and cannot be predicted. If GS&Co. makes a market in the notes, the price quoted by GS&Co. would reflect any changes in market conditions and other relevant factors, including any deterioration in our creditworthiness or perceived creditworthiness or the creditworthiness or perceived creditworthiness of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. These changes may adversely affect the value of your notes, including the price you may receive for your notes in any market making transaction. To the extent that GS&Co. makes a market in the notes, the quoted price will reflect the estimated value determined by reference to GS&Co.'s pricing models at that time, plus or minus its then current bid and ask spread for similar sized trades of structured notes (and subject to the declining excess amount described above).

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Furthermore, if you sell your notes, you will likely be charged a commission for secondary market transactions, or the price will likely reflect a dealer discount. This commission or discount will further reduce the proceeds you would receive for your notes in a secondary market sale.

There is no assurance that GS&Co. or any other party will be willing to purchase your notes at any price and, in this regard, GS&Co. is not obligated to make a market in the notes. See [Your Notes May Not Have an Active Trading Market](#) below.

The Notes Are Subject to the Credit Risk of the Issuer and the Guarantor

Although the return on the notes will be based on the performance of the underlier, the payment of any amount due on the notes is subject to the credit risk of GS Finance Corp., as issuer of the notes, and the credit risk of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. as guarantor of the notes. The notes are our unsecured obligations. Investors are dependent on our ability to pay all amounts due on the notes, and therefore investors are subject to our credit risk and to changes in the market's view of our creditworthiness. Similarly, investors are dependent on the ability of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., as guarantor of the notes, to pay all amounts due on the notes, and therefore are also subject to its credit risk and to changes in the market's view of its creditworthiness. See [Description of the Notes We May Offer](#) [Information About Our Medium-Term Notes, Series E Program](#) [How the Notes Rank Against Other Debt](#) on page S-4 of the accompanying prospectus supplement and [Description of Debt Securities We May Offer](#) [Guarantee by The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.](#) on page 42 of the accompanying prospectus.

The Cash Settlement Amount on Your Notes Is Linked to the Closing Level of the Underlier on Five Averaging Dates

The final underlier level will be based on the arithmetic average of the underlier closing levels on each of the five averaging dates (each of which is subject to postponement in the case of market disruption events or non-trading days), and therefore not the simple performance of the underlier over the life of your notes. Therefore, the cash settlement amount for your notes may be significantly less than it would have been had the cash settlement amount been linked only to the closing level of the underlier on that last averaging date.

You May Lose Your Entire Investment in the Notes

You can lose your entire investment in the notes. The cash payment on your notes on the stated maturity date, if any, will be based on the performance of the S&P 500® Index as measured from the initial underlier level set on the trade date to the closing level on each of the averaging dates. If the final underlier level is *less than* the buffer level, you will have a loss for each \$1,000 of the face amount of your notes equal to the *product* of (i) the buffer rate *times* (ii) the *sum* of the underlier return *plus* the buffer amount *times* (iii) \$1,000. Thus, you may lose your entire investment in the notes, which would include any premium to face amount you paid when you purchased the notes.

Also, the market price of your notes prior to the stated maturity date may be significantly lower than the purchase price you pay for your notes. Consequently, if you sell your notes before the stated maturity date, you may receive far less than the amount of your investment in the notes.

Your Notes Will Not Bear Interest

You will not receive any interest payments on your notes. As a result, even if the cash settlement amount payable for your notes on the stated maturity date exceeds the face amount of your notes, the overall return you earn on your notes may be less than you would have earned by investing in a non-indexed debt security of comparable maturity that bears interest at a prevailing market rate.

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The Potential for the Value of Your Notes to Increase Will Be Limited

Your ability to participate in any positive change in the level of the underlier over the life of your notes will be limited because of the maximum upside settlement amount. The upside cap level will limit the cash settlement amount you may receive for each of your notes at maturity, no matter how much the level of the underlier may rise beyond the upside cap level over the life of your notes. Accordingly, if the underlier return is positive, the amount payable for each of your notes may be significantly less than it would have been had you invested directly in the underlier. In addition, if the underlier return is negative and the final index level is *equal to or greater than* the buffer level, you will receive for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes an amount in cash equal to the sum of \$1,000 plus the product of \$1,000 times the absolute underlier return. You will only benefit from the absolute underlier return if the final underlier level has not declined relative to the initial underlier level by more than the buffer amount. Therefore, if the final underlier level is less than the initial underlier level but greater than or equal to the buffer level, the amount you may receive at maturity will not exceed \$1,150.5 for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes.

