



# Navigating the PE Fundraising Cycle: Are We Out of the Woods?

July 2023

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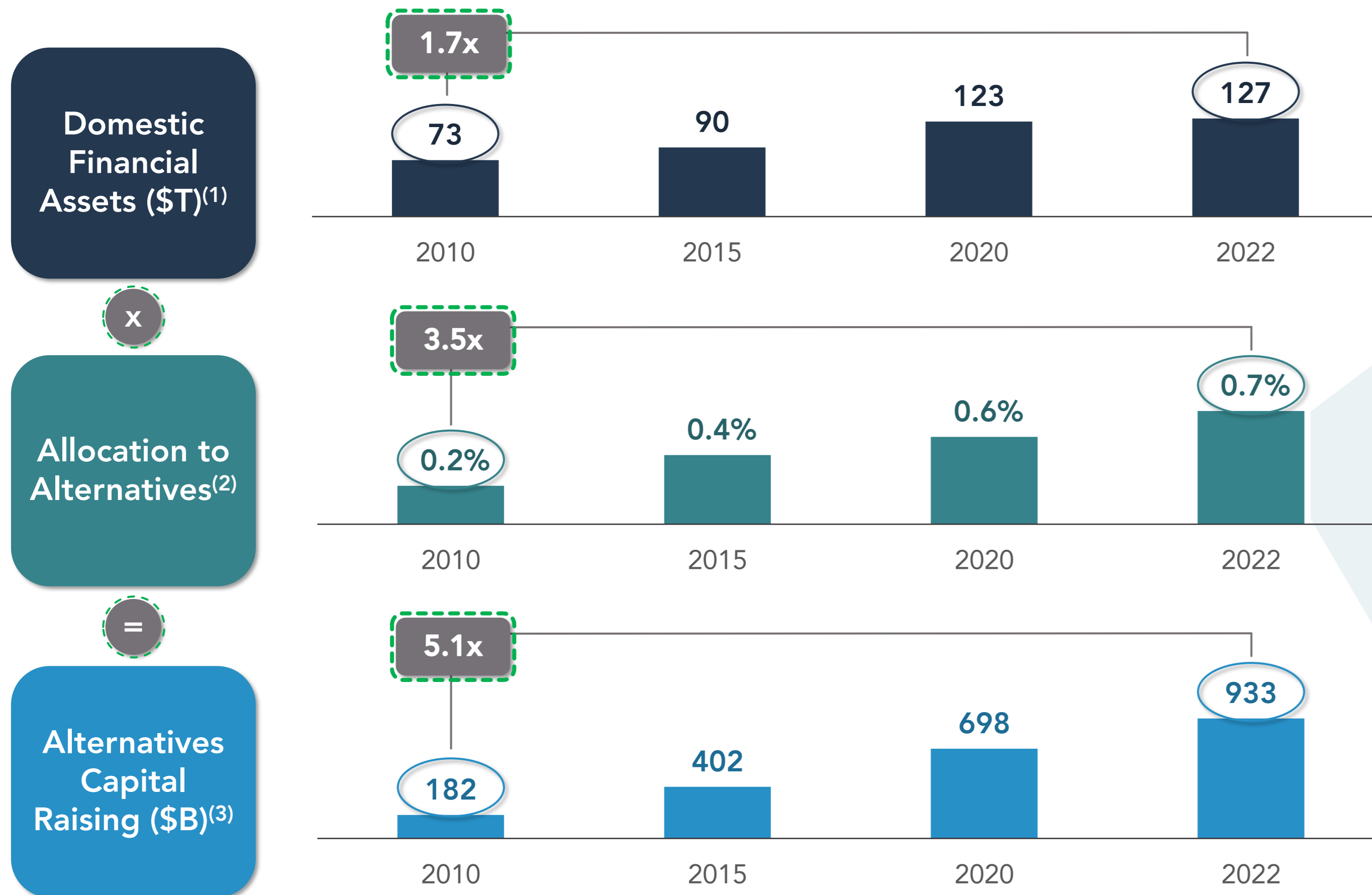
# Executive Summary

We think the supply/demand dynamic for capital to private equity remains unbalanced.

- 1 Since 2010, private equity fundraising was fueled by financial asset price growth and growing PE allocations. Since 2022, the overhang from the '21 PE Boom has left both fuel sources depleted.
- 2 The '21 PE Boom saw extraordinary, idiosyncratic returns in private equity (~13% per quarter), driven largely by write-ups.
- 3 These returns well outpaced public financial assets (stocks & bonds). As public assets have contracted, private equity valuations have remained elevated. This 'excess NAV' overhang persists as of Q2-'23.
- 4 To clear excess NAV, we need a mix of write-downs (or low NAV growth), public asset reflation and/or sustained exits, and, most importantly, time. **Absent growth in target allocations, we estimate it could take >3 years to fully clear excess NAV.**

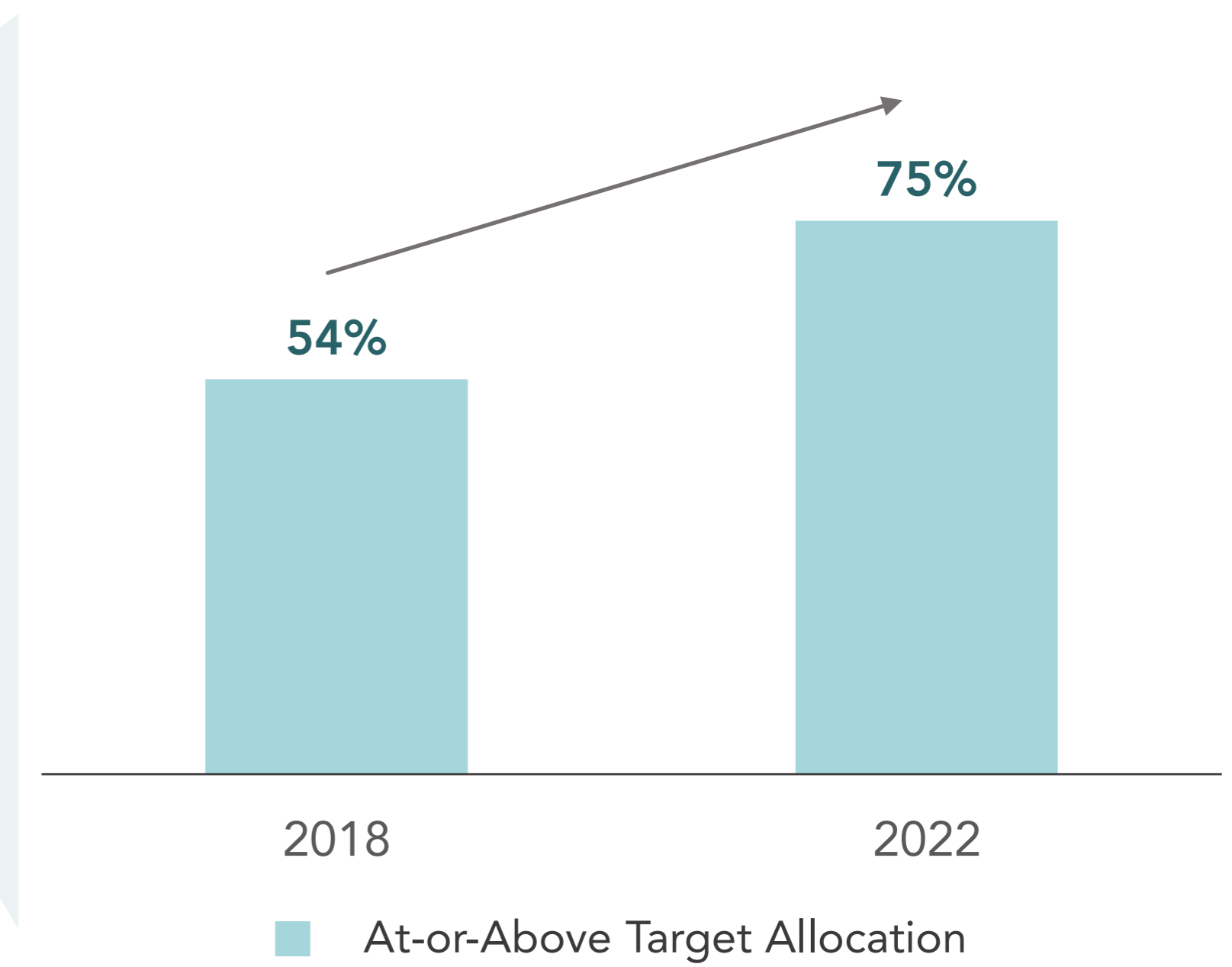
# We Believe 'Goldilocks' Period for Asset and Allocation Growth Is Ending

