



# Aflac Inc. (AFL)

Updated April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022, by Nathan Parsh

## Key Metrics

|                             |      |  |       |                                  |                       |
|-----------------------------|------|--|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Current Price:</b>       | \$59 | <b>5 Year CAGR Estimate:</b>               | 4.2%  | <b>Market Cap:</b>               | \$38.5 B              |
| <b>Fair Value Price:</b>    | \$52 | <b>5 Year Growth Estimate:</b>             | 4.0%  | <b>Ex-Dividend Date:</b>         | 05/18/22 <sup>1</sup> |
| <b>% Fair Value:</b>        | 113% | <b>5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:</b> | -2.4% | <b>Dividend Payment Date:</b>    | 06/01/22 <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>Dividend Yield:</b>      | 2.7% | <b>5 Year Price Target</b>                 | \$64  | <b>Years Of Dividend Growth:</b> | 40                    |
| <b>Dividend Risk Score:</b> | A    | <b>Retirement Suitability Score:</b>       | A     | <b>Rating:</b>                   | Hold                  |

## Overview & Current Events

Aflac Inc., founded in 1955, is the world's largest underwriter of supplemental cancer insurance. The diversified insurance corporation also provides accident, short-term disability, critical illness, dental, vision, and life insurance. Roughly 70% of the company's pretax earnings are from Japan, with 30% coming from the U.S. The \$38.5 billion market cap company generated \$4.1 billion in profit in 2021.

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Aflac declared a \$0.40 quarterly dividend, marking a 21.2% increase, after a 17.9% increase in 2020. This is the company's 40<sup>th</sup> straight year of increasing its payment.

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Aflac released first quarter results for the period ending March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. The company reported \$5.27 billion in revenue, a -0.2% decline compared to the first quarter of 2021. Net earnings equaled \$1 billion, or \$1.58 per share, compared to \$1.3 million, or \$1.87, in the first quarter of the previous year. However, this includes investment gains which are excluded from adjusted earnings. On an adjusted basis, earnings-per-share equaled \$1.42 versus \$1.51 prior. Both revenue and earnings-per-share came in ahead of estimates.

In U.S. dollars, Aflac Japan net premiums fell 12.8% to \$2.7 billion while Aflac U.S. net earned premiums were down 0.6% to \$1.4 billion. Book value fell 3% to \$45.75 per share. Aflac repurchased 8 million shares at an average price of \$62.50 during the quarter. The company has 47.8 million shares, or 7.3% of its outstanding share count, remaining on its repurchase authorization.

Aflac is expected to earn \$5.22 per share in 2022. We have updated our forecast accordingly.

## Growth on a Per-Share Basis

| Year                      | 2012   | 2013   | 2014   | 2015   | 2016   | 2017   | 2018   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   | 2022          | 2027          |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>EPS</b>                | \$2.93 | \$3.09 | \$3.08 | \$3.08 | \$3.40 | \$3.41 | \$4.17 | \$4.44 | \$4.96 | \$6.00 | <b>\$5.22</b> | <b>\$6.35</b> |
| <b>DPS</b>                | \$0.67 | \$0.71 | \$0.75 | \$0.79 | \$0.83 | \$0.87 | \$1.04 | \$1.08 | \$1.12 | \$1.32 | <b>\$1.60</b> | <b>\$1.95</b> |
| <b>Shares<sup>3</sup></b> | 936    | 919    | 885    | 849    | 812    | 781    | 755    | 727    | 692    | 677    | <b>653</b>    | <b>630</b>    |

From 2007 through 2020, Aflac was able to grow earnings-per-share by an average compound rate of 8.8% per annum, although part of that improvement is tax reform related. Also, keep in mind that the Yen was generally weakening against the dollar for a good amount of the last decade. Results for 2020 were especially impressive amid the pandemic, while 2021 proved to be a standout year.

Aflac has two sources of revenue: income from premiums and income from investments. On the premium side, this is generally sticky with policy renewals making up the bulk of income. However, Aflac operates in two developed markets where we would not anticipate outsized growth in the business. The other lever available is on the investment side, where the vast majority of the portfolio is in bonds. Here there is a possibility for income improvement should rates rise in the future, although lower rates have been persistent. In addition, the share repurchase program has been an important factor as well and we believe it will continue to drive bottom-line results.

