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Interest Rates Increasingly Focused on Stimulus

The bond market, which drives interest rates, is in the habit of reacting to big developments that impact the economy and inflation. At present, bonds are **forced to wait** for several such developments, but only one of them might come into focus this month.

The developments in question are all very different, but all are important in their own way. They are:

1. The path of the pandemic and resulting impact on the economy
2. The presidential election and resulting fiscal policy changes
3. The much-debated 2nd installment of fiscal stimulus (covid-19 relief)

Naturally, the pandemic's economic impact will take **years** to be fully understood. On that front, there will be no single event that decides the fate of the market and interest rates.

The election, on the other hand, has a definitive result and deadline attached to it, but it's still a month away.

In the meantime, fiscal stimulus is an important consideration for the economy, the election, and **especially** for interest rates. A decision could come at any time. It could be delayed until after the election. It could be bigger or smaller than expected. But odds are something will happen **before** the election and **despite** all the political posturing, that it will fall somewhere between the two ideological boundaries guarded by either side of the aisle.

This is a **big deal**. To understand why, consider the following chart of ISM's Non-Manufacturing Index--one of the broadest barometers of economic activity in the US and far more timely than GDP.

National Average Mortgage Rates



	Rate	Change	Points
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Mortgage News Daily

30 Yr. Fixed	7.07%	+0.02	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.45%	0.00	0.00
30 Yr. FHA	6.51%	+0.02	0.00
30 Yr. Jumbo	7.26%	0.00	0.00
5/1 ARM	7.02%	-0.01	0.00

Freddie Mac

30 Yr. Fixed	6.86%	-0.01	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.16%	+0.03	0.00

Rates as of: 6/28

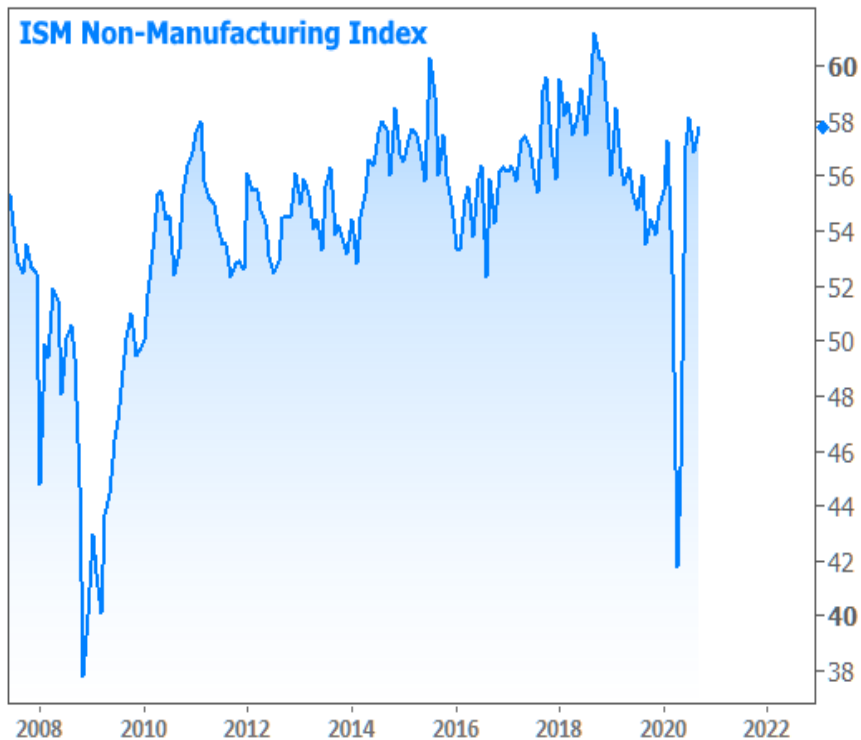
Market Data

	Price / Yield	Change
MBS UMBS 5.5	98.49	-0.45
MBS GNMA 5.5	99.10	-0.44
10 YR Treasury	4.3892	-0.0088
30 YR Treasury	4.5568	-0.0072

Pricing as of: 6/30 10:50PM EST

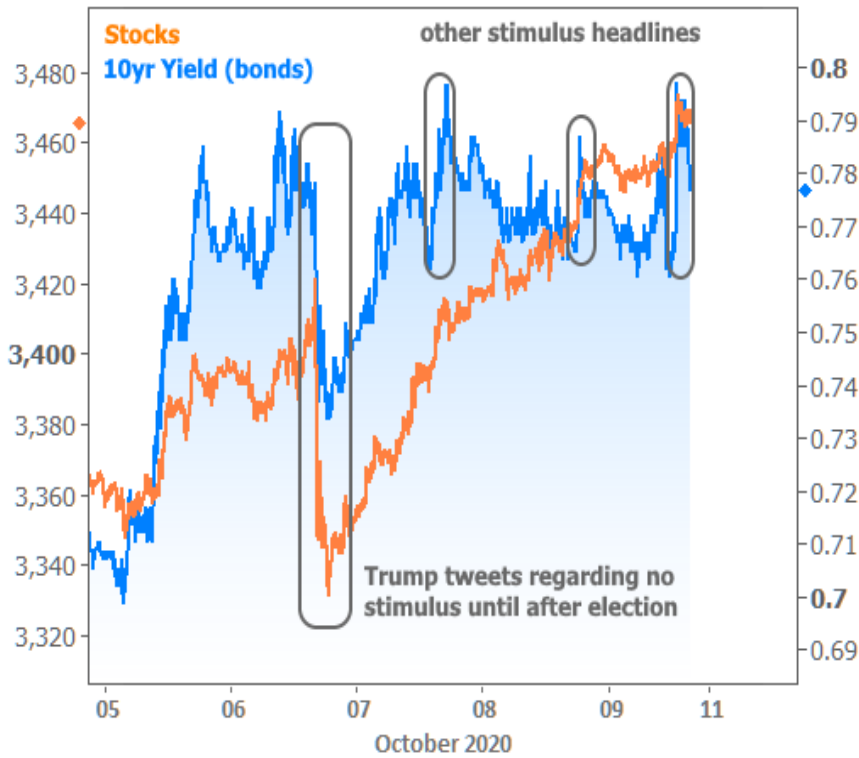
Recent Housing Data

		Value	Change
Mortgage Apps	Jun 12	208.5	+15.58%
Building Permits	Mar	1.46M	-3.95%
Housing Starts	Mar	1.32M	-13.15%
New Home Sales	Mar	693K	+4.68%
Pending Home Sales	Feb	75.6	+1.75%
Existing Home Sales	Feb	3.97M	-0.75%
Builder Confidence	Mar	51	+6.25%

