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# Board Consideration of Investment Management Arrangement

Sanford C. Bernstein Fund, Inc. (the “Fund”) is subject to Section 15 of the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended. Section 15 provides that any investment advisory agreement with a registered investment company such as the Fund may continue in effect for a period of more than two years from the date of its execution, only so long as such continuance is specifically approved at least annually by the board of directors (or by vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the investment company). Pursuant to this requirement, the Fund’s Board of Directors, including the Directors who are not interested persons of the Fund (the “Independent Directors”), unanimously approved the continuation of the Investment Management Agreement between the Fund, on behalf of the Tax-Managed International, International, Emerging Markets, Short Duration Diversified Municipal, New York Municipal, California Municipal, Diversified Municipal, Short Duration Plus, Intermediate Duration, Overlay A, Tax-Aware Overlay A, Overlay B, Tax-Aware Overlay B, Tax-Aware Overlay C and Tax-Aware Overlay N Portfolios (each, a “Portfolio” and collectively, the “Portfolios”) of the Fund, and AllianceBernstein L.P. (the “Adviser”)( the “Investment Management Agreement”) at a video conference meeting held on October 28-29, 2020.<sup>1</sup>

The following discussion describes the considerations in connection with the Board’s review of the Investment Management Agreement.

In connection with the annual review of the continuation of the Investment Management Agreement between the Fund and the Adviser, counsel to the Independent Directors sent a letter to the Adviser dated August 7, 2020, that contained a list of information requested by the Independent Directors to conduct their annual review. The Board of Directors, including the Independent Directors, met by video conference and telephonically and received and evaluated extensive materials relating to the continuation of the Investment Management Agreement from the Adviser during meetings in September and October 2020. In addition, the Board received materials from the Senior Analyst and an independent fee consultant as described below. On September 30, 2020, the Board of Directors held a video conference meeting to discuss its review of the Investment Management Agreement and the materials the Directors had been provided. At that meeting, the Independent Directors met separately with their independent counsel and the Senior Analyst and the independent fee consultant in executive sessions. Following the September 30, 2020 meeting, the Independent Directors, through counsel, requested certain additional information by means of a letter from their independent counsel dated October 5, 2020, and the Adviser provided certain additional information by means of a letter dated October 15, 2020. The Independent Directors held a telephonic meeting on October 20, 2020 with their independent counsel and the Senior Analyst to further discuss the contract renewal materials and supplemental materials provided in response to the Board’s request. On October 28-29, 2020, the Board of Directors held a video conference meeting to continue their review of the Investment Management Agreement. During this meeting, the Adviser provided further information to the Board relating to contract renewal, and the Independent Directors also met separately with counsel to the Independent Directors as well as the Senior Analyst to review the contract renewal materials provided by the Adviser and the materials prepared by the Senior Analyst. At the conclusion of this meeting, the Board approved the continuation of the Investment Management Agreement for an additional annual term as described below.

In approving the Investment Management Agreement, the Board, including the Independent Directors, considered all information it deemed reasonably necessary to evaluate the terms of the Investment Management Agreement and considered whether the Agreement would be in the best interests of the Fund. In particular, the Board considered the information that was provided to them by the Adviser in response to their requests, as well as information prepared by the Senior Analyst and the independent fee consultant at the request of the Board. The Fund’s Senior Analyst assists the Board (as well as the boards of other funds sponsored by the Adviser) in evaluating investment management agreements and certain other plans and agreements pursuant to which the Adviser or its affiliates provide services to the Funds. The Board also considered other information provided to the Board in connection with the September 30, 2020, and October 28-29, 2020 meetings and throughout the past year.

The information considered by the Board included information with respect to the nature, extent and quality of services provided, investment performance, fees and expenses, profitability, economies of scale, and fall-out benefits and other revenue.

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<sup>1</sup> The meeting was held by video conference in view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and based on exemptive relief issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission, with the Board’s intention to ratify the approval of the Investment Management Agreement at its next in-person meeting.

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In the Board's consideration of the factors discussed below, no single factor was considered in isolation or to be determinative to the decision of the Board to approve the Investment Management Agreement. Rather, the Board concluded, in light of a weighing and balancing of all factors considered and in the exercise of the Directors' business judgment, that it was in the best interests of the Fund to approve the Investment Management Agreement including the fees to be charged for services thereunder, as summarized below.