You Have No Shareholder Rights or Rights to Receive Any Underlier Stock

Investing in your notes will not make you a holder of any of the underlier stocks. Neither you nor any other holder or owner of your notes will have any rights with respect to the underlier stocks, including any voting rights, any right to receive dividends or other distributions, any rights to make a claim against the underlier stocks or any other rights of a holder of the underlier stocks. Your notes will be paid in cash and you will have no right to receive delivery of any underlier stocks.

We May Sell an Additional Aggregate Face Amount of the Notes at a Different Issue Price

At our sole option, we may decide to sell an additional aggregate face amount of the notes subsequent to the date of this pricing supplement. The issue price of the notes in the subsequent sale may differ substantially (higher or lower) from the original issue price you paid as provided on the cover of this pricing supplement.

If You Purchase Your Notes at a Premium to Face Amount, the Return on Your Investment Will Be Lower Than the Return on Notes Purchased at Face Amount and the Impact of Certain Key Terms of the Notes Will Be Negatively Affected

The cash settlement amount will not be adjusted based on the issue price you pay for the notes. If you purchase notes at a price that differs from the face amount of the notes, then the return on your investment in such notes held to the stated maturity date will differ from, and may be substantially less than, the return on notes purchased at face amount. If you purchase your notes at a premium to face amount and hold them to the stated maturity date the return on your investment in the notes will be lower than it would have been had you purchased the notes at face amount or a discount to face amount. In addition, the impact of the buffer level and the upside cap level on the return on your investment will depend upon the price you pay for your notes relative to the face amount. For example, if you purchase your notes at a premium to the face amount, the upside cap level will only permit a lower percentage increase in your investment in the notes than would have been the case for notes purchased at face amount or a discount to face amount. Similarly, the buffer level, while still providing some protection for the return on the notes, will allow a greater percentage decrease in your investment in the notes than would have been the case for notes purchased at face amount or a discount to face amount.

Your Notes May Not Have an Active Trading Market

Your notes will not be listed or displayed on any securities exchange or included in any interdealer market quotation system, and there may be little or no secondary market for your notes. Even if a secondary market for your notes develops, it may not provide significant liquidity and we expect that transaction costs in any secondary market would be high. As a result, the difference between bid and asked prices for your notes in any secondary market could be substantial.

Your Notes May Be Subject to an Adverse Change in Tax Treatment in the Future

The tax consequences of an investment in your notes are uncertain, both as to the timing and character of any inclusion in income in respect of your notes.

The Internal Revenue Service announced on December 7, 2007 that it is considering issuing guidance regarding the tax treatment of an instrument such as your notes, and any such guidance could adversely affect the value and the tax treatment of your notes. Among other things, the Internal Revenue Service may decide to require the holders to accrue ordinary income on a current basis and recognize ordinary income on payment at maturity, and could subject non-U.S. investors to withholding tax. Furthermore, in

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2007, legislation was introduced in Congress that, if enacted, would have required holders that acquired instruments such as your notes after the bill was enacted to accrue interest income over the term of such instruments even though there will be no interest payments over the term of such instruments. It is not possible to predict whether a similar or identical bill will be enacted in the future, or whether any such bill would affect the tax treatment of your notes. We describe these developments in more detail under Supplemental Discussion of U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences United States Holders Possible Change in Law below. You should consult your tax advisor about this matter. Except to the extent otherwise provided by law, GS Finance Corp. intends to continue treating the notes for U.S. federal income tax purposes in accordance with the treatment described under Supplemental Discussion of U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences below unless and until such time as Congress, the Treasury Department or the Internal Revenue Service determine that some other treatment is more appropriate. Please also consult your tax advisor concerning the U.S. federal income tax and any other applicable tax consequences to you of owning your notes in your particular circumstances.

Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) Withholding May Apply to Payments on Your Notes, Including as a Result of the Failure of the Bank or Broker Through Which You Hold the Notes to Provide Information to Tax Authorities

Please see the discussion under United States Taxation Taxation of Debt Securities Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) Withholding in the accompanying prospectus for a description of the applicability of FATCA to payments made on your notes.

