Pioneer Strategic Income VCT Portfolio

A portfolio of Pioneer Variable Contracts Trust

Class I Shares

Prospectus, May 1, 2013

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PIONEER Investments®

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Portfolio summary

Investment objective

A high level of current income.

Fees and expenses

This table describes the fees and expenses that you may pay if you buy and hold shares of the portfolio. **Your costs would be higher if fees or sales charges imposed by a Variable Contract for which the portfolio is an investment option were included.** Please consult your insurance company's separate account prospectus or disclosure document for more information.

Annual portfolio operating expenses

(expenses that you pay each year as a percentage of the value of your investment)	**Class I**
Management Fees	0.65%
Distribution and Service (12b-1) Fees	0.00%
Other Expenses	0.62%
Total Annual Portfolio Operating Expenses	1.27%

Example

This example is intended to help you compare the cost of investing in the portfolio with the cost of investing in other mutual funds. The example assumes that you invest $10,000 in the portfolio for the time periods shown and then redeem all of your shares at the end of those periods. It also assumes that (a) your investment has a 5% return each year and (b) the portfolio's total annual operating expenses remain the same. This example does not reflect any fees or sales charges imposed by a Variable Contract for which the portfolio is an investment option. If they were included, your costs would be higher.

Although your actual costs may be higher or lower, based on these assumptions your costs would be:

	Number of years you own your shares (with or without redemption)			
	1	**3**	**5**	**10**
Class I	$129	$403	$697	$1,534

Portfolio turnover

The portfolio pays transaction costs, such as commissions, when it buys and sells securities (or "turns over" its portfolio). A higher portfolio turnover rate may indicate higher transaction costs. These costs, which are not reflected in annual portfolio operating expenses or in the example, affect the portfolio's performance. During the most recent fiscal year, the portfolio turnover rate was 25% of the average value of the portfolio.

Principal investment strategies

Normally, the portfolio invests at least 80% of its net assets (plus the amount of borrowings, if any, for investment purposes) in debt securities. For purposes of satisfying the 80% requirement, the fund also may invest in derivative instruments that have economic characteristics similar to such debt securities. The portfolio has the flexibility to invest in a broad range of issuers and segments of the debt securities markets. The portfolio's investment adviser allocates the portfolio's investments among the following three segments of the debt markets:

- Below investment grade (high yield or "junk bond") securities of U.S. and non-U.S. issuers
- Investment grade securities of U.S. issuers
- Investment grade securities of non-U.S. issuers

The adviser's allocations among the segments of the debt markets depend upon its outlook for economic, interest rate and political trends. At any given time, the portfolio may have a substantial amount of its assets in any one of such segments.

The portfolio invests primarily in debt securities issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government, its agencies or instrumentalities or non-U.S. governmental entities; debt securities of U.S. and non-U.S. corporate issuers (including convertible debt); and mortgage-related securities, including "sub-prime" mortgages, and asset-backed securities.

The portfolio invests in securities with a broad range of maturities and maintains an average portfolio maturity which varies based upon the judgment of the portfolio's investment adviser. The portfolio's investments may have fixed or variable principal payments and all types of interest rate payment and reset terms, including fixed rate, adjustable rate, floating rate, zero coupon, contingent, deferred, payment in kind and auction rate features.

Depending upon the adviser's allocation among market segments, up to 70% of the portfolio's total assets may be in debt securities rated below investment grade at the time of purchase or determined to be of equivalent quality by the adviser. Up to 20% of the portfolio's total assets may be invested in debt securities rated below CCC by Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC or the equivalent by another nationally recognized statistical rating organization or determined to be of equivalent credit quality by the adviser. The portfolio may also invest in securities that are in default, subordinated debt securities, event-linked bonds and Treasury Inflation Protected Securities ("TIPS") and other inflation-linked debt securities.

Up to 85% of the portfolio's total assets may be in debt securities of non-U.S. corporate and governmental issuers, including debt securities of corporate and governmental issuers in emerging markets.

The portfolio may invest up to 20% of its total assets in equity securities, including common stocks, preferred stocks, rights, warrants, depositary receipts, exchange-traded funds (ETFs) that invest primarily in equity securities and equity interests in real estate trusts (REITs).

The portfolio may, but is not required to, use derivatives, such as credit default swaps, forward foreign currency exchange contracts, and bond and interest rate futures. The portfolio may use derivatives for a variety of purposes, including: as a hedge against adverse changes in the market price of securities, interest rates or currency exchange rates; as a substitute for purchasing or selling securities; and to increase the portfolio's return as a non-hedging strategy that may be considered speculative. The portfolio may choose not to make use of derivatives for a variety of reasons, and any use may be limited by applicable law and regulations. The portfolio also may hold cash or other short-term investments.

The adviser considers both broad economic and issuer specific factors in selecting investments. In assessing the appropriate maturity, rating, sector and country weightings of the portfolio, the adviser considers a variety of factors that are expected to influence economic activity and interest rates. The adviser selects individual securities to buy and sell based upon such factors as a security's yield, liquidity and rating, an assessment of credit quality, and sector and issuer diversification.

Principal risks of investing in the portfolio

You could lose money on your investment in the portfolio. As with any mutual fund, there is no guarantee that the portfolio will achieve its objective.

Market risk. The values of securities held by the portfolio may go up or down, sometimes rapidly or unpredictably, due to general market conditions, such as real or perceived adverse economic, political, or regulatory conditions, inflation, changes in interest or currency rates or adverse investor sentiment. Adverse market conditions may be prolonged and may not have the same impact on all types of securities. The values of securities may fall due to factors affecting a particular issuer, industry or the securities market as a whole. The stock market may perform poorly relative to other investments. (This risk may be greater in the short term.) High public debt in the U.S. and other countries creates ongoing systemic and market risks and policymaking uncertainty. The financial crisis that began in 2008 has caused a significant decline in the value and liquidity of many securities of issuers worldwide. Some governmental and non-governmental issuers (notably in Europe) have

defaulted on, or been forced to restructure, their debts, and many other issuers have faced difficulties obtaining credit. These market conditions may continue, worsen or spread, including in the U.S., Europe and beyond. Further defaults or restructurings by governments and others of their debt could have additional adverse effects on economies, financial markets and asset valuations around the world. In response to the crisis, the U.S. and other governments and the Federal Reserve and certain foreign central banks have taken steps to support financial markets. The withdrawal of this support, failure of efforts in response to the crisis, or investor perception that these efforts are not succeeding could negatively affect financial markets generally as well as the value and liquidity of certain securities. Whether or not the fund invests in securities of issuers located in or with significant exposure to countries experiencing economic and financial difficulties, the value and liquidity of the fund's investments may be negatively affected by the countries experiencing these difficulties. In addition, policy and legislative changes in the U.S. and in other countries are affecting many aspects of financial regulation. The impact of these changes on the markets, and the practical implications for market participants, may not be fully known for some time. The portfolio may experience a substantial or complete loss on any individual security.

High yield or "junk" bond risk. Debt securities that are below investment grade, called "junk bonds," are speculative, have a higher risk of default or are already in default, tend to be less liquid and are more difficult to value than higher grade securities. Junk bonds tend to be volatile and more susceptible to adverse events and negative sentiments.

Interest rate risk. Interest rates may go up, causing the value of the portfolio's investments to decline (this risk generally will be greater for securities with longer maturities). Interest rates in the U.S. recently have been historically low.

Credit risk. If an issuer or guarantor of a security held by the portfolio or a counterparty to a financial contract with the portfolio defaults on its obligation to pay principal and/or interest, has its credit rating downgraded or is perceived to be less creditworthy, or the credit quality or value of any underlying assets declines, the value of your investment will decline. Credit risk is broadly gauged by the credit ratings of the securities in which the portfolio invests. However, ratings are only the opinions of the companies issuing them and are not guarantees as to quality. Junk bonds have a higher risk of default or are already in default and are considered speculative.

Prepayment or call risk. Many issuers have a right to prepay their securities. If interest rates fall, an issuer may exercise this right. If this happens, the portfolio will be forced to reinvest prepayment proceeds at a time when yields on securities available in the market are lower than the yield on the prepaid security. The portfolio also may lose any premium it paid on the security.

Extension risk. During periods of rising interest rates, the average life of certain types of securities may be extended because of slower than expected principal payments. This may lock in a below market interest rate, increase the security's duration (the estimated period until the security is paid in full) and reduce the value of the security.

Liquidity risk. Some securities held by the portfolio may be difficult to sell, or illiquid, particularly during times of market turmoil. Illiquid securities also may be difficult to value. If the portfolio is forced to sell an illiquid asset to meet redemption requests or other cash needs, the portfolio may be forced to sell at a loss.

Portfolio selection risk. The adviser's judgment about the quality, relative yield, relative value or market trends affecting a particular sector or region, market segment, security or about interest rates generally may prove to be incorrect.

U.S. government agency obligations risk. The portfolio invests in obligations issued by agencies and instrumentalities of the U.S. government. Government-sponsored entities such as Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae), Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac) and the Federal Home Loan Banks (FHLBs), although chartered or sponsored by Congress, are not funded by congressional appropriations

and the debt and mortgage-backed securities issued by them are neither guaranteed nor issued by the U.S. government. Such debt and mortgage-backed securities are subject to the risk of default on the payment of interest and/or principal, similar to debt of private issuers. Although the U.S. government has provided financial support to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in the past, there can be no assurance that it will support these or other government-sponsored entities in the future.