<sup>1</sup> Estimated ex-dividend date.

<sup>2</sup> Estimated dividend payment date.

<sup>3</sup> In millions.



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All these items – premium growth, higher rates and repurchases – were challenged to some degree by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the company has proven to be quite resilient. After a notable uptick in 2021 earnings, we are forecasting a 4% annual growth rate over the intermediate term.

## Valuation Analysis

| Year      | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022        | 2027        |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|-------------|
| Avg. P/E  | 7.9  | 9.4  | 10.0 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 11.4 | 10.8 | 11.6 | 8.0  | 8.6  | <b>11.3</b> | <b>10.0</b> |
| Avg. Yld. | 2.9% | 2.4% | 2.4% | 2.6% | 2.5% | 2.2% | 2.3% | 2.1% | 2.8% | 2.5% | <b>2.7%</b> | <b>3.1%</b> |

Over the last decade shares of Aflac have traded hands with an average P/E ratio of roughly 10 times earnings. We believe this is fair for the security, considering that many insurers trade at a comparable multiple. This lower average valuation multiple allows for the robust share repurchase program to be more effective. Ongoing owners are much better served if the company is buying out past partners at 10 times earnings as compared to say 15- or 20-times earnings. With shares trading near 11 times our earnings estimate, this implies a small valuation headwind. Reverting to our target multiple by 2027 would reduce annual returns by 2.4% for the period. Shares have fallen 8% since our February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 report.

Aflac is a Dividend Aristocrat with a long streak of rising dividends. Moreover, with the company paying out roughly a third of its profits in the form of a dividend, there is ample runway for the dividend streak to continue.

## Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

| Year   | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022       | 2027       |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------------|------------|
| Payout | 23%  | 23%  | 24%  | 26%  | 24%  | 26%  | 25%  | 24%  | 23%  | 22%  | <b>31%</b> | <b>31%</b> |

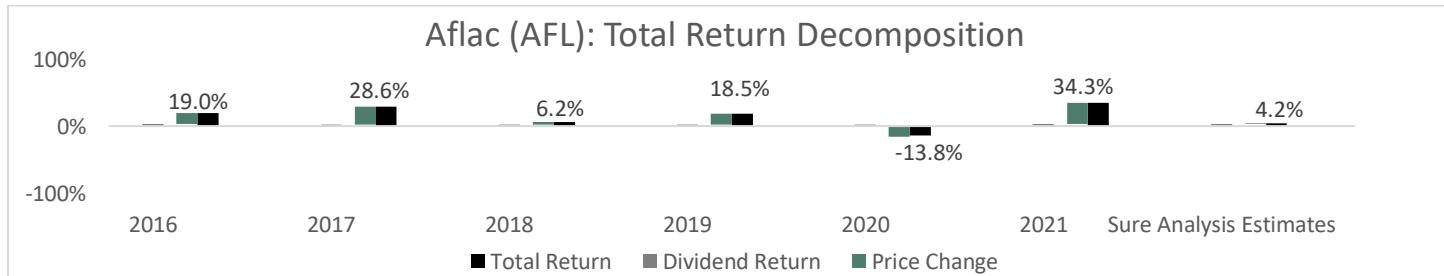
During the Great Recession Aflac generated earnings-per-share of \$1.64, \$1.31, \$1.96, and \$2.57 during the 2007 through 2010 period. Furthermore, the dividend was increasing this entire time. We are encouraged by the past performance and ongoing financial stability, as the company's strong brand and conservative approach serve as complementary competitive advantages. Although we do note that the company's international exposure, while strong in Japan, mitigates some of its reliability, especially as it relates to currency fluctuations.

Despite this reasonable recession performance, especially in comparison to other financial institutions, Aflac's share price dropped all the way from \$34 in the middle of 2008 down to under \$6 per share at the depths of the recession – even though the underlying earnings power was fine, and the dividend never faltered. We suppose this is a general cautionary note: in the long run business results will prevail, but in the short-term anything can happen, so it's important to prepare accordingly.