### ***Fees and Expenses***

The Board, including the Independent Directors, compared the fees and expense ratios of each Portfolio (before and after any fee waivers and expense reimbursements) against fees and expense ratios of a peer group of funds with similar investment objectives ("peer group"). Both the peer group and the funds within the peer group, with respect to the fee and expense data, were available from Strategic Insight, an independent provider of investment company data. The Senior Analyst also performed analyses of the advisory fees, and compared such analyses to the Portfolios' peer groups. In addition, the Board received and considered information from an independent fee consultant regarding the fees and expenses of the Portfolios as well as their investment performance.

The Board also received and considered information about the services rendered, and the fee rates charged, to other clients advised by the Adviser, including information about any recent advisory fee changes with respect to other investment companies advised by the Adviser. The Board noted the differences between the services provided to the Portfolios in comparison to those provided to other types of clients, including institutional clients and other investment companies for which the Adviser acted as subadviser, and the differences in the entrepreneurial and other risks borne by the Adviser in serving the Portfolios compared to other types of clients.

The Board noted that the Adviser will begin voluntarily waiving the 0.10% shareholder servicing fee for the private client class of the Short Duration Plus Portfolio and the Short Duration Diversified Municipal Portfolio effective with the new term of the shareholder servicing agreement. The Board also noted the Adviser's proposal to modify the advisory fee schedule of the Overlay A and Tax-Aware Overlay Portfolios by reducing the level where each Portfolio reaches its first breakpoint, and adding a new breakpoint on assets over \$5 billion, and that this advisory fee change was expected to provide immediate savings to the Tax-Aware Overlay A Portfolio based on current asset levels.

On the basis of its review and consideration of the fees as described above and the Board's consideration of the other factors described below, and in light of the Adviser's agreement to reduce certain fees and to apply certain fee waivers and/or expense caps for certain Portfolios, the Board concluded that the contractual advisory fees as proposed were reasonable.

### ***Nature, Extent and Quality of Services Provided***

The Board, including the Independent Directors, considered the nature, quality and extent of services performed by the Adviser and its affiliates gained from their experience as Directors of the Fund, their overall confidence in the Adviser's integrity and competence they have gained from that experience, and the Adviser's initiative in identifying and raising potential issues with the Directors. The Board also considered the Adviser's responsiveness, frankness and attention to concerns raised by the Directors from time to time, including the Adviser's willingness to consider and implement organizational changes designed to improve investment results and the services provided to the Portfolios. The Board also considered the scope and quality of the Adviser's investment management capabilities, other resources dedicated to performing its services, the quality of its compliance, administrative and other services provided to the Portfolios and the background and experience of the Adviser's senior management. The Board reviewed the qualifications, backgrounds and responsibilities of the investment staff primarily responsible for day-to-day portfolio management services for each Portfolio and noted the Adviser's commitment to strong research and investment management capabilities throughout changing market environments. The Board reviewed the compliance and administrative services of the Adviser that support the investment advisory services provided to the Portfolios. The Board also considered how the organizational capabilities and financial condition of the Adviser may affect the nature and quality of its services. In that regard, the Board considered information about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Adviser's operations and the Adviser's ability to continue to provide the same scope and quality of services to the Portfolios as before the pandemic. The Board considered the ongoing impacts of the relocation of substantial operations of the Adviser from the New York City area to Nashville, Tennessee as well as the implications of a substantial number of the Adviser's employees working

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## Board Consideration of Investment Management Arrangement *(continued)*

from home during the pandemic. The Board also noted that the Adviser and its affiliates had continued to update the Board on matters relating to the sale by AXA, S.A., previously an indirect parent of AllianceBernstein Corporation, the general partner of the Adviser, of its remaining ownership interest in its U.S. subsidiary, Equitable Holdings, Inc. The Board considered the statements of the Adviser that it has continued to operate as an independent, publicly-traded US asset manager, that the divestiture has not materially changed the Adviser's current management structure or strategy, and that the Adviser does not believe that the divestiture will have a material impact on the Adviser with respect to its operations, personnel, organizational structure, or capitalization, financial and other resources.

In considering the nature and quality of the services provided by the Adviser, the Board, including the Independent Directors, received and considered information about each Portfolio's investment performance, as well as the performance of its peer group and the performance of an appropriate benchmark index. The Board was provided with performance data versus each Portfolio's peer group, for the 1-year, 3-year, 5-year and 10-year periods, as applicable, ended July 31, 2020 and versus each Portfolio's benchmark index, for the relevant periods, as well as the most recently available Morningstar rating for those Portfolios with an available rating. The Board also received certain updated performance information as of September 30, 2020. In addition, the Directors considered information showing performance compared to peer groups and benchmarks for rolling calendar year periods and the year to date. The Directors also receive detailed comparative performance information for the Portfolios at each regular Board meeting during the year. The Board recognized that the benchmark indices do not account for fees and expenses incurred by a fund, including the Portfolios. The Directors also considered how peer groups have changed over time and how comparisons may differ depending upon the selection of the peer groups or benchmark indices.