Mortgage-related and asset-backed securities risk. The value of mortgage-related and asset-backed securities will be influenced by factors affecting the housing market and the assets underlying such securities. As a result, during periods of declining asset value, difficult or frozen credit markets, swings in interest rates, or deteriorating economic conditions, mortgage-related and asset-backed securities may decline in value, face valuation difficulties, become more volatile and/or become illiquid. Additionally, during such periods and also under normal conditions, these securities are also subject to prepayment and call risk. Some of these securities may receive little or no collateral protection from the underlying assets and are thus subject to the risk of default. The risk of such defaults is generally higher in the case of mortgage-backed investments that include so-called "sub-prime" mortgages. The structure of some of these securities may be complex and there may be less available information than for other types of debt securities. Upon the occurrence of certain triggering events or defaults, the portfolio may become the holder of underlying assets at a time when those assets may be difficult to sell or may be sold only at a loss.

Risks of subordinated securities. A holder of securities that are subordinated or "junior" to more senior securities of an issuer is entitled to payment after holders of more senior securities of the issuer. Subordinated securities are more likely to suffer a credit loss than non-subordinated securities of the same issuer, any loss incurred by the subordinated securities is likely to be proportionately greater, and any recovery of interest or principal may take more time. As a result, even a perceived decline in creditworthiness of the issuer is likely to have a greater impact on them.

Risks of non-U.S. investments. Investing in non-U.S. issuers, or in U.S. issuers that have significant exposure to foreign markets may involve unique risks compared to investing in securities of U.S. issuers. These risks are more pronounced for issuers in emerging markets or to the extent that the portfolio invests significantly in one region or country. These risks may include different financial reporting practices and regulatory standards, less liquid trading markets, extreme price volatility, currency risks, changes in economic, political, regulatory and social conditions, sustained economic downturns, financial instability, tax burdens, and investment and repatriation restrictions. Lack of information and less market regulation also may affect the value of these securities. Withholding and other non-U.S. taxes may decrease the portfolio's return. Non-U.S. issuers may be located in parts of the world that have historically been prone to natural disasters. Investing in depositary receipts is subject to many of the same risks as investing directly in non-U.S. issuers.

Equity securities risk. Equity securities represent an ownership interest in an issuer, rank junior in a company's capital structure to debt securities and consequently may entail greater risk of loss than debt securities. Equity securities are subject to the risk that stock prices may rise and fall in periodic cycles and may perform poorly relative to other investments. This risk may be greater in the short term.

Market segment risk. To the extent the portfolio emphasizes, from time to time, investments in a market segment, the portfolio will be subject to a greater degree to the risks particular to that segment, and may experience greater market fluctuation than a portfolio without the same focus.

Risks of investing in event-linked bonds. The return of principal and the payment of interest on "event-linked" bonds are contingent on the non-occurrence of a pre-defined "trigger" event, such as a hurricane or an earthquake of a specific magnitude. If a trigger event, as defined within the terms of an event-linked bond, involves losses or other metrics exceeding a specific magnitude in the geographic region and time period specified therein, the portfolio may lose a portion or all of its accrued interest and/or principal invested in

such event-linked bond. In addition to the specified trigger events, event-linked bonds may expose the portfolio to other risks, including but not limited to issuer (credit) default, adverse regulatory or jurisdictional interpretations and adverse tax consequences.

Risks of investing in floating rate loans. Floating rate loans and similar investments may be illiquid or less liquid than other investments. The value of collateral, if any, securing a floating rate loan can decline or may be insufficient to meet the issuer's obligations or may be difficult to liquidate. No active trading market may exist for many floating rate loans, and many loans are subject to restrictions on resale. Market quotations for these securities may be volatile and/or subject to large spreads between bid and ask prices. Any secondary market may be subject to irregular trading activity and extended trade settlement periods.

Risks of inverse floating rate obligations. The interest rate on inverse floating rate obligations will generally decrease as short-term interest rates increase, and increase as short-term rates decrease. Due to their leveraged structure, the sensitivity of the market value of an inverse floating rate obligation to changes in interest rates is generally greater than a comparable long-term bond issued by the same issuer and with similar credit quality, redemption and maturity provisions. Inverse floating rate obligations may be volatile and involve leverage risk.

Inflation-linked securities risk. The principal or interest of inflation-linked securities such as TIPS is adjusted periodically to a specified rate of inflation. The inflation index used may not accurately measure the real rate of inflation. Inflation-linked securities may lose value or interest payments on such securities may decline in the event that the actual rate of inflation is different than the rate of the inflation index.

Derivatives risk. Using derivatives can increase portfolio losses and reduce opportunities for gains when market prices, interest rates or the derivative instruments themselves behave in a way not anticipated by the portfolio. Using derivatives may increase the volatility of the portfolio's net asset value and may not provide the result intended. Derivatives may have a leveraging effect on the portfolio. Some derivatives have the potential for unlimited loss, regardless of the size of the portfolio's initial investment. Changes in a derivative's value may not correlate well with the referenced asset or metric. The portfolio also may have to sell assets at inopportune times to satisfy its obligations. Derivatives may be difficult to sell, unwind or value, and the counterparty may default on its obligations to the portfolio. Recent legislation calls for new regulation of the derivatives markets. The extent and impact of the regulation is not yet fully known and may not be for some time. New regulation of derivatives may make them more costly, may limit their availability, or may otherwise adversely affect their value or performance.

Credit default swap risk. Credit default swap contracts, a type of derivative instrument, involve special risks and may result in losses to the portfolio. Credit default swaps may in some cases be illiquid, and they increase credit risk since the portfolio has exposure to both the issuer of the referenced obligation and the counterparty to the credit default swap. Swaps may be difficult to unwind or terminate. The swap market could be disrupted or limited as a result of recent legislation, and these changes could adversely affect the portfolio.

Leveraging risk. The value of your investment may be more volatile and other risks tend to be compounded if the portfolio borrows or uses derivatives or other investments, such as ETFs, that have embedded leverage. Leverage generally magnifies the effect of any increase or decrease in the value of the portfolio's underlying assets or creates investment risk with respect to a larger pool of assets than the portfolio would otherwise have, potentially resulting in the loss of all assets. Engaging in such transactions may cause the portfolio to liquidate positions when it may not be advantageous to do so to satisfy its obligations or meet segregation requirements.

Expense risk. Your actual costs of investing in the portfolio may be higher than the expenses shown in "Annual portfolio operating expenses" for a variety of reasons. For example, expense ratios may be higher than those shown if overall net assets decrease. Net assets are more likely to decrease and portfolio expense ratios are more likely to increase when markets are volatile.

Please note that there are many other factors that could adversely affect your investment and that could prevent the portfolio from achieving its goals.

An investment in the portfolio is not a bank deposit and is not insured or guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other government agency.

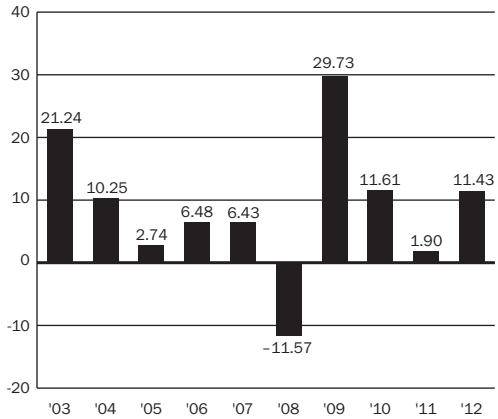
The portfolio's past performance

The bar chart and table indicate the risks and volatility of an investment in the portfolio by showing how the portfolio has performed in the past. The bar chart shows changes in the performance of the portfolio's Class I shares from calendar year to calendar year. The table shows the average annual total returns for Class I shares of the portfolio over time and compares these returns to the returns of the Barclays Capital U.S. Universal Index, a broad-based measure of market performance that has characteristics relevant to the portfolio's investment strategies.

The bar chart and table do not reflect any fees or expenses payable with respect to a Variable Contract. Such fees and expenses will reduce your return.

The portfolio's past performance does not necessarily indicate how it will perform in the future.

Annual return Class I Shares (%)
(Year ended December 31)



For the period covered by the bar chart:

The highest calendar quarterly return was 12.46% (04/01/2009 to 06/30/2009).
The lowest calendar quarterly return was –9.42% (10/01/2008 to 12/31/2008).

Average annual total return (%)
(for periods ended December 31, 2012)

	1 Year	5 Years	10 Years	Since Inception (07/29/99)
Class I	11.43	7.77	8.51	8.03
Barclays Capital U.S. Universal Index (reflects no deduction for fees, expenses or taxes)	5.53	6.19	5.59	6.35

Management

Investment adviser	Pioneer Investment Management, Inc.
Portfolio management	Kenneth J. Taubes, Executive Vice President and Chief Investment Officer, U.S. of Pioneer (portfolio manager of the portfolio since 1999), Andrew Feltus, Senior Vice President of Pioneer (portfolio manager of the portfolio since 2012), and Charles Melchreit, Vice President of Pioneer (portfolio manager of the portfolio since 2012)

Tax information

Shares of the portfolio are held by life insurance company separate accounts that fund the benefits under variable annuity and variable life insurance contracts (Variable Contracts) issued by their companies and by certain qualified pension and retirement plans (Qualified Plans). Owners of Variable Contracts should read the prospectus of their insurance company's Variable Contract for a discussion of the tax status of a Variable Contract, including the tax consequences of withdrawals or other payments. Participants in a Qualified Plan should consult their tax advisers regarding the tax consequences of participating in and receiving distributions or other payments relating to such plans.

