

GOLDMAN SACHS GROUP INC

Form 424B2

September 21, 2018

Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(2)

Registration Statement No. 333-219206

The information in this preliminary pricing supplement is not complete and may be changed. This preliminary pricing supplement is not an offer to sell nor does it seek an offer to buy these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.

Subject to Completion. Dated September 21, 2018.

GS Finance Corp.

\$

Absolute Return Trigger 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 on the stated maturity date (expected to be the second scheduled business day after the determination date) is based on the performance of the S&P 500[®] Index as measured from and including the trade date to and including the determination date (expected to be between 24 and 27 months after the trade date), unless a barrier event has occurred.

A barrier event will occur if, on any day during the measurement period, which is the period from but excluding the trade date to and including the determination date, the closing level of the index increases or decreases by more than the maximum return of between 19.05% and 22.15% (set on the trade date) from the initial index level. The initial index level will be set on the trade date and may be higher or lower than the actual closing level of the index on that date.

If a barrier event has occurred at any time during the measurement period, the return on your notes will be positive and at maturity you will receive \$1,020 for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes (representing a return of 2%), regardless of the final index level (which is the closing index level on the determination date). A barrier event may occur at any point during the measurement period; however, you will not receive the \$1,020 per \$1,000 face amount on your note until maturity and you will receive such amount regardless of the final index level.

If a barrier event has not occurred, the return on your notes will be zero or positive and will equal the absolute value of the index return which is the increase or decrease in the final index level from the initial index level. For example, if the index return is either -10% or +10%, your return will be +10%.

At maturity, for each \$1,000 face amount, (a) if a barrier event has occurred you will receive \$1,020 and (b) if a barrier event has not occurred, you will receive (i) \$1,000 plus (ii) \$1,000 times the absolute value of the index return (not less than \$1,000 and not more than between \$1,190.5 and \$1,221.5). If the increase in the final index level from the initial index level exceeds the maximum return, you will only receive \$1,020.

A purchaser of these notes in the secondary market should determine if a barrier event has already occurred. The occurrence of a barrier event could significantly affect both the secondary market trading price of these notes and the amount that a holder of the notes will receive at maturity. See page PS-6.

At maturity, for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes you will receive an amount in cash equal to:

if a barrier event has not occurred, the sum of (a) \$1,000 plus (b) the product of \$1,000 times the absolute value of the index return, which sum will be no less than \$1,000 and no more than between \$1,190.5 and \$1,221.5; or

if a barrier event has occurred, \$1,020.

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-13.

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 , 2018 Original issue price: 100% of the face amount

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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 , 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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Absolute Return Trigger S&P 500® Index-Linked Notes due

INVESTMENT THESIS

For investors who:

believe that a barrier event (described below) will not occur and that the underlier return or absolute value of the underlier return will be greater than 2% but not more than between 19.05% and 22.15%;
 want limited exposure to (i) the underlier return if the final underlier level is greater than or equal to the initial underlier level or (ii) the absolute value of the underlier return if the final underlier level is less than the initial underlier level, in each case assuming a barrier event does not occur;
 are willing to forgo exposure to such underlier return or absolute value of the underlier return if a barrier event occurs and in that case are willing to receive a 2% contingent return instead; and
 are willing to accept that, if a barrier event has not occurred, the return on the notes will be limited to between 0%, on the lower end of the range, and between 19.05% and 22.15%, on the higher end of the range, and, if a barrier event has occurred, the return on the notes will be limited to 2%.

A barrier event will occur if, on any day during the measurement period, the closing level of underlier (i) declines below the lower barrier of between 80.95% and 77.85% of the initial underlier level or (ii) increases above the upper barrier of between 119.05% and 122.15% of the initial underlier level.

DETERMINING THE CASH SETTLEMENT AMOUNT

At maturity, for each \$1,000 face amount, the investor will receive:

if a barrier event has not occurred, the sum of (a) \$1,000 plus (b) the product of \$1,000 times the absolute value of the underlier return; or

if a barrier event has occurred, \$1,020.

