

Economic & Market Commentary

Last week's solid market gains were helped by continued signs of tariff-tension off-ramps and prospects for further progress. Moreover, the Q125 earnings season continued to outperform expectations, with the blended EPS growth rate for the S&P 500 now sitting at 12.8% in contrast to the 7.2% expected on March-30. Corporate commentary has also been constructive, helping to illustrate consumer resilience, tariff-mitigation efforts, and a still robust AI secular growth theme. The S&P 500 notched its first back-to-back weekly advances since January and the index ended the week on a nine-day streak of gains, its longest since November 2004. The S&P is now back to levels above the early April drop following President Trump's "Liberation Day" tariff announcements. On the tariff front, President Trump signed an order confirming some expected temporary relief for US automakers. Treasury Secretary Bessent and Commerce Secretary Lutnick last week both talked up ongoing negotiations, with Lutnick indicating one trade deal was done and just awaiting final approval from that country's parliament. It also appeared that China and the U.S. are inching closer to beginning trade talks as well, although both countries continue to posture as "tough" and willing to play the tariff long game. On the economic front, reports released were mixed. April nonfarm payrolls were stronger than expected (177K vs 136K). ISM manufacturing was firmer than consensus and March pending-home sales printed at their strongest since 2023. The first estimate of 1Q25 GDP showed the first q/q decline (-0.30%) since 1Q22, with a big impact from a huge surge of imports (+41.3%) from those firms' front-running tariffs. Core underlying data was solid as consumer spending (+1.8%) grew modestly while business investment surged (+21.9%). April's consumer confidence report continued to reflect unease, falling to its lowest level (86.0) since spring 2020.