The Directors noted the complexity of the Overlay Portfolios, in particular the complexity of managing the globally diversified set of asset classes and derivatives in which the Overlay Portfolios can invest as well as the complexity of dynamically allocating assets through the Overlay Portfolios among various asset classes as economic and market conditions change in seeking to provide the desired risk/return trade-off for their investors in light of their overall portfolios (and not just their investment in the Overlay Portfolios themselves). The Board reviewed the performance of the Overlay Portfolios in response to the increased market volatility and the performance of the Overlay Portfolios' dynamic asset allocation component during this unusual market environment. With respect to the International Portfolio and the Tax-Managed International Portfolio, the Board considered that, subject to shareholder approval, the two Portfolios would be merged into another portfolio managed by the Adviser in late 2020 or early 2021. In evaluating the performance of the Portfolios that invest primarily in fixed-income securities, the Directors considered whether those Portfolios may have incurred less credit risk or interest rate risk, or both, in relation to their peer groups and benchmark indices. Where the Portfolios had underperformed their peer groups or benchmark indices, the Directors considered the Adviser's explanations for performance and, as applicable, measures the Adviser had taken or proposed to take to improve performance. In particular, for those Portfolios that pursue a value strategy, the Directors noted the Adviser's explanation regarding the recent underperformance of value strategies generally versus growth strategies. The Directors also noted the Adviser's explanation that certain Portfolios are designed to maintain higher credit quality and a more conservative approach versus the funds in its relevant peer group, and that as a result of a lower risk profile, those Portfolios have underperformed the peer group during periods when riskier assets have outperformed. The Directors noted generally the Adviser's continued efforts to enhance the services provided to the Portfolios, including but not limited to, its continued research efforts to enhance the dynamic asset allocation component utilized by the Overlay Portfolios. The Directors also noted that they would continue to monitor investment performance closely.

The Board concluded that the Adviser had the experience and resources necessary to provide services of appropriate nature, quality and scope with respect to the Portfolios.

### ***Profitability***

The Board, including the Independent Directors, considered the level of the Adviser's profits in respect of its management of the respective Portfolios. The materials provided to the Independent Directors included information indicating the profitability of the Portfolios to the Adviser for calendar years 2018 and 2019, which had been reviewed by an independent consultant. The Directors reviewed the assumptions and methods of allocation used by the Adviser in preparing fund-specific profitability data and noted that there are many potentially acceptable allocation methodologies for information of this type. The Directors noted that they received information regarding all revenues and expenses of the Adviser's relationship with the Fund, including those relating to the Adviser's subsidiaries that provide transfer

agency and, distribution services to the Fund, and that they had focused on profitability before taxes and distribution expenses. The Directors reviewed comparative information regarding profitability for other publicly-traded advisers, recognizing that it is difficult to make comparisons of profitability among fund advisory contracts because only limited comparative information is publicly available and the comparisons are affected by numerous factors including different cost accounting methodologies.

After reviewing all relevant factors, the Directors, including the Independent Directors, concluded that the levels of the Adviser's profits in respect of its management of the Portfolios were not excessive.

### ***Economies of Scale***

The Board, including the Independent Directors, considered whether there have been economies of scale in respect of the management of the Portfolios, whether the Portfolios have appropriately benefited from any economies of scale, and whether there is potential for realization of any further economies of scale. The Directors discussed possible ways in which any such economies of scale may be shared with the Portfolios, including by investment in enhanced services.

The Directors also considered the Senior Analyst materials which they received in connection with the review of the Investment Management Agreement, which included information reflecting changes in asset levels of the Portfolios and in the profitability of the Adviser over various periods.

After reviewing the profitability and economies of scale information provided by the Adviser, the Board concluded that the benefits of any economies of scale were appropriately being shared with Portfolio investors by way of, among other things and as applicable, establishing advisory fees at levels that contemplated future achievement of scale, recent fee reductions for the Short Duration Diversified Municipal, Short Duration Plus, Intermediate Duration, Tax-Managed International, International, and Emerging Markets Portfolios, breakpoint arrangements including the lowering of the first breakpoint and the addition of a new breakpoint in the advisory fee schedule for the Overlay A and Tax-Aware Overlay A Portfolios as well as other recently adopted or modified breakpoints for certain Portfolios, expense caps and waivers applying to select Portfolios, and the Adviser's continued reinvestment in the business, including by researching and implementing new product enhancements. The Directors also noted that they would continue to monitor the growth of the Portfolios.

