

Good morning!

It took way too long for Congress to compromise and pass another COVID-relief bill, but once HR # 133 was signed into law by President Donald Trump on Sunday 12/27/20, stimulus money was in the bank accounts of eligible Americans within 4 days. The bill, 5,593 pages long and the 5th longest piece of legislation passed in history, also contains money for jobless benefits, rental assistance, small businesses, vaccine distribution and the devastated airline industry, as well as the blueprint needed for fiscal year 2021 discretionary spending. The total price tag: \$2.3 trillion (source: Congress).

The stock market has been pricing in expectations of additional government assistance ever since it bottomed on 3/23/20. From that March low, the S&P 500 has rebounded, erasing the impact of a first quarter bear market, eventually recording an +18.4% (total return) full-year performance for 2020. Since 1950 (i.e., 1950-2020), the S&P 500 has been up 54% of 17,866 trading days, 60% of 852 months, 67% of 284 quarters and 73% of 71 years (source: BTN Research).

Few of us saw this coming – from the first US death on 2/06/20 through the end of last year, an average of more than 1,000 Americans died per day as a result of the pandemic. That adds up to a total of 337,000 COVID-19 fatalities in calendar year 2020 including 77,000 in the month of December alone (source: The COVID Tracking Project).

Notable Numbers for the Week:

1. **JOBLESS RATE** - The lowest (3.5%) and the highest (14.7%) unemployment rates in the United States in the last 50 years (since 1970) both occurred in 2020, and they took place just 2 months apart (source: Department of Labor).
2. **BIRTHS, DEATHS AND IMMIGRATION** - Between 7/01/19 and 7/01/20, the Census Bureau estimated that the US population grew by just +0.35%, i.e., approximately one-third of 1% growth rate between 2019-2020. That's the lowest year-over-year growth rate in the USA based upon records maintained since 1900 or 120 years of data (source: Census Bureau).
3. **LIVING LONG** - The life expectancy at birth of an American baby in 1971, i.e., 50 years ago, was 71.1 years. The life expectancy at birth of an American baby today is 78.7 years. Thus, life expectancy in the United States has increased 7.6 years over the last half century, i.e., American life expectancy at birth is increasing at the rate of 1 ½ years every decade (source: Center for Disease Control).
4. **TEN-YEAR TREASURY NOTE** - The yield on the 10-year Treasury note ended 2020 at 0.91%, its lowest calendar year close ever and down 1 percentage point from its 12/31/19 close of 1.91%. The 10-year Treasury note yield was 0.50% on Monday 3/09/20, its lowest closing yield ever. 10-year notes have been traded in the USA since 1790, i.e., 230 years of trading (source: Treasury Department).

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