KEY TERMS

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Issuer: | GS Finance Corp. |
| Guarantor: | The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. |
| Underlier: | The S&P 500® Index (Bloomberg symbol, “SPX Index”) |
| Face Amount: | \$ in the aggregate; each note will have a face amount equal to \$1,000 |
| Trade Date: | |
| Settlement Date: | Expected to be the fifth scheduled business day following the trade date |
| Determination Date: | Expected to be between 24 and 27 months after the trade date |
| Stated Maturity Date: | Expected to be the second scheduled business day following the determination date |
| Initial Underlier Level: | To be determined on the trade date |
| Final Underlier Level: | The closing level of the underlier on the determination date |
| Absolute Underlier Return: | The absolute value of the underlier return, expressed as a percentage (e.g., a -10% or +10% underlier return will equal a +10% absolute underlier return) |
| Underlier Return: | The quotient of (i) the final underlier level minus the initial underlier level divided by (ii) the initial underlier level, expressed as a positive or negative percentage. 2% |

Contingent
Return:

Measurement
Period:

The period from but excluding the trade date to and including the determination date, excluding any date or dates on which the calculation agent determines that a market disruption event occurs or is continuing or that the calculation agent determines is not a trading day, as further described under “Supplemental Terms of the Notes — Measurement Periods” on page S-21 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734

Barrier Event:

On any trading day during the measurement period, (i) the closing level of the underlier is below the lower barrier or (ii) the closing level of the underlier is above the upper barrier

Lower Barrier:

Expected to be between 80.95% and 77.85% of the initial underlier level

Upper Barrier:

Expected to be between 119.05% and 122.15% of the initial underlier level

CUSIP/ISIN:

40055QZU9 / US40055QZU92

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HYPOTHETICAL PAYMENT AT MATURITY*

| Hypothetical Final Underlier Level (as Percentage of Initial Underlier Level) | Hypothetical Cash Settlement Amount (as Percentage of Face Amount) | Barrier Event Has Not Occurred | Barrier Event Has Occurred |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 200.000% | N/A | | 102.000% |
| 175.000% | N/A | | 102.000% |
| 150.000% | N/A | | 102.000% |
| 125.000% | N/A | | 102.000% |
| 119.050% | 119.050% | | 102.000% |
| 110.000% | 110.000% | | 102.000% |
| 105.000% | 105.000% | | 102.000% |
| 102.000% | 102.000% | | 102.000% |
| 101.000% | 101.000% | | 102.000% |
| 100.500% | 100.500% | | 102.000% |
| 100.000% | 100.000% | | 102.000% |
| 99.500% | 100.500% | | 102.000% |
| 99.000% | 101.000% | | 102.000% |
| 98.000% | 102.000% | | 102.000% |
| 95.000% | 105.000% | | 102.000% |
| 90.000% | 110.000% | | 102.000% |
| 80.950% | 119.050% | | 102.000% |
| 70.000% | N/A | | 102.000% |
| 60.000% | N/A | | 102.000% |
| 50.000% | N/A | | 102.000% |
| 25.000% | N/A | | 102.000% |
| 0.000% | N/A | | 102.000% |

*assumes a barrier set at the top of the lower barrier range (between 80.95% and 77.85%) and the bottom of the upper barrier range (between 119.05% and 122.15%)

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 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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SUMMARY INFORMATION

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, “SPX Index”), 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

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. 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-15 of this pricing supplement.

Supplemental discussion of U.S. federal income tax consequences: the notes will be treated as debt instruments subject to the special rules governing contingent payment debt instruments for U.S. federal income tax purposes. Under this treatment, it is the opinion of Sidley Austin llp that if you are a U.S. individual or taxable entity, you generally should be required to pay taxes on ordinary income from the notes over their term based on the comparable yield for the notes. In addition, any gain you may recognize on the sale, exchange or maturity of the notes will be taxed as ordinary interest income.