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THE UNDERLIER

The S&P 500® Index includes a representative sample of 500 leading companies in leading industries of the U.S. economy. The S&P 500® Index is calculated, maintained and published by S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC.

As of July 31, 2017, companies with multiple share class lines are no longer eligible for inclusion in the S&P 500® Index. Constituents of the S&P 500® Index prior to July 31, 2017 with multiple share class lines will be grandfathered in and continue to be included in the S&P 500® Index. If an S&P 500® Index constituent reorganizes into a multiple share class line structure, that company will be reviewed for continued inclusion in the S&P 500® Index at the discretion of the S&P Index Committee. Also as of July 31, 2017, the criteria employed by S&P for purposes of making additions to the S&P 500® Index were changed as follows:

- with respect to the U.S. company criterion, (i) the IEX was added as an eligible exchange for the primary listing of the relevant company's common stock and (ii) the former corporate governance structure consistent with U.S. practice requirement was removed; and
- with respect to constituents of the S&P MidCap 400® Index and the S&P SmallCap 600® Index that are being considered for addition to the S&P 500® Index, the financial viability, public float and/or liquidity eligibility criteria no longer need to be met if the S&P Index Committee decides that such an addition will enhance the representativeness of the S&P 500® Index as a market benchmark.

As of December 17, 2018, the 500 companies included in the S&P 500® Index were divided into eleven Global Industry Classification Sectors. The Global Industry Classification Sectors include (with the approximate percentage currently included in such sectors indicated in parentheses): Communication Services (10.12%), Consumer Discretionary (9.83%), Consumer Staples (7.57%), Energy (5.50%), Financials (13.19%), Health Care (15.48%), Industrials (9.21%), Information Technology (20.16%), Materials (2.61%), Real Estate (2.98%) and Utilities (3.36%). (Sector designations are determined by the underlier sponsor using criteria it has selected or developed. Index sponsors may use very different standards for determining sector designations. In addition, many companies operate in a number of sectors, but are listed in only one sector and the basis on which that sector is selected may also differ. As a result, sector comparisons between indices with different index sponsors may reflect differences in methodology as well as actual differences in the sector composition of the indices.) As of the close of business on September 21, 2018, S&P and MSCI, Inc. updated the Global Industry Classification Sector structure. Among other things, the update broadened the Telecommunications Services sector and renamed it the Communication Services sector. The renamed sector includes the previously existing Telecommunication Services Industry group, as well as the Media Industry group, which was moved from the Consumer Discretionary sector and renamed the Media & Entertainment Industry group. The Media & Entertainment Industry group contains three

industries: Media, Entertainment and Interactive Media & Services. The Media industry continues to consist of the Advertising, Broadcasting, Cable & Satellite and Publishing sub-industries. The Entertainment industry contains the Movies & Entertainment sub-industry (which includes online entertainment streaming companies in addition to companies previously classified in such industry prior to September 21, 2018) and the Interactive Home Entertainment sub-industry (which includes companies previously classified in the Home Entertainment Software sub-industry prior to September 21, 2018 (when the Home Entertainment Software sub-industry was a sub-industry in the Information Technology sector)), as well as producers of interactive gaming products, including mobile gaming applications). The Interactive Media & Services industry and sub-industry includes companies engaged in content and information creation or distribution through proprietary platforms, where revenues are derived primarily through pay-per-click advertisements, and includes search engines, social media and networking platforms, online classifieds and online review companies. The Global Industry Classification Sector structure changes are effective for the S&P 500® Index as of the open of business on September 24, 2018 to coincide with the September 2018 quarterly rebalancing.

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The above information supplements the description of the underlier found in the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734. This information was derived from information prepared by the underlier sponsor, however, the percentages we have listed above are approximate and may not match the information available on the underlier sponsor's website due to subsequent corporate actions or other activity relating to a particular stock. For more details about the underlier, the underlier sponsor and license agreement between the underlier sponsor and the issuer, see "The Underliers - S&P 500® Index" on page S-40 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734.