GPs benefited from growth in financial assets and PE allocations; both are now slowing in a saturated market. To reestablish alternatives AUM growth, allocations would have to double from here.<sup>(4)</sup>



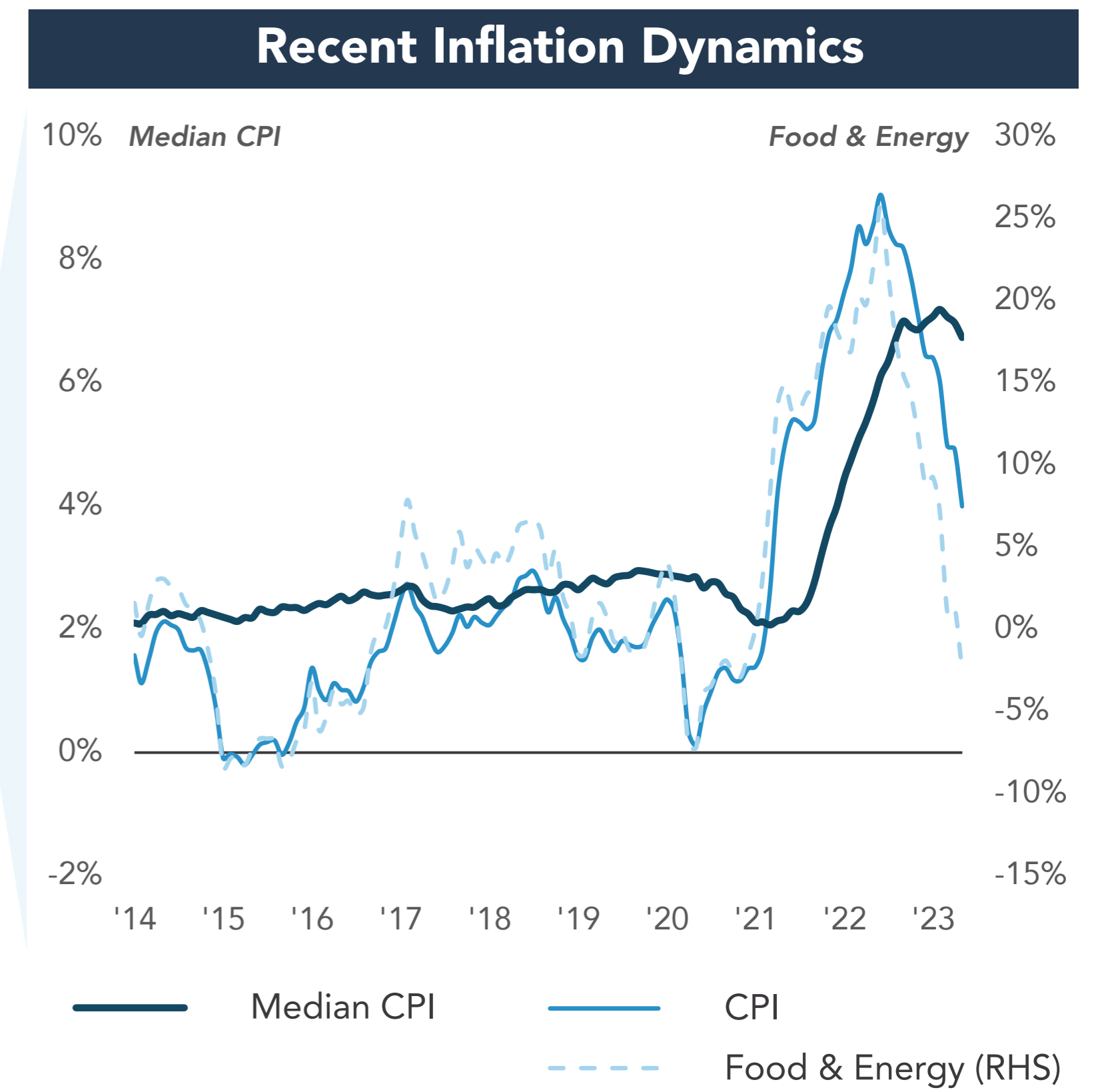
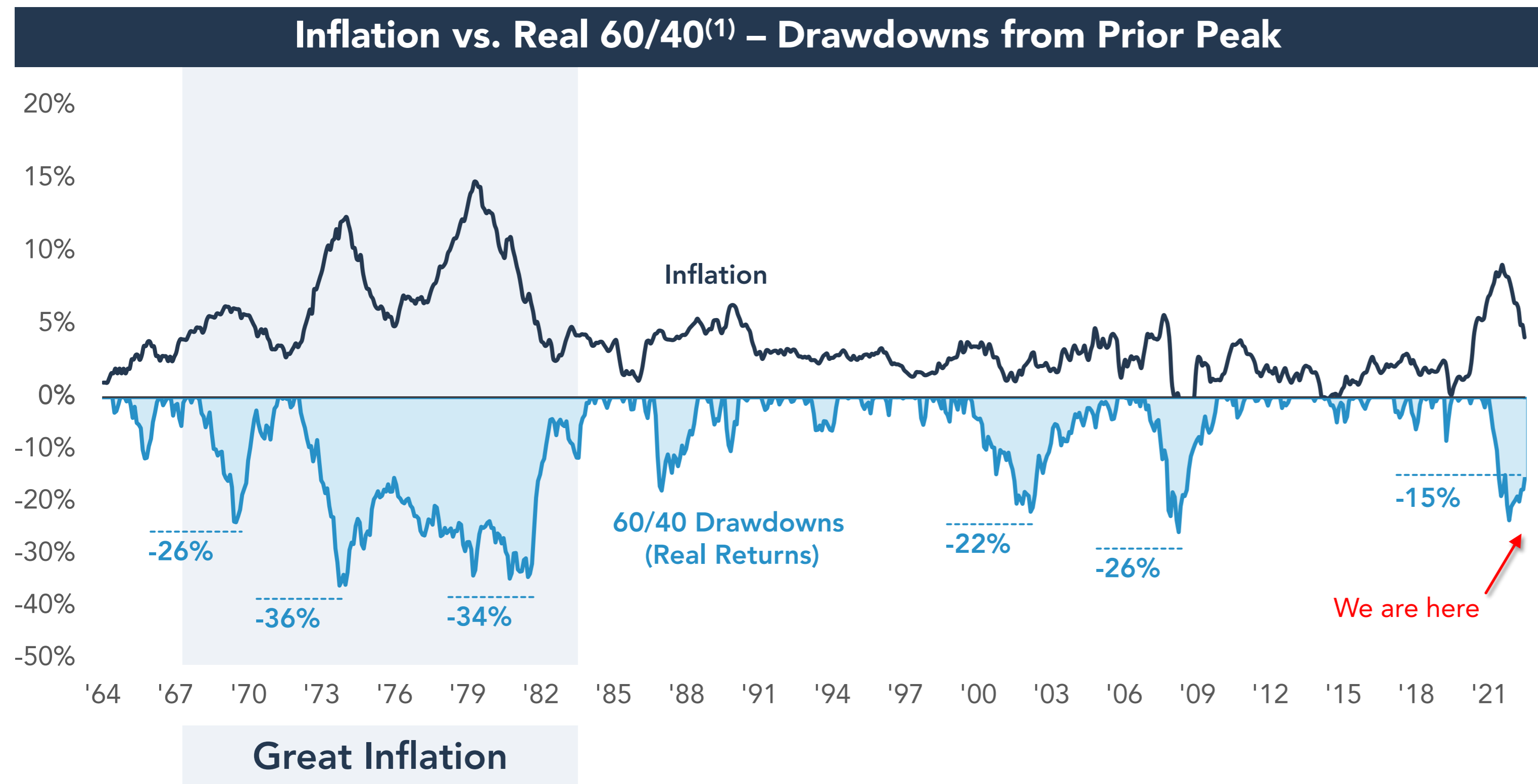
## Inst'l Investors Close to Target Allocations<sup>(5)</sup>

