

# Tax Time, Government Deficits, and Broken Records

February 12, 2024

- **Energy Elevation** - The January 2024 \*Consumer Price Index reported a 2.0% increase in the energy index, with a 2.4% hike in gasoline month-over-month. From January 2023 to January 2024, energy costs rose 8.7%, with the fuel oil index rising 27.7% (source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- **Setting the Tone** - The \*S&P 500 started January 2024 off strong, returning 1.6%. Since 1957, January has posted a positive return only 39 times, excluding January 2024. 33 out of 39 of these occurrences resulted in a positive 11-month return for the remainder of the year (source: Business Insider).
- **More Money Please** - During 2023, worker compensation rose, with wages and salaries for both civilian workers and private industry employees increasing by 4.3%, and state government workers finishing the year off at a 4.7% increase (source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- **A Surging Labor Force** - In January 2024, 353,000 jobs were created, with the unemployment rate holding steady at 3.7%. The prime age \*\*labor force (ages 25 to 54) participation rate also ending January 2024 at 83.3% (source: The White House).
- **Tax Time** - The IRS officially opened the filing season for 2023 individual income tax returns on January 29<sup>th</sup>. Individual returns are due on April 17<sup>th</sup> unless an extension is requested. The IRS offers a free-file program for filers with an adjusted gross income under \$79,000 (source: IRS).
- **The Boss of Alternative Investments** - Bitcoin closed out 2023 at \$42,152, a 150% increase from January's share price of \$16,626. Despite the increase, the jump is nowhere near Bitcoin's highest share price of \$68,789 in November 2021 (source: Yahoo! Finance).
- **Spending Issues?** - In 2023, the U.S. government spent \$6.13 trillion while only collecting \$4.44 trillion in revenue, resulting in a deficit of \$1.69 trillion (source: FiscalData).
- **Frontdesk Frenzy** - Frontdesk, a tech-based property management startup, fired all 200 employees over a two-minute Google Meet call at the beginning of January 2024 after a failed capital raise. This follows the 262,682 reported layoffs in the tech industry in 2023. (source: TechCrunch).
- **Fore!** - Wyndham Clark becomes the first player to shoot a 60 in the 105-year history of Pebble Beach Golf Links, breaking the previous record of 61 (source: Fox News).
- **A Star in the Making** - Shai Gilgeous-Alexander passed NBA Hall of Fame Reggie Miller's 30-point game record on February 2, 2024, with a total of 115 qualifying games. Michael Jordan currently holds the top spot- 562 games with 30 points or more (source: Inside The Thunder).

## [\\*Definitions and Indexes](#)

\*\*Labor Force Participation Rate: The labor force participation rate is an estimate of an economy's active workforce. The formula is the number of people ages 16 and older who are employed or actively seeking employment, divided by the total non-institutionalized, civilian working-age population. (Source: Investopedia.com)

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