The S&P 500® Index is a product of S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, and has been licensed for use by GS Finance Corp. (Goldman Sachs). Standard & Poor's® and S&P® are registered trademarks of Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC; Dow Jones® is a registered trademark of Dow Jones Trademark Holdings LLC (Dow Jones) and these trademarks have been licensed for use by S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC and sublicensed for certain purposes by Goldman Sachs. Goldman Sachs's notes are not sponsored, endorsed, sold or promoted by S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, Dow Jones, Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC or any of their respective affiliates and neither S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, Dow Jones, Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC or any of their respective affiliates make any representation regarding the advisability of investing in such notes.

Historical Closing Levels of the Underlier

The closing level of the underlier has fluctuated in the past and may, in the future, experience significant fluctuations. Any historical upward or downward trend in the closing level of the underlier during the period shown below is not an indication that the underlier is more or less likely to increase or decrease at any time during the life of your notes.

You should not take the historical levels of the underlier as an indication of the future performance of the underlier. We cannot give you any assurance that the future performance of the underlier or the underlier stocks will result in your receiving an amount greater than the outstanding face amount of your notes on the stated maturity date.

Neither we nor any of our affiliates make any representation to you as to the performance of the underlier. 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. The actual performance of the underlier over the life of the offered notes, as well as the cash settlement amount, may bear little relation to the historical closing levels shown below.

The graph below shows the daily historical closing levels of the underlier from December 21, 2008 through December 21, 2018. We obtained the closing levels in the graph below from Bloomberg Financial Services, without independent verification.

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Historical Performance of the S&P 500® Index

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SUPPLEMENTAL DISCUSSION OF U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSEQUENCES

The following section supplements the discussion of U.S. federal income taxation in the accompanying prospectus.

The following section is the opinion of Sidley Austin LLP, counsel to GS Finance Corp. and The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. In addition, it is the opinion of Sidley Austin LLP that the characterization of the notes for U.S. federal income tax purposes that will be required under the terms of the notes, as discussed below, is a reasonable interpretation of current law.

This section does not apply to you if you are a member of a class of holders subject to special rules, such as:

- a dealer in securities or currencies;

- a trader in securities that elects to use a mark-to-market method of accounting for your securities holdings;

- a bank;

- a life insurance company;

- a tax exempt organization;

- a regulated investment company;

- an accrual method taxpayer subject to special accounting rules as a result of its use of financial statements;

- a partnership;

- a person that owns a note as a hedge or that is hedged against interest rate risks;
- a person that owns a note as part of a straddle or conversion transaction for tax purposes; or
- a United States holder (as defined below) whose functional currency for tax purposes is not the U.S. dollar.

Although this section is based on the U.S. Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, its legislative history, existing and proposed regulations under the Internal Revenue Code, published rulings and court decisions, all as currently in effect, no statutory, judicial or administrative authority directly addresses how your notes should be treated for U.S. federal income tax purposes, and as a result, the U.S. federal income tax consequences of your investment in your notes are uncertain. Moreover, these laws are subject to change, possibly on a retroactive basis.

You should consult your tax advisor concerning the U.S. federal income tax and any other applicable tax consequences of your investments in the notes, including the application of state, local or other tax laws and the possible effects of changes in federal or other tax laws.

United States Holders

This section applies to you only if you are a United States holder that holds your notes as a capital asset for tax purposes. You are a United States holder if you are a beneficial owner of each of your notes and you are:

- a citizen or resident of the United States;
- a domestic corporation;
- an estate whose income is subject to U.S. federal income tax regardless of its source; or
- a trust if a United States court can exercise primary supervision over the trust's administration and one or more United States persons are authorized to control all substantial decisions of the trust.

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Tax Treatment. You will be obligated pursuant to the terms of the notes in the absence of a change in law, an administrative determination or a judicial ruling to the contrary to characterize each note for all tax purposes as a pre-paid derivative contract in respect of the underlier. Except as otherwise stated below, the discussion herein assumes that the notes will be so treated.

Upon the sale, exchange or maturity of your notes, you should recognize capital gain or loss equal to the difference, if any, between the amount of cash you receive at such time and your tax basis in your notes. Your tax basis in the notes will generally be equal to the amount that you paid for the notes. If you hold your notes for more than one year, the gain or loss generally will be long-term capital gain or loss. If you hold your notes for one year or less, the gain or loss generally will be short-term capital gain or loss. Short-term capital gains are generally subject to tax at the marginal tax rates applicable to ordinary income.

