



## The Week in Brief

It was a rough week across the board, with S&P 500 leading at -0.32% and Dow Jones lagging at -1.13%. On the safe-haven front, Gold climbing 2.15% to \$5,230.50 while the 10-year yield falling to 3.96% while the dollar weakening 0.08% to 97.57.

The macro picture was busy. Consumer Confidence (CB, February) came in above expectations (91.2 vs. 88.4). PPI (January 2026, MoM) came in above expectations (0.5% vs. 0.3%).

Looking ahead, the key events to watch are: ISM Manufacturing PMI (February), ISM Services PMI (February), Nonfarm Payrolls (February). Position sizing and hedges should reflect the potential for volatility around these releases.

## What This Means

**Stocks slipped modestly.** The S&P 500 lost -0.3% — a quiet pullback, not a panic, but the direction was down.

**Gold surged +2.1% to \$5,230.** When gold runs like this it usually means investors are nervous — they're moving money to something that holds value when everything else feels uncertain.

**Bond yields fell sharply** (the 10-year Treasury dropped to 3.96%). Lower yields mean the bond market thinks the economy may be slowing, or that inflation is cooling — either way, it's a signal worth watching. It also means existing bonds in your portfolio went up in value.

### **On the economic data front:**

- The Consumer Confidence index came in at 91.2 — higher than expected. Translation: everyday Americans feel relatively okay about their jobs and finances. That tends to support continued spending, which is good for the economy.
- The Producer Price Index — basically what businesses pay for their inputs — came in hotter than expected at 0.5%. This matters because when businesses pay more to make things, they eventually pass those costs on to you as higher prices. It also signals the Fed probably won't be cutting interest rates anytime soon.
- The big non-data story this week was trade policy. A court ruling challenged existing tariffs, and a new 10% blanket import tax was announced. Tariffs raise costs for U.S. companies that import

goods — that pressure can squeeze profit margins and eventually show up as higher prices. It's adding an extra layer of uncertainty that the market doesn't love.

**The bottom line:** It was an uncomfortable week to be an investor. Inflation is still sticky, trade policy is unpredictable, and the Fed has no reason to rescue markets with rate cuts yet. That's not a reason to panic — but it is a reason to make sure your portfolio isn't leaning too hard into rate-sensitive or import-dependent sectors.

**Watch next week:** ISM Manufacturing PMI (February) and ISM Services PMI (February) are the key releases. These can move markets — particularly bonds and rate-sensitive sectors — so it's worth being positioned before the prints rather than reacting after.

## Index Snapshot

LARGE CAP		BROAD MARKET		FIXED INCOME	
S&P 500	-0.32%	Russell 2000	-0.85%	10Y Treasury	-11 bps
Dow Jones	-1.13%	Gold	+2.15%		
Nasdaq	-0.76%				

## Market Snapshot

INDEX	CLOSE	WEEKLY %	WEEK RANGE
Gold	5,230.50	+2.15%	5,112.70 – 5,280.00
USD Index	97.57	-0.08%	97.28 – 97.94
S&P 500	6,878.88	-0.32%	6,815.43 – 6,952.51
Nasdaq	22,668.21	-0.76%	22,528.26 – 23,169.68
Russell 2000	2,632.36	-0.85%	2,600.99 – 2,679.61
Dow Jones	48,977.92	-1.13%	48,678.78 – 49,815.22
10Y Treasury	3.96	-11 bps	3.96 – 4.07

▲ Best: Gold (+2.15%)

▼ Worst: 10Y Treasury (-11 bps)

## Last Week's Economic Events

DATE	EVENT	ACTUAL	EXPECTED	PREVIOUS	SURPRISE
2026-02-24	Consumer Confidence (CB, February)	91.2	88.4	89.0	Above
2026-02-27	PPI (January 2026, MoM)	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%	Above
2026-02-25	SCOTUS Tariff Ruling + New Tariff Announcement	--	--	--	Inline

### CONSUMER CONFIDENCE (CB, FEBRUARY)

Strong beat on consumer confidence driven by improved labor market optimism. The 2.2-point gain to 91.2 exceeded every analyst forecast, suggesting household spending resilience despite mounting tariff uncertainty. Positive for consumer discretionary (XLY) and financials (XLF). The Expectations sub-index rose sharply to 72.0, though it remains below the 80 threshold historically associated with recession risk.

### PPI (JANUARY 2026, MOM)

Wholesale inflation ran significantly hotter than expected, with core PPI surging 0.8% vs. 0.3% consensus – the largest monthly core gain in over a year. Broad-based services costs drove the miss. The hot PPI print reignited inflation fears and caused a sharp equity sell-off on Friday. Treasury yields rose across the curve. Watch the delayed PCE report (now rescheduled to March 13) for confirmation of whether producer-level price pressures are feeding through to consumers.

### SCOTUS TARIFF RULING + NEW TARIFF ANNOUNCEMENT

The dominant macro theme of the week: the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 6-3 to block President Trump's broad IEEPA-based global tariff authority. Trump responded by announcing a new blanket 15% global import levy, which came into effect midweek at 10%. Policy uncertainty spiked across all asset classes. Defensives (XLU, XLP) outperformed; import-sensitive cyclicals (XLY, XLI) underperformed. Watch for retaliatory measures from trading partners in coming weeks.

## Upcoming Week

DATE	EVENT	IMPORTANCE
2026-03-02	ISM Manufacturing PMI (February)	High
2026-03-04	ADP Employment Change (February)	Medium
2026-03-04	ISM Services PMI (February)	High
2026-03-06	Nonfarm Payrolls (February)	High
2026-03-06	Unemployment Rate (February)	Medium

## Positioning Tips

SIGNAL	SUGGESTED ACTION
Flash Manufacturing PMI on 2026-03-02	A key read on factory activity. Watch industrials (XLI) for directional cues.