Payments to broker-dealers and other financial intermediaries

If you purchase the portfolio through a broker-dealer or other financial intermediary (such as a bank), the portfolio and its related companies may pay the intermediary for the sale of portfolio shares and related services. These payments may create a conflict of interest by influencing the broker-dealer or other intermediary and your salesperson or investment professional to recommend the portfolio over another investment. Ask your salesperson or investment professional or visit your financial intermediary's website for more information.

In addition, shares of the portfolio are offered to insurance companies to fund the benefits under Variable Contracts issued by their companies and are additionally offered to Qualified Plans. The portfolio and its related companies may pay the sponsoring insurance companies and their affiliated broker-dealers and service providers for the sale of portfolio shares and related services. These payments may create a conflict of interest by influencing insurance companies to recommend the portfolio over another investment. Your insurance company's separate account prospectus or disclosure document may contain additional information about these payments.

More on the portfolio's investment objective and strategies

Investment objective

A high level of current income.

The portfolio's investment objective may be changed without shareholder approval. The portfolio will provide at least 30 days' notice prior to implementing any change to its investment objective.

Principal investment strategies

Normally, the portfolio invests at least 80% of its net assets (plus the amount of borrowings, if any, for investment purposes) in debt securities. For purposes of satisfying the 80% requirement, the fund also may invest in derivative instruments that have economic characteristics similar to such debt securities. The portfolio has the flexibility to invest in a broad range of issuers and segments of the debt securities markets. Pioneer Investment Management, Inc. ("Pioneer"), the portfolio's investment adviser, allocates the portfolio's investments among the following three segments of the debt markets:

- Below investment grade (high yield or "junk bond") securities of U.S. and non-U.S. issuers
- Investment grade securities of U.S. issuers
- Investment grade securities of non-U.S. issuers

Pioneer's allocations among the segments of the debt markets depend upon its outlook for economic, interest rate and political trends. At any given time, the portfolio may have a substantial amount of its assets in any one of such segments.

The portfolio invests primarily in:

- Debt securities issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government, its agencies or instrumentalities or non-U.S. governmental entities
- Debt securities of U.S. and non-U.S. corporate issuers, including convertible debt
- Mortgage-related securities, including "sub-prime" mortgages, and asset-backed securities

The portfolio invests in securities with a broad range of maturities and maintains an average portfolio maturity which varies based upon the judgment of Pioneer. The portfolio's investments may have fixed or variable principal payments and all types of interest rate payment and reset terms, including fixed rate, adjustable rate, floating rate, zero coupon, contingent, deferred, payment in kind and auction rate features.

Depending upon Pioneer's allocation among market segments, up to 70% of the portfolio's total assets may be in debt securities rated below investment grade at the time of purchase or determined to be of equivalent quality by Pioneer. Up to 20% of the portfolio's total assets may be invested in debt securities rated below CCC by Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC or the equivalent by another nationally recognized statistical rating organization or determined to be of equivalent credit quality by Pioneer. The portfolio's investments in debt securities rated below investment grade may include securities that are in default. The portfolio may also invest in Treasury Inflation Protected Securities ("TIPS") and other inflation-linked debt securities.

Depending upon Pioneer's allocation among market segments, up to 85% of the portfolio's total assets may be in debt securities of non-U.S. corporate and governmental issuers, including debt securities of corporate and governmental issuers in emerging markets.

The portfolio may invest up to 20% of its total assets in equity securities, including common stocks, preferred stocks, rights, warrants, depositary receipts, exchange-traded funds (ETFs) that invest primarily in equity securities and equity interests in real estate trusts (REITs). The portfolio may invest in equity securities as a consequence of holding debt of the same issuer or when Pioneer believes they offer the potential for capital gains or other portfolio management purposes, although equity securities may not pay dividends or contribute to achieving the portfolio's investment objective of a high level of current income.

Pioneer considers both broad economic and issuer specific factors in selecting a portfolio designed to achieve the portfolio's investment objective. In assessing the appropriate maturity, rating, sector and country weightings of the portfolio, Pioneer considers a variety of factors that are expected to influence economic activity and interest rates. These factors include fundamental economic indicators, such as the rates of economic growth and inflation, Federal Reserve monetary policy and the relative value of the U.S. dollar compared to other currencies. Once Pioneer determines the preferable portfolio characteristics, Pioneer selects individual securities based upon the terms of the securities (such as yields compared to U.S. Treasuries or comparable issuers), liquidity and rating, sector and issuer diversification. Pioneer also employs fundamental research to assess an issuer's credit quality, taking into account financial condition and profitability, future capital needs, potential for change in rating, industry outlook, the competitive environment and management ability. In making these portfolio decisions, Pioneer relies on the knowledge, experience and judgment of its staff and the staff of its affiliates who have access to a wide variety of research.

Below investment grade securities

The portfolio may invest in debt securities rated below investment grade or, if unrated, of equivalent quality as determined by Pioneer. A debt security is below investment grade if it is rated BB or lower by Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC or the equivalent rating by another nationally recognized statistical rating organization or determined to be of equivalent credit quality by Pioneer. Debt securities rated below investment grade are commonly referred to as "junk bonds" and are considered speculative. Below investment grade debt securities involve greater risk of loss, are subject to greater price volatility and are less liquid, especially during periods of economic uncertainty or change, than higher quality debt securities. Below investment grade securities also may be more difficult to value.

Debt rating considerations

For purposes of the portfolio's credit quality policies, if a security receives different ratings from nationally recognized statistical rating organizations, the portfolio will use the rating chosen by the portfolio manager as most representative of the security's credit quality. The ratings of nationally recognized statistical rating organizations represent their opinions as to the quality of the securities that they undertake to rate and may not accurately describe the risks of the securities. A rating organization may have a conflict of interest with respect to a security for which it assigns a quality rating. In addition, there may be a delay between a change in the credit quality of a security or other asset and a change in the quality rating assigned to the security or other asset by a rating organization. If a rating organization changes the quality rating assigned to one or more of the portfolio's securities, Pioneer will consider if any action is appropriate in light of the portfolio's investment objective and policies. An investor can still lose significant amounts when investing in investment grade securities.

U.S. government securities

The portfolio may invest in U.S. government securities. U.S. government securities include obligations: directly issued by or supported by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government, like Treasury bills, notes and bonds and Government National Mortgage Association certificates; supported by the right of the issuer to borrow from the U.S. Treasury, like those of the Federal Home Loan Banks; supported by the discretionary authority of the U.S. government to purchase the agency's securities like those of the Federal National Mortgage Association; or supported only by the credit of the issuer itself, like the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Mortgage-backed securities

The portfolio may invest in mortgage-backed securities. Mortgage-backed securities may be issued by private issuers, by government-sponsored entities such as the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) or Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac) or by agencies of the U.S. government, such as the Government National Mortgage Association (Ginnie Mae). Mortgage-backed securities represent direct or

indirect participation in, or are collateralized by and payable from, mortgage loans secured by real property. The portfolio's investments in mortgage-related securities may include mortgage derivatives and structured securities.

The portfolio may invest in collateralized mortgage obligations (CMOs). A CMO is a mortgage-backed bond that is issued in multiple classes, each with a specified fixed or floating interest rate and a final scheduled distribution date. The holder of an interest in a CMO is entitled to receive specified cash flows from a pool of underlying mortgages or other mortgage-backed securities. Depending upon the category of CMO purchased, the holder may be entitled to payment before the cash flow from the pool is used to fund other CMOs or, alternatively, the holder may be paid only to the extent that there is cash remaining after the cash flow has been used to fund other CMOs first. A subordinated interest may serve as a credit support for the senior securities purchased by other investors.

Asset-backed securities

The portfolio may invest in asset-backed securities. Asset-backed securities represent participations in, or are secured by and payable from, assets such as installment sales or loan contracts, leases, credit card receivables and other categories of receivables. The portfolio's investments in asset-backed securities may include derivative and structured securities.

The portfolio may invest in asset-backed securities issued by special entities, such as trusts, that are backed by a pool of financial assets. The portfolio may invest in collateralized debt obligations (CDOs), which include collateralized bond obligations (CBOs), collateralized loan obligations (CLOs) and other similarly structured securities. A CDO is a trust backed by a pool of fixed income securities. The trust typically is split into two or more portions, called tranches, which vary in credit quality, yield, credit support and right to repayment of principal and interest. Lower tranches pay higher interest rates but represent lower degrees of credit quality and are more sensitive to the rate of defaults in the pool of obligations.

Subordinated securities

The portfolio may invest in securities that are subordinated or "junior" to more senior securities of the issuer. The investor in a subordinated security of an issuer is entitled to payment after other holders of debt in that issuer.

Non-U.S. investments

The portfolio may invest in securities of non-U.S. issuers, including securities of emerging markets issuers. Non-U.S. issuers are issuers that are organized and have their principal offices outside of the United States. Non-U.S. securities may be issued by non-U.S. governments, banks or corporations, or private issuers, and certain supranational organizations, such as the World Bank and the European Union. The portfolio considers emerging market issuers to include issuers organized under the laws of an emerging market country, issuers with a principal office in an emerging market country, issuers that derive at least 50% of their gross revenues or profits from goods or services produced in emerging markets, and emerging market governmental issuers.

