



Basis Points – July 21, 2020

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Above the Fold

Is More Stimulus (Aid) Coming to Americans?

The government and Federal Reserve acted quickly to enact a myriad of measures to add liquidity to the marketplace, shore up confidence and put cash and resources into the hands of business owners and working Americans. And whether you believe they did too much or too little, lawmakers are now debating another round of aid for consumers still affected by a pandemic that continues to shutter businesses and crimp commerce from shore to shore.

The more than ~\$2 trillion CARES Act, signed into law March 27, provided a lump sum payment and unemployment compensation expansion for those affected, among other benefits. Unfortunately, the hotly debated recurring additional payment of \$600 for unemployment recipients is set to end in less than two weeks and some believe that could trigger a string of loan defaults, as it would reduce weekly national spending power by about ~\$19 billion. With many states and municipalities still enforcing high restrictions on businesses, and with PPP loan funds starting to run dry (in some cases), workers may also face a one-two financial punch if additional aid doesn't come.

There are segments of the economy and the country that remain relatively unaffected (financially), but as some areas roll back reopening plans, the strain for some could worsen. Some experts argue that adding to the deficit may not be the most prudent, but it seems that both sides of the aisle are open to some form of additional stimulus — we should learn just what and how much over the next two weeks.

Three Things

1. ***Anyone Up for a Trip to Mars?*** – Due to planetary alignment, this summer is the perfect time to get to Mars using as little fuel as possible. Several countries are looking to send probes, but China is particularly interested as the nation is looking to take on the world leader, America. Over the last two years, China has launched more rockets than any other nation and has even set a date to establish mankind's first lunar base by 2036.
2. ***Twitter Hacked Using Centuries-Old Technique*** – Today we call it “social engineering,” but it was simply good ole’ fashioned trickery that convinced a small number of Twitter employees to allow hackers to access 45 accounts, including several high-profile individuals last week. A hacker named “Kirk,” who allegedly had access to Twitter’s internal tools, sold access to each account for between \$500 and \$10,000 (paid in Bitcoin).
3. ***3D Printed Chicken Nuggets*** – As part of its “restaurant of the future” concept, Kentucky Fried Chicken has partnered with Russian company 3D Bioprinting Solutions to “print” chicken meat, using chicken cells and plant material. The 3D-printed chicken would not require the slaughter of any animals, but wouldn’t be considered vegetarian as the food would require “animal material” to be produced.

Did You Know?

Two Digital Titans — BackRub and FaceMash

Yes, you could very well be searching “BackRub” for your latest financial news. BackRub was the name of the original search algorithm developed by Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin (along with Scott Hassan and Alan Steremberg) back in the '90s. Fortunately, their humor and geeky wit landed on the Google moniker in the early 2000s.

FaceMash, Facebook’s predecessor launched in 2003, was developed as a sort of dating app that would display two different photos of college students for other students to select the more attractive person. That idea was actually stolen from another website called “hot or not” launched more than three years prior.

CORRECTION: The CARES Act is approximately \$2 trillion not \$2 billion and the weekly national spending power would be reduced by approximately \$19 billion not \$19 million.

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