LPs at or above target allocation has increased ~40%



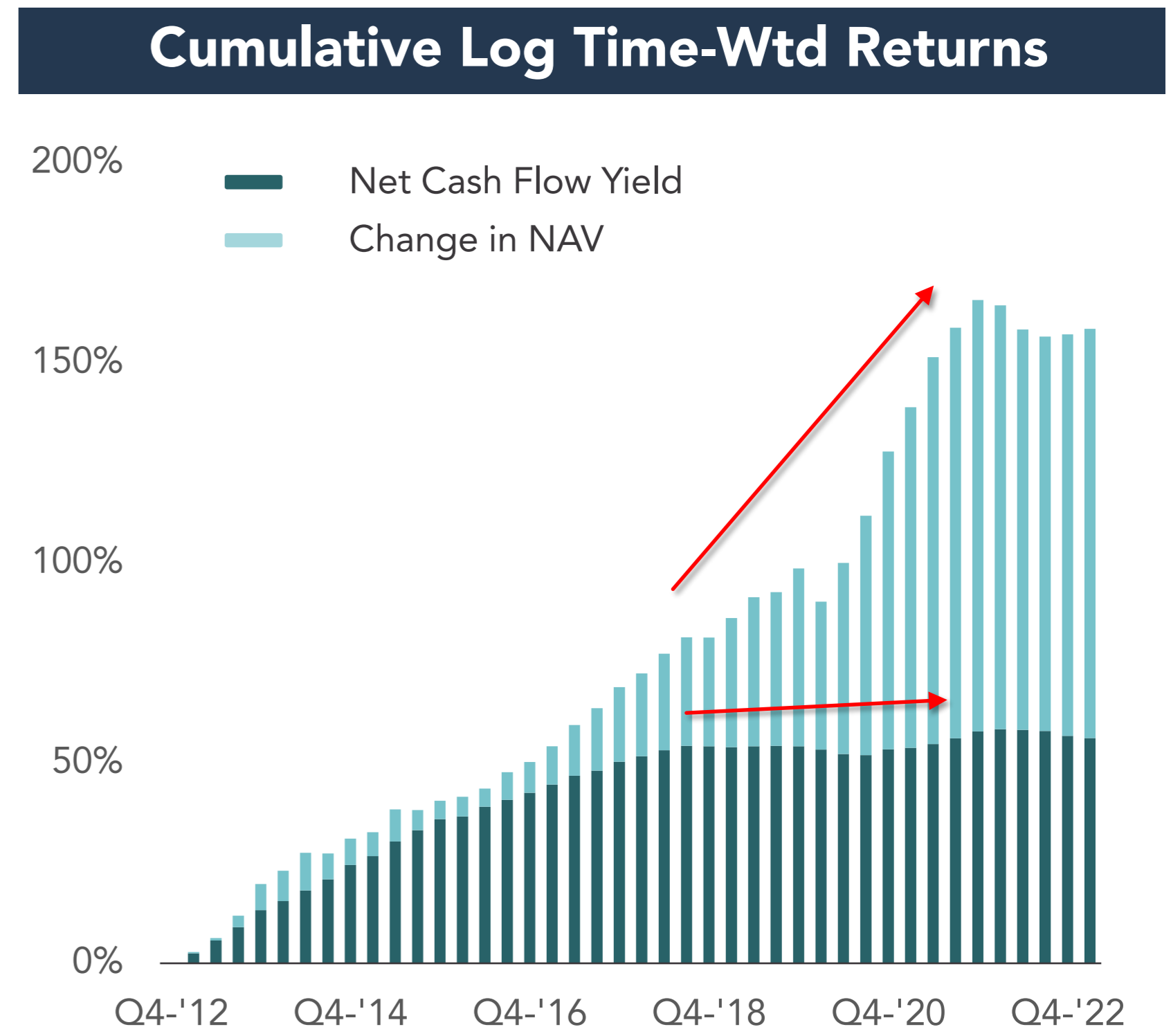
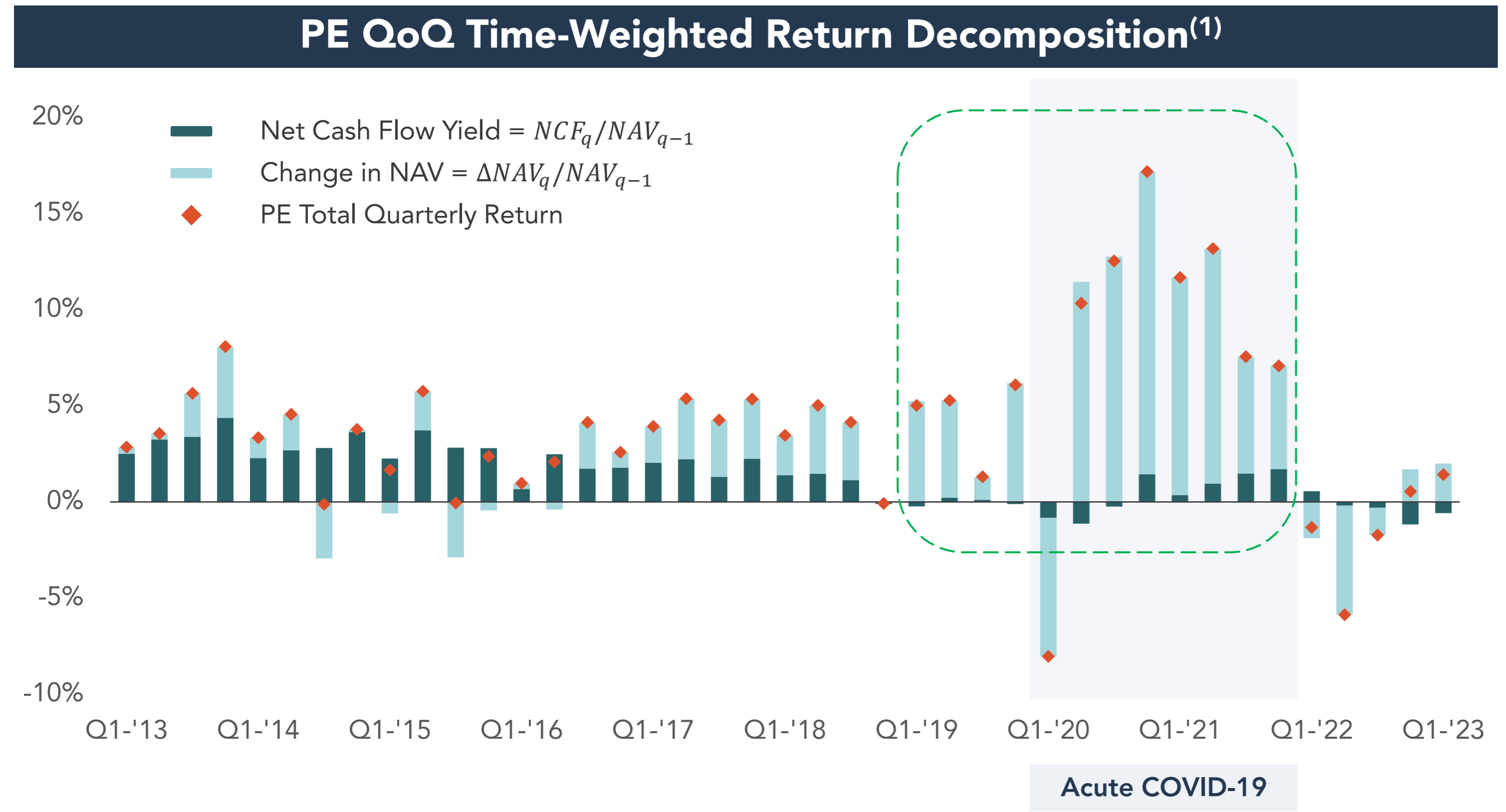
# Financial Assets (60/40 Portfolio) Still Down

Despite some cooling of headline inflation, financial asset prices remain depressed in real terms, which we believe is driven by continued structural inflation in several sectors and high long-term rates.