Floating rate loans

Floating rate loans are provided by banks and other financial institutions to large corporate customers. These loans are rated below investment grade, but typically are secured with specific collateral and have a senior position in the capital structure of the borrower. These loans typically have rates of interest that are reset periodically by reference to a base lending rate, such as the London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR), plus a premium.

Event-linked bonds

The portfolio may invest in "event-linked" bonds, which sometimes are referred to as "insurance-linked" or "catastrophe" bonds. Event-linked bonds are debt obligations for which the return of principal and the payment of interest are contingent on the non-occurrence of a pre-defined "trigger" event, such as a hurricane or an

earthquake of a specific magnitude. For some event-linked bonds, the trigger event's magnitude may be based on losses to a company or industry, industry indexes or readings of scientific instruments rather than specified actual losses. The portfolio is entitled to receive principal and interest payments so long as no trigger event occurs of the description and magnitude specified by the instrument.

Event-linked bonds may be issued by government agencies, insurance companies, reinsurers, special purpose corporations or other on-shore or off-shore entities.

Event-linked bonds are typically rated by at least one nationally recognized statistical rating agency, but also may be unrated. The rating for an event-linked bond primarily reflects the rating agency's calculated probability that a pre-defined trigger event will occur. This rating also assesses the event-linked bond's credit risk and the model used to calculate the probability of a trigger event.

Derivatives

The portfolio may, but is not required to, use futures and options on securities, indices and currencies, forward foreign currency exchange contracts, bond and interest rate futures, swaps and other derivatives. A derivative is a security or instrument whose value is determined by reference to the value or the change in value of one or more securities, currencies, indices or other financial instruments. The portfolio may use derivatives for a variety of purposes, including:

- As a hedge against adverse changes in the market prices of securities, interest rates or currency exchange rates
- As a substitute for purchasing or selling securities
- To attempt to increase the portfolio's return as a non-hedging strategy that may be considered speculative
- To manage portfolio characteristics (for example, the duration or credit quality of the fund's portfolio)

The portfolio may choose not to make use of derivatives for a variety of reasons, and any use may be limited by applicable law and regulations.

The portfolio also may enter into credit default swaps, which can be used to acquire or to transfer the credit risk of a security without buying or selling the security.

Inverse floating rate obligations

The portfolio may invest in inverse floating rate obligations (a type of derivative instrument). The interest rate on inverse floating rate obligations will generally decrease as short-term interest rates increase, and increase as short-term rates decrease. Due to their leveraged structure, the sensitivity of the market value of an inverse floating rate obligation to changes in interest rates is generally greater than a comparable long-term bond issued by the same issuer and with similar credit quality, redemption and maturity provisions. Inverse floating rate obligations may be volatile and involve leverage risk.

Cash management and temporary investments

Normally, the portfolio invests substantially all of its assets to meet its investment objective. The portfolio may invest the remainder of its assets in securities with remaining maturities of less than one year or cash equivalents, or may hold cash. For temporary defensive purposes, including during periods of unusual cash flows, the portfolio may depart from its principal investment strategies and invest part or all of its assets in these securities or may hold cash. The portfolio may adopt a defensive strategy when the adviser believes securities in which the portfolio normally invests have special or unusual risks or are less attractive due to adverse market, economic, political or other conditions. During such periods, it may be more difficult for the portfolio to achieve its investment objective.

Additional investment strategies

In addition to the principal investment strategies discussed above, the portfolio may also use other techniques, including the following non-principal investment strategies.

More on the portfolio's investment objective and strategies

Reverse repurchase agreements and borrowing

The portfolio may enter into reverse repurchase agreements pursuant to which the portfolio transfers securities to a counterparty in return for cash, and the portfolio agrees to repurchase the securities at a later date and for a higher price. Reverse repurchase agreements are treated as borrowings by the portfolio, are a form of leverage and may make the value of an investment in the portfolio more volatile and increase the risks of investing in the portfolio. The portfolio also may borrow money from banks or other lenders for temporary purposes. The portfolio may borrow up to 33⅓% of its total assets. Entering into reverse repurchase agreements and other borrowing transactions may cause the portfolio to liquidate positions when it may not be advantageous to do so in order to satisfy its obligations or meet segregation requirements.

Short-term trading

The portfolio usually does not trade for short-term profits. The portfolio will sell an investment, however, even if it has only been held for a short time, if it no longer meets the portfolio's investment criteria. If the portfolio does a lot of trading, it may incur additional operating expenses, which would reduce performance.

More on the risks of investing in the portfolio

Principal investment risks

You could lose money on your investment in the portfolio. As with any mutual fund, there is no guarantee that the portfolio will achieve its objective.

Market risk. The values of securities held by the portfolio may go up or down, sometimes rapidly or unpredictably, due to general market conditions, such as real or perceived adverse economic, political, or regulatory conditions, inflation, changes in interest or currency rates or adverse investor sentiment. Adverse market conditions may be prolonged and may not have the same impact on all types of securities. The values of securities may fall due to factors affecting a particular issuer, industry or the securities market as a whole. The equity and debt capital markets in the United States and internationally have experienced unprecedented volatility in recent years. High public debt in the U.S. and other countries creates ongoing systemic and market risks and policymaking uncertainty. The financial crisis that began in 2008 has caused a significant decline in the value and liquidity of many securities; in particular, the values of some sovereign debt and of securities of issuers that invest in sovereign debt and related investments have fallen, credit has become more scarce worldwide and there has been significant uncertainty in the markets. Some governmental and non-governmental issuers (notably in Europe) have defaulted on, or been forced to restructure, their debts; and many other issuers have faced difficulties refinancing existing obligations. These market conditions may continue, worsen or spread, including in the U.S., Europe and beyond. Further defaults or restructurings by governments and others of their debt could have additional adverse effects on economies, financial markets and asset valuations around the world. In response to the crisis, the U.S. and other governments and the Federal Reserve and certain foreign central banks have taken steps to support financial markets. The withdrawal of this support, failure of efforts in response to the crisis, or investor perception that such efforts are not succeeding could negatively affect financial markets generally as well as the value and liquidity of certain securities. This environment could make identifying investment risks and opportunities especially difficult for the adviser, and whether or not the fund invests in securities of issuers located in or with significant exposure to countries experiencing economic and financial difficulties, the value and liquidity of the fund's investments may be negatively affected. In addition, policy and legislative changes in the U.S. and other countries are affecting many aspects of financial regulation. The impact of these changes on the markets, and the practical implications for market participants, may not be fully known for some time. The portfolio may experience a substantial or complete loss on any individual security.

High yield or "junk" bond risk. Debt securities that are below investment grade, called "junk bonds," are speculative, have a higher risk of default or are already in default, tend to be less liquid and are more difficult to value than higher grade securities. Junk bonds tend to be volatile and more susceptible to adverse events and negative sentiments.

Interest rate risk. When interest rates rise, the value of fixed income securities generally falls. A change in interest rates will not have the same impact on all fixed income securities. Generally, the longer the maturity or duration of a fixed income security, the greater the impact of a rise in interest rates on the security's value. In addition, different interest rate measures (such as short- and long-term interest rates and U.S. and foreign interest rates), or interest rates on different types of securities or securities of different issuers, may not necessarily change in the same amount or in the same direction. Interest rates in the U.S. recently have been historically low.

Certain fixed income securities pay interest at variable or floating rates. Variable rate securities tend to reset at specified intervals, while floating rate securities may reset whenever there is a change in a specified index rate. In most cases, these reset provisions reduce the impact of changes in market interest rates on the value of the security. However, some securities do not track the underlying index directly, but reset based on formulas that may produce a leveraging effect; others may also provide for interest payments that vary inversely with market rates. The market prices of these securities may fluctuate significantly when interest rates change.

More on the risks of investing in the portfolio

Credit risk. If an issuer or guarantor of a security held by the portfolio or a counterparty to a financial contract with the portfolio defaults on its obligation to pay principal and/or interest, has its credit rating downgraded or is perceived to be less creditworthy, or the credit quality or value of any underlying assets declines, the value of your investment will decline. In addition, the portfolio may incur expenses to protect the portfolio's interest in securities experiencing these events. Credit risk is broadly gauged by the credit ratings of the securities in which the portfolio invests. However, ratings are only the opinions of the companies issuing them and are not guarantees as to quality.

Prepayment or call risk. Many fixed income securities give the issuer the option to prepay or call the security prior to its maturity date. Issuers often exercise this right when interest rates fall. Accordingly, if the portfolio holds a fixed income security that can be prepaid or called prior to its maturity date, it may not benefit fully from the increase in value that other fixed income securities generally experience when interest rates fall. Upon prepayment of the security, the portfolio also would be forced to reinvest the proceeds at then current yields, which would be lower than the yield of the security that was prepaid or called. In addition, if the portfolio purchases a fixed income security at a premium (at a price that exceeds its stated par or principal value), the portfolio may lose the amount of the premium paid in the event of prepayment.

Extension risk. During periods of rising interest rates, the average life of certain types of securities may be extended because of slower than expected principal payments. This may lock in a below market interest rate, increase the security's duration (the estimated period until the security is paid in full) and reduce the value of the security.

To the extent the portfolio invests significantly in mortgage-related and asset-backed securities, its exposure to extension risks may be greater than if it invested in other fixed income securities.