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 a barrier event has not occurred, the sum of (i) \$1,000 plus (ii) the product of \$1,000 times the absolute underlier return; or

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if a barrier event has occurred, the sum of (i) \$1,000 plus (ii) the product of \$1,000 times the contingent return. Initial underlier level (to be set on the trade date and may be higher or lower than the actual closing level of the underlier on that date):

Final underlier level: the closing level of the underlier on the determination date, 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

Absolute underlier return (to be set on the trade date): the absolute value of the underlier return, expressed as a percentage (e.g., a -10% or +10% underlier return will equal a +10% absolute underlier return)

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 positive or negative percentage

Contingent return: 2%

Measurement period: the period from but excluding the trade date to and including the determination date, excluding any date or dates on which the calculation agent determines that a market disruption event occurs or is continuing or that the calculation agent determines is not a trading day, subject to adjustment as provided under “Supplemental Terms of the Notes — Measurement Periods” on page S-21 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734

Barrier event: on any trading day during the measurement period, (i) the closing level of the underlier is below the lower barrier or (ii) the closing level of the underlier is above the upper barrier.

Lower barrier (to be set on the trade date): expected to be between 80.95% and 77.85% of the initial underlier level

Upper barrier (to be set on the trade date): expected to be between 119.05% and 122.15% of the initial underlier level

Trade date:

Original issue date (settlement date) (to be set on the trade date): expected to be the fifth scheduled business day following the trade date

Determination date (to be set on the trade date): a specified date that is expected to be between 24 and 27 months after the trade date, subject to adjustment as described under “Supplemental Terms of the Notes — Determination Date” on page S-17 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734

Stated maturity date (to be set on the trade date): a specified date that is expected to be the second scheduled business day following the determination date, 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

Considerations for Secondary Market Purchasers: A purchaser of these notes in the secondary market should determine if a barrier event has already occurred. The occurrence of a barrier event could affect both the secondary market trading price of these notes after a secondary market purchase and the amount a secondary market purchaser will receive at maturity. In order to determine if a barrier event has occurred, you should determine if, on any date from the day after the trade date to the date of your purchase, the closing level of underlier was less than between 80.95% and 77.85% of the initial underlier level or the closing level of the underlier was greater than between 119.05% and 122.15% of the initial underlier level. Certain financial websites make index levels publicly available, which can be helpful when determining whether a barrier event may have occurred. If you would like assistance in determining whether a barrier event has occurred, please call GS&Co. at (212) 902-0300

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

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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: 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 94 of the accompanying prospectus; GS Finance Corp. estimates that its share of the total offering expenses, excluding underwriting discounts and commissions, will be approximately \$.

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. The underwriting discount set forth on the cover page of this pricing supplement per \$1,000 face amount is comprised of \$ of underwriting fees and \$ of selling commission. 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.

We expect to deliver the notes against payment therefor in New York, New York on , 2018. 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.: 40055QZU9

ISIN no.: US40055QZU92

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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HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLES

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 during the measurement period including 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 underlier levels that are entirely hypothetical; no one can predict what the underlier level will be on any day during the measurement period, and no one can predict what the final underlier level will be on the determination 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-13 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 |
| Upper barrier | 119.05% of the initial underlier level |
| Lower barrier | 80.95% of the initial underlier level |
| Contingent return | 2% |

Neither a market disruption event nor a non-trading day occurs during the measurement period, including on the originally scheduled determination date

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 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 and may be higher or lower than the actual closing level of the underlier on that 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.

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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 middle column represent the hypothetical cash settlement amounts, based on the corresponding hypothetical final underlier level (expressed as a percentage of the initial underlier level), assuming that a barrier event does not occur (i.e., the closing level of the underlier has not decreased below the lower barrier or increased above the upper barrier on any trading day during the measurement period), and are expressed as percentages of the face amount of a note (rounded to the nearest one-thousandth of a percent). 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), assuming that a barrier event occurs (i.e., the closing level of the underlier has decreased below the lower barrier or has increased above the upper barrier on one or more trading days during the measurement period), 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) | |
|---|--|----------------------------|
| | Barrier Event Has Not Occurred | Barrier Event Has Occurred |
| 200.000% | N/A | 102.000% |
| 175.000% | N/A | 102.000% |
| 150.000% | N/A | 102.000% |
| 125.000% | N/A | 102.000% |
| 119.050% | 119.050% | 102.000% |
| 110.000% | 110.000% | 102.000% |
| 105.000% | 105.000% | 102.000% |
| 102.000% | 102.000% | 102.000% |
| 101.000% | 101.000% | 102.000% |
| 100.500% | 100.500% | 102.000% |
| 100.000% | 100.000% | 102.000% |
| 99.500% | 100.500% | 102.000% |
| 99.000% | 101.000% | 102.000% |
| 98.000% | 102.000% | 102.000% |
| 95.000% | 105.000% | 102.000% |
| 90.000% | 110.000% | 102.000% |
| 80.950% | 119.050% | 102.000% |
| 70.000% | N/A | 102.000% |
| 60.000% | N/A | 102.000% |
| 50.000% | N/A | 102.000% |
| 25.000% | N/A | 102.000% |
| 0.000% | N/A | 102.000% |

