

Unemployment Update, Financial Flip, and Crumbling Crafts

March 17th, 2025

1. **Unemployment Update** – Unemployment rose by 0.1% to 4.1% in February 2025. In addition, nonfarm payroll employment increased by 151,000 in February 2025, mainly in healthcare, financial activities, transportation and warehousing, and social assistance. Federal government employment declined by 10,000 in February 2025 (source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).
2. **Financial Flip** – During 2023 and 2024, the Magnificent Seven stocks grew their market share by a combined 156.1%, significantly outpacing the 25.2% gain reported by the remaining 493 stocks on the S&P 500. This situation flipped during the first two months of 2025, with the Magnificent Seven stocks reporting a 5.73% loss, while the remaining 493 S&P 500 stocks reported a collective gain of 5.12% (source: Y Charts).
3. **Crumbling Crafts** – Joann Fabrics is officially going out of business, closing all its stores after failing to find a buyer who would keep the doors open. Joann previously filed for Chapter 11 protection in March 2024. The retailer re-declared bankruptcy in January 2025 (source: CBS News).
4. **Productive Progress** – Nonfarm business sector labor productivity rose by 1.5% in Q4 2024, with output increasing by 2.4% and hours worked jumping by 0.8%. During 2024, manufacturing labor costs increased by 3.3%, while hourly compensation rose by 4.0%, and productivity spiked by 0.6% (source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).
5. **Mixed Results** – The Consumer Discretionary sector had the largest sector loss in February 2025 at -6.98%. The Technology sector was the next loser, with a market loss of 2.29%. Consumer Staples reported a 5.19% gain, followed by the Real Estate sector at 4.18%, and the Energy sector at 3.83% (source: Y Charts).
6. **Promising Pay** – In 2024, women earned an average of 85% of what men earned, which is up from 2023's percentage of 81%. Women workers ages 25 to 34 reported a smaller wage gap in 2024, earning 95% of what men in similar roles make (source: Pew Research Center).
7. **Stock Superstar** – Super Micro Computer, an information technology company, reported the highest share price increase on the S&P 500 in February 2025 at 45.4%. Year-to-date through February 2025, Super Micro Computer has a share price return of 36.0% (source: Y Charts).
8. **Minimal Movements** – Gold prices saw a modest 0.009% increase in February 2025, rising from \$2,812.50 on January 30, 2025, to \$2,836.80 on February 27, 2025 (source: Yahoo Finance).

9. **Pricey Pay Raise** – Josh Allen signed a \$330 million deal with the Buffalo Bills, which averages out to \$55 million per year. This is higher than Dak Prescott’s average of \$54.8 million per year and Patrick Mahomes’ average of \$52.02 million per year (source: Sports Illustrated).
10. **Drinking Data** – The Pew Research Center found that 57% of alcohol drinkers believe that consumption does not increase their risk of serious health problems. Additionally, 53% of respondents agree that drinking alcohol increases their enjoyment of food and meals, while another 44% believe it helps them maintain social connections (source: Pew Research Center).

Definitions and Indexes

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