Liquidity risk. Liquidity risk exists when particular investments are difficult to sell. Although most of the portfolio's securities must be liquid at the time of investment, securities may become illiquid after purchase by the portfolio, particularly during periods of market turmoil. When the portfolio holds illiquid investments, its portfolio may be harder to value, especially in changing markets. If the portfolio is forced to sell these investments to meet redemptions or for other cash needs, the portfolio may suffer a loss. In addition, when there is illiquidity in the market for certain securities, the portfolio, due to limitations on investments in illiquid securities, may be unable to achieve its desired level of exposure to a certain sector. To the extent the portfolio holds a material percentage of the outstanding debt securities of an issuer, this practice may impact adversely the liquidity and market value of those investments.

Portfolio selection risk. The adviser's judgment about the quality, relative yield, relative value or market trends affecting a particular sector or region, market segment, security or about interest rates generally may prove to be incorrect.

U.S. government agency obligations risk. The portfolio invests in obligations issued by agencies and instrumentalities of the U.S. government. Government-sponsored entities such as Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and the Federal Home Loan Banks (FHLBs), although chartered or sponsored by Congress, are not funded by congressional appropriations and the debt and mortgage-backed securities issued by them are neither guaranteed nor issued by the U.S. government. Such debt and mortgage-backed securities are subject to the risk of default on the payment of interest and/or principal, similar to debt of private issuers. Although the U.S. government has provided financial support to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in the past, there can be no assurance that it will support these or other government-sponsored entities in the future.

Mortgage-related and asset-backed securities risk. The repayment of certain mortgage-backed and asset-backed securities depends primarily on the cash collections received from the issuer's underlying asset portfolio and, in certain cases, the issuer's ability to issue replacement securities. As a result, there could be losses to the portfolio in the event of credit or market value deterioration in the issuer's underlying portfolio, mismatches in the timing of the cash flows of the underlying asset interests and the repayment obligations

of maturing securities, or the issuer's inability to issue new or replacement securities. Upon the occurrence of certain triggering events or defaults, the portfolio may become the holder of underlying assets at a time when those assets may be difficult to sell or may be sold only at a loss. In the event of a default, the value of the underlying collateral may be insufficient to pay certain expenses, such as litigation and foreclosure expenses, and inadequate to pay any principal or unpaid interest. Privately issued mortgage-backed and asset-backed securities are not traded on an exchange and may have a limited market. Without an active trading market, these securities may be particularly difficult to value given the complexities in valuing the underlying collateral.

Certain mortgage-backed and asset-backed securities may pay principal only at maturity or may represent only the right to receive payments of principal or interest on the underlying obligations, but not both. The value of these types of instruments may change more drastically than debt securities that pay both principal and interest during periods of changing interest rates. Principal only instruments generally increase in value if interest rates decline, but are also subject to the risk of prepayment. Interest only instruments generally increase in value in a rising interest rate environment when fewer of the underlying obligations are prepaid. Interest only instruments could lose their entire value in a declining interest rate environment if the underlying obligations are prepaid.

These securities may include instruments that allow for balloon payments or negative amortization payments. Such instruments permit the borrower to avoid paying currently a portion of the interest accruing on the instrument. While these features make the debt instrument more affordable to the borrower in the near term, they increase the risk that the borrower will be unable to make the resulting higher payment or payments that become due at the maturity of the loan.

Unlike mortgage-related securities issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government or its agencies and instrumentalities, mortgage-related securities issued by private issuers do not have a government or government-sponsored entity guarantee (but may have other credit enhancement), and may, and frequently do, have less favorable collateral, credit risk or other characteristics. The portfolio may invest in other mortgage-related securities, including mortgage derivatives and structured securities. These securities typically are not secured by real property. Because these securities have imbedded leverage features, small changes in interest or prepayment rates may cause large and sudden price movements. These securities also can become illiquid and difficult to value in volatile or declining markets.

Mortgage-backed securities are particularly susceptible to prepayment and extension risk, because prepayments on the underlying mortgages tend to increase when interest rates fall and decrease when interest rates rise.

The value of mortgage-backed and asset-backed securities may be affected by changes in credit quality or value of the mortgage loans or other assets that support the securities. In addition, for mortgage-backed securities, when market conditions result in an increase in the default rates on the underlying mortgages and the foreclosure values of the underlying real estate are below the outstanding amount of the underlying mortgages, collection of the full amount of accrued interest and principal on these investments may be less likely. For mortgage derivatives and structured securities that have embedded leverage features, small changes in interest or prepayment rates may cause large and sudden price movements. Mortgage derivatives can also become illiquid and hard to value in declining markets.

The portfolio may invest in CMOs. Principal prepayments on the underlying mortgage loans may cause a CMO to be retired substantially earlier than its stated maturity or final distribution date. If there are defaults on the underlying mortgage loans, the portfolio will be less likely to receive payments of principal and interest, and will be more likely to suffer a loss. This risk may be increased to the extent the underlying mortgages include sub-prime mortgages. As market conditions change, and particularly during periods of rapid or unanticipated changes in market interest rates, the attractiveness of a CMO class and the ability of the structure to provide the anticipated investment characteristics may be significantly reduced. Such changes can result in volatility in the market value, and in some instances reduced liquidity, of a CMO class.

More on the risks of investing in the portfolio

The portfolio may invest in CDOs. The risks of an investment in a CDO depend largely on the type of the underlying obligations (e.g., an underlying obligation may decline in quality or default) and the tranche of the CDO in which the portfolio invests (e.g., the portfolio may invest in a tranche of CDO that is subordinate to other tranches). Investments in CDOs may be characterized by the portfolio as illiquid securities, which may be hard to value and difficult to sell at an advantageous time or price. Although certain CDOs may receive credit enhancement in the form of a senior-subordinate structure, over-collateralization or bond insurance, such enhancement may not always be present, and may fail to protect a portfolio against the risk of loss on default of the collateral.

Risks of subordinated securities. A holder of securities that are subordinated or "junior" to more senior securities of an issuer is entitled to payment after holders of more senior securities of the issuer. Subordinated securities are more likely to suffer a credit loss than non-subordinated securities of the same issuer, any loss incurred by the subordinated securities is likely to be proportionately greater, and any recovery of interest or principal may take more time. As a result, even a perceived decline in creditworthiness of the issuer is likely to have a greater impact on them.

Risks of non-U.S. investments. Investing in non-U.S. issuers, or in U.S. issuers that have significant exposure to foreign markets may involve unique risks compared to investing in securities of U.S. issuers. These risks are more pronounced for issuers in emerging markets or to the extent that the portfolio invests significantly in one region or country. These risks may include:

- Less information about non-U.S. issuers or markets may be available due to less rigorous disclosure or accounting standards or regulatory practices
- Many non-U.S. markets are smaller, less liquid and more volatile. In a changing market, the adviser may not be able to sell the portfolio's securities at times, in amounts and at prices it considers reasonable
- Adverse effect of currency exchange rates or controls on the value of the portfolio's investments, or its ability to convert non-U.S. currencies to U.S. dollars
- The economies of non-U.S. countries may grow at slower rates than expected or may experience a downturn or recession
- Economic, political, regulatory and social developments may adversely affect the securities markets
- It may be difficult for the portfolio to pursue claims against a foreign issuer in the courts of a foreign country
- Withholding and other non-U.S. taxes may decrease the portfolio's return
- Some markets in which the portfolio may invest are located in parts of the world that have historically been prone to natural disasters that could result in a significant adverse impact on the economies of those countries and investments made in those countries
- A governmental entity may delay, or refuse or be unable to pay, interest or principal on its sovereign debt due to cash flow problems, insufficient foreign currency reserves, political considerations, the relative size of the governmental entity's debt position in relation to the economy or the failure to put in place economic reforms
- Investing in depositary receipts is subject to many of the same risks as investing directly in non-U.S. issuers

Additional risks of investing in emerging markets include:

- The extent of economic development, political stability, market depth, infrastructure, capitalization and regulatory oversight can be less than in more developed markets
- Emerging market countries may experience rising interest rates, or, more significantly, rapid inflation or hyperinflation
- The portfolio could experience a loss from settlement and custody practices in some emerging markets
- The possibility that a counterparty may not complete a currency or securities transaction
- Low trading volumes may result in a lack of liquidity and in extreme price volatility

Equity securities risk. Equity securities are subject to the risk that stock prices may rise and fall in periodic cycles and may perform poorly relative to other investments. This risk may be greater in the short term. Equity securities represent an ownership interest in an issuer, rank junior in a company's capital structure to debt securities and consequently may entail greater risk of loss than fixed income securities.

Market segment risk. To the extent the portfolio emphasizes, from time to time, investments in a market segment, the portfolio will be subject to a greater degree to the risks particular to that segment, and may experience greater market fluctuation, than a portfolio without the same focus. For example, industries in the financial segment, such as banks, insurance companies, broker-dealers and real estate investment trusts (REITs), may be sensitive to changes in interest rates and general economic activity and are generally subject to extensive government regulation.

