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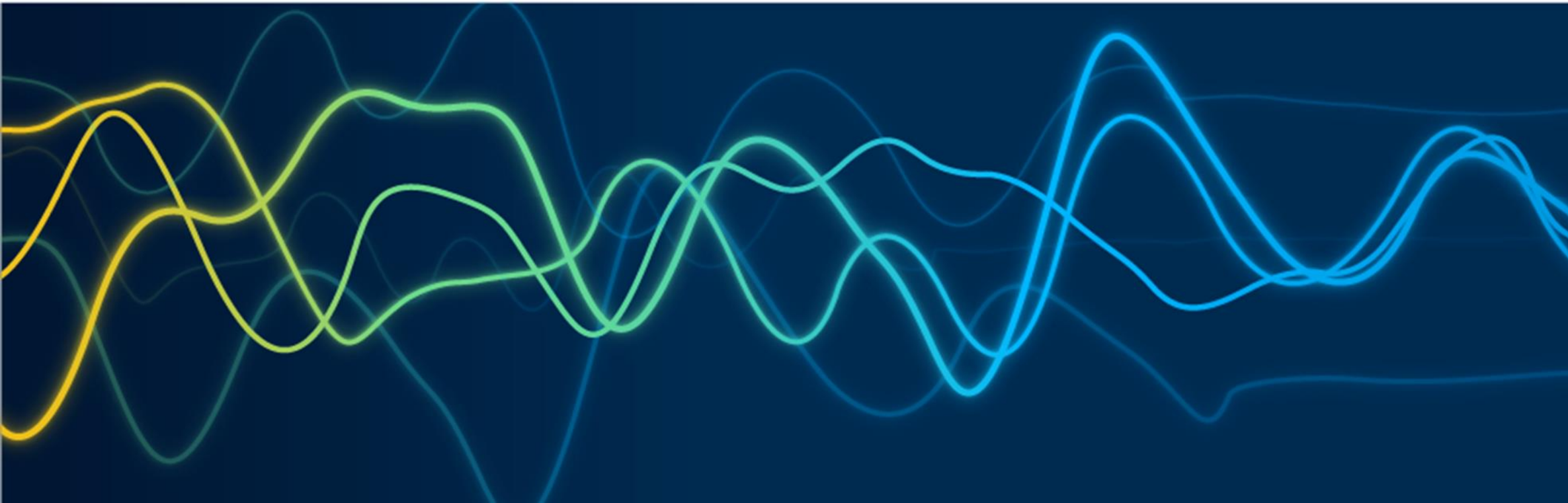
Municipal Bond Market Monitor

Municipal Bond Investment Team

March 31, 2026



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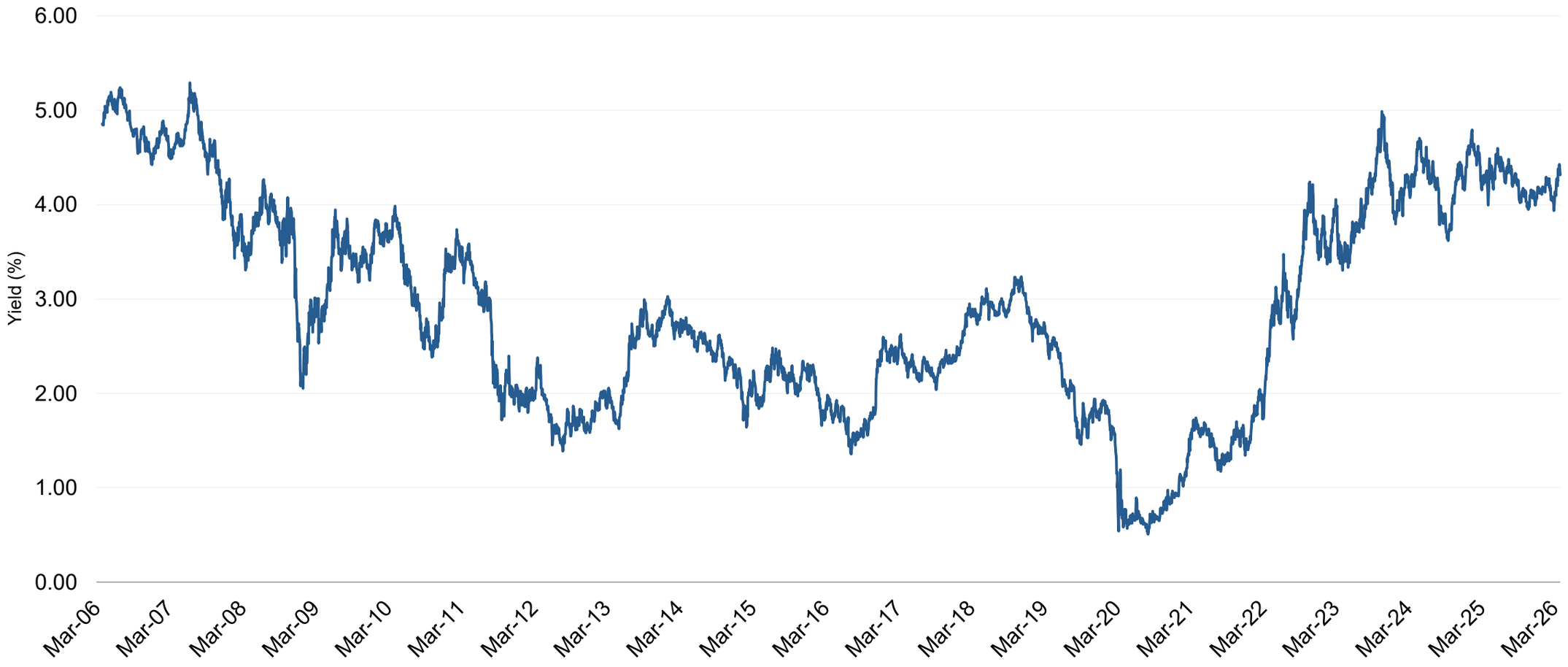
Macro Outlook

Yields remain elevated compared to history

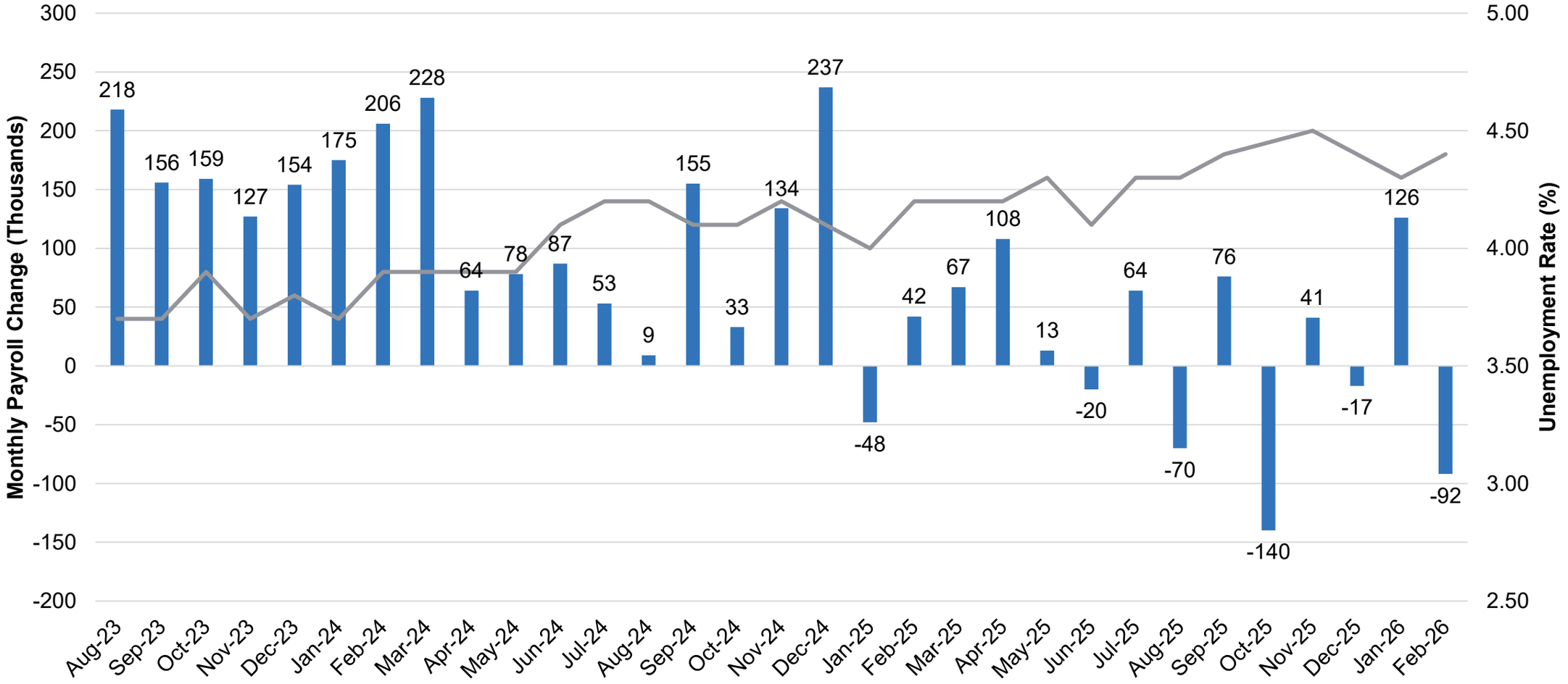
Bloomberg 10-Year US Treasury Bond Index Yield-to-Worst



Source: Bloomberg as of 3/31/26. Data is for informational use only. **Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results.** The index performance is provided for illustrative purposes only and is not meant to depict the /performance of a specific investment.

Job growth has slowed as unemployment rises

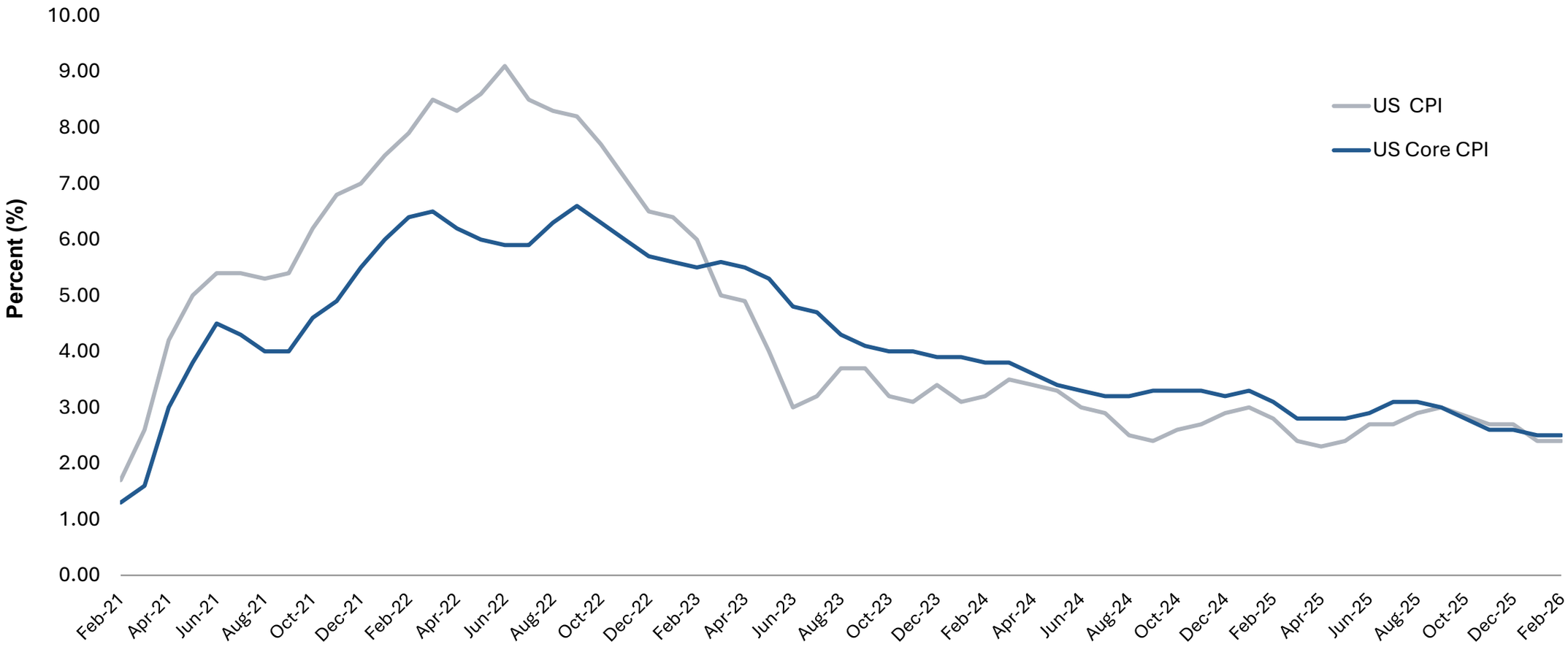
Monthly Payrolls and Unemployment Rate (%)



