

Good morning!

Oil ministers from Saudi Arabia, Russia and the other OPEC+ countries met last week to evaluate the group's 10 million barrels per day production cut implemented in May 2020. The supply cuts have worked. From its 4/30/20 closing price of only \$18.84 a barrel as the cuts were being executed, the US crude oil benchmark (West Texas Intermediate) has more than tripled to \$66.09 a barrel as of Friday's (3/05/21) close (source: NYMEX).

The Senate worked into the weekend, but they did pass their version of HR # 1319. The differences between their bill and the bill passed by the House just a week earlier (e.g., unemployment benefits, eligibility for stimulus checks, minimum wage) will now force the House to debate and vote on the Senate bill. With either bill, almost all US households will receive a stimulus payment. The House voted to provide stimulus payments to an estimated 93% of US households (117 million). The Senate version of the legislation would provide stimulus payments to 87% of US households (110 million) (source: Penn Wharton Budget Model).

Tax Day – April 15 – is 5 ½ weeks from today. 35% of the 153.8 million tax returns that were filed nationwide for tax year 2018 (the latest year for which data has been released) did not pay any federal income tax, a total of 53.4 million tax returns. 90% of these “non-taxable” returns (48.0 million returns) reported adjusted gross income of less than \$40,000 (source: Internal Revenue Service).

Notable Numbers for the Week:

1. **IN MY LIFETIME** - Last year's (2020) contraction of the US economy (down 3.5%) was the largest drop our nation has experienced since 1946 or 74 years earlier (source: Bureau of Economic Analysis).
2. **WHAT A COMEBACK** – Many American employers have recovered and as of 2/28/21 they have hired back 67% of the 25.4 million jobs that were lost last year during the 2 months of March-April 2020 (source: Department of Labor).
3. **IT'S THE RENTERS THAT ARE HURTING** - Just 1 in 39 homeowners (2.5%) was at least 3 months behind in paying their monthly mortgage as of 12/31/20. However 1 in 5 renters (20.5%) was at least 3 months behind in paying their monthly rent as of 12/31/20 (source: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau).
4. **ALMOST FIVE YEARS EARLY** - The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released a 10-year forecast on 1/19/16 (i.e., 5 years ago) of the projected size of our national debt. The non-partisan agency predicted that our national debt, \$18.9 trillion in size as of 1/19/16, would reach \$28.003 trillion as of 12/31/25. As of last Monday 3/01/21, the national debt was \$28.004 trillion (source: CBO).

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03/08/21 Monday