If, for example, a barrier event has occurred and 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 102.000% for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes, as shown in the table above. Additionally, if the final underlier level were determined to be 50.000% of the initial underlier level, the cash settlement amount that we would deliver on your notes at maturity would be 102.000% for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes, as shown in the table above.

If, for example, a barrier event has not occurred and the final underlier level were determined to be 90.000% of the initial underlier level, the absolute underlier return would be 10.000% and the cash

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settlement amount that we would deliver on your notes at maturity would be 110.000% for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes, as shown in the table above. However, you will benefit from the absolute underlier return only if a barrier event has not occurred. Because a barrier event will occur if, on any trading day during the measurement period (including the determination date), the closing level of the underlier is below the lower barrier (80.950% of the initial underlier level) or above the upper barrier (119.050% of the initial underlier level), the cash settlement amount that we will deliver at maturity if a barrier event has not occurred will be limited to between 100.000% and 119.050% (representing a return of between 0.000% and 19.050%) for each \$1,000 face amount. As a result, you would not benefit from a final underlier level on the determination date (or a closing level of the underlier on any other trading day during the measurement period) that is above the upper barrier or below the lower barrier. In fact, a final underlier level on the determination date (or a closing level of the underlier on any other trading day during the measurement period) that is above the upper barrier or below the lower barrier will cause the cash settlement amount that we will deliver at maturity to be limited to 102.000% (representing a contingent return of 2.000%) for each \$1,000 face amount. Further, you should be aware that, even if a barrier event has not occurred, the cash settlement amount that we will deliver at maturity will be less than 102.000% (representing less than the contingent return of 2.000%) for each \$1,000 face amount if the final underlier level is less than 102.000%, but greater than 98.000%, of the initial underlier, as shown in the table above.

The following chart also shows a graphical illustration of the hypothetical cash settlement amounts (expressed as a percentage of the face amount of your notes) that we would pay on your notes on the stated maturity date, if the final underlier level (expressed as a percentage of the initial underlier level) were any of the hypothetical levels shown on the horizontal axis. The chart shows that, if a barrier event occurs at any time during the measurement period, any hypothetical final underlier level (expressed as a percentage of the initial underlier level) would result in a hypothetical payment amount of 102.000% for each \$1,000 face amount of the note (the horizontal line that crosses the 102.000% marker on the vertical axis). The chart also shows that, if a barrier event does not occur at any time during the measurement period, any hypothetical final underlier level between 80.950% and 119.050% (expressed as a percentage of the initial underlier level) (the section between the 80.950% and 119.050% markers on the horizontal axis) would result in a hypothetical payment amount that is greater than or equal to 100.000%, but less than or equal to 119.050%, for each \$1,000 face amount of the note (the section on or above the 100.000% marker on the vertical axis but on or below the 119.050% marker on the vertical axis).

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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 determination date 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 Your Notes — The Market Value of Your Notes May Be Influenced by Many Unpredictable Factors” on page PS-15.

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.

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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 at maturity and the rate of return on the offered notes will depend on the actual initial underlier level, lower barrier and upper barrier, which we will set on the trade date, the actual closing levels of the underlier during the measurement period 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 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 “The Market Value of Your Notes May Be Influenced by Many Unpredictable Factors” below.

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

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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).

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 "Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Your Notes — Your Notes May Not Have an Active Trading Market" on page S-7 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734.

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

If a barrier event has not occurred, the cash settlement amount at maturity for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes will be limited to between \$1,000, on the lower end of the range, and between \$1,190.5 and \$1,221.5, on the higher end of the range (set on the trade date and representing a return of between 0%, on the lower end of the range, and between 19.05% and 22.15%, on the higher end of the range), depending on the absolute underlier return. If a barrier event has occurred, the cash settlement amount at maturity for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes will be limited to \$1,020 (representing the contingent return of 2%), regardless of the underlier return.