Source: Bloomberg as of 2/28/2026. Data provided is for informational use only. **Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results.**

Inflation readings have steadied, but still above the Fed's target

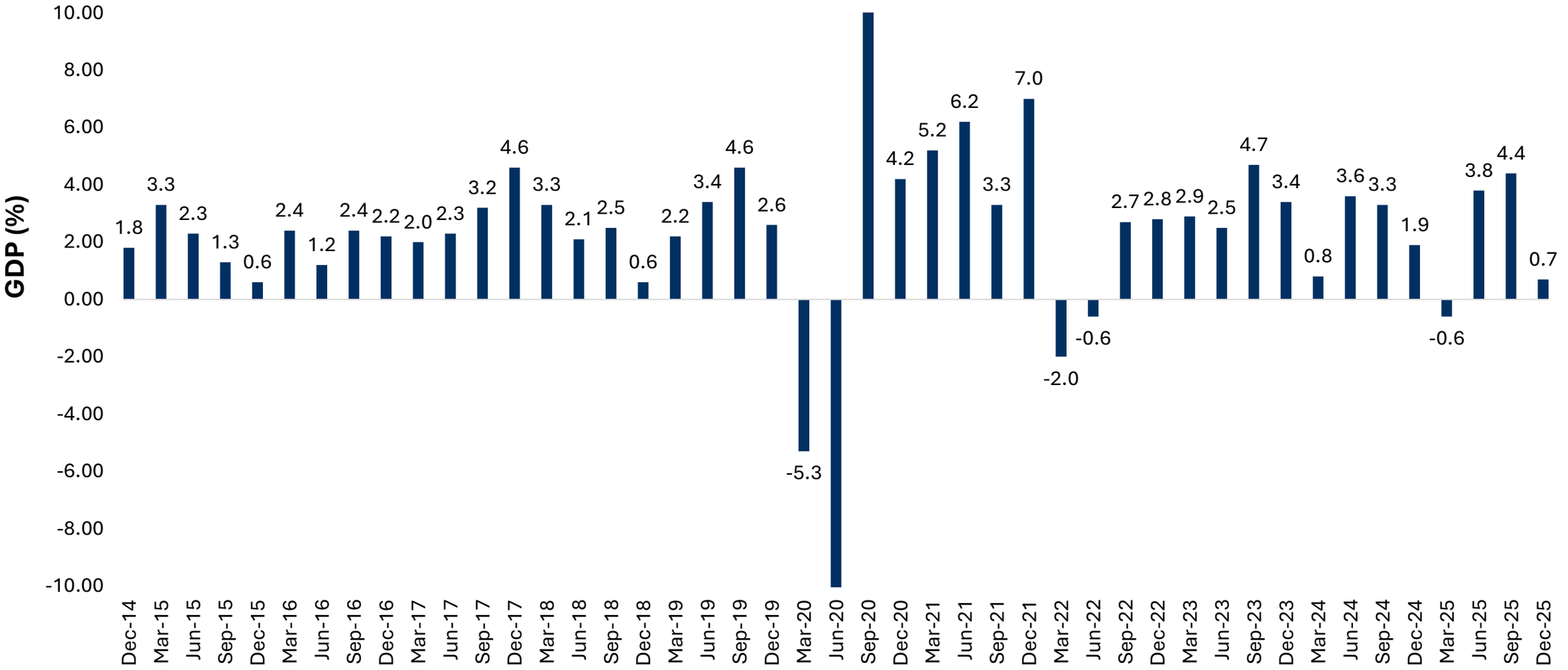
Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Core CPI (%)



Source: Bloomberg as of 2/28/2026. Data provided is for informational use only. **Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results.**

After a negative print in Q1 2025, GDP bounced back in Q2 and Q3, and slowed in Q4

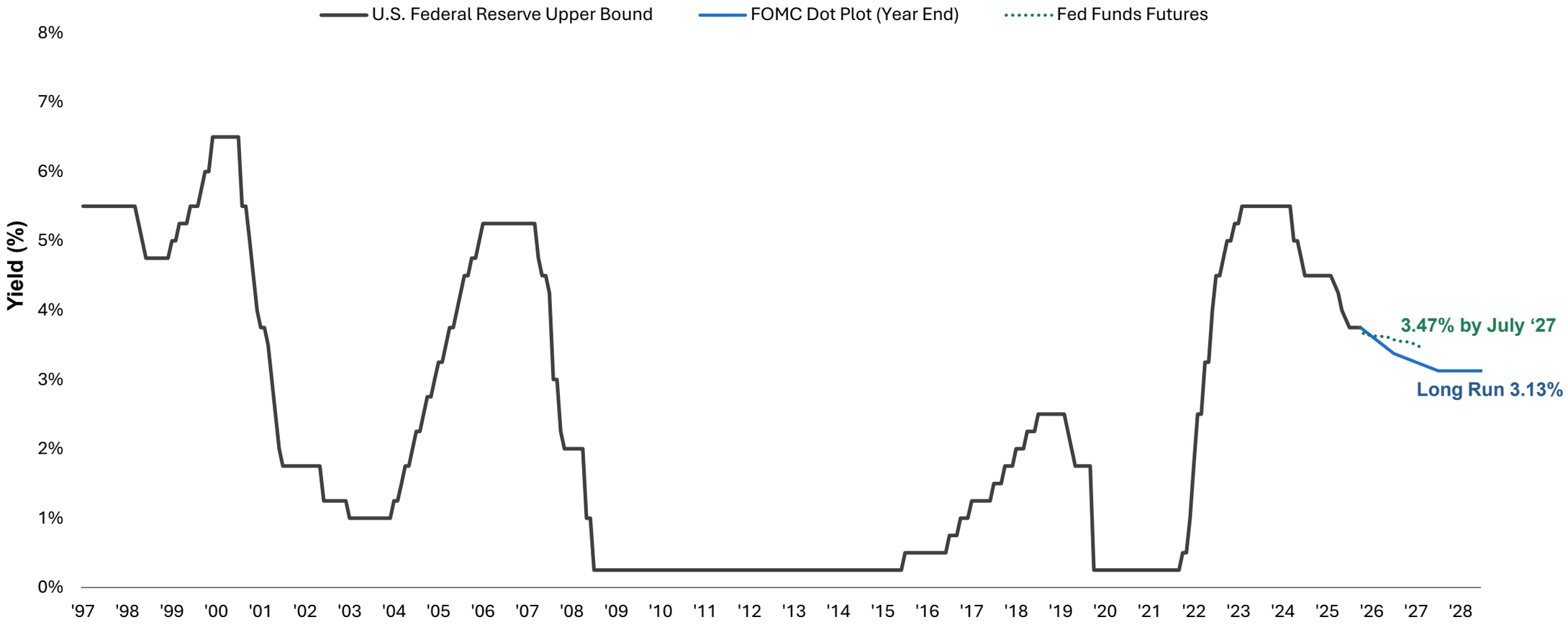
GDP US Chained Dollars (Quarter over Quarter)



Source: Bloomberg as of 12/31/25. Data provided is for informational use only. **Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results.** GDP data in Jun 2020 and Sep 2020 was -28% and +34.8% respectively.

Markets expect slower rate cuts than the Fed is signaling

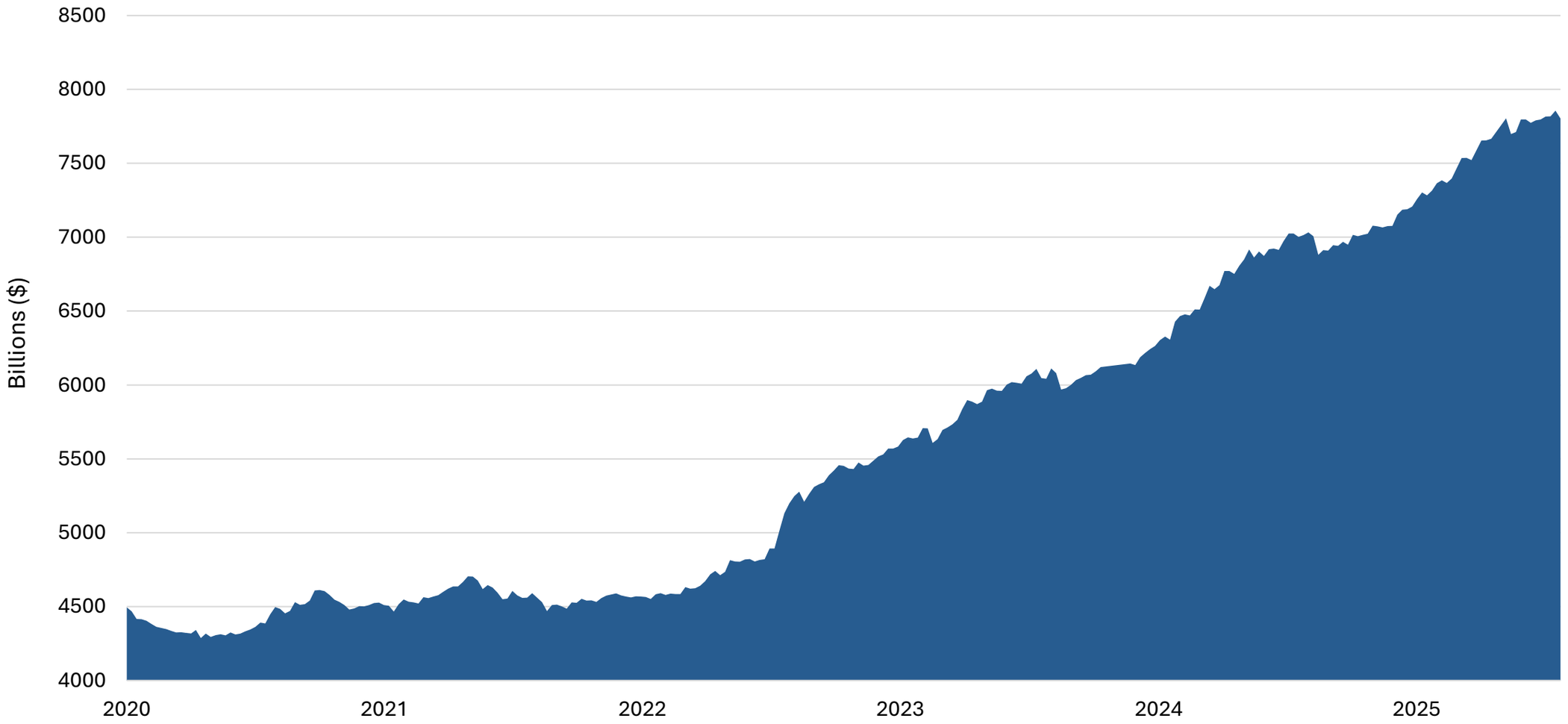
US Federal Reserve - Central Bank Policy Rate Upper Bound *PLUS* Futures-implied and FOMC Expectations



Source: FOMC and Bloomberg as of 3/31/2026. Data provided is for informational use only. **Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results.**

As overnight rates decline, money market fund assets may seek a new home

ICI Money Market Funds Total Net Assets



Source: Bloomberg as of 3/31/2026. Data provided is for informational use only. **Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results.**

Equity Risk Premium - Bonds look more attractive as stocks appear overvalued

Source: Bloomberg as of 3/31/26. Data provided is for informational use only. **Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results**. Index shown is the Morgan Stanley Equity Risk Premium S&P500 Index. . It is not possible to invest directly in an index. Indexes are unmanaged and do not reflect the deduction of fees or expenses. Equity Risk Premium is the difference between S&P 500 earnings yield and 10-Year UST Yield.