## Final Thoughts & Recommendation

Aflac has a solid business model and great dividend growth record. Total return potential comes in at 4.2% per annum, driven by the 4% growth rate and 2.7% starting dividend yield, offset by multiple compression. Shares earn a hold rating.

## Total Return Breakdown by Year



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*Disclosure: This analyst has a long position in the security discussed in this research report.*



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## Income Statement Metrics

| Year                  | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  | 2015  | 2016  | 2017  | 2018  | 2019  | 2020  | 2021  |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Revenue</b>        |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | 22120 |       |
|                       | 25272 | 23827 | 22606 | 20811 | 22489 | 21600 | 21758 | 22307 |       | 21923 |
| <b>Net Profit</b>     | 2866  | 3158  | 2951  | 2533  | 2659  | 4604  | 2920  | 3304  | 4778  | 4325  |
| <b>Net Margin</b>     | 11.3% | 13.3% | 13.1% | 12.2% | 11.8% | 21.3% | 13.4% | 14.8% | 21.6% | 19.7% |
| <b>Free Cash Flow</b> | 14952 | 10547 | 6550  | 6776  | 5987  | 6128  | ---   | ---   | 5958  | 5,051 |
| <b>Income Tax</b>     | 1436  | 1658  | 1540  | 1329  | 1408  | -586  | 1063  | 1141  | -619  | 997   |

## Balance Sheet Metrics

| Year                          | 2012   | 2013   | 2014   | 2015   | 2016   | 2017   | 2018   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021  |
|-------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| <b>Total Assets (\$B)</b>     | 131.09 | 121.31 | 119.77 | 118.26 | 129.82 | 137.22 | 140.41 | 152.77 | 165.09 | 158   |
| <b>Cash &amp; Equivalents</b> | 2041   | 2543   | 4658   | 4350   | 4859   | 3491   | ---    | ---    | 5141   | 5,051 |
| <b>Accounts Receivable</b>    | 976    | 1165   | 842    | 705    | 669    | 827    | ---    | ---    | 796    | 693   |
| <b>Total Liab. (\$B)</b>      | 115.12 | 106.69 | 101.42 | 100.55 | 109.34 | 112.62 | 116.94 | 123.81 | 131.53 | 124   |
| <b>Accounts Payable</b>       | ---    | ---    | ---    | ---    | ---    | ---    | ---    | ---    | ---    | ---   |
| <b>Long-Term Debt</b>         | 4343   | 4891   | 5268   | 4951   | 5339   | 5267   | 5778   | 6569   | 7745   | 7,839 |
| <b>Shareholder's Equity</b>   | 15978  | 14620  | 18347  | 17708  | 20482  | 24598  | 23462  | 28959  | 33560  | 33253 |
| <b>LTD/E Ratio</b>            | 0.27   | 0.33   | 0.29   | 0.28   | 0.26   | 0.21   | 0.25   | 0.23   | 0.23   | 0.24  |

## Profitability & Per Share Metrics

| Year                    | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  | 2015  | 2016  | 2017  | 2018  | 2019  | 2020  | 2021  |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Return on Assets</b> | 2.3%  | 2.5%  | 2.4%  | 2.1%  | 2.1%  | 3.4%  | 2.1%  | 2.3%  | 3.0%  | 2.7%  |
| <b>Return on Equity</b> | 19.8% | 20.6% | 17.9% | 14.1% | 13.9% | 20.4% | 12.2% | 12.6% | 15.3% | 12.9% |
| <b>ROIC</b>             | 15.7% | 15.9% | 13.7% | 10.9% | 11.0% | 16.5% | 9.9%  | 10.2% | 12.5% | 10.5% |
| <b>Shares Out.</b>      | 936   | 919   | 885   | 849   | 812   | 781   | 755   | 727   | 717   | 653   |
| <b>Revenue/Share</b>    | 26.93 | 25.49 | 24.90 | 24.02 | 27.17 | 27.07 | 28.09 | 29.88 | 30.88 | 32.40 |
| <b>FCF/Share</b>        | 15.93 | 11.28 | 7.21  | 7.82  | 7.23  | 7.68  | ---   | ---   | 7.23  | 7.46  |

Note: All figures in millions of U.S. Dollars unless per share or indicated otherwise.

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