No statutory, judicial or administrative authority directly discusses how your notes should be treated for U.S. federal income tax purposes. As a result, the U.S. federal income tax consequences of your investment in the notes are uncertain and alternative characterizations are possible. Accordingly, we urge you to consult your tax advisor in determining the tax consequences of an investment in your notes in your particular circumstances, including the application of state, local or other tax laws and the possible effects of changes in federal or other tax laws.

Alternative Treatments. There is no judicial or administrative authority discussing how your notes should be treated for U.S. federal income tax purposes. Therefore, the Internal Revenue Service might assert that a treatment other than that described above is more appropriate. For example, the Internal Revenue Service could treat your notes as a single debt instrument subject to special rules governing contingent payment debt instruments. Under those rules, the amount of interest you are required to take into account for each accrual period would be determined by constructing a projected payment schedule for the notes and applying rules similar to those for accruing original issue discount on a hypothetical noncontingent debt instrument with that projected payment schedule. This method is applied by first determining the comparable yield i.e., the yield at which we would issue a noncontingent fixed rate debt instrument with terms and conditions similar to your notes and then determining a payment schedule as of the issue date that would produce the comparable yield. These rules may have the effect of requiring you to include interest in income in respect of your notes prior to your receipt of cash attributable to that income.

If the rules governing contingent payment debt instruments apply, any income you recognize upon the sale, exchange or maturity of your notes would be treated as ordinary interest income. Any loss you recognize at that time would be treated as ordinary loss to the extent of interest you included as income in the current or previous taxable years in respect of your notes, and, thereafter, as capital loss.

If the rules governing contingent payment debt instruments apply, special rules would apply to a person who purchases notes at a price other than the adjusted issue price as determined for tax purposes.

It is also possible that your notes could be treated in the manner described above, except that any gain or loss that you recognize at maturity would be treated as ordinary gain or loss. You should consult your tax advisor as to the tax consequences of such characterization and any possible alternative characterizations of your notes for U.S. federal income tax purposes.

It is possible that the Internal Revenue Service could seek to characterize your notes in a manner that results in tax consequences to you different from those described above and you should consult your tax advisor with respect to the tax treatment of the notes.

Possible Change in Law

On December 7, 2007, the Internal Revenue Service released a notice stating that the Internal Revenue Service and the Treasury Department are actively considering issuing guidance regarding the proper U.S. federal income tax treatment of an instrument such as your notes, including whether the holder of an instrument such as your notes should be required to accrue ordinary income on a current basis and whether gain or loss should be ordinary or capital. It is not possible to determine what guidance they will ultimately issue, if any. Holders are urged to consult their tax advisors concerning the significance, and

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the potential impact, of the above considerations. Except to the extent otherwise provided by law, GS Finance Corp. intends to continue treating the notes for U.S. federal income tax purposes in accordance with the treatment described above under Tax Treatment unless and until such time as Congress, the Treasury Department or the Internal Revenue Service determine that some other treatment is more appropriate. You are urged to consult your tax advisor as to the possibility that any legislative or administrative action may adversely affect the tax treatment and the value of your notes.

Furthermore, in 2007, legislation was introduced in Congress that, if enacted, would have required holders that acquired instruments such as your notes after the bill was enacted to accrue interest income over the term of such instruments even though there will be no interest payments over the term of such instruments. It is not possible to predict whether a similar or identical bill will be enacted in the future, or whether any such bill would affect the tax treatment of your notes.

It is impossible to predict what any such legislation or administrative or regulatory guidance might provide, and whether the effective date of any legislation or guidance will affect notes that were issued before the date that such legislation or guidance is issued. You are urged to consult your tax advisor as to the possibility that any legislative or administrative action may adversely affect the tax treatment of your notes.

Backup Withholding and Information Reporting

Please see the discussion under United States Taxation Taxation of Debt Securities Backup Withholding and Information Reporting United States Holders in the accompanying prospectus for a description of the applicability of the backup withholding and information reporting rules to payments made on your notes.

United States Alien Holders

This section applies to you only if you are a United States alien holder. You are a United States alien holder if you are the beneficial owner of notes and are, for U.S. federal income tax purposes:

- a nonresident alien individual;

- a foreign corporation; or

- an estate or trust that in either case is not subject to U.S. federal income tax on a net income basis on income or gain from the notes.