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Municipal Market Update

March Municipal Market Review

MUNICIPAL GAINS ACCRUED IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY ERASED BY MARCH SELL-OFF

MARCH 2026 RETURNS:

- Muni Bond Index: -2.3% | HY Muni Index: -1.9% | Taxable Muni Index: -2.1%
- US Treasury: -1.7% | Corporate: -2.0%

MUNICIPAL YIELDS JUMPED DURING THE MONTH LEAVING YIELDS HIGHER FOR THE QUARTER

MARCH '26 AAA Muni

- 2-Year: 2.03% → 2.42% +39 bps
- 5-Year 2.10% → 2.67% +57 bps
- 10-Year 2.52% → 3.12% +60 bps
- 30-Year 4.17% → 4.47% +30 bps

YTD 2025 AAA Muni

- 2-Year: 2.39% → 2.42% +3 bps
- 5-Year 2.41% → 2.67% +26 bps
- 10-Year 2.76% → 3.12% +36 bps
- 30-Year 4.24% → 4.47% +23 bps

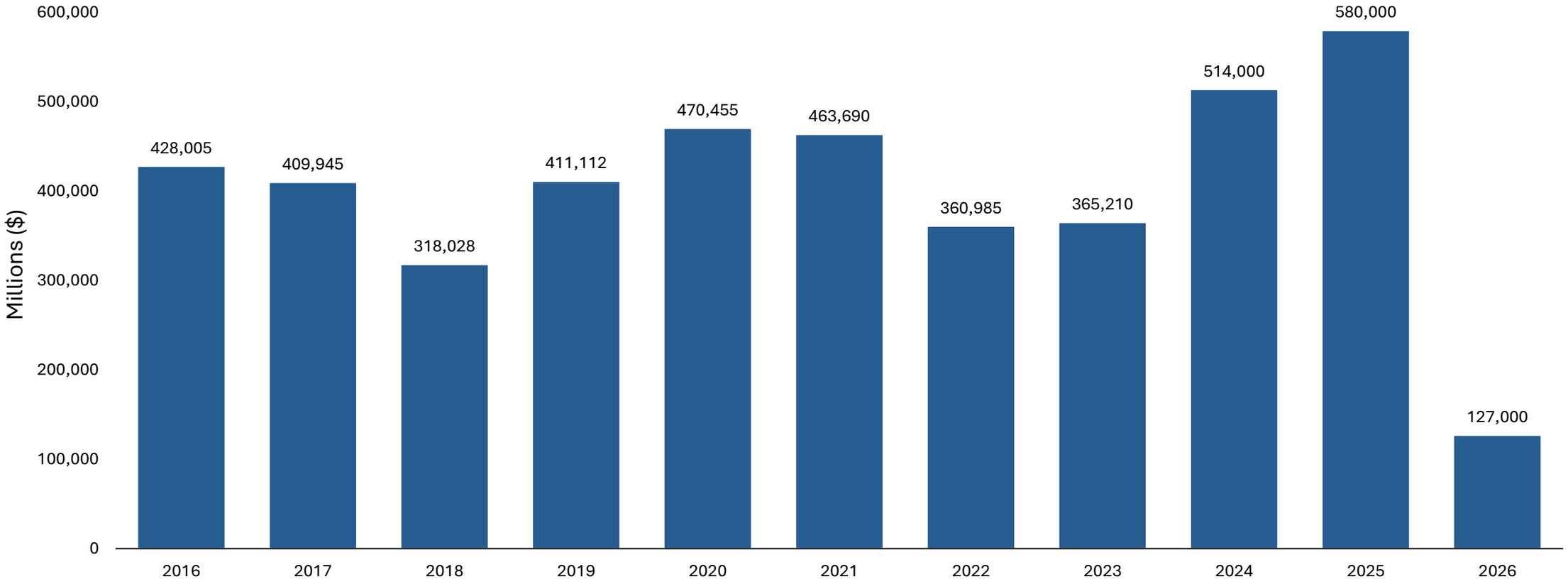
DESPITE MARKET WEAKNESS IN MARCH, MUNICIPAL FUND FLOWS WERE STRONG IN Q1

- YTD: Short (+$1.3bn), Short/Intermediate ($2.3bn) and Intermediate (+$8.1bn) fund flows all solidly positive, with Long Duration (+$14.3bn) funds the biggest beneficiary.
- 87% of Q1 flows entered investment grade funds.

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. It is not possible to invest directly in an index. See end of report for important additional information. This commentary may contain statements that are not historical facts, referred to as "forward looking statements". Actual future results may differ significantly from those stated in any forward-looking statement, depending on factors such as changes in securities or financial markets or general economic conditions.
Source: Index Performance: Bloomberg, AAA YTD changes as of 3/31/2026. Fund Flows: J.P Morgan, Ratios: Bloomberg

Heavy March issuance ($50bn) brought Q1 supply to $127bn, up 6% year-over-year.

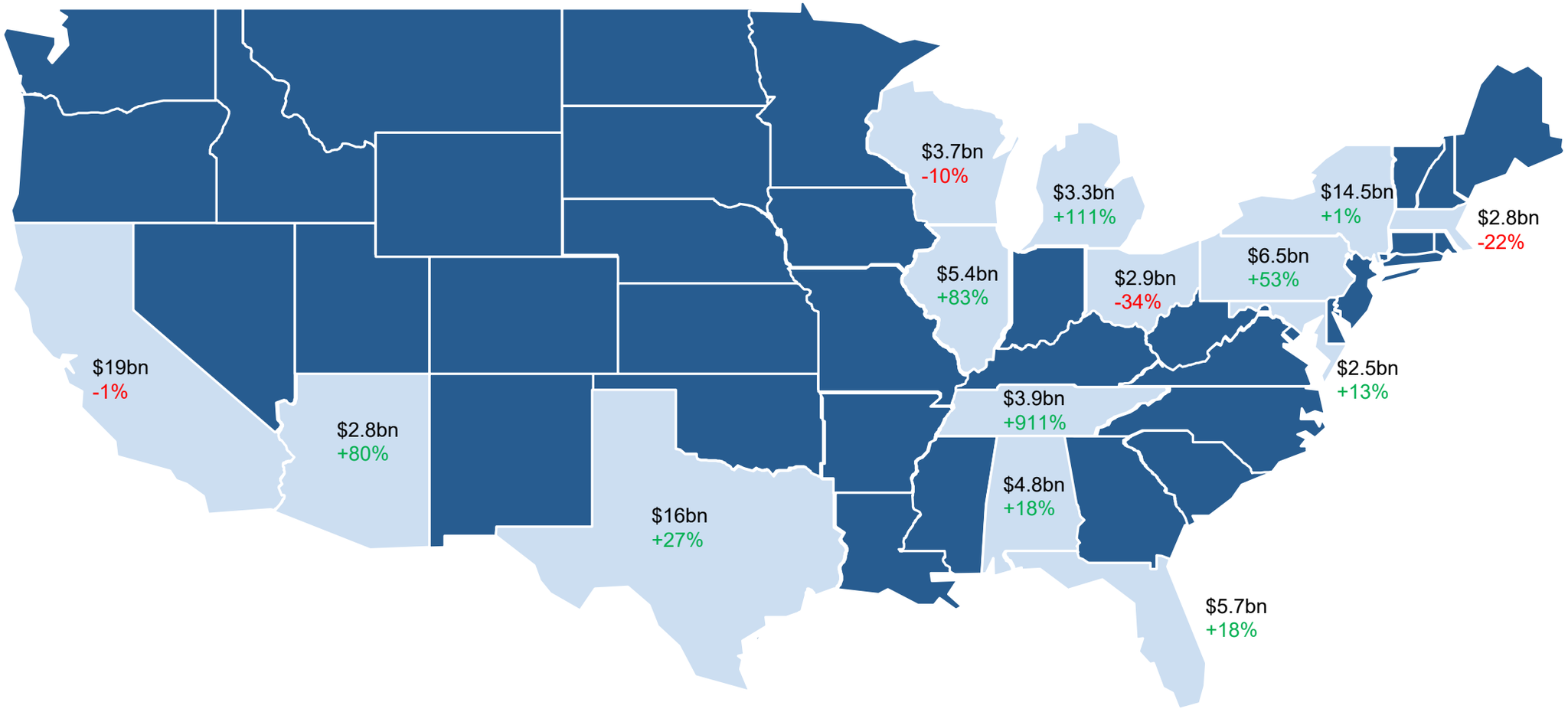
Municipal Bond Issuance



Source: LSEG Refinitiv as of 3/31/26

Top 15 State issuance and year over year change (%)

Municipal Bond Issuance

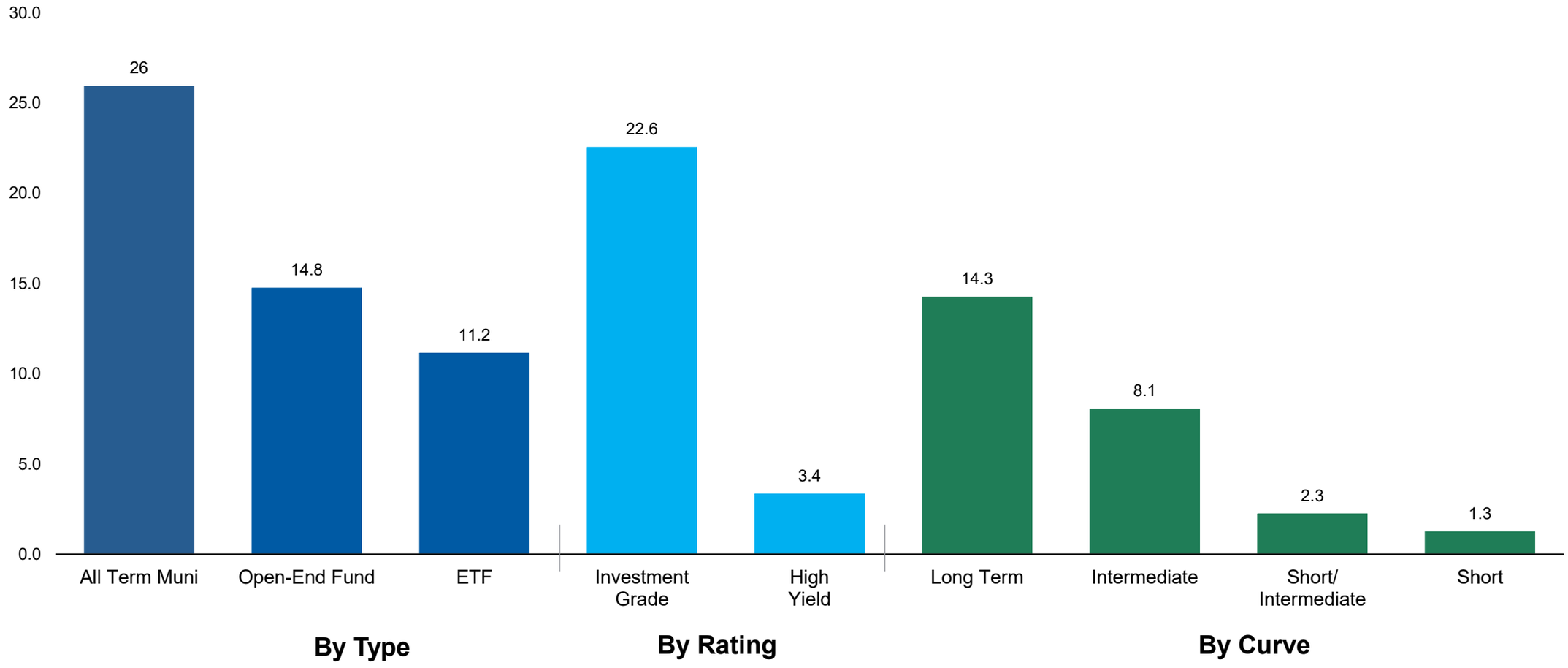


Source: Bloomberg as of 3/31/26

Q1 flows were strong with investment grade funds leading the way

Muni Fund Flows By Category

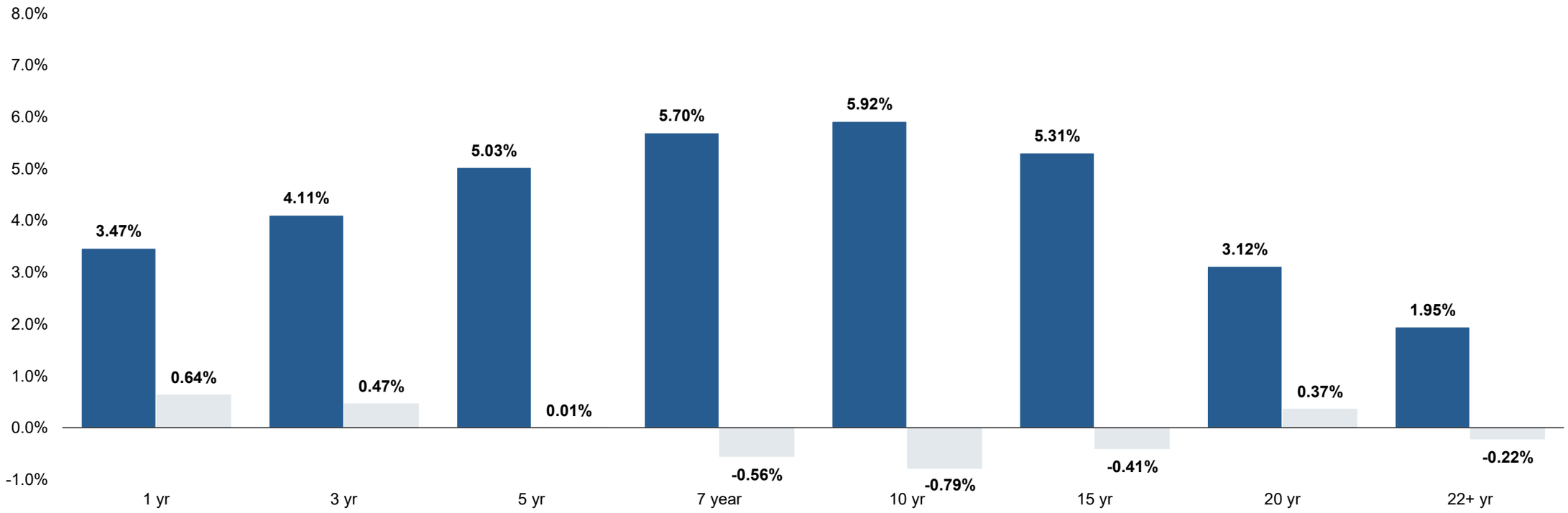
YTD Municipal Fund Flows ($Bn)



Source: J.P. Morgan, as of 3/31/26.