You will benefit from the absolute underlier return only if a barrier event has not occurred. Because a barrier event will occur if, on any trading day during the measurement period (including the determination date), the closing level of the underlier is below the lower barrier (expected to be between 80.95% and 77.85% of the initial underlier level) or above the upper barrier (expected to be between 119.05% and 122.15% of the initial underlier level), the cash settlement amount that we will deliver at maturity if a barrier event has not occurred will be limited to between 100%, on the lower end of the range, and between 119.05% and 122.15%, on the higher end of the range (representing a return of between 0%, on the lower end of the range, and between 19.05% and 22.15%, on the higher end of the range) for each \$1,000 face amount. As a result, you would not benefit from a final underlier level on the determination date (or a closing level of the underlier on any other trading day during the measurement period) that is above the upper barrier or below the lower barrier. In fact, a final underlier level on the determination date (or a closing level of the underlier on any other trading day during the measurement period) that is above the upper barrier or below the lower barrier will cause the cash settlement amount that we will deliver at maturity to be limited to 102% (representing a contingent return of 2%) for each \$1,000 face amount. Further, you should be aware that, even if a barrier event has not occurred, the cash settlement amount that we will deliver at maturity will be less than 102% (representing less than the contingent return of 2%) for each \$1,000 face amount if the final underlier level is less than 102%, but greater than 98%, of the initial underlier.

The Return on Your Notes May Change Significantly Despite Only a Small Change in the Underlier Level

Your ability to participate in any change in the level of the underlier over the life of your notes will be limited and the return on your notes may change significantly despite only a small change in the underlier

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level. If a barrier event occurs and the final underlier level is greater than the initial underlier level, your return on the notes is limited to the contingent return no matter how much the final underlier level may increase above the initial underlier level. This means that, assuming an upper barrier of 119.05% of the initial underlier level, while an increase in the level of the underlier of 19.05% will not cause a barrier event to occur, an increase of greater than 19.05% will cause a barrier event to occur and your return on the notes will be limited to the contingent return. Accordingly, if a barrier event occurs and 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 stocks.

Similarly, if a barrier event occurs and the final underlier level is less than the initial underlier level, your return will be limited to the contingent return and you will not receive the benefit of the absolute underlier return. This means that, assuming a lower barrier of 80.95% of the initial underlier level, while a decrease in the level of the underlier of 19.05% will not cause a barrier event to occur, a decrease of greater than 19.05% will cause a barrier event to occur and your return on the notes will be limited to the contingent return. Accordingly, if a barrier event occurs and the underlier return is negative, you will not receive the benefit of the absolute underlier return.

Further, if a barrier event does not occur and the final underlier level is less than the initial underlier level but greater than 98% of the initial underlier level, your return on the notes will be less than the contingent return notwithstanding the benefit from the absolute underlier return.

Your Notes Do 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.

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.

The Market Value of Your Notes May Be Influenced by Many Unpredictable Factors

When we refer to the market value of your notes, we mean the value that you could receive for your notes if you chose and are able to sell them in the open market before the stated maturity date. A number of factors, many of which are beyond our control and impact the value of bonds and options generally, will influence the market value of your notes, including:

- whether a barrier event has occurred;
- the level of the underlier;

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- the volatility — i.e., the frequency and magnitude of changes — in the level of the underlier;
- the dividend rates of the underlier stocks;
- economic, financial, regulatory, political, military and other events that affect stock markets generally and the underlier stocks, and which may affect the level of the underlier;
- interest rates and yield rates in the market;
 - the time remaining until your notes mature; and
- our creditworthiness and the creditworthiness of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., whether actual or perceived, including actual or anticipated upgrades or downgrades in our credit ratings or the credit ratings of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. or changes in other credit measures.

These factors will influence the price you will receive if you sell your notes before maturity, including the price you may receive for your notes in any market-making transaction. If you sell your notes before maturity, you may receive less than the face amount of your notes.

You cannot predict the future levels of the underlier based on its historical fluctuations. The actual level of the underlier over the life of the notes may bear little or no relation to the historical closing level of the underlier or to the hypothetical examples shown elsewhere in this prospectus supplement.

