



Friday, February 21, 2020

Week in Review, February 21, 2020

Special Focus: Because Injustice Is Here

Markets slumped this week, as companies announced reductions to both production and revenue targets, due to the ongoing Coronavirus outbreak. China has not returned to business as usual, and the impact was felt in economic numbers around the world: one of the world's largest cell phone makers reduced its first quarter sales forecasts due to a decreased supply of its smartphones and the closure of all its stores in China. ([NY Times](#)) Japan's Manufacturing PMI had the largest contraction in 7 years, coming in below expectations at 47.6. ([Trading Economics](#)) Meanwhile, the Vice Chairman of the Fed Reserve confirmed the fundamentals of the U.S. economy remain strong, noting that the impact of the Coronavirus has not yet been felt. He confirmed the Fed is on alert for numbers that show an impact. ([WSJ](#)) On Wednesday, the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq hit new highs. ([Investor's Business Daily](#)) For the past 2 days, U.S. markets have retreated, though all remain in striking distance of their all-time highs. The Dow Jones ended the week -1.4%, the S&P 500 slid -1.3%, and the Nasdaq lost -1.6%.

Here in California, pundits marveled at the riskiness of our Governor's State of the State address: he has staked his near-term political future on a battle against homelessness. Celebrating all the economic achievement of the state, declaring that California has produced 1 in 7 of all new jobs in the U.S. since 2010, still it is "a disgrace, that the richest state in the richest nation—succeeding across so many sectors—is failing to properly house, heal, and humanely treat so many of its own people. Every day, the California Dream is dimmed by the wrenching reality of families, children and seniors living unfed on a concrete bed." ([CA.gov](#)) Woven through a powerful narrative, he returns again and again to the ideas of justice, of preserving the California Dream for all of us, and the moral imperative. It reminds us of Dr. King's 1963 letter from a jail in Birmingham. As Dr. King writes, "I am in Birmingham because injustice is here." Dr. King calls to the clergy, "the time is always ripe to do what is right." ([Letter](#)) Governor Newsom reminds us that "[M]ost of us experienced homelessness as a pang of guilt, not a call to action" and that "[i]t's an enduring California value that every Californian has value." ([CA.gov](#)) With his words, with money from the state's coffers, Governor Newsom makes homelessness our calling. Bravo!

Also anxious to be on the right side of justice, employees at one of the largest tech companies in the world have been building a movement. Over the course of several years, employees there have pushed back against projects that they worry will be used to deprive people of human rights, violate privacy concerns or generally can be used by those with bad intentions. Despite the company's culture of encouraging questions and once having inscribed in its corporate code of conduct "Don't be evil", many of the

leaders who shed light on questionable projects and organized protests have been fired, often with little warning. ([New York Times Magazine](#))

What are we to do when the most vulnerable among us suffer the most? When there are impacts everywhere, but the impacts are not equal? In Africa, locusts flying in swarms the size of cities are killing crops and placing millions of people at risk of starvation. ([The Guardian](#)) The warming climate makes locust outbreaks more likely, as the weather is warmer and drier. ([Morning Brew](#)) This week, a large U.S. airline announced a \$1 billion-dollar budget over the next 10 years to limit the carbon footprint of air travel on the planet. ([NBC News](#)) But the biggest news of all, to quote the world's richest man, is that the "biggest threat to our planet" will be fought with \$10 billion dollars of his money ([CNN Business](#)). As climate change is expected to hit the poorest countries hardest, and impact the safety and the health of communities of color most, we hope that the strategies pursued by this billionaire's Earth Fund target research, policies, and technologies that bring environmental justice to us all.

As always, please reach out to us with any questions or commentary!

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