A weak March resulted in slightly positive to slightly negative returns across the curve in Q1

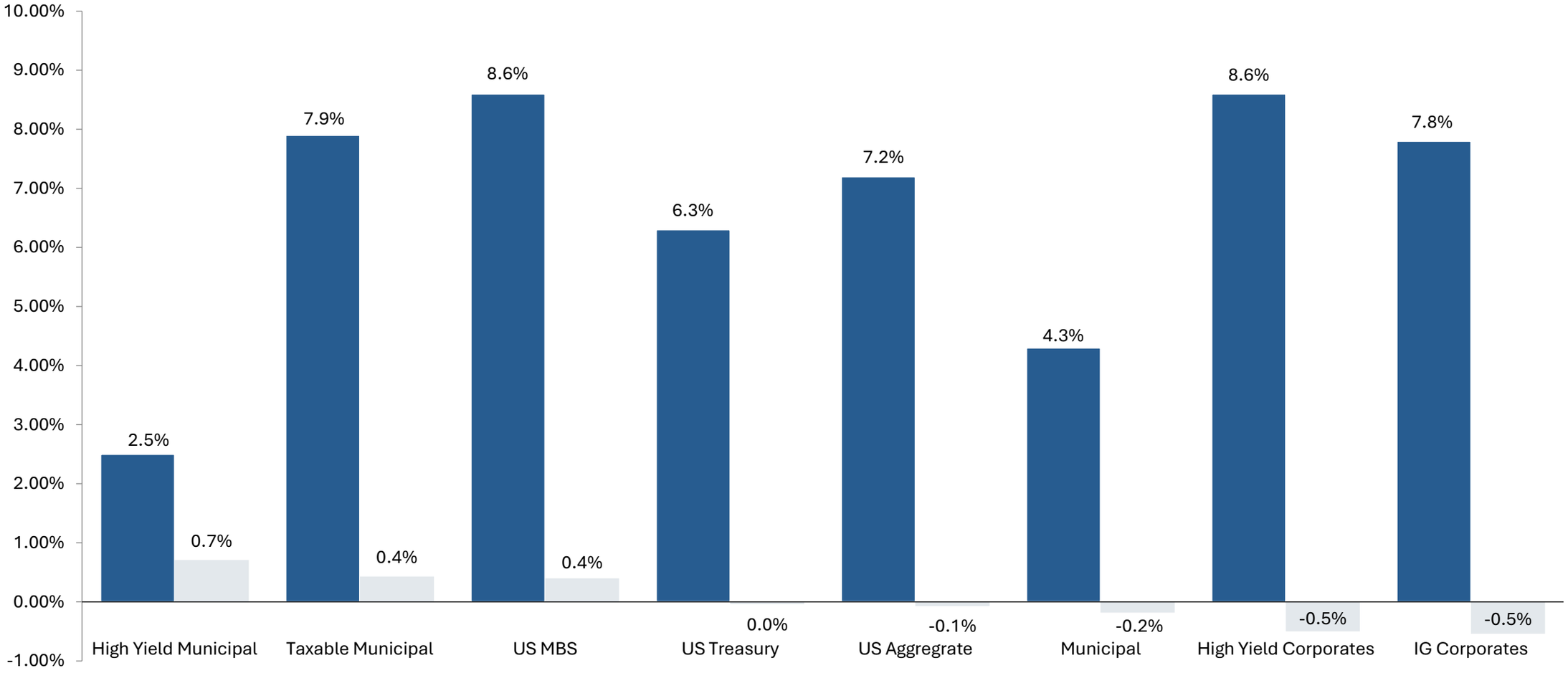
Bloomberg Municipal Bond Index Returns 2025 and YTD



Source: Bloomberg, MMA and Morningstar Direct as of 3/31/2026. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.** Performance less than one year is cumulative. It is not possible to invest directly in an index. See end of report for important additional information.

After a strong 2025, fixed income returns were muted in Q1

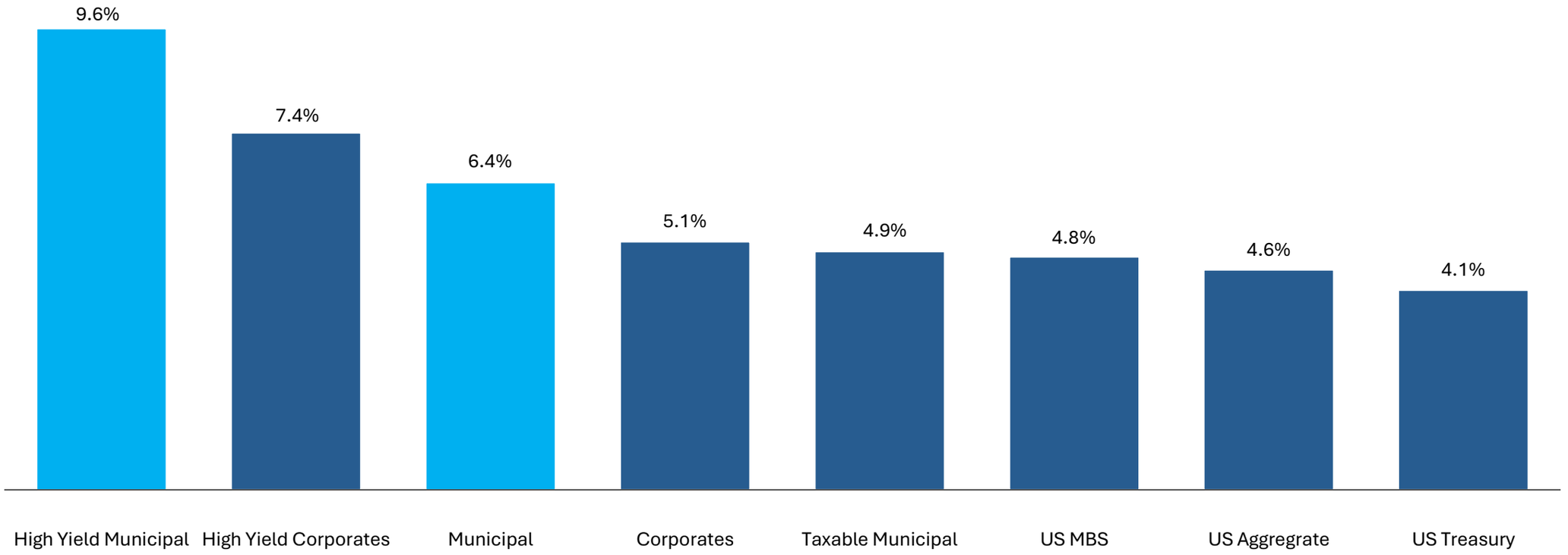
Fixed Income Index Returns 2025 and YTD



Source: Bloomberg and Morningstar Direct as of 3/31/2026. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.** It is not possible to invest directly in an index. See end of report for important additional information. *Basis points (BPS) is a unit that is equal to 1/100th of 1% and is used to denote the change in a financial instrument. High Yield Municipal Index is the Bloomberg High Yield Municipal Index, the Taxable Municipal Index is the Bloomberg Taxable Municipal Index, US MBS Index is the US MBS Component of the Barclays US Aggregate Index, US Aggregate Index is the Barclays AGG, Municipal Index is the Bloomberg Municipal Index, High Yield Corporates Index is the Bloomberg US Corporate High Yield Index, and IG Corporates is the Bloomberg US IG Corporate Index.

Municipal yields are attractive relative to other fixed income alternatives

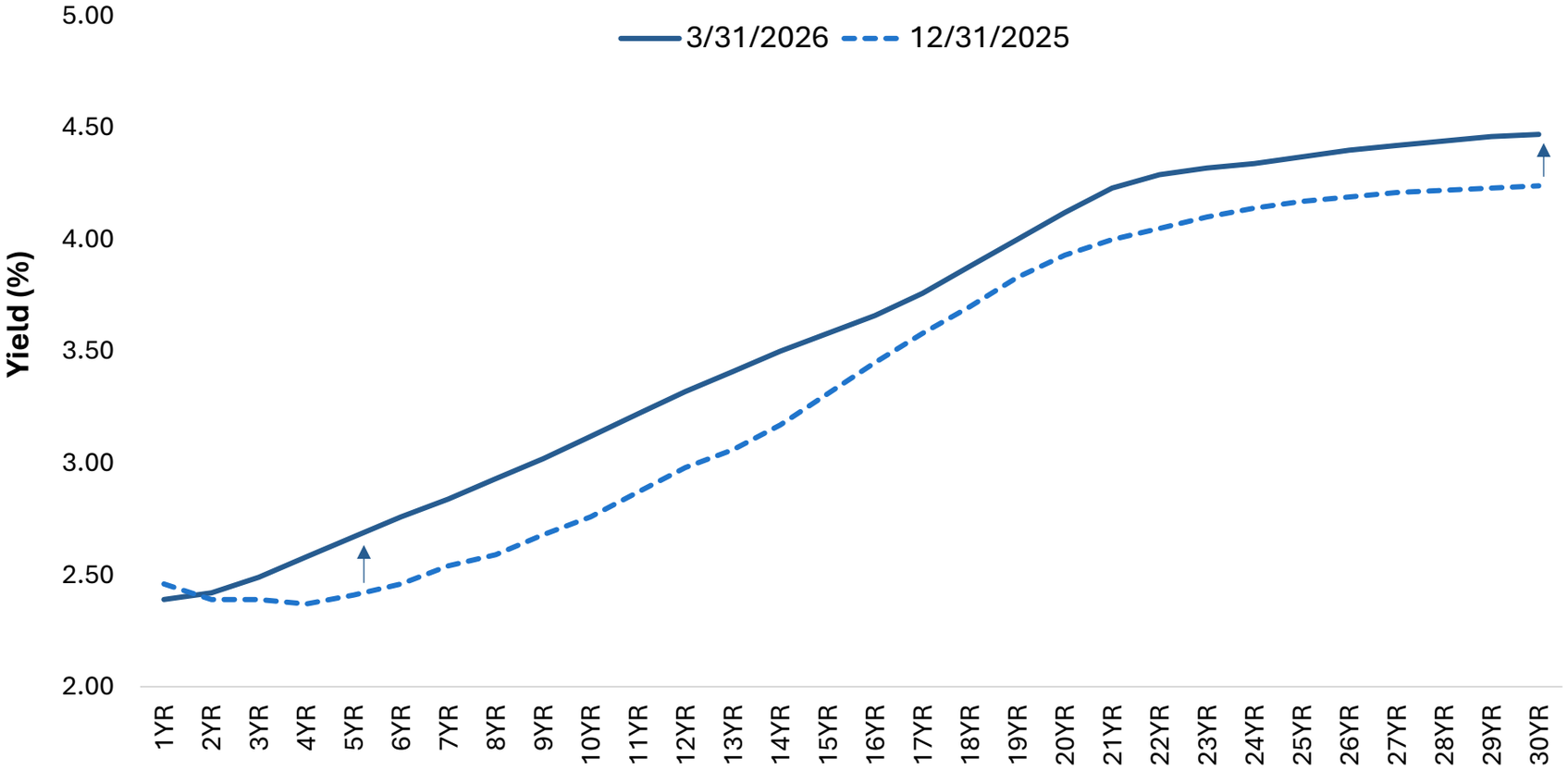
Yield-to-Worst (%) and Taxable-Equivalent Yields for Municipal Indices



Source: Bloomberg and Morningstar Direct as of 3/31/26. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.** It is not possible to invest directly in an index. See end of report for important additional information. *Basis points (BPS) is a unit that is equal to 1/100th of 1% and is used to denote the change in a financial instrument.