### ***Fall-Out Benefits and Other Revenue***

The Board, including the Independent Directors, also took into account so-called "fall-out benefits" to the Adviser, such as soft dollar arrangements (whereby the Adviser receives the benefit of research services from many of the brokers and dealers that execute purchases and sales of securities on behalf of its clients on an agency basis), Rule 12b-1 fees and sales charges received by the principal underwriter (which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Adviser) with respect to the retail share classes of certain Portfolios, and transfer agency fees paid by the retail share classes of certain Portfolios to a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Adviser. The Directors recognized that the Adviser's profitability would be lower without these benefits. They also considered other benefits potentially derived from an increase in the Adviser's business as a result of its relationship with the Fund. The Directors concluded that these fall-out benefits to the Adviser were acceptable.

### ***Advisory Fee Rate Schedule***

On the basis of the information considered, the Board determined to approve the continuation of the Investment Management Agreement for an additional annual term, without change to the contractual fee schedules of the Portfolios other than the new breakpoints established for the Overlay A Portfolio and the Tax-Aware Overlay Portfolio, as set forth below.

<b>PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>ANNUAL PERCENTAGE OF AVERAGE DAILY NET ASSETS OF EACH PORTFOLIO</b>
Short Duration Diversified Municipal Portfolio	0.30% of the first \$750 million; 0.25% of assets in excess of \$750 million
Short Duration Plus Portfolio	0.35% of the first \$750 million; 0.30% of assets in excess of \$750 million

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## Board Consideration of Investment Management Arrangement *(continued)*

<b>PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>ANNUAL PERCENTAGE OF AVERAGE DAILY NET ASSETS OF EACH PORTFOLIO</b>
New York Municipal Portfolio	0.425% of the first \$1 billion; 0.375% in excess of \$1 billion up to, but not exceeding \$3 billion; 0.325% in excess of \$3 billion up to, but not exceeding \$5 billion; 0.275% of assets in excess of \$5 billion
California Municipal Portfolio	0.425% of the first \$1 billion; 0.375% in excess of \$1 billion up to, but not exceeding \$3 billion; 0.325% in excess of \$3 billion up to, but not exceeding \$5 billion; 0.275% of assets in excess of \$5 billion
Diversified Municipal Portfolio	0.425% of the first \$1 billion; 0.375% in excess of \$1 billion up to, but not exceeding \$3 billion; 0.325% in excess of \$3 billion up to, but not exceeding \$5 billion; 0.275% in excess of \$5 billion up to, but not exceeding \$7 billion; 0.225% of assets in excess of \$7 billion
Intermediate Duration Portfolio	0.45% on the first \$2.5 billion; 0.40% in excess of \$2.5 billion up to, but not exceeding \$5 billion; 0.35% in excess of \$5 billion up to, but not exceeding \$8 billion; 0.30% of assets in excess of \$8 billion
Tax-Managed International Portfolio	0.75% on the first \$2.5 billion; 0.65% in excess of \$2.5 billion up to, but not exceeding \$5 billion; 0.60% of assets in excess of \$5 billion
International Portfolio	0.75% on the first \$2.5 billion; 0.65% in excess of \$2.5 billion up to, but not exceeding \$5 billion; 0.60% of assets in excess of \$5 billion
Emerging Markets Portfolio	0.95% of the first \$2.5 billion; 0.90% in excess of \$2.5 billion up to, but not exceeding \$5 billion; 0.85% of assets in excess of \$5 billion.
Overlay A Portfolio	0.90% of the first \$2.5 billion; 0.875% in excess of \$2.5 billion up to, but not exceeding \$5 billion; 0.85% of assets in excess of \$5 billion.
Tax-Aware Overlay A Portfolio	0.90% of the first \$2.5 billion; 0.875% in excess of \$2.5 billion up to, but not exceeding \$5 billion; 0.85% of assets in excess of \$5 billion.
Overlay B Portfolio	0.65% of assets.
Tax-Aware Overlay B Portfolio	0.65% of assets.
Tax-Aware Overlay C Portfolio	0.65% of assets.
Tax-Aware Overlay N Portfolio	0.65% of assets.

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