If the Level of the Underlier Changes, the Market Value of Your Notes May Not Change in the Same Manner
Your notes may trade quite differently from the performance of the underlier. Changes in the level of the underlier may not result in a comparable change in the market value of your notes. Even if the level of the underlier increases above the initial underlier level during the life of the notes, the market value of your notes may not increase by the same amount. We discuss some of the reasons for this disparity under “— The Market Value of Your Notes May Be Influenced by Many Unpredictable Factors” above.

Your Notes Will Be Treated as Debt Instruments Subject to Special Rules Governing Contingent Payment Debt Instruments for U.S. Federal Income Tax Purposes

The notes will be treated as debt instruments subject to special rules governing contingent payment debt instruments for U.S. federal income tax purposes. If you are a U.S. individual or taxable entity, you generally will be required to pay taxes on ordinary income from the notes over their term based on the comparable yield for the notes, even though you will not receive any payments from us until maturity. This comparable yield is determined solely to calculate the amount on which you will be taxed prior to maturity and is neither a prediction nor a guarantee of what the actual yield will be. In addition, any gain you may recognize on the sale, exchange or maturity of the notes will be taxed as ordinary interest income. If you are a secondary purchaser of the notes, the tax consequences to you may be different. Please see "Supplemental Discussion of Federal Income Tax Consequences" below for a more detailed discussion. 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 (“S&P”). 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 September 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): Consumer Discretionary (12.81%), Consumer Staples (6.87%), Energy (5.87%), Financials (13.63%), Health Care (14.80%), Industrials (9.80%), Information Technology (25.95%), Materials (2.51%), Real Estate (2.73%), Telecommunication Services (2.01%) and Utilities (2.89%). (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.) S&P and MSCI, Inc. have announced that the Global Industry Classification Sector structure is expected to be updated after the close of business on September 28, 2018. Among other things, the update is expected to broaden the current Telecommunications Services sector and rename it the Communication Services sector. The renamed sector is expected to include the existing Telecommunication Services Industry group, as well as the Media Industry group, which is expected to move from the Consumer Discretionary sector and be renamed the Media & Entertainment Industry group. The Media & Entertainment Industry group is expected to contain three industries: Media, Entertainment and Interactive Media & Services. The Media industry is expected to continue to consist of the Advertising, Broadcasting, Cable & Satellite and Publishing sub-industries. The Entertainment industry is expected to contain the Movies & Entertainment sub-industry (which is expected to include online entertainment streaming companies in addition to companies currently classified in such industry) and the Interactive Home Entertainment sub-industry (which is expected to include companies from the current Home Entertainment Software sub-industry in the Information Technology sector, as well as producers of mobile gaming applications). The Interactive Media & Services industry and sub-industry is expected to include companies engaged in content and information creation or distribution through proprietary platforms, where revenues are derived primarily through pay-per-click advertisements, and will include search engines, social media and networking platforms, online classifieds and online review companies.

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.

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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”). Standard & Poor[®] 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. Goldman’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.

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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 September 19, 2008 through September 19, 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 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. It applies to you only if you hold your notes as a capital asset for tax purposes. 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 regulated investment company;
- a life insurance company;
- a tax-exempt organization;
- a partnership;
- a person that owns the notes as a hedge or that is hedged against interest rate risks;
- a person that owns the notes 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.

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. 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 other tax consequences of your investment 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 subsection describes the tax consequences to a United States holder. You are a United States holder if you are a beneficial owner of 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.

If you are not a United States holder, this section does not apply to you and you should refer to “— United States Alien Holders” below.

Your notes will be treated as debt instruments subject to special rules governing contingent payment debt instruments for U.S. federal income tax purposes. Under those rules, and subject to the discussion below regarding fixed but deferred contingent payments, the amount of interest you are required to take into account for each accrual period will be determined by constructing a projected payment schedule for your 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 yield at which we would issue a noncontingent fixed rate debt instrument with terms and conditions similar to your notes (the “comparable yield”) and then determining as of the issue date a payment schedule that would produce the comparable yield. These rules will generally have the effect of requiring you to include amounts in income in respect of your notes prior to your receipt of cash attributable to such income.