Municipal yields increased 40-70bps in March and 3-40bps during Q1

AAA MMD Municipal Curve

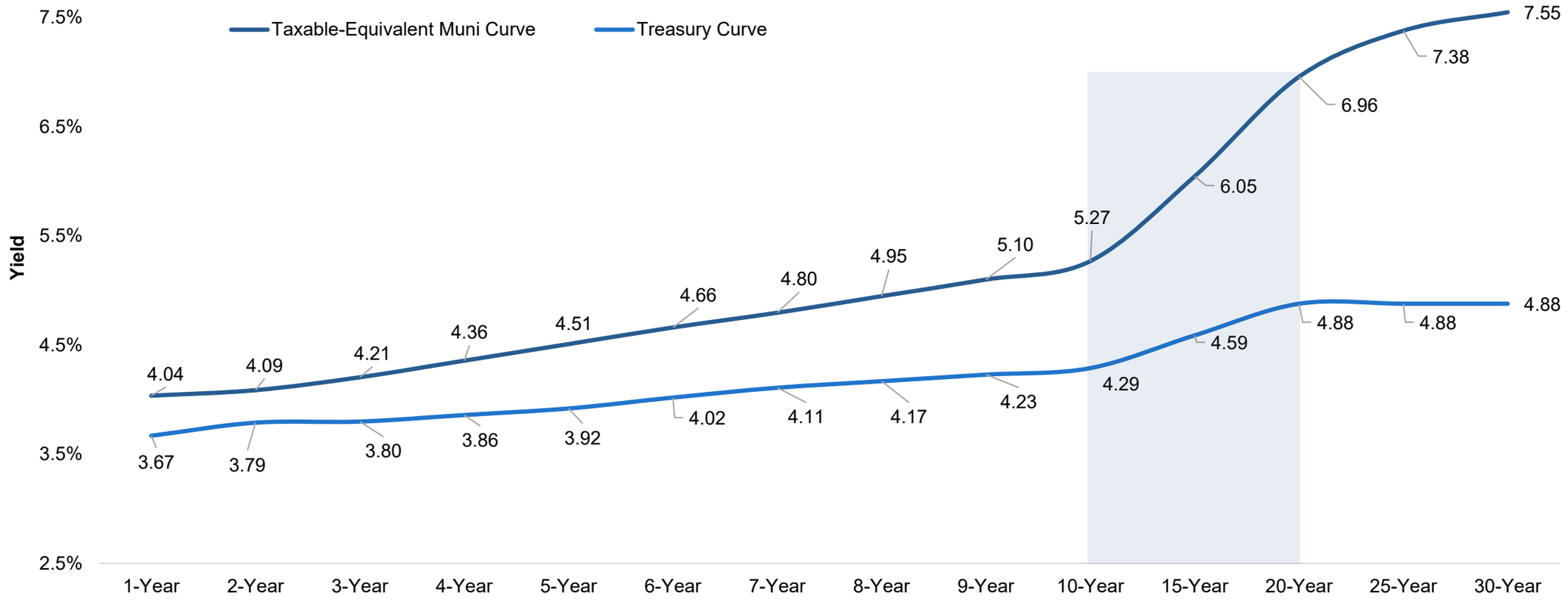


Maturity Year	YTD Yield Change
2-Year	+0.03
5-Year	+0.26
10-Year	+0.40
15-Year	+0.27
20-Year	+0.19
30-Year	+0.23

Source: Refinitiv as of 3/31/2026. Data provided is for informational use only. **Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results.**

Taxable-equivalent yields continue to look compelling in 10-to-20 years

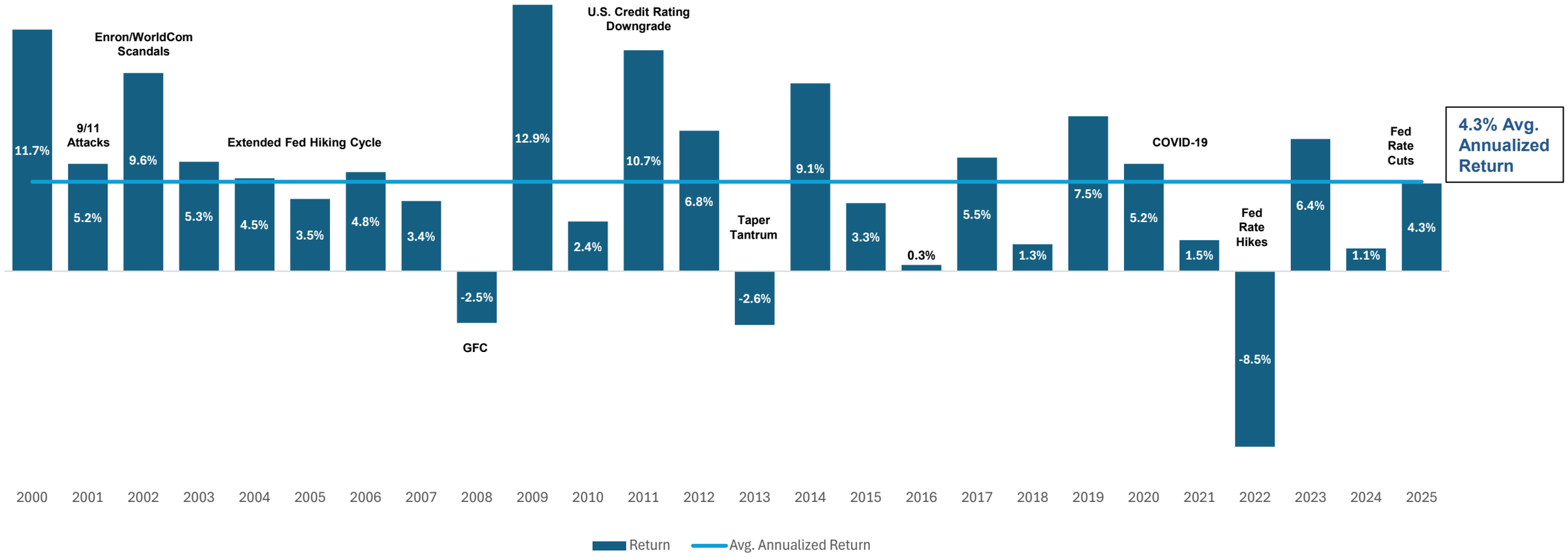
Though shorter duration municipals have become more attractive, the best value remains out the curve



Source: Bloomberg & Refinitiv as of 3/31/2026. Data provided is for informational use only. **Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results**. Tax-equivalent yields is calculated assuming a federal tax rate of 40.80%.

Investment grade performance ended 2025 in-line with 25-year average due to strong second half

Bloomberg Municipal Bond Index Calendar Year Returns



Source: Parametric and Bloomberg. Index data based on Bloomberg Municipal Bond Index. Data analyzed from 12/31/2000 through 12/31/2025. It is not possible to invest directly in an index. Indexes are unmanaged and do not reflect the deduction of fees or expenses. **Past performance is not indicative of future results**.

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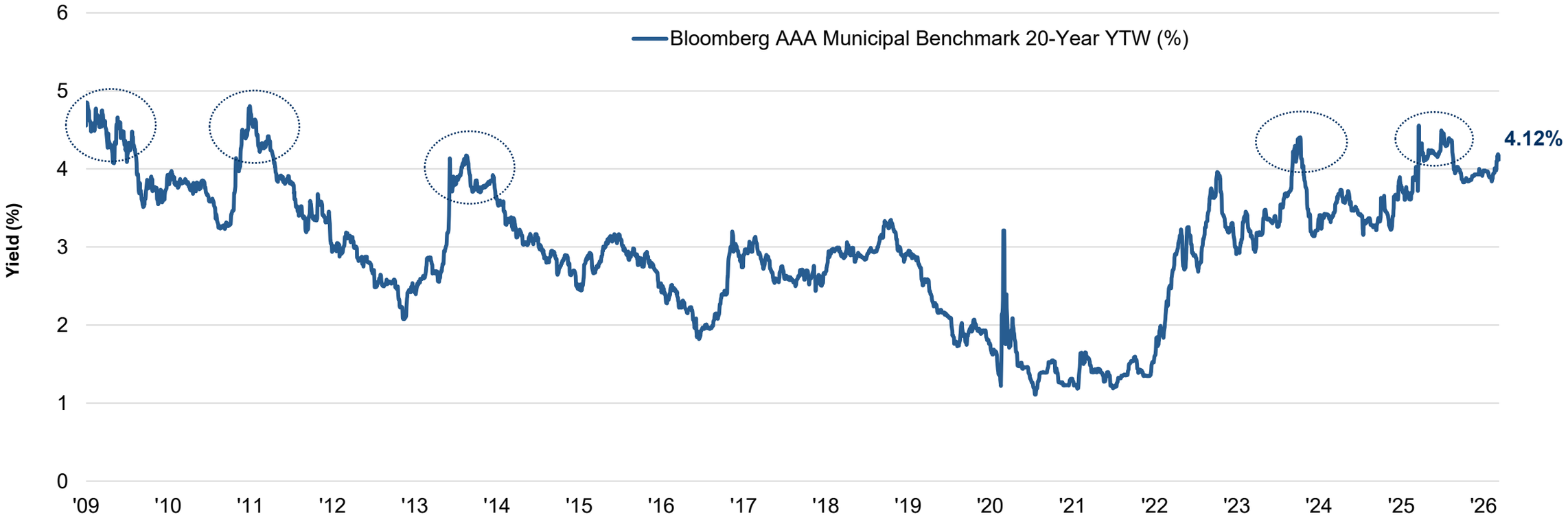
Current Market Opportunities

Yields are Elevated: Municipal index yields are 118 basis points above the 10-year average

Source: Eaton Vance, Parametric, and Bloomberg. Index data based on Bloomberg Municipal Bond Index. Data analyzed from 3/31/2006 through 3/31/2026. Starting yields are represented by index yield to worst. Starting yields and forward index returns based on daily values for the last 15 years. It is not possible to invest directly in an index. Indexes are unmanaged and do not reflect the deduction of fees or expenses. **Past performance is not indicative of future results.**

Yields are Elevated: Past periods with 20-year muni yields above 4% proved to be attractive entry points

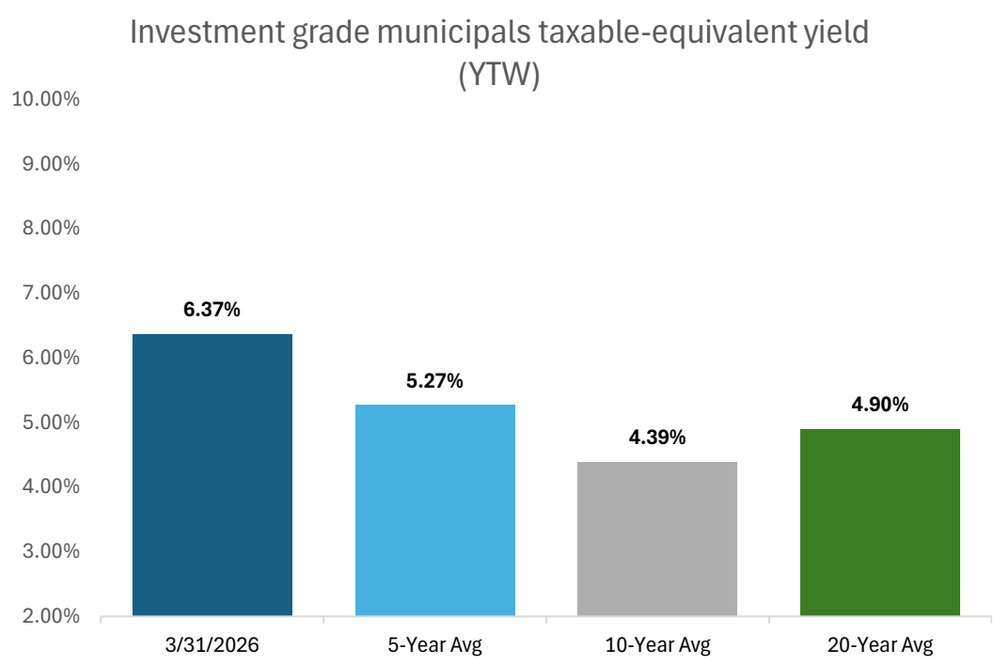
Bloomberg Municipal Benchmark 20-Year Index Yield-to-Worst (%)