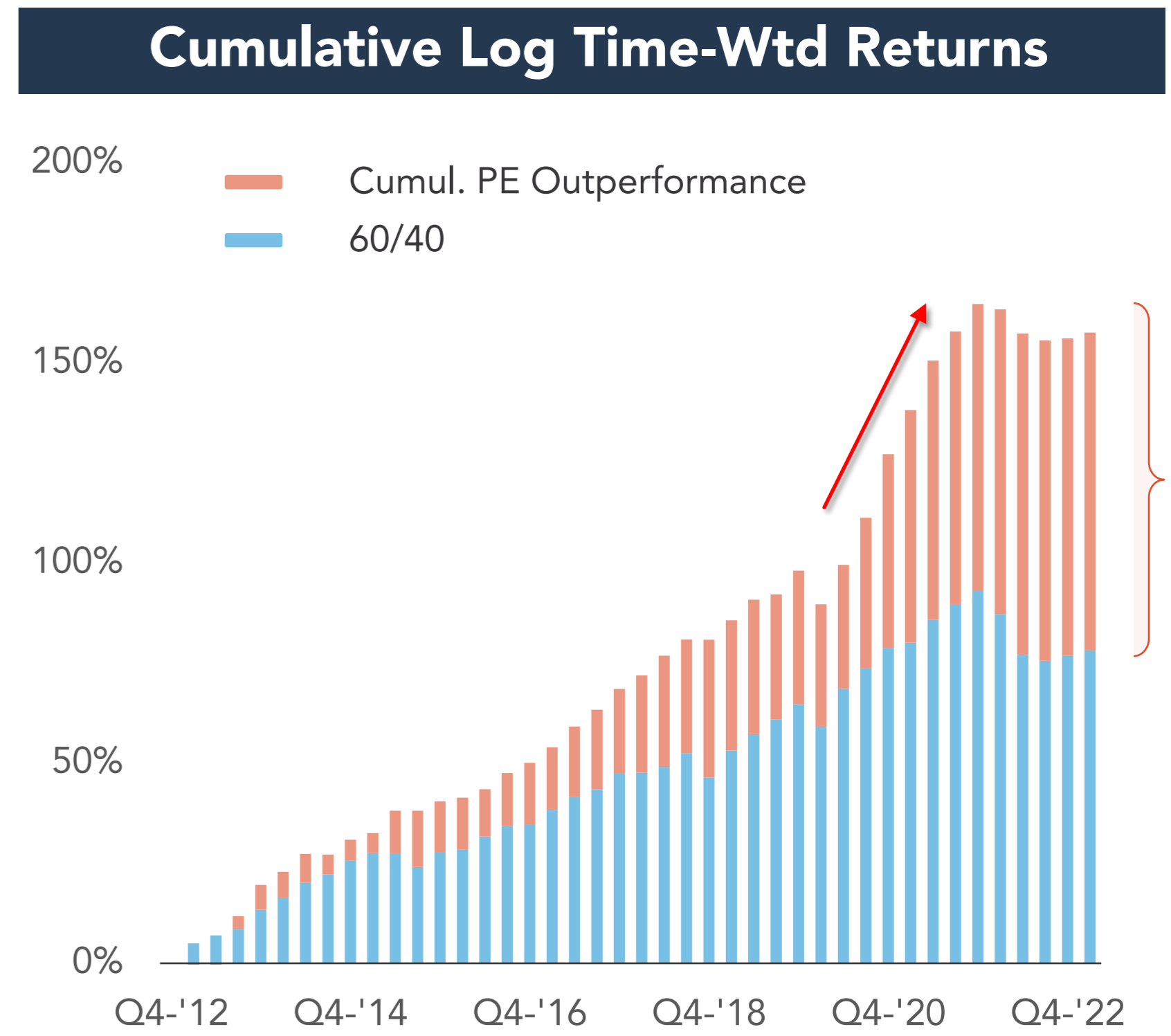
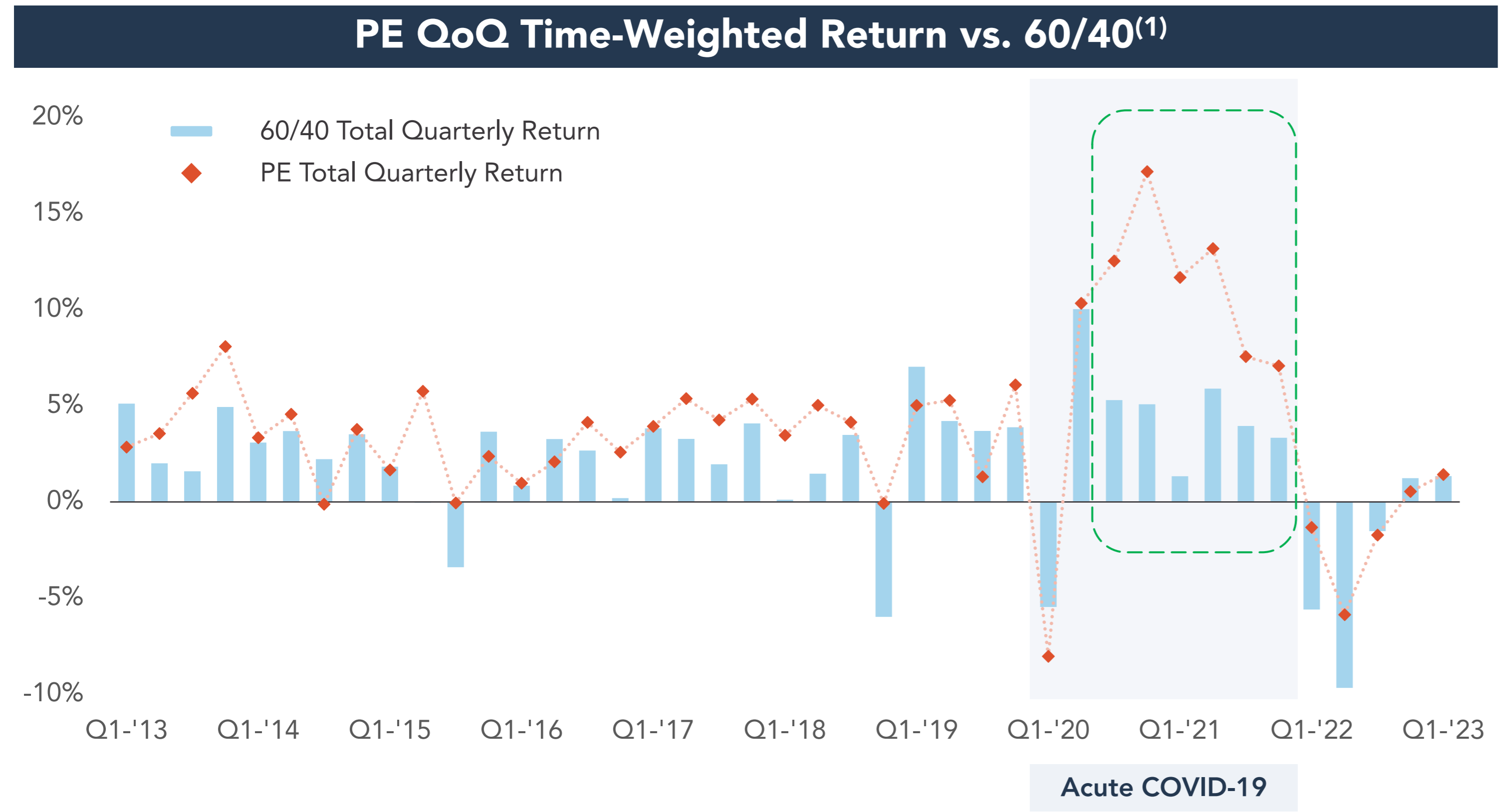
# Private Equity Returns During COVID (1/3)

Prior to the correction in the 60/40, private equity returns surged, predominantly due to NAV growth. (Actually, NAV-driven returns began in Q1-2019, before the pandemic.)



# Private Equity Returns During COVID (2/3)

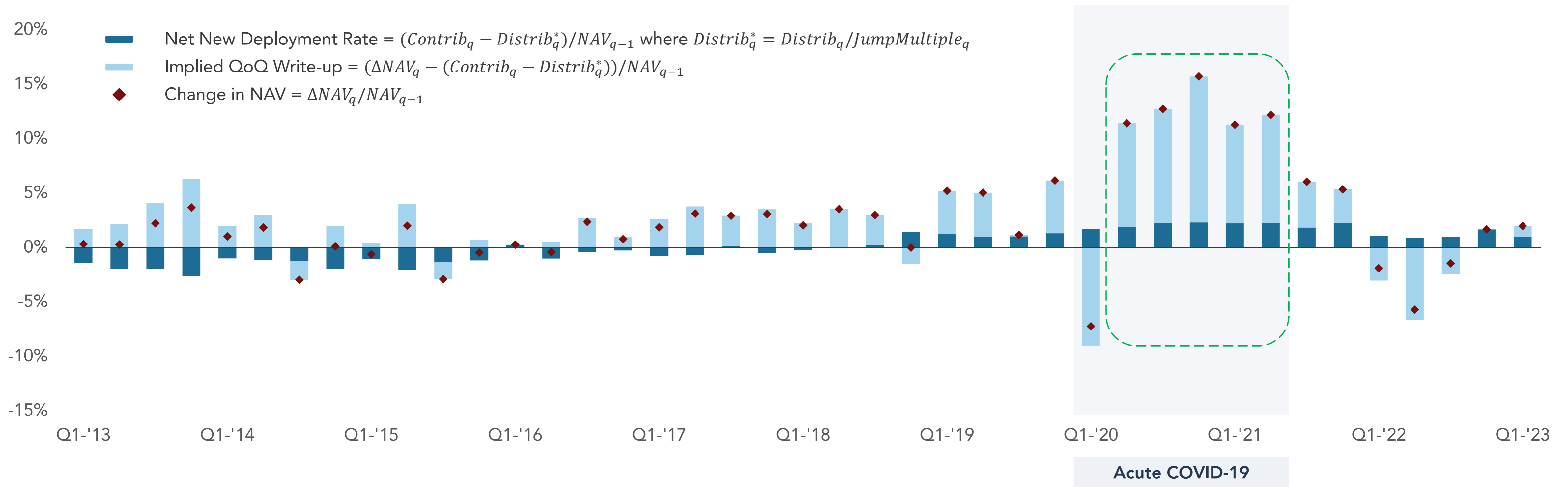
COVID-19 private equity returns dramatically outpaced public asset prices from Q3-'20 to Q4-'21, and there has been no equal-but-opposite negative underperformance since COVID ended.