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We have determined that the comparable yield for the notes is equal to % per annum, compounded semi-annually, with a projected payment at maturity of \$ based on an investment of \$1,000.

Based on this comparable yield, if you are an initial holder that holds a note until maturity and you pay your taxes on a calendar year basis, we have determined that you would be required to report the following amounts as ordinary income, not taking into account any positive or negative adjustments you may be required to take into account based on the actual payments on the notes, from the note each year:

| Accrual Period | Interest Deemed to Accrue During Accrual Period (per \$1,000 note) | Total Interest Deemed to Have Accrued from Original Issue Date (per \$1,000 note) as of End of Accrual Period |
|----------------|--|--|
|----------------|--|--|

through December 31, 2018

January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019

January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020

January 1, 2021 through

You are required to use the comparable yield and projected payment schedule that we compute in determining your interest accruals in respect of your notes, unless you timely disclose and justify on your U.S. federal income tax return the use of a different comparable yield and projected payment schedule.

The comparable yield and projected payment schedule are not provided to you for any purpose other than the determination of your interest accruals in respect of your notes, and we make no representation regarding the amount of contingent payments with respect to your notes.

You will recognize income or loss upon the sale, exchange or maturity of your notes in an amount equal to the difference, if any, between the cash amount you receive at such time and your adjusted basis in your notes. In general, your adjusted basis in your notes will equal the amount you paid for your notes, increased by the amount of interest you previously accrued with respect to your notes (in accordance with the comparable yield and the projected payment schedule for your notes) and increased or decreased by the amount of any positive or negative adjustment, respectively, that you are required to make if you purchase your notes at a price other than the adjusted issue price determined for tax purposes.

In addition except as described below with respect to certain fixed but deferred contingent payments, any income you recognize upon the sale, exchange or maturity of your notes will be ordinary interest income. Any loss you recognize at such time will be 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, capital loss. If you are a noncorporate holder, you would generally be able to use such ordinary loss to offset your income only in the taxable year in which you recognize the ordinary loss and would generally not be able to carry such ordinary loss forward or back to offset income in other taxable years. Pursuant to recently enacted legislation, for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2018, with respect to a debt instrument issued with original issue discount, such as the notes, an accrual method taxpayer that reports revenues on an applicable financial statement generally must recognize income for U.S. federal income tax purposes no later than the taxable year in which such income is taken into account as revenue in an applicable financial statement of the taxpayer. For this purpose, an “applicable financial statement” generally means a financial statement certified as having been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles or that is made on the basis of international financial reporting standards and which is used by the taxpayer for various specified purposes. This rule could

potentially require such a taxpayer to recognize income for U.S. federal income tax purposes with respect to the notes prior to the time such income would be recognized pursuant to the rules described above. Potential investors in the notes should consult their tax advisors regarding the potential applicability of these rules to their investment in the notes.

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Fixed but deferred contingent payments

Notwithstanding the rules described above, special rules apply to a contingent payment debt instrument where all the remaining contingent payments on such instrument become fixed more than six months before all of the contingent payments on such instrument become due. This rule would apply to your notes, for example, if on a date that is more than six months prior to maturity a barrier event occurs. Although not entirely clear, we think that in such a case it would be reasonable for an initial holder of the notes to recognize an ordinary loss equal to any interest previously accrued on the notes in excess of the contingent return, and to cease accruing interest over the remainder of the notes. Thereafter, any gain or loss you recognize from a subsequent sale of the notes should generally be characterized as capital gain or loss.

The application to your notes of the rules governing contingent payments that become fixed are not clear, and the Internal Revenue Service could assert that the tax consequences to you should be different than described above. You are urged to consult your tax advisor regarding the application of these rules to your particular circumstances.

United States Alien Holders

If you are a United States alien holder, please see the discussion under “United States Taxation” in the accompanying prospectus for a description of the tax consequences relevant to you. You are a United States alien holder if you are the beneficial owner of the 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.

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.-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 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.

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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 FATCA withholding. However, according to published guidance, the withholding tax described above will not apply to payments of gross proceeds from the sale, exchange or other disposition of the notes made before January 1, 2019.

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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.

Absolute Return Trigger S&P 500[®] Index-Linked Notes due

guaranteed by

The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.

Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC