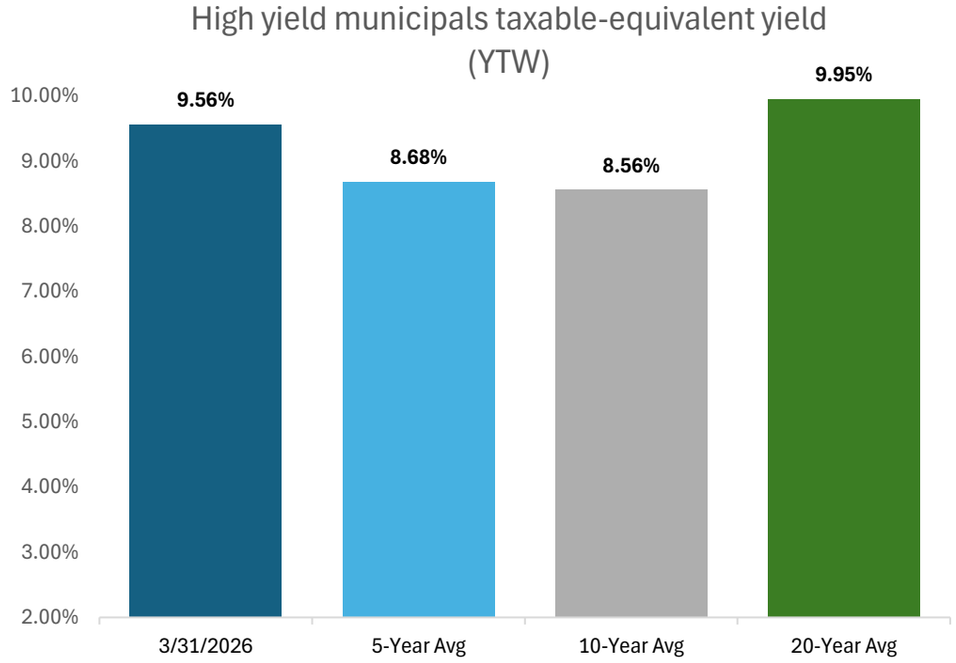
Source: Bloomberg as of 3/31/2026. Index data based on Bloomberg BVAL Benchmark 20-Year Municipal Bond Curve Index. It is not possible to invest directly in an index. Indexes are unmanaged and do not reflect the deduction of fees or expenses. **Past performance is not indicative of future results**.

Yields are Elevated: Current yield levels in municipals are elevated vs. historical averages

Bloomberg Municipal Indices Yield-to-Worst vs 5-, 10- and 20-Year Averages



+198 bps vs. trailing 10-year average



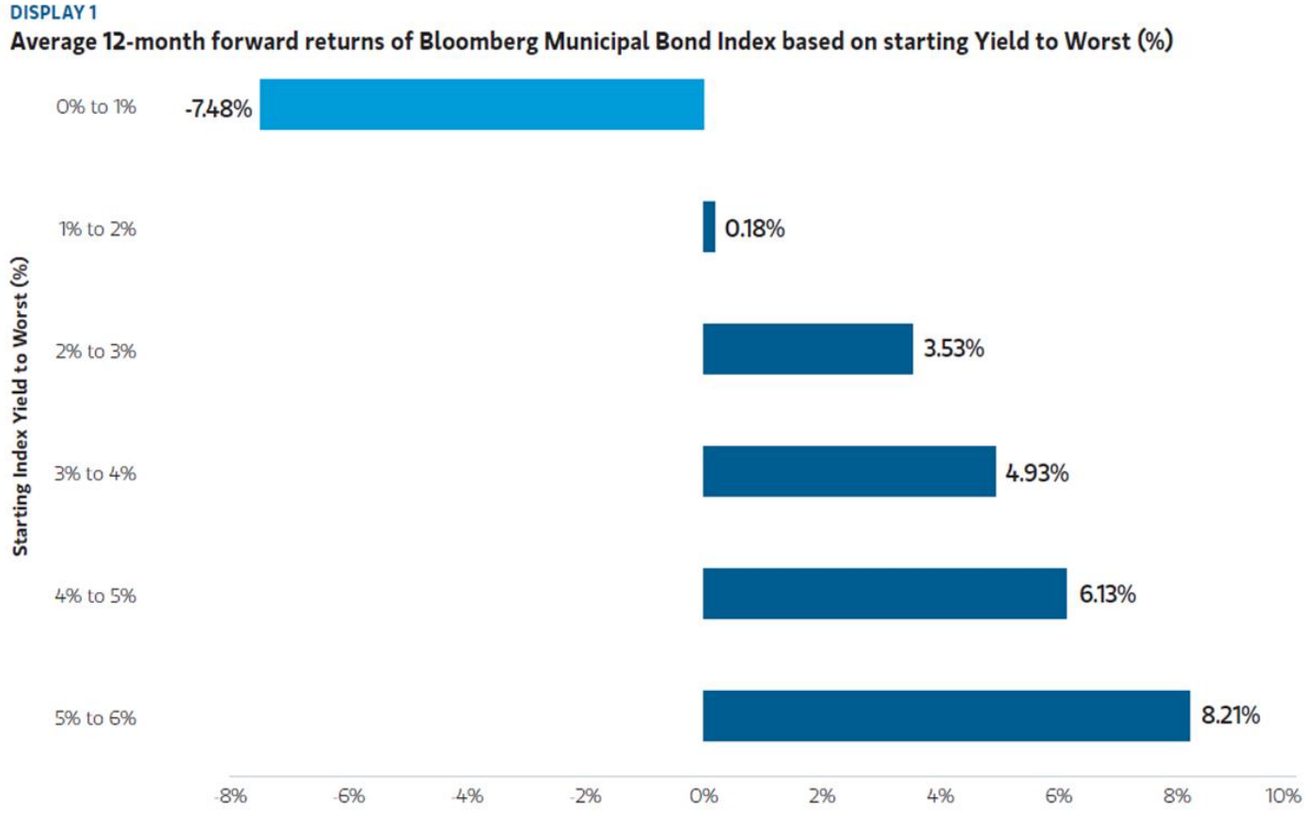
+100 bps vs. trailing 10-year average

Source: Bloomberg as of 3/31/2026. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.** The index performance is provided for illustrative purposes only and is not meant to depict the performance of a specific investment.

Starting Yields Matter: Locking in current interest rates can provide an income "cushion" and potentially higher returns

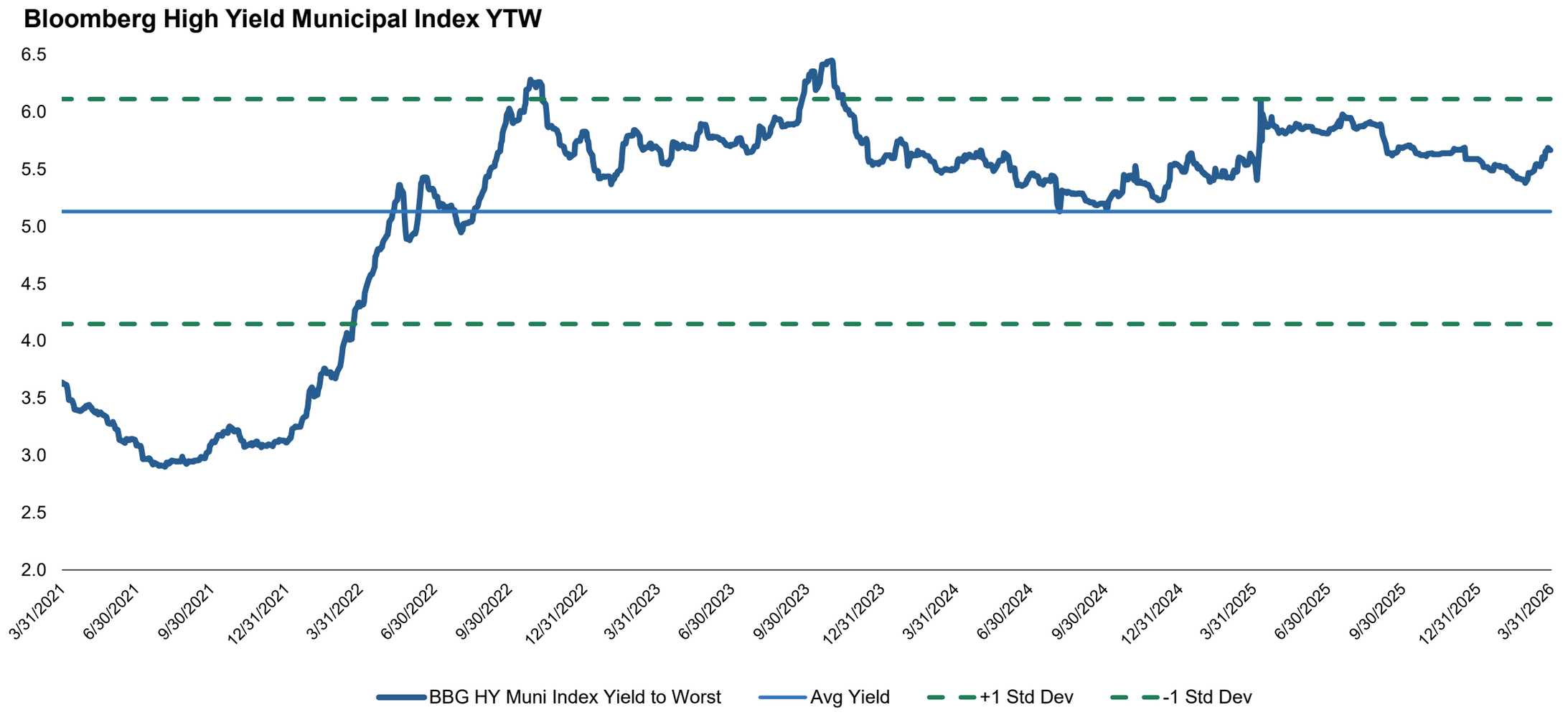
Average 12-month forward returns for the Bloomberg Municipal Bond Index based on starting yield-to-worst

- On average, a higher starting index yield-to-worst has resulted in higher forward 12 month returns.
- For example, the average index return over the 12-months following all starting yields between 3% and 4% has been 4.93%.



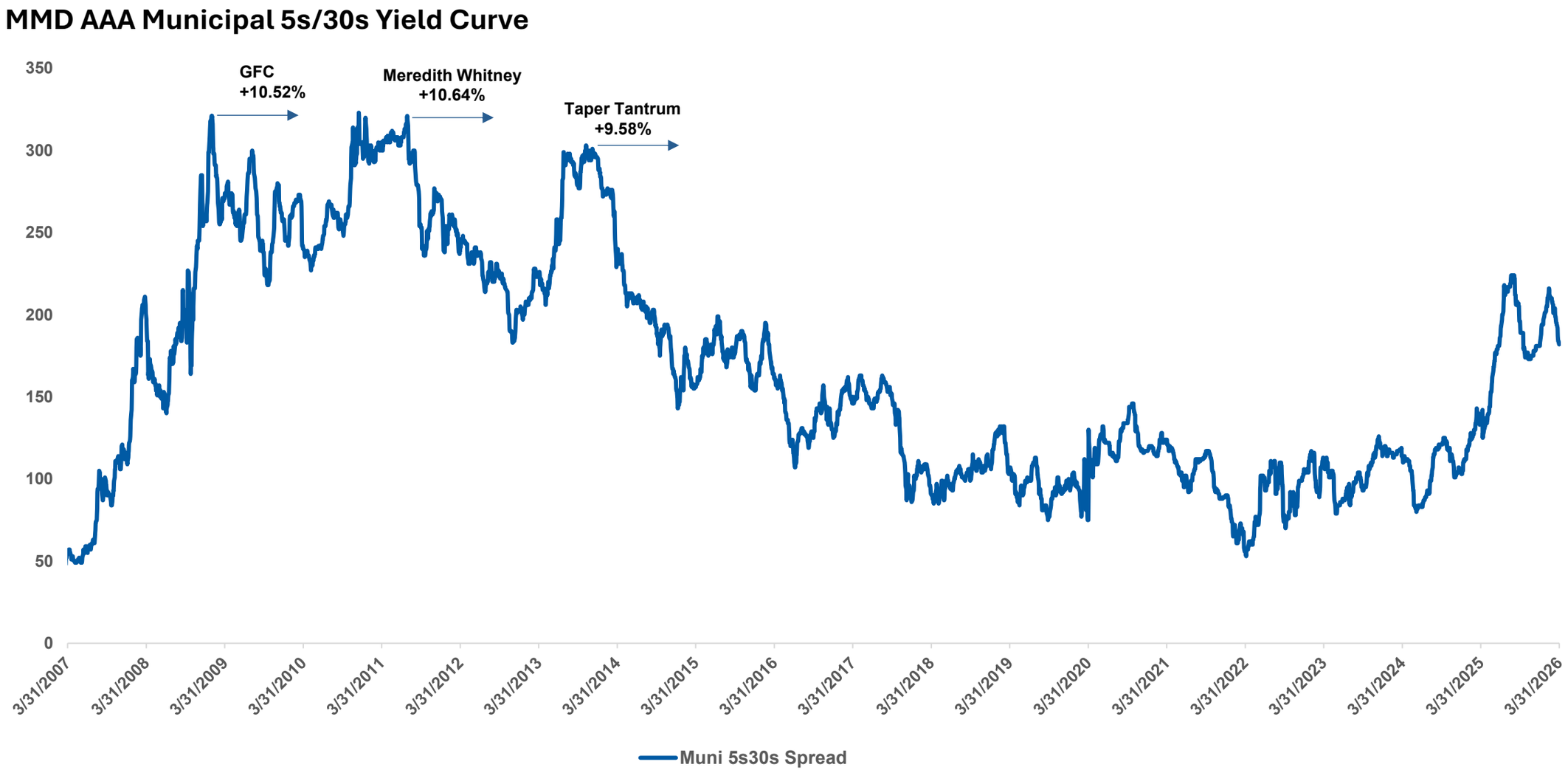
Source: Parametric and Bloomberg. Index data based on Bloomberg Municipal Bond Index. Data analyzed from 5/1/2000 through 5/1/2025. Starting yields are represented by index yield to worst. Starting yields and forward index returns based on daily values for the last 25 years. It is not possible to invest directly in an index. Indexes are unmanaged and do not reflect the deduction of fees or expenses. Past performance is not indicative of future results.

High yield municipals are compelling with absolute yields higher than the 5-year average



Source: Barclays and Bloomberg, as of 3/31/2026. The index performance is provided for illustrative purposes only and is not meant to depict the performance of a specific investment. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.**

Steep N' Cheap: In the past, steep yield curves have been accurate predictors of strong 12-month forward returns

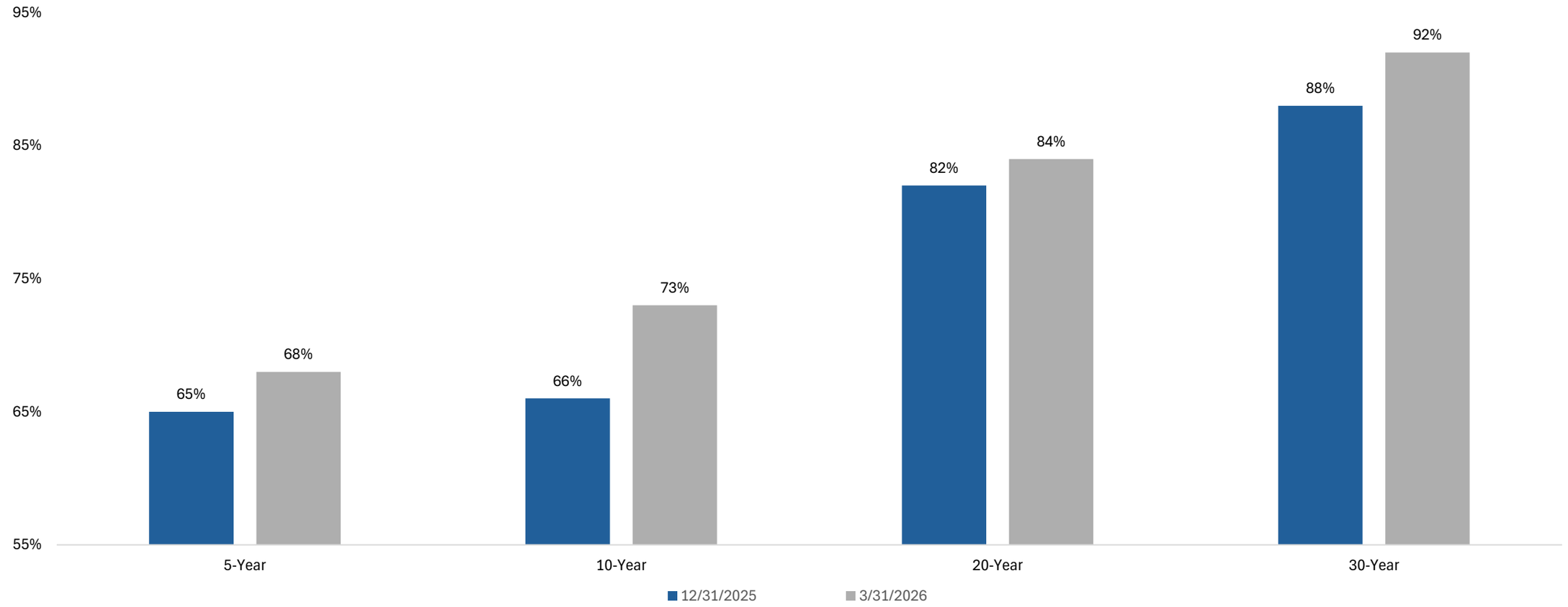


Source: Refinitiv as of 3/31/2026. Data provided is for informational use only. **Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results.**

Steep N' Cheap: Municipal ratios cheapened in Q1, and longer duration continues to look attractive relative to short and intermediate maturities

Muni/Treasury Ratios

Muni/Treasury Ratios 12/31/25 and Present



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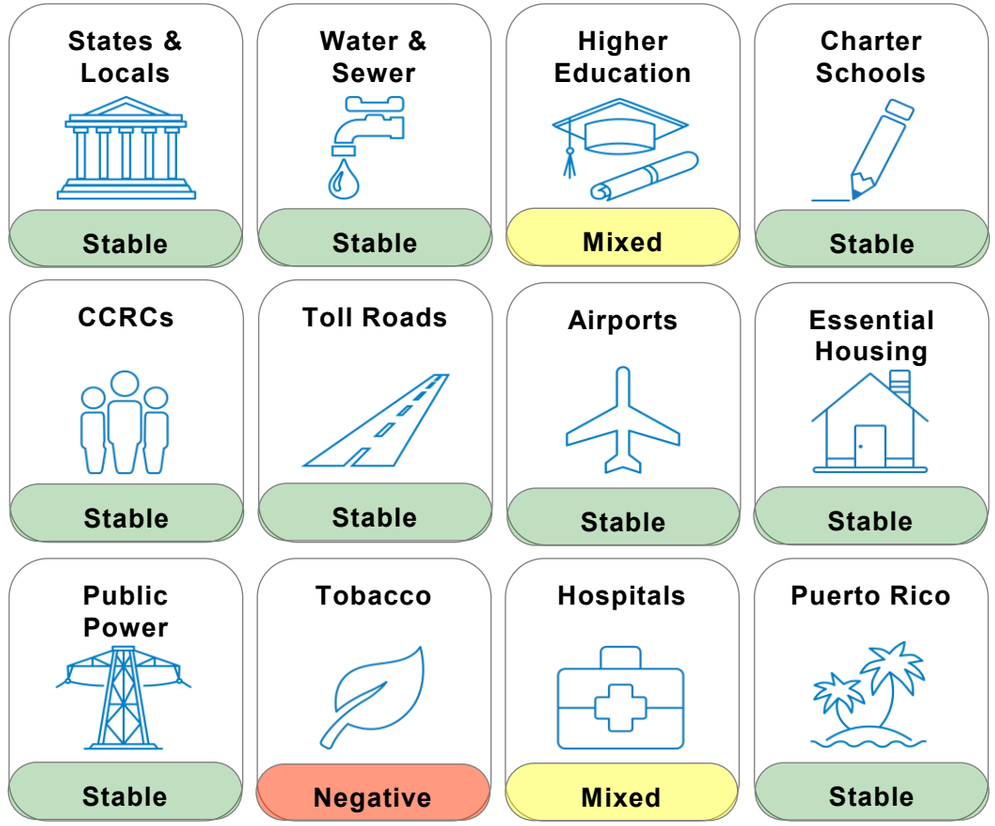
Municipal Credit Overview

Credit Fundamentals: Most sectors will likely experience stable credit quality in 2026

However, we believe credit pressure could arrive amid new administration federal policy decisions

- **State and Local Governments outlook remains stable.** The median rainy day fund balance has decreased slightly from its previous high but remains at 12.8% of expenses. Revenues have risen; however, the number of states falling below estimates has increased modestly. Costs for Medicaid, pension funding, and SNAP are expected to increase. Medicaid costs could rise further if states choose to replace federal funding beginning in 2027. States may need to compensate for reduced FEMA funding in the future.
- **Higher education is mixed, and credit bifurcation continues to widen.** Strong institutions are holding their market position with healthy balance sheets while struggling schools face enrollment declines leading to weak operating performance and potential liquidity issues.
- **Healthcare is also mixed.** Hospital performance continues to recover as patient volumes normalize, and revenue diversification and expense efficiency measures take hold. Cash reserves provide meaningful support. However, profitability gains are slowing, and pressures from rising labor costs, inflation, and workforce shortages persist. OBBA will significantly cut Medicaid funding and expand the uninsured population, disproportionately affecting safety-net and rural hospitals. Expiration of ACA premium subsidies, governmentally imposed staffing and pricing mandates, and payer shift toward Medicare managed care, are expected to weigh on margins.
- **We have a negative outlook on the Tobacco sector**. The negative outlook is primarily driven by US smoker demographics, proliferation of smoking alternatives and price inflation.



Source: Eaton Vance. For informational purposes and does not constitute an offer or a recommendation to buy or sell any particular security or do adopt any specific investment strategy.

Middle East Conflict: Implications for Municipal Credit

Overall municipal market remains resilient, but short-term credit impacts are increasingly sector and state specific

Positive	Near-Term Neutral	Negative

• **Oil Producing States:**
  • Higher severance tax revenues (AK, WY, NM, ND, TX)
• **Defense-oriented States:**
  • Increased federal defense spending supporting local economies (TX, VA, CA)
	• **Healthcare:**
	  • Essential service with largely inelastic demand
	• **Education:**
	  • Essential service, generally insulated from economic shocks
		• **Transportation:**
		  • Higher fuel costs weaken travel demand, pressuring toll roads and airport revenues. Most acute for airports with low-cost carrier exposure.
		• **Utilities / Public Power:**
		  • Increased input costs pressure operating margins
		• **Construction / Project Finance:**
		  • Inflation increases construction costs and strains budgets

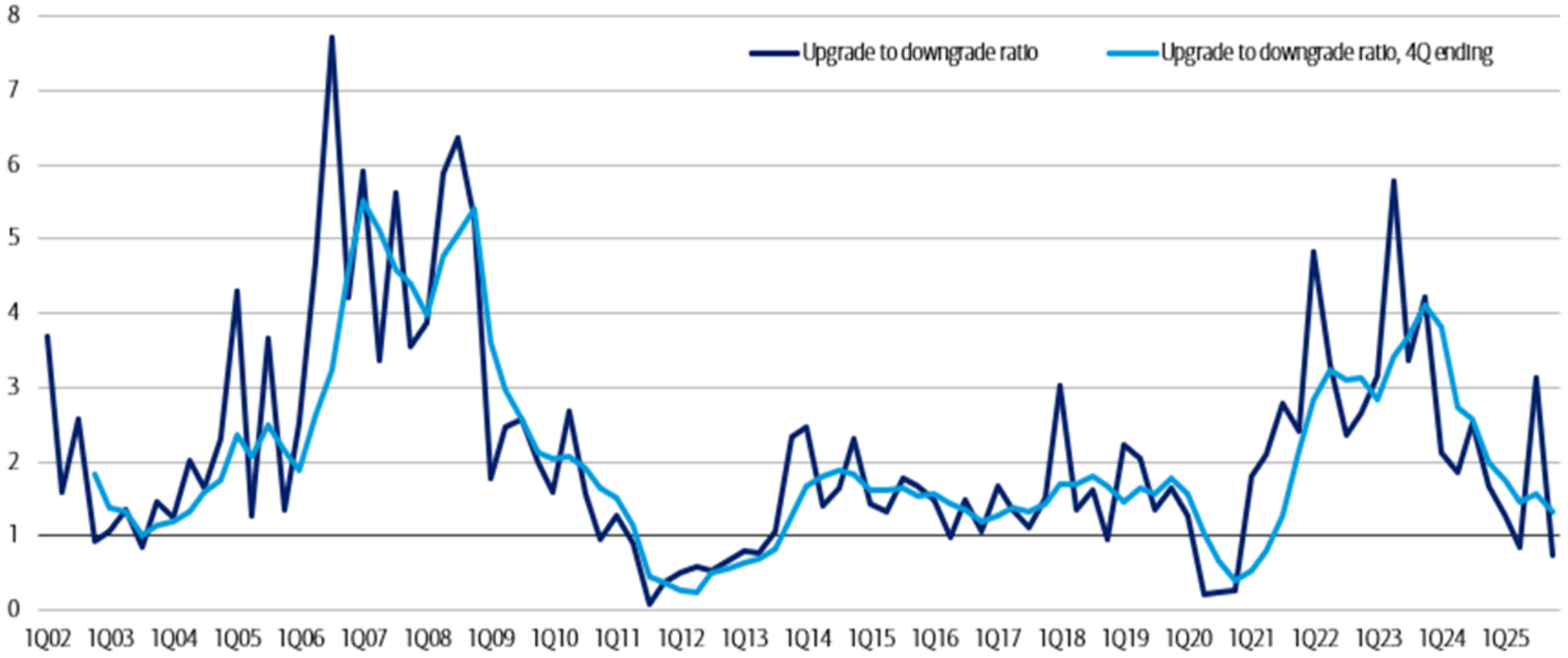
Secondary Credit Risks: Tax revenue pressure from prolonged weak consumption and elevated cybersecurity risks to critical infrastructure

A prolonged Middle East conflict could drive greater **structural credit divergence -** benefiting energy-producing and defense-linked regions while pressuring transportation, utilities, and lower-rated issuers through sustained inflation, higher operating costs, and weaker demand. Over time, credit outcomes will increasingly hinge on **oil prices and fiscal discipline.** Issuers with strong reserves and cost flexibility will likely fare better.

Source: Eaton Vance, 3/31/26. For informational purposes and does not constitute an offer or a recommendation to buy or sell any particular security or do adopt any specific investment strategy.

State Credit Fundamentals: Municipal credit quality remains positive, but the upgrade/downgrade ratio has weakened.

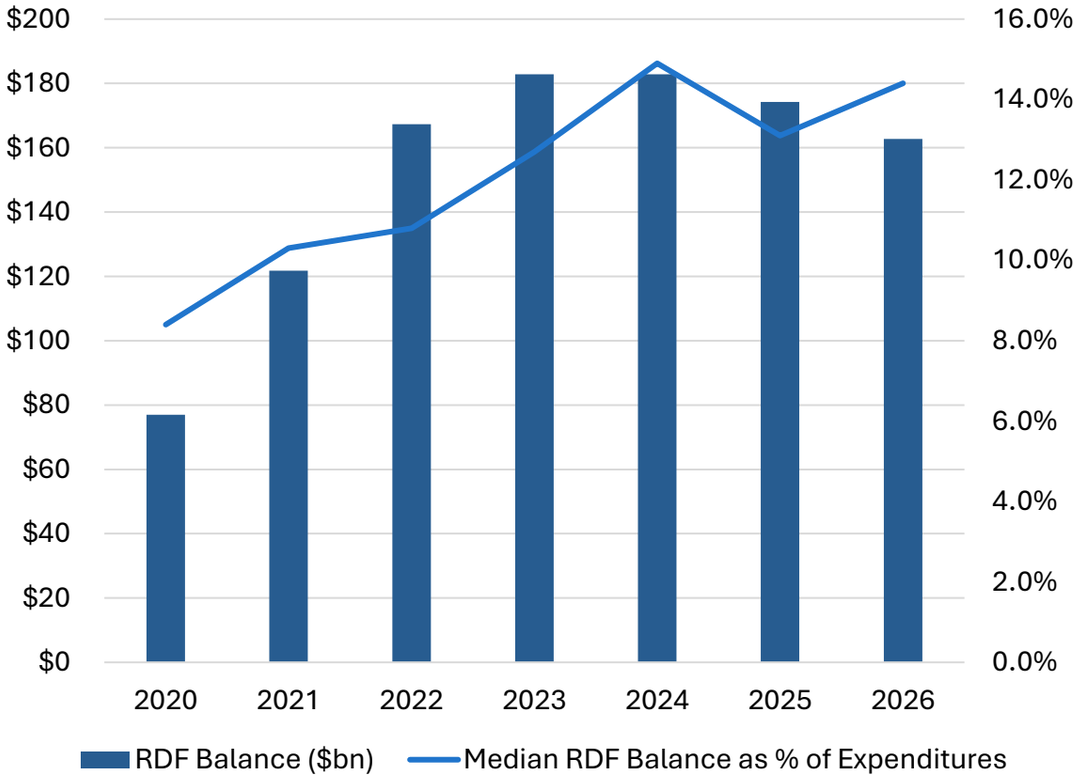
2025 Upgrade/Downgrade ratio of 1.3 is the weakest since Q1 '22



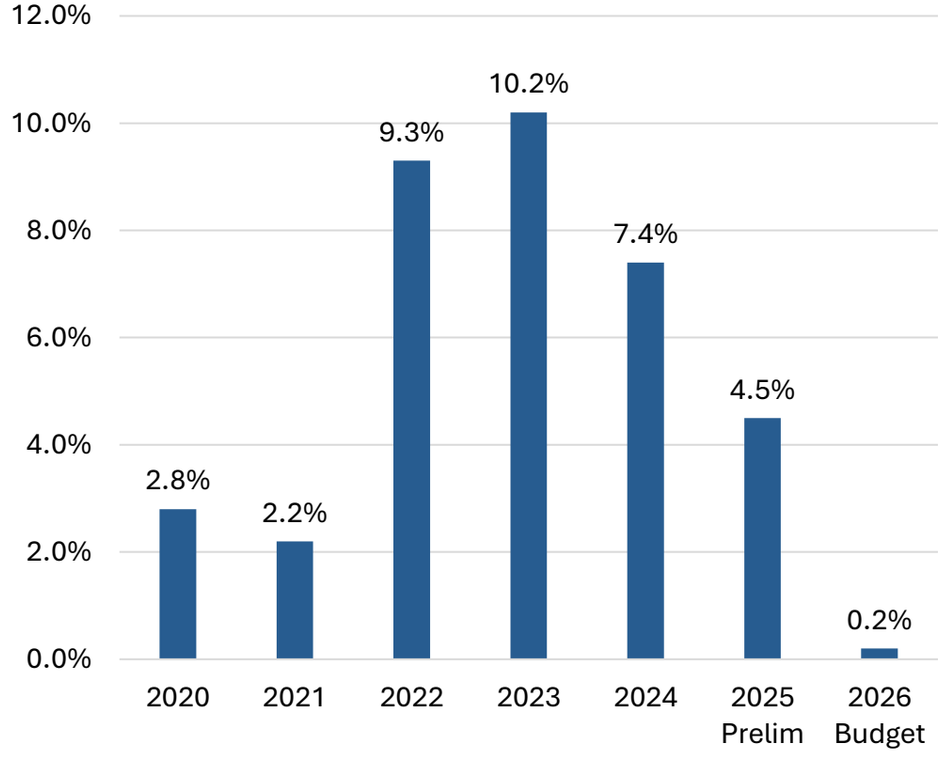
Source: BofA Global Research, Moody's Ratings, S&P Ratings as of 12/31/25

State Credit Fundamentals: Elevated rainy day fund balances and conservative spending growth give states the financial means to navigate federal funding uncertainties.

State Rainy Day Fund Balances & Median Balance as % of Expenditures



Median Y/Y Change in General Fund Spending

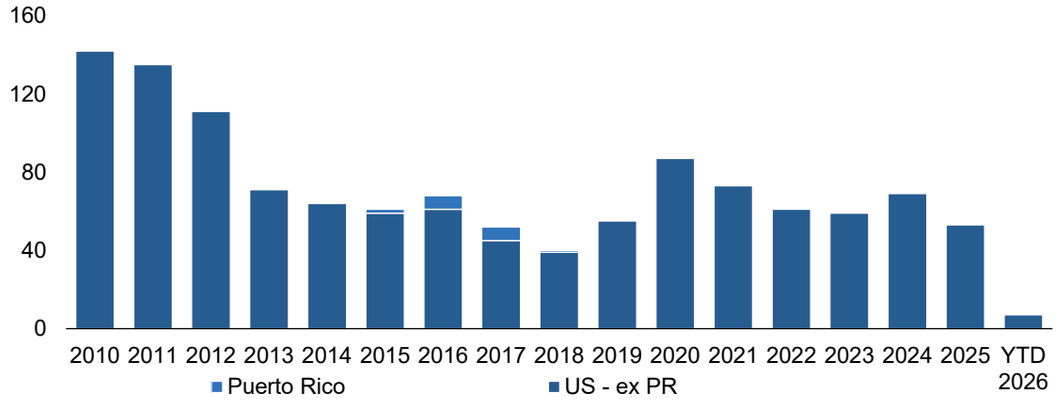


Source: National Association of State Budget Officers, JPM. Rainy Day Funds and General Fund Spending: Fiscal 2025 data represents preliminary actuals and fiscal 2026 data represents projections in enacted budgets.

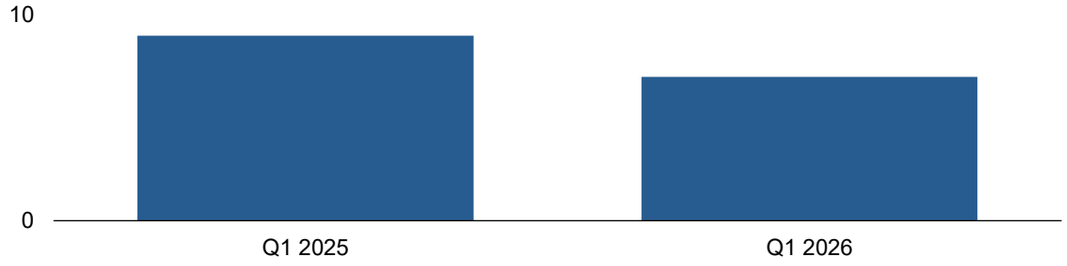
The number of municipal defaults has consistently declined since 2020

Number of Unique Annual Defaults

Number of Unique Defaults

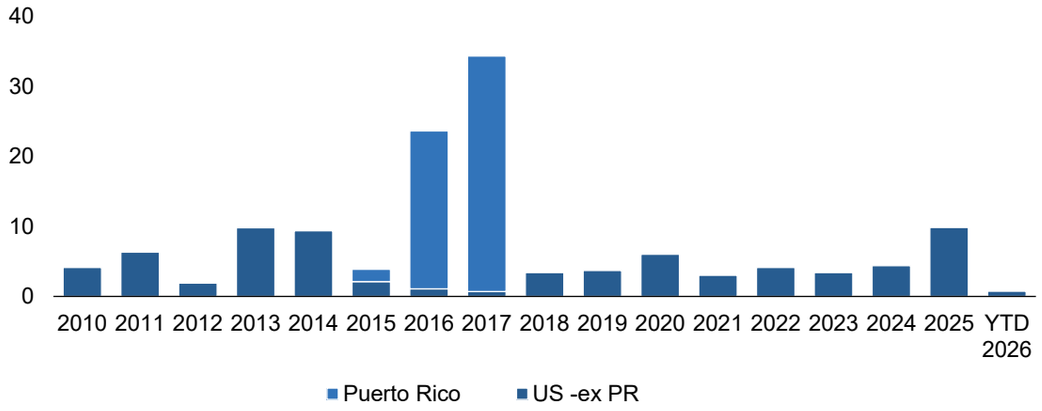


Q1 2026 Number of Unique Defaults Decreased Slightly YoY

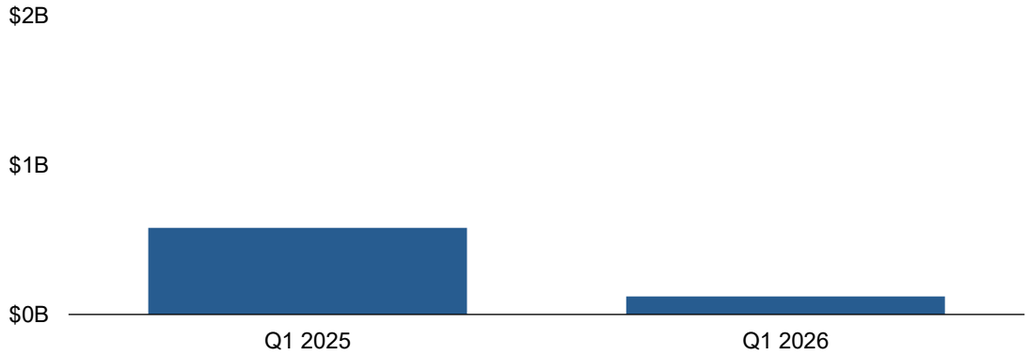


Dollar Value of Annual Defaults ($ Billions)

Dollar Value of Defaults ($ Billions)



Q1 2026 Dollar Value of Defaults Decreased Significantly YoY



Source: MMA. Default data as of 3/25/2026

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Bloomberg High Yield Municipal Bond Index is an unmanaged index of non-Investment Grade Municipal bonds traded in the U.S.

Bloomberg Taxable Municipal Bond Index is an unmanaged index of Taxable Municipal Bonds traded in the U.S.

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