# Private Equity Returns During COVID (3/3)

We can estimate how much of this NAV growth came from write-ups of existing assets vs. net new deployment. Even assuming “jump multiples” at exit of 1.75x over prior quarter NAV during the PE Boom, NAV growth was driven by write-ups.\*

## PE NAV Growth Decomposition<sup>(1)</sup>



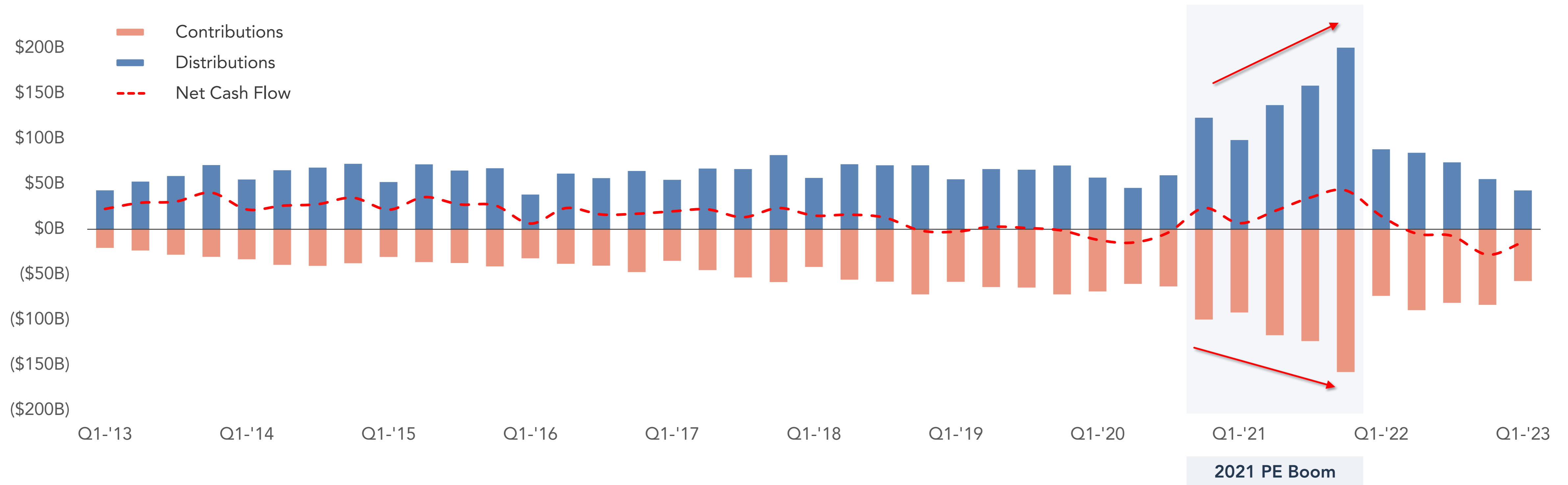
\*Assumptions: Q3-'20 to Q1-'22, JumpMultiple = 1.75, otherwise, JumpMultiple = 1.3. Data is not sensitive to assumed intra-quarter timing of cash flows.



# Why Didn't We See Excess NAV 'Clear' Through Record Harvesting?

The '21 PE Boom was not a particularly strong period for *net* cash flow. Distributions were nearly all called back for new deployment.

## Developed Market PE Net Cash Flows – Last Ten Years<sup>(1)</sup>

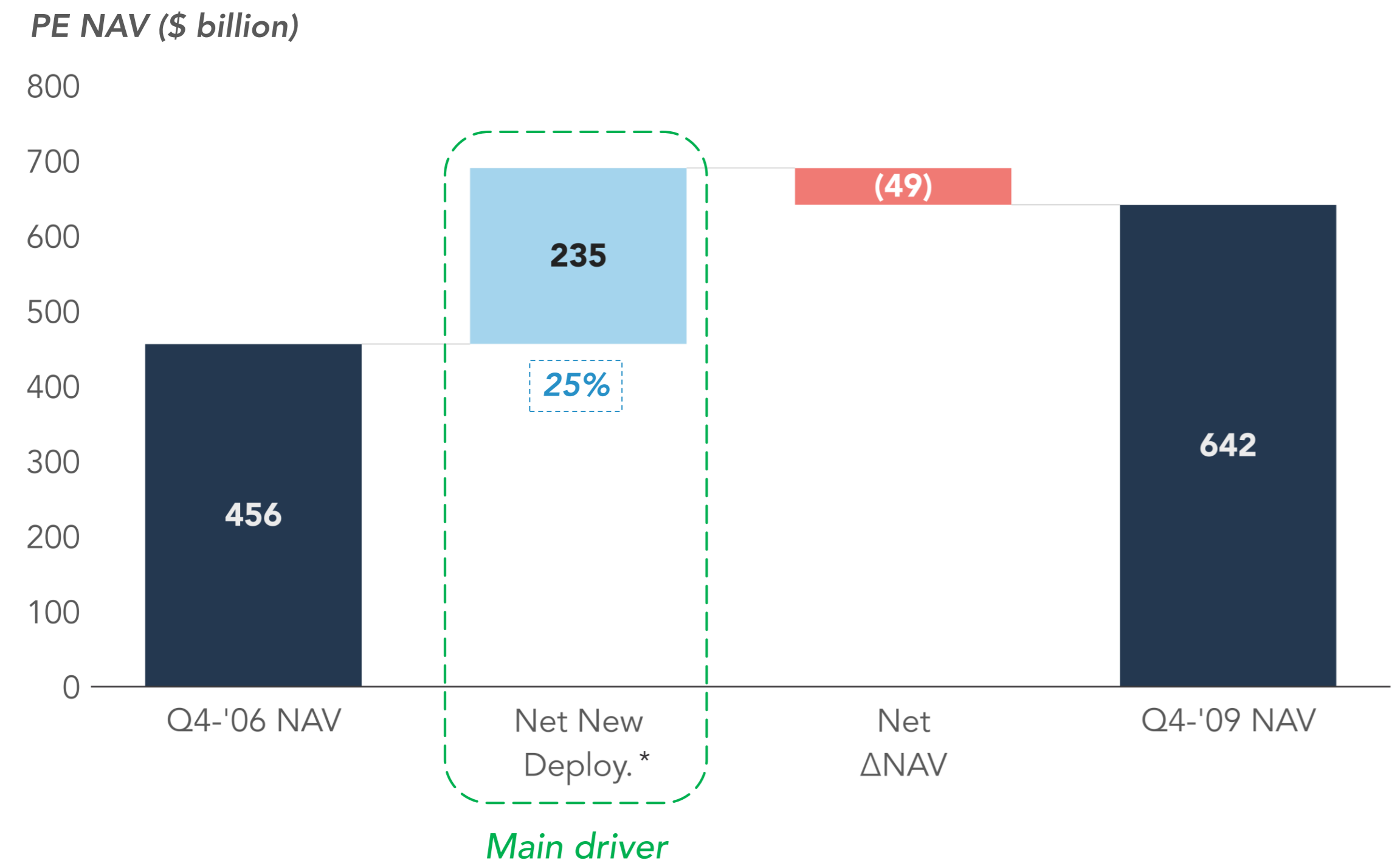


# Not Your Dad's Denominator Dilemma (1/2)

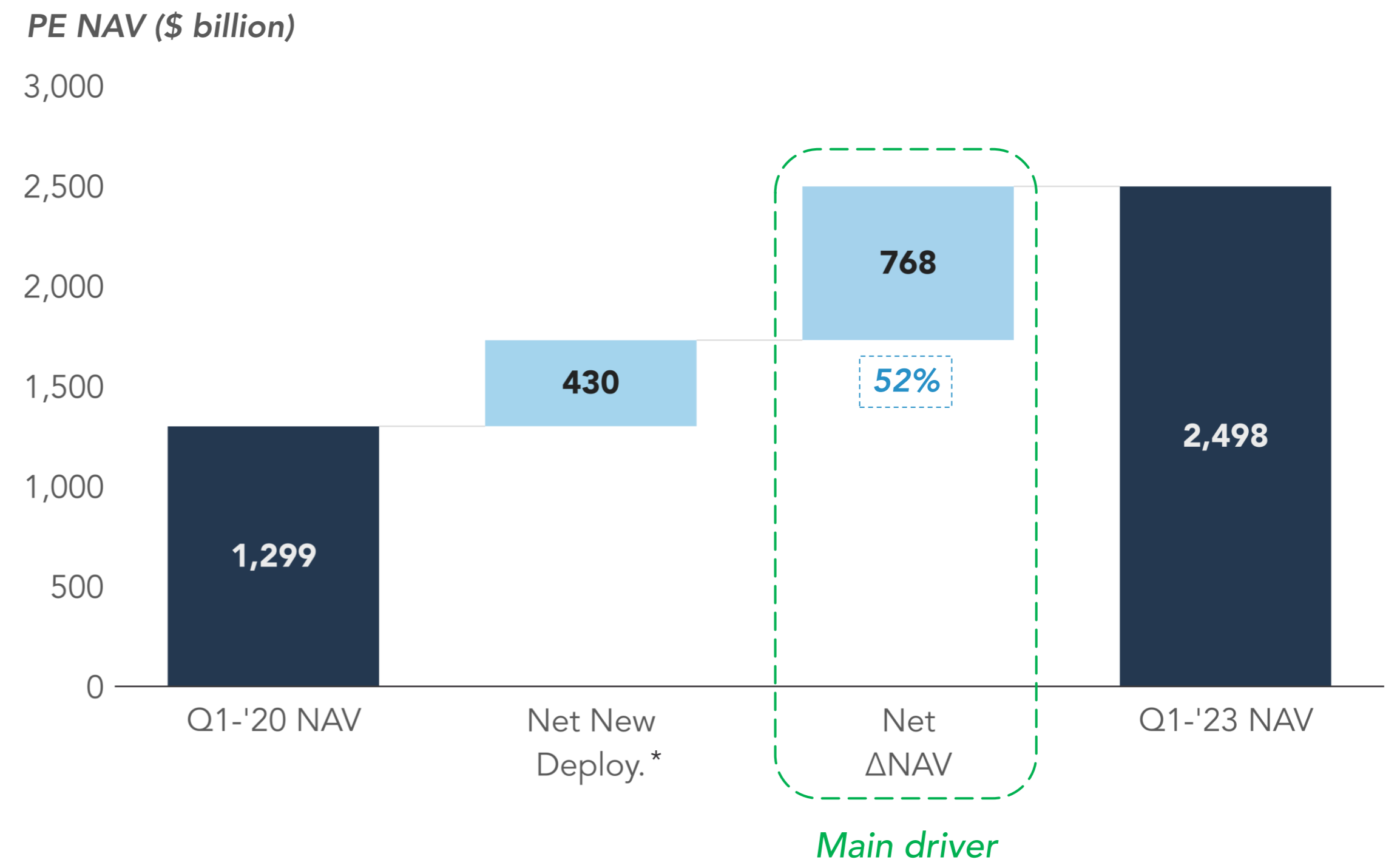
This data pattern is different from what explained the "excess NAV" of the pre-GFC boom, which was a spike in deployment. VC, Growth, and Tech Buyout were larger (though not exclusive) drivers of today's overhang.

*% VC/Growth/Tech LBO*

## Pre-GFC Boom: Q4-'06 to Q4-'09 PE NAV Bridge<sup>(1)</sup>



## '21 PE Boom: Q1-'20 to Q1-'23 PE NAV Bridge<sup>(1)</sup>



\*Assumptions: Pre-GFC JumpMultiple = 1.3; PE Boom JumpMultiple = 1.75. Assuming 1.75 for both periods exacerbates the impact of NND for '06-'09.

# Private Equity NAV vs. Public Markets

'Excess NAV' implies large, unrealized, and persistent alpha generation during the '21 PE boom – roughly Q3-'20 to Q4-'21 – unexplained by beta or leverage (which would have led to a correction).

## PE NAV<sup>(1)</sup> vs. 60/40 Nominal Total Return (Matching 60/40 Level to Q4-'19)



# Sidebar: NAV Overhang for Insurers

Using a hypothetical 10/90 portfolio as the base-line asset proxy – more accurate for insurers – makes the NAV overhang significantly worse. For all investor types, fixed income allocations have come down

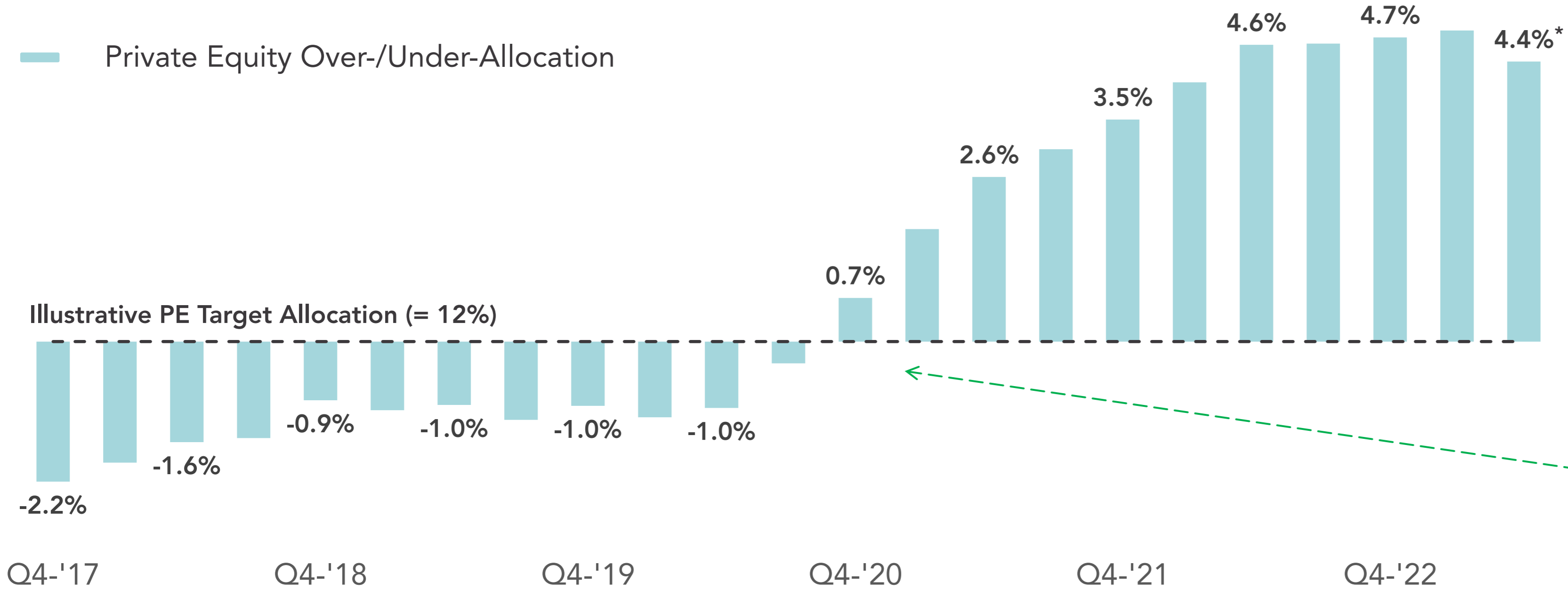
## PE NAV<sup>(1)</sup> vs. 10/90 Nominal Total Return (Matching 10/90 Level to Q4-'19)



# Measuring Denominator Pressure

Using rough estimates of average institutional investor allocations pre-COVID, we estimate that denominator pressure strongly persists. We think this signal is key to estimating the PE fundraising market cycle.

## Illustrative Pension Model (Q2-'23): Assumes -1% Under Target Pre-COVID<sup>(1)</sup>



## Current Imbalance

To bring allocation back to target...

### Target Allocations (Current = 12%)

↑ +36% i.e., 12.0% → 16.4%

### 60/40 Portfolio Return (Above PE)

↑ +44%

### Private Equity NAV Contraction / Harvest

↓ -30%

Via write-downs or net CFs

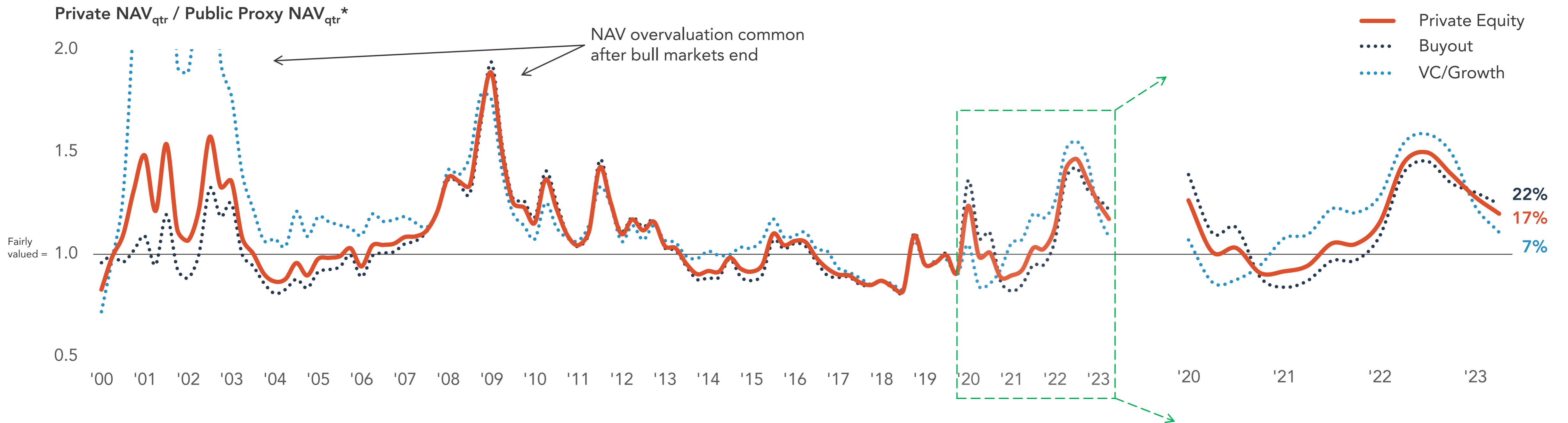
Combination of three effects + moderate deployment is required to rebalance allocations

\*Uses our nowcast est. of Private NAV for Q2-'23.

# NAV Overvaluation Implied by Public Proxies Is Coming Down

The issue is not NAV overvaluation alone. H1 2023 public equity rally in tech and continued VC write-downs have narrowed overvaluation in VC to only 7%. Overall overvaluation remains elevated, but write-downs to FMV alone cannot fix the excess NAV issue.

## Public-Private Proxy: North American Buyout and VC/Growth (1.0 = Fairly Valued)



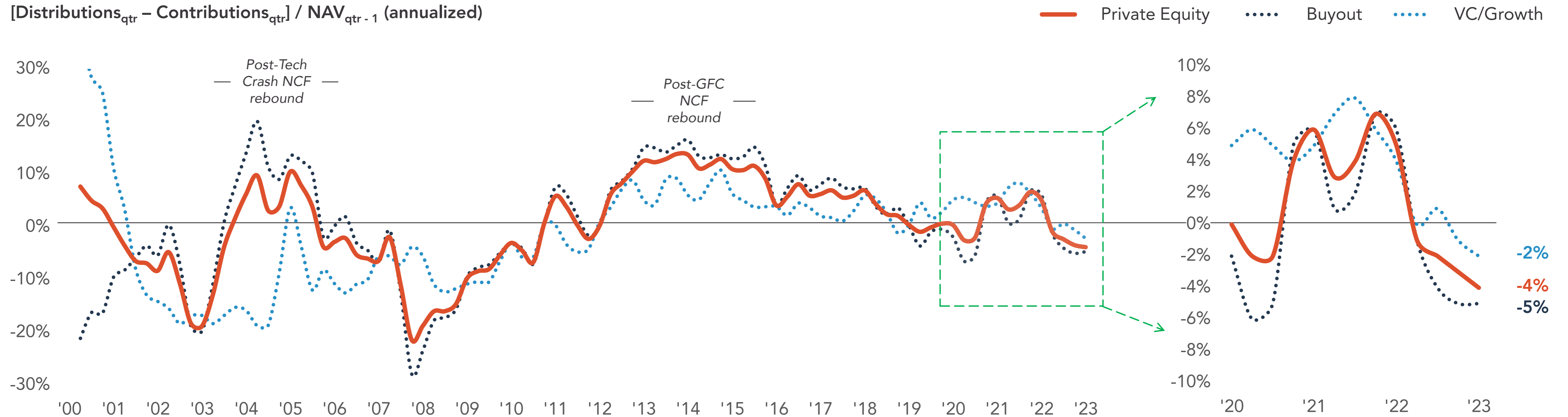
\*Uses our nowcast est. of Private NAV for Q2-'23.

# Exit Activity Is Currently Depressed Relative to Deployment

Another lever is net cash flow (distributions over contributions), but NCF yield has not been a PE driver of return since at least pre-COVID. However, NCF yield could rise again if deployment rates remain low, as it typically does 3-5 years after a downturn.

## Net Cash Flow Yield: North American Buyout and VC/Growth

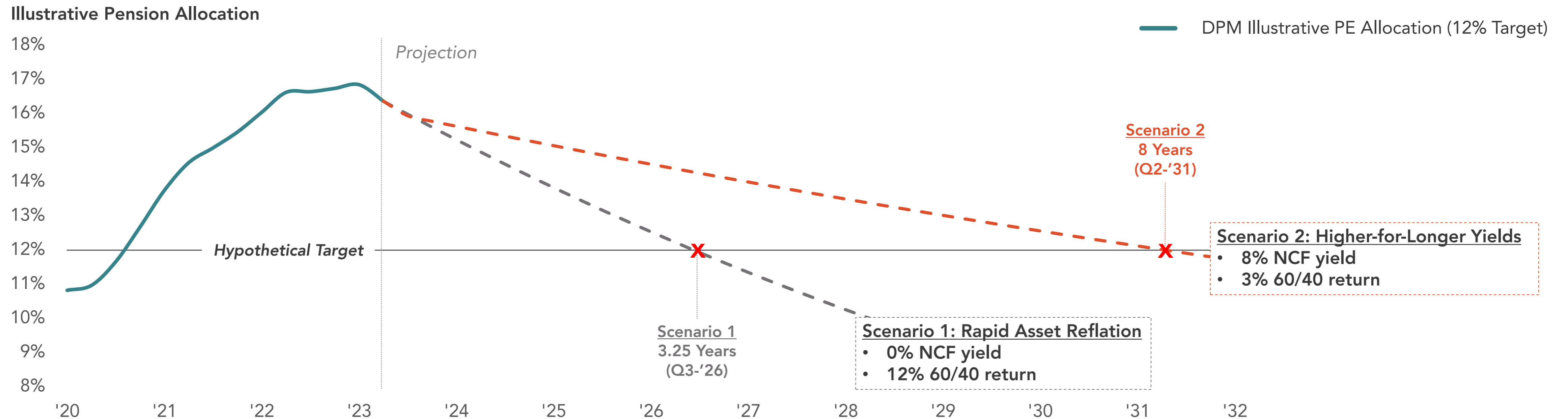
$[Distributions_{qtr} - Contributions_{qtr}] / NAV_{qtr-1}$  (annualized)



# Rebalancing Will Probably Take Time

Returning to prior target allocations will be a function of 60/40 performance, NAV growth, and NCF yield. In our view, a good base case would be >3 years. Upside would be driven by fast reflation of public assets and/or the return of lower rates. NCF yields should be low in a 'Fast Reflation' case as deployment activity kicks back on; it should be high in a very low-growth case, as it typically is post-recession.

## Denominator Pressure Model (DPM) Output: Time to Rebalance Estimates



Note: all scenarios assume flat NAV growth (illustrative)