Risks of investing in event-linked bonds. The return of principal and the payment of interest on "event-linked" bonds are contingent on the non-occurrence of a pre-defined "trigger" event, such as a hurricane or an earthquake of a specific magnitude. If a trigger event, as defined within the terms of an event-linked bond, involves losses or other metrics exceeding a specific magnitude in the geographic region and time period specified therein, the portfolio may lose a portion or all of its accrued interest and/or principal invested in such event-linked bond. In addition to the specified trigger events, event-linked bonds may expose the portfolio to other risks, including but not limited to issuer (credit) default, adverse regulatory or jurisdictional interpretations and adverse tax consequences. Event-linked bonds are also subject to the risk that the model used to calculate the probability of a trigger event was not accurate and underestimated the likelihood of a trigger event. Upon the occurrence or possible occurrence of a trigger event, and until the completion of the processing and auditing of applicable loss claims, the portfolio's investment in an event-linked bond may be priced using fair value methods. As a relatively new type of financial instrument, there is limited trading history for these securities, and there can be no assurance that a liquid market in these instruments will develop.

Risks of investing in floating rate loans. Floating rate loans and similar investments may be illiquid or less liquid than other investments. The value of collateral, if any, securing a floating rate loan can decline or may be insufficient to meet the issuer's obligations or may be difficult to liquidate. No active trading market may exist for many floating rate loans, and many loans are subject to restrictions on resale. Market quotations for these securities may be volatile and/or subject to large spreads between bid and ask prices. Any secondary market may be subject to irregular trading activity and extended trade settlement periods.

Risks of inverse floating rate obligations. The interest rate on inverse floating rate obligations will generally decrease as short-term interest rates increase, and increase as short-term rates decrease. Due to their leveraged structure, the sensitivity of the market value of an inverse floating rate obligation to changes in interest rates is generally greater than a comparable long-term bond issued by the same issuer and with similar credit quality, redemption and maturity provisions. Inverse floating rate obligations may be volatile and involve leverage risk.

Inflation-linked securities risk. Unlike a conventional bond, whose issuer makes regular fixed interest payments and repays the face value of the bond at maturity, an inflation-indexed security provides principal payments and interest payments, both of which are adjusted over time to reflect a rise (inflation) or a drop (deflation) in the general price level. The inflation index generally used is the non-seasonally adjusted index, which is not statistically smoothed to overcome highs and lows observed at different points each year. The use of the non-seasonally adjusted index can cause the portfolio's income level to fluctuate. As inflationary expectations increase, inflation-linked securities will become more attractive, because they protect future interest payments against inflation. Conversely, as inflationary concerns decrease, inflation-linked securities will become less attractive and less valuable. The non-seasonally adjusted index used may not accurately measure the real rate of inflation. Inflation-linked securities may lose value or interest payments on such securities may decline in the event that the actual rate of inflation is different than the rate of the non-seasonally adjusted index.

Derivatives risk. Using derivatives exposes the portfolio to additional risks, may increase the volatility of the portfolio's net asset value and may not provide the expected result. Derivatives may have a leveraging effect on the portfolio, and they can disproportionately increase losses and reduce opportunities for gain. Some derivatives have the potential for unlimited loss, regardless of the size of the portfolio's initial investment.

More on the risks of investing in the portfolio

If changes in a derivative's value do not correspond to changes in the value of the portfolio's other investments or do not correlate well with the underlying assets, rate or index, the portfolio may not fully benefit from, or could lose money on, or could experience unusually high expenses as a result of, the derivative position. Derivatives involve the risk of loss if the counterparty defaults on its obligation. Certain derivatives may be less liquid, which may reduce the returns of the portfolio if it cannot sell or terminate the derivative at an advantageous time or price. The portfolio also may have to sell assets at inopportune times to satisfy its obligations. Some derivatives may involve the risk of improper valuation. Suitable derivatives may not be available in all circumstances or at reasonable prices and may not be used by the portfolio for a variety of reasons. Recent legislation calls for new regulation of the derivatives markets. The extent and impact of the regulation is not yet fully known and may not be for some time. New regulation of derivatives may make them more costly, may limit their availability, or may otherwise adversely affect their value or performance. Risks associated with the use of derivatives are magnified to the extent that a large portion of the portfolio's assets are committed to derivatives in general or are invested in just one or a few types of derivatives.

Credit default swap risk. Credit default swap contracts, a type of derivative instrument, involve special risks and may result in losses to the portfolio. Credit default swaps may in some cases be illiquid, and they increase credit risk since the portfolio has exposure to both the issuer of the referenced obligation and the counterparty to the credit default swap. Swaps may be difficult to unwind or terminate. The absence of a central exchange or market for swap transactions led, in some instances, to difficulties in trading and valuation, especially in the event of market disruptions. Recent legislation, noted above, will require most swaps to be executed through a centralized exchange or regulated facility and be cleared through a regulated clearinghouse. The swap market could be disrupted or limited as a result of this legislation, which could adversely affect the portfolio. Moreover, the establishment of a centralized exchange or market for swap transactions may not result in swaps being easier to trade or value.

Leveraging risk. The value of your investment may be more volatile and other risks tend to be compounded if the portfolio borrows or uses derivatives or other investments, such as ETFs, that have embedded leverage. Leverage generally magnifies the effect of any increase or decrease in the value of the portfolio's underlying assets or creates investment risk with respect to a larger pool of assets than the portfolio would otherwise have, potentially resulting in the loss of all assets. Engaging in such transactions may cause the portfolio to liquidate positions when it may not be advantageous to do so to satisfy its obligations or meet segregation requirements.

Cash management risk. The value of the investments held by the portfolio for cash management or temporary defensive purposes may be affected by changing interest rates and by changes in credit ratings of the investments. To the extent that the portfolio has any uninvested cash, the portfolio would be subject to risk with respect to the depository institution holding the cash. If the portfolio holds cash uninvested, the portfolio will not earn income on the cash and the portfolio's yield will go down. During such periods, it may be more difficult for the portfolio to achieve its investment objective.

Expense risk. Your actual costs of investing in the portfolio may be higher than the expenses shown in "Annual portfolio operating expenses" for a variety of reasons. For example, expense ratios may be higher than those shown if overall net assets decrease. Net assets are more likely to decrease and portfolio expense ratios are more likely to increase when markets are volatile.

To learn more about the portfolio's investments and risks, you should obtain and read the statement of additional information. Please note that there are many other factors that could adversely affect your investment and that could prevent the portfolio from achieving its goals.

Disclosure of portfolio holdings

The portfolio's policies and procedures with respect to disclosure of the portfolio's securities are described in the statement of additional information.

Management

Investment adviser

Pioneer, the portfolio's investment adviser, selects the portfolio's investments and oversees the portfolio's operations.

Pioneer is an indirect, wholly owned subsidiary of UniCredit S.p.A., one of the largest banking groups in Italy. Pioneer is part of the global asset management group providing investment management and financial services to mutual funds, institutional and other clients. As of March 31, 2013, assets under management were approximately $207 billion worldwide, including over $67 billion in assets under management by Pioneer (and its U.S. affiliates).

Pioneer's main office is at 60 State Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02109.

The firm's U.S. mutual fund investment history includes creating in 1928 one of the first mutual funds.

Pioneer has received an order from the Securities and Exchange Commission that permits Pioneer, subject to the approval of the portfolio's Board of Trustees, to hire and terminate a subadviser that is not affiliated with Pioneer (an "unaffiliated subadviser") or to materially modify an existing subadvisory contract with an unaffiliated subadviser for the portfolio without shareholder approval. Pioneer retains the ultimate responsibility to oversee and recommend the hiring, termination and replacement of any unaffiliated subadviser.

Portfolio management

Day-to-day management of the portfolio is the responsibility of Kenneth J. Taubes. Mr. Taubes is supported by portfolio managers Andrew Feltus and Charles Melchreit and the fixed income team. Members of this team manage other Pioneer funds investing primarily in fixed income securities. The portfolio manager and the team also may draw upon the research and investment management expertise of the global research teams, which provide fundamental and quantitative research on companies and include members from Pioneer's affiliate, Pioneer Investment Management Limited.

Mr. Taubes, Executive Vice President and Chief Investment Officer, U.S. of Pioneer, is responsible for overseeing the U.S. and global fixed income teams. He joined Pioneer as a senior vice president in September 1998 and has been an investment professional since 1982. Mr. Taubes has served as portfolio manager of the portfolio since 1999.

Mr. Feltus, a Senior Vice President, joined Pioneer in 1994 and has served as a portfolio manager of the portfolio since 2012.

Mr. Melchreit, Vice President, joined Pioneer in 2006 and has served as a portfolio manager of the portfolio since 2012.

The portfolio's statement of additional information provides additional information about the portfolio managers' compensation, other accounts managed by the portfolio managers, and the portfolio managers' ownership of shares of the portfolio.

Management fee

The portfolio pays Pioneer a fee for managing the portfolio and to cover the cost of providing certain services to the portfolio. Pioneer's annual fee is equal to 0.65% of the portfolio's average daily net assets. The fee is normally accrued daily and paid monthly.

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012, the portfolio paid management fees (excluding waivers and/or assumption of expenses) equivalent to 0.65% of the portfolio's average daily net assets.

A discussion regarding the basis for the Board of Trustees' approval of the management contract is available in the portfolio's annual report to shareholders for the period ended December 31, 2012.

Distributor and transfer agent

Pioneer Funds Distributor, Inc. is the portfolio's distributor. Pioneer Investment Management Shareholder Services, Inc. is the portfolio's transfer agent. The portfolio compensates the distributor and transfer agent for their services. The distributor and the transfer agent are affiliates of Pioneer.

Pricing of shares

Net asset value

The portfolio's net asset value is the value of its securities plus any other assets minus its accrued operating expenses and other liabilities. The portfolio calculates a net asset value for each class of shares every day the New York Stock Exchange is open when regular trading closes (normally 4:00 p.m. Eastern time). If the New York Stock Exchange closes at another time, the portfolio will calculate a net asset value for each class of shares as of the actual closing time.

The portfolio generally values debt securities and certain derivative instruments by using the prices supplied by independent third party pricing services. A pricing service may use market prices or quotations from one or more brokers or other sources, or may use a pricing matrix or other fair value methods or techniques to provide an estimated value of the security or instrument. A pricing matrix is a means of valuing a debt security on the basis of current market prices for other debt securities, historical trading patterns in the market for fixed income securities and/or other factors. Non-U.S. debt securities that are listed on an exchange will be valued at the bid price obtained from an independent third party pricing service.

Senior loans are valued at the mean between the last available bid and asked prices for one or more brokers or dealers as obtained from an independent third party pricing service. Senior loans for which no reliable price quotes are available, will be valued by an independent third party pricing service through the use of a pricing matrix or other fair value methods or techniques. Event linked bonds are valued at the bid price obtained from an independent third party pricing service.

The portfolio values short-term fixed income securities with remaining maturities of 60 days or less at amortized cost, unless circumstances indicate that using this method would not reflect an investment's value.

The portfolio generally values its equity securities and certain derivative instruments that are traded on an exchange using the last sale price on the principal exchange on which they are traded. Equity securities that are not traded on the date of valuation, or securities for which no last sale prices are available, are valued at the mean between the last bid and asked prices or, if both last bid and asked prices are not available, at the last quoted bid price. Last sale, bid and asked prices are provided by independent third party pricing services. In the case of equity securities not traded on an exchange, prices are typically determined by independent third party pricing services approved by the Board of Trustees using a variety of techniques and methods. The portfolio may use a fair value model developed by an independent pricing service to value non-U.S. equity securities.

To the extent that the portfolio invests in shares of other mutual funds that are not traded on an exchange, such shares of other mutual funds are valued at their net asset values as provided by those funds. The prospectuses for those funds explain the circumstances under which those funds will use fair value pricing methods and the effects of using fair value pricing methods.

The valuations of securities traded in non-U.S. markets and certain fixed income securities will generally be determined as of the earlier closing time of the markets on which they primarily trade. When the portfolio holds securities or other assets that are denominated in a foreign currency, the portfolio will normally use the currency exchange rates as of 3:00 p.m. (Eastern time). Non-U.S. markets are open for trading on weekends and other days when the portfolio does not price its shares. Therefore, the value of the portfolio's shares may change on days when you will not be able to purchase or redeem portfolio shares.

When independent third party pricing services are unable to supply prices for an investment, or when prices or market quotations are considered by Pioneer to be unreliable, the value of that security may be determined using quotations from one or more broker-dealers. When such prices or quotations are not available, or when they are considered by Pioneer to be unreliable, the portfolio uses fair value methods to value its securities pursuant to procedures adopted by the Board of Trustees. The portfolio also may use fair value methods if it is determined that a significant event has occurred between the time at which a price is determined and the time at which the portfolio's net asset value is calculated. Because the portfolio may invest in securities rated below investment grade — some of which may be thinly traded and for which prices may not be readily

available or may be unreliable — the portfolio may use fair value methods more frequently than funds that primarily invest in securities that are more widely traded. Valuing securities using fair value methods may cause the net asset value of the portfolio's shares to differ from the net asset value that would be calculated only using market prices.

The prices used by the portfolio to value its securities may differ from the amounts that would be realized if these securities were sold and these differences may be significant, particularly for securities that trade in relatively thin markets and/or markets that experience extreme volatility.

Shareholder information

Payments to intermediaries

Pioneer and its affiliates may make payments to your financial intermediary in addition to other forms of compensation it may receive. These payments by Pioneer may provide your financial intermediary with an incentive to favor the portfolio over other funds or assist the distributor in its efforts to promote the sale of the portfolio's shares, including through Variable Contracts and Qualified Plans. Financial intermediaries include broker-dealers, banks (including bank trust departments), insurance companies, registered investment advisers, financial planners, retirement plan administrators and other types of intermediaries.

Pioneer makes these additional payments (sometimes referred to as "revenue sharing") to financial intermediaries out of its own assets, which may include profits derived from services provided to the portfolio. Pioneer may base these payments on a variety of criteria, such as the amount of sales or assets of the Pioneer funds (including the portfolio) attributable to the financial intermediary.

Not all financial intermediaries receive additional compensation and the amount of compensation paid varies for each financial intermediary. In certain cases, these payments may be significant. Pioneer determines which firms to support and the extent of the payments it is willing to make, generally choosing firms that have a strong capability to effectively distribute shares of the Pioneer funds and that are willing to cooperate with Pioneer's promotional efforts. To the extent intermediaries sell more shares of the Pioneer funds or retain shares of the Pioneer funds in their clients' accounts, Pioneer receives greater management and other fees due to the increase in the Pioneer funds' assets.

In addition to these payments, Pioneer may compensate financial intermediaries, including insurance companies that sponsor Variable Contracts, for providing certain administrative and other services. Although an intermediary may request additional compensation from Pioneer to offset costs incurred by the financial intermediary in providing these services, the intermediary may earn a profit on these payments, if the amount of the payment exceeds the intermediary's costs.

The compensation that Pioneer pays to financial intermediaries is discussed in more detail in the portfolio's statement of additional information. Intermediaries may categorize and disclose these arrangements differently than in the discussion above and in the statement of additional information. In addition to the payments by Pioneer, the insurance company sponsors of Variable Contracts that invest in the portfolio similarly may compensate financial intermediaries out of their own resources. You can ask your financial intermediary about any payments it receives, as well as about fees and/or commissions it charges.

Investments in shares of the portfolio

The portfolio may sell its shares directly to separate accounts established and maintained by insurance companies for the purpose of funding Variable Contracts and to Qualified Plans. Shares of the portfolio are sold at net asset value. Investments in the portfolio are expressed in terms of the full and fractional shares of the portfolio purchased. Investments in the portfolio are credited to an insurance company's separate account or Qualified Plan account immediately upon acceptance of the investment by the portfolio. Investments will be processed at the net asset value next determined after an order is received and accepted by the portfolio. The offering of shares of the portfolio may be suspended for a period of time and the portfolio reserves the right to reject any specific purchase order. Purchase orders may be refused if, in Pioneer's opinion, they are of a size or frequency that would disrupt the management of the portfolio.

Since you may not directly purchase shares of the portfolio, you should read the prospectus for your insurance company's Variable Contract to learn how to purchase a Variable Contract based on the portfolio.

The interests of Variable Contracts and Qualified Plans investing in the portfolio could conflict due to differences of tax treatment and other considerations. The portfolio currently does not foresee any disadvantages to investors arising out of the fact that the portfolio may offer its shares to insurance company separate accounts that serve as the investment vehicles for their Variable Contracts or that the portfolio may offer its shares to

Qualified Plans. Nevertheless, the portfolio's Board of Trustees intends to monitor events in order to identify any material irreconcilable conflicts which may possibly arise and to determine what action, if any, should be taken in response to such conflicts. If such a conflict were to occur, one or more insurance companies' separate accounts or Qualified Plans might be required to withdraw their investments in the portfolio and shares of another portfolio may be substituted. This might force the portfolio to sell securities at disadvantageous prices. In addition, the Board of Trustees may refuse to sell shares of the portfolio to any separate account or Qualified Plan or may suspend or terminate the offering of shares of the portfolio if such action is required by law or regulatory authority or is in the best interests of the shareholders of the portfolio.

Insurance companies and plan fiduciaries are required to notify the portfolio if the tax status of their separate account or Qualified Plan is revoked or challenged by the Internal Revenue Service. The portfolio may redeem any account of any shareholder whose qualification as a diversified segregated asset account or a Qualified Plan satisfying the requirements of Treasury Regulation §1.817-5 is revoked or challenged. The portfolio will not treat an investor as a Qualified Plan for this purpose unless the investor is among the categories specifically enumerated in Revenue Ruling 2007-58, 2007-2 C.B. 562. An insurance company separate account or Qualified Plan whose tax status is revoked or challenged by the Internal Revenue Service may be liable to the portfolio or Pioneer for losses incurred by the portfolio or Pioneer as a result of such action.

Selling

Shares of the portfolio may be sold on any business day. Portfolio shares are sold at net asset value next determined after receipt by the portfolio of a redemption request in good order. Sale proceeds will normally be forwarded by bank wire to the selling insurance company or Qualified Plan on the next business day after receipt of the sales instructions by the portfolio but in no event later than 7 days following receipt of instructions. The portfolio may suspend transactions in shares or postpone payment dates when trading on the New York Stock Exchange is closed or restricted, or when the Securities and Exchange Commission determines an emergency or other circumstances exist that make it impracticable for the portfolio to sell or value its investments.

Excessive trading

Frequent trading into and out of the portfolio can disrupt portfolio management strategies, harm portfolio performance by forcing the portfolio to hold excess cash or to liquidate certain portfolio securities prematurely and increase expenses for all investors, including long-term investors who do not generate these costs. An investor may use short-term trading as a strategy, for example, if the investor believes that the valuation of the portfolio's securities for purposes of calculating its net asset value does not fully reflect the then-current fair market value of those holdings. The portfolio discourages, and does not take any intentional action to accommodate, excessive and short-term trading practices, such as market timing. Although there is no generally applied standard in the marketplace as to what level of trading activity is excessive, we may consider trading in the portfolio's shares to be excessive for a variety of reasons, such as if a Variable Contract owner or plan participant provides instructions to the insurance company or plan administrator for:

- The sale of shares of the portfolio within a short period of time after the shares were purchased;
- Two or more purchases and redemptions within a short period of time; or
- A series of transactions that indicate a timing pattern or strategy.