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You will be subject to generally applicable information reporting and backup withholding requirements as discussed in the accompanying prospectus under United States Taxation Taxation of Debt Securities Backup Withholding and Information Reporting United States Alien Holders with respect to payments on your notes at maturity and, notwithstanding that we do not intend to treat the notes as debt for tax purposes, we intend to backup withhold on such payments with respect to your notes unless you comply with the requirements necessary to avoid backup withholding on debt instruments (in which case you will not be subject to such backup withholding) as set forth under United States Taxation Taxation of Debt Securities United States Alien Holders in the accompanying prospectus.

As discussed above, alternative characterizations of the notes for U.S. federal income tax purposes are possible. Should an alternative characterization of the notes, by reason of a change or clarification of the law, by regulation or otherwise, cause payments at maturity with respect to the notes to become subject to withholding tax, we will withhold tax at the applicable statutory rate and we will not make payments of any additional amounts. Prospective United States alien holders of the notes should consult their tax advisors in this regard.

Furthermore, on December 7, 2007, the Internal Revenue Service released Notice 2008-2 soliciting comments from the public on various issues, including whether instruments such as your notes should be subject to withholding. It is therefore possible that rules will be issued in the future, possibly with retroactive effect, that would cause payments on your notes at maturity to be subject to withholding, even if you comply with certification requirements as to your foreign status.

In addition, the Treasury Department has issued regulations under which amounts paid or deemed paid on certain financial instruments (871(m) financial instruments) that are treated as attributable to U.S.-

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source dividends could be treated, in whole or in part depending on the circumstances, as a dividend equivalent payment that is subject to tax at a rate of 30% (or a lower rate under an applicable treaty), which in the case of any amounts you receive upon the sale, exchange or maturity of your notes, could be collected via withholding. If these regulations were to apply to the notes, we may be required to withhold such taxes if any U.S.-source dividends are paid on the stocks included in the underlier during the term of the notes. We could also require you to make certifications (e.g., an applicable Internal Revenue Service Form W-8) prior to the maturity of the notes in order to avoid or minimize withholding obligations, and we could withhold accordingly (subject to your potential right to claim a refund from the Internal Revenue Service) if such certifications were not received or were not satisfactory. If withholding was required, we would not be required to pay any additional amounts with respect to amounts so withheld. These regulations generally will apply to 871(m) financial instruments (or a combination of financial instruments treated as having been entered into in connection with each other) issued (or significantly modified and treated as retired and reissued) on or after January 1, 2021, but will also apply to certain 871(m) financial instruments (or a combination of financial instruments treated as having been entered into in connection with each other) that have a delta (as defined in the applicable Treasury regulations) of one and are issued (or significantly modified and treated as retired and reissued) on or after January 1, 2017. In addition, these regulations will not apply to financial instruments that reference a qualified index (as defined in the regulations). We have determined that, as of the issue date of your notes, your notes will not be subject to withholding under these rules. In certain limited circumstances, however, you should be aware that it is possible for United States alien holders to be liable for tax under these rules with respect to a combination of transactions treated as having been entered into in connection with each other even when no withholding is required. You should consult your tax advisor concerning these regulations, subsequent official guidance and regarding any other possible alternative characterizations of your notes for U.S. federal income tax purposes.

Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) Withholding

Pursuant to Treasury regulations, Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) withholding (as described in United States Taxation Taxation of Debt Securities Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) Withholding in the accompanying prospectus) will generally apply to obligations that are issued on or after July 1, 2014; therefore, the notes will generally be subject to the FATCA withholding rules.

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We have not authorized anyone to provide any information or to make any representations other than those contained or incorporated by reference in this pricing supplement, the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734, the accompanying prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. We take no responsibility for, and can provide no assurance as to the reliability of, any other information that others may give you. This pricing supplement, the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734, the accompanying prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus is an offer to sell only the notes offered hereby, but only under circumstances and in jurisdictions where it is lawful to do so. The information contained in this pricing supplement, the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734, the accompanying prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus is current only as of the respective dates of such documents.

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GS Finance Corp.

Supplemental Discussion of U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences

PS-18 Buffered S&P 500® Index-Linked Notes due

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guaranteed by

The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.

Prospectus Supplement dated July 10, 2017

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Validity of the Notes and Guarantees

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Placement Agent