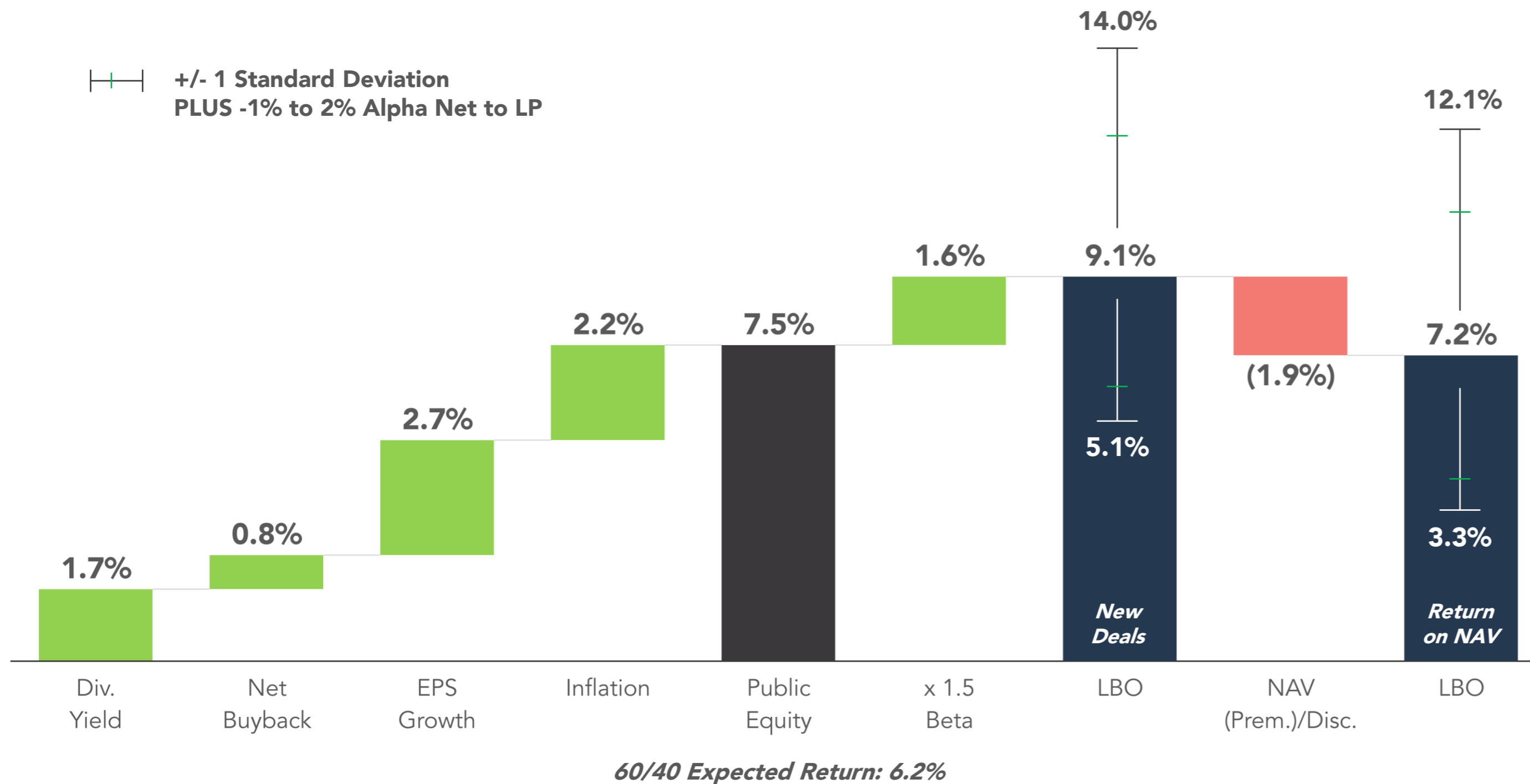
# We Expect Public Market Tailwinds to Be Low

Our nominal return forecast for public equities and Buyout are relatively low vs. historical averages.

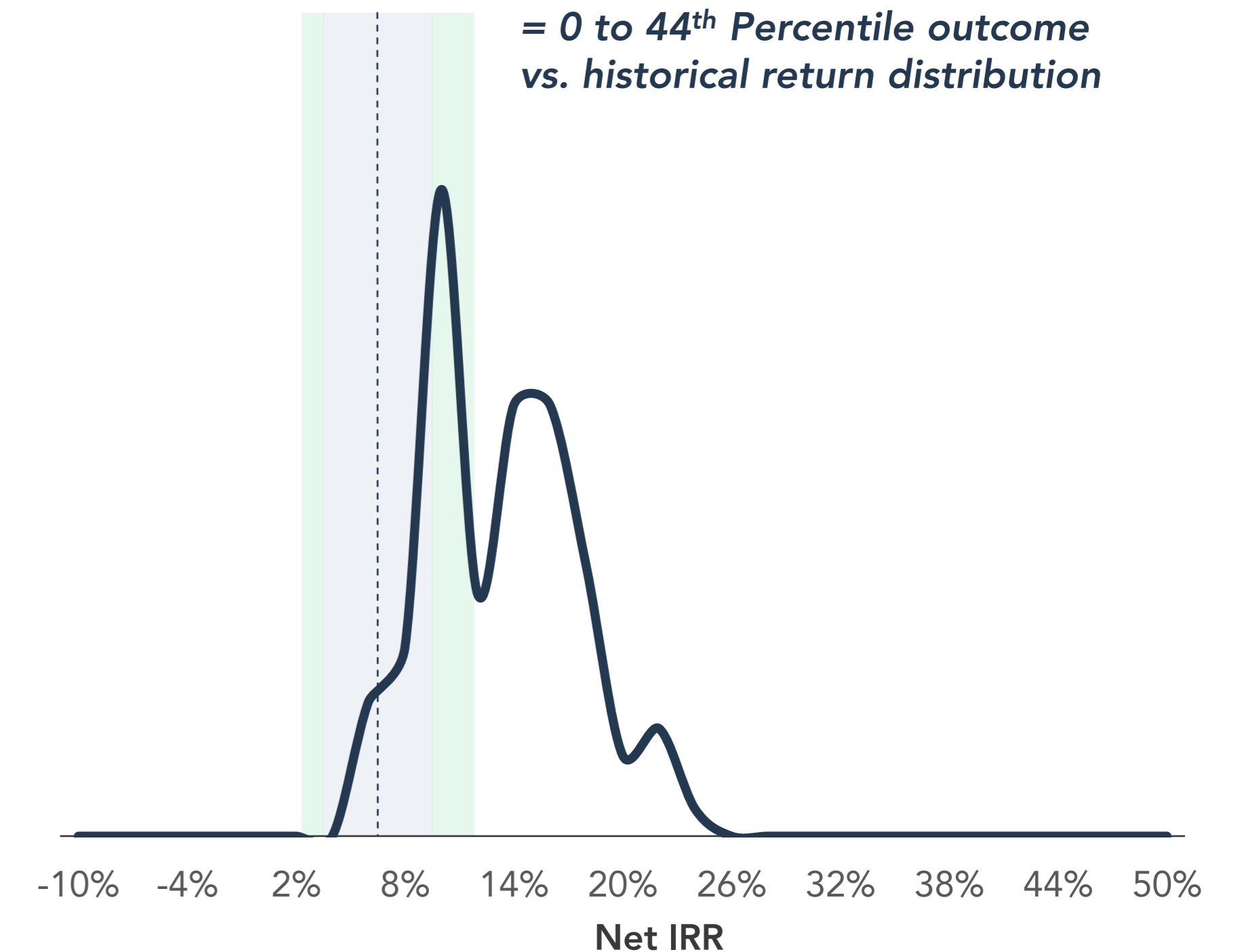
## North American Buyout: Bottoms-up 7-yr Status Quo Return Forecast

As of Q2-'23

+/- 1 Standard Deviation  
PLUS -1% to 2% Alpha Net to LP



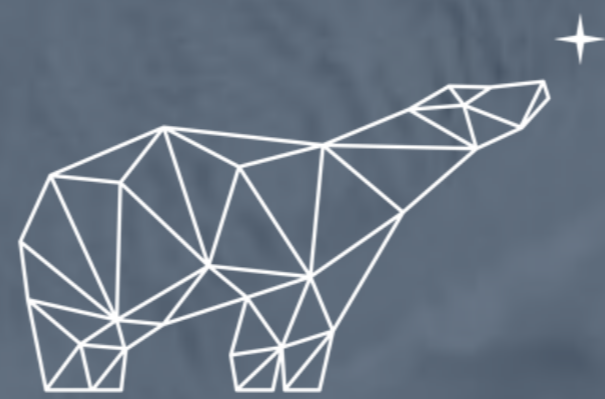
## Buyout: Distribution of 7-yr Net Returns on NAV<sup>(1)</sup>



# Our Takeaways & Recommendations

## Key Takeaways

- ✓ Even if excess NAV corrects itself in the near-term (a likely outcome, given trend lines), that will not solve overallocations at LPs. It is important for internal budgeting, product roadmap, hiring or M&A plans, etc. that this is recognized. The base case should be a sluggish environment for some time.
- ✓ In response to these market conditions, we expect GP M&A activity to increase – as it would in any market under growth stress. But M&A is not a requirement, and we think maintaining a high bar for M&A is critical, given how people-intense our business is.
- ✓ The temptation to grow by acquiring an en vogue platform (private credit, infrastructure, or secondaries) will be high. But do a careful right-to-win self-assessment first. Credit often requires significant scale, both people and capital, and is lower margin per dollar of AUM.
- ✓ Instead, “strengthening the core” is a basic, foundational approach that all managers can lean into. What we mean:
  - Do a bottoms-up people assessment. Ensure your star performers are excited and motivated.
  - Spend time on your fundraising strategy and staffing model. This may even be an area to add resources.
  - Most of your LPs need liquidity, so distributions differentiate. Focus creativity on sourcing *exits* as well as deals. There are creative solutions available that can preserve upside for you and your LPs and give them capital relief today.



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