The portfolio's Board of Trustees has adopted policies and procedures with respect to frequent purchases and redemptions of portfolio shares by investors. Because the insurance company aggregates the trading by Variable Contract owners, we are not able to monitor trading at the Variable Contract owner level. If we are advised by an insurance company that a Variable Contract owner, initiating transactions in the portfolio through a separate account that is the owner of record, has engaged in excessive short-term trading that we believe may be harmful to the portfolio, we will ask the insurance company to restrict the Variable Contract owner from placing further purchase orders in the portfolio. We may seek limitations on trading activity by Qualified Plans investing in the portfolio in similar circumstances. In determining whether to take such action, we seek

to act in a manner that is consistent with the best interests of the portfolio's shareholders. In order to prevent short-term trading in portfolios that primarily invest in non-U.S. securities, these portfolios use a fair value pricing service, as discussed under "Net asset value" in this prospectus.

While we use efforts that we believe are reasonable under the circumstances to detect excessive trading activity, there can be no assurance that our efforts will be successful or that market timers will not employ tactics designed to evade detection. If we are not successful, the return of an investor in a portfolio may be adversely affected. However, we are dependent upon the insurance companies that offer Variable Contracts and the administrators of the qualified plans that invest in the portfolios to monitor and restrict such activities. Consequently, an investment in a portfolio may involve the risk that certain investors will engage in short-term or excessive trading.

The portfolio may reject any purchase or exchange order before its acceptance or the issuance of shares, or request that the insurance company or plan administrator restrict transaction activity by a Variable Contract owner, for any reason, without prior notice, including transactions that the portfolio believes are requested on behalf of market timers. The portfolio reserves the right to reject any purchase request by a Qualified Plan or insurance company if the portfolio believes that any combination of trading activity in the account or related accounts is potentially disruptive to the portfolio. A prospective investor whose purchase order is rejected will not achieve the investment results, whether gain or loss, that would have been realized if the order were accepted and an investment made in the portfolio. The portfolio and its shareholders do not incur any gain or loss as a result of a rejected order. The portfolio may impose further restrictions on trading activities by market timers in the future.

Distributions and taxes

Shares of the portfolio are held by life insurance company separate accounts that fund Variable Contracts and by certain Qualified Plans. Owners of Variable Contracts should read the prospectus of their insurance company's Variable Contract for a discussion of the tax status of a Variable Contract, including the tax consequences of withdrawals or other payments, and should keep all statements received from the insurance company or the portfolio to assist in personal recordkeeping. Participants in a Qualified Plan should consult their tax advisers regarding the tax consequences of participating in and receiving distributions or other payments relating to such plans.

The portfolio is treated as a separate entity for U.S. federal income tax purposes. The portfolio has elected to be treated, and has qualified and intends to continue to qualify each year, as a regulated investment company under Subchapter M of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"). In order to so qualify, the portfolio generally must satisfy certain requirements relating to the sources of its income and the diversification of its assets. If the portfolio qualifies as a regulated investment company and meets certain distribution requirements, it generally will not be subject to federal income tax on any net investment income and net realized capital gains that are distributed to its shareholders.

Under the Code, the portfolio's dividends and distributions of ordinary income or of net short-term capital gain that are paid to insurance company separate accounts or to Qualified Plans are generally treated as dividend income; distributions of net long-term capital gain in excess of net short-term capital loss are generally treated as long-term capital gain. Dividends and capital gain distributions are treated as received by the insurance company or Qualified Plan rather than by the owner of the Variable Contract or the plan participant. Insurance companies and Qualified Plans should consult their own tax advisers regarding the tax treatment of dividends or capital gain distributions they receive from the portfolio.

In addition to satisfying the requirements applicable to regulated investment companies described above, the portfolio also intends to satisfy the diversification requirements applicable to separate accounts of insurance companies. If the portfolio qualifies as a regulated investment company and only sells its shares to separate accounts and to certain other permitted investors, including Qualified Plans, then the separate accounts invested in the portfolio will be allowed to look through to the portfolio's investments in testing their compliance with the diversification requirements. If the portfolio fails to meet the diversification requirements applicable to separate accounts or fails to qualify as a regulated investment company, or if the portfolio's shares are sold to any investor other than certain permitted investors, then that look-through treatment would not be available and separate accounts invested in the portfolio might fail to satisfy the diversification requirements, and Variable Contracts invested in those separate accounts might not qualify for their expected federal income tax treatment. More specific information on these diversification requirements is contained in the insurance company's separate account prospectus and in the SAI.

Distributions

The portfolio declares a dividend daily. The dividend consists of substantially all of the portfolio's net income other than net short-term and long-term capital gains. Investors begin to earn dividends on the first business day following receipt of payment for shares, and continue to earn dividends up to and including the date of sale. Dividends are normally paid on the last business day of each month. The portfolio generally pays any distributions of net short- and long-term capital gains in June. The portfolio may also pay dividends and capital gain distributions at other times if necessary for the portfolio to avoid federal income or excise tax.

Financial highlights

The financial highlights table helps you understand the portfolio's financial performance. Certain information reflects financial results for a single share of the portfolio. The total returns in the table represent the rate that you would have earned on an investment in the portfolio (assuming reinvestment of all dividends and distributions). The information below has been audited by Ernst & Young LLP, the independent registered public accounting firm for the fiscal periods shown, whose report is included in the portfolio's annual report along with the portfolio's financial statements. The annual report is available upon request.

Pioneer Strategic Income VCT Portfolio

Class I

	Year Ended 12/31/12	Year Ended 12/31/11	Year Ended 12/31/10	Year Ended 12/31/09	Year Ended 12/31/08
Net asset value, beginning of period	$ 10.24	$ 10.63	$ 10.07	$ 8.91	$ 10.83
Increase (decrease) from investment operations:					
Net investment income	$ 0.48	$ 0.63	$ 0.55	$ 0.61(a)	$ 0.68
Net realized and unrealized gain (loss) on investments, futures contracts and foreign currency transactions	0.67	(0.43)	0.59	1.85	(1.86)
Net increase (decrease) from investment operations	$ 1.15	$ 0.20	$ 1.14	$ 2.46	$ (1.18)
Distributions to shareowners:					
Net investment income	(0.53)	(0.54)	(0.58)	(0.78)	(0.72)
Net realized gain	(0.10)	(0.05)	—	(0.52)	(0.02)
Net increase (decrease) in net asset value	$ 0.52	$ (0.39)	$ 0.56	$ 1.16	$ (1.92)
Net asset value, end of period	$ 10.76	$ 10.24	$ 10.63	$ 10.07	$ 8.91
Total return*	11.43%	1.90%(b)	11.61%	29.73%	(11.57)%
Ratio of net expenses to average net assets†	1.27%	1.22%	1.23%	1.28%	0.89%
Ratio of net investment income to average net assets†	4.24%	5.30%	5.25%	6.43%	6.49%
Portfolio turnover rate	25%	43%	92%	71%	66%
Net assets, end of period (in thousands)	$10,931	$11,312	$15,494	$15,096	$12,822

(a) Net investment income per share has been calculated using the average shares method.
(b) If the Portfolio had not recognized gains in settlement of class action lawsuits during the year ended December 31, 2011, the total return would have been 1.83%.
* Assumes initial investment at net asset value at the beginning of each period, reinvestment of all distributions and the complete redemption of the investment at net asset value at the end of each period.
† Ratios with no reduction for fees paid indirectly.
NOTE: The above financial highlights do not reflect the deduction of non-portfolio expenses associated with variable insurance products, such as mortality and expense risk charges, separate account charges, and sales charges.

Notes

Pioneer Variable Contracts Trust

Pioneer Strategic Income VCT Portfolio
Class I Shares

You can obtain more free information about the portfolio by writing to Pioneer Investment Management Shareholder Services, Inc., 60 State Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02109. You may also call **1-800-225-6292** for information about the portfolio, to request copies of the portfolio's statement of additional information and shareowner reports, and to make other inquiries. The portfolio's statement of additional information and shareowner reports are available, free of charge, on the Pioneer website at www.pioneerinvestments.com.

Shareowner reports
Annual and semiannual reports to shareowners, and quarterly reports filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, provide additional information about the portfolio's investments. The annual report discusses market conditions and investment strategies that significantly affected the portfolio's performance during its last fiscal year.

Statement of additional information
The statement of additional information provides more detailed information about the portfolio.

The statement of additional information, and the independent registered public accounting firm's report and financial statements in the portfolio's annual report to shareowners, are incorporated by reference into this prospectus.

You can also review and copy the portfolio's shareowner reports, prospectus and statement of additional information at the Securities and Exchange Commission's Public Reference Room in Washington, D.C. Call 1-202-551-8090 for information. The Commission charges a fee for copies. You can get the same information free from the Commission's EDGAR database on the Internet (http://www.sec.gov). You may also e-mail requests for these documents to publicinfo@sec.gov or make a request in writing to the Commission's Public Reference Section, Washington, D.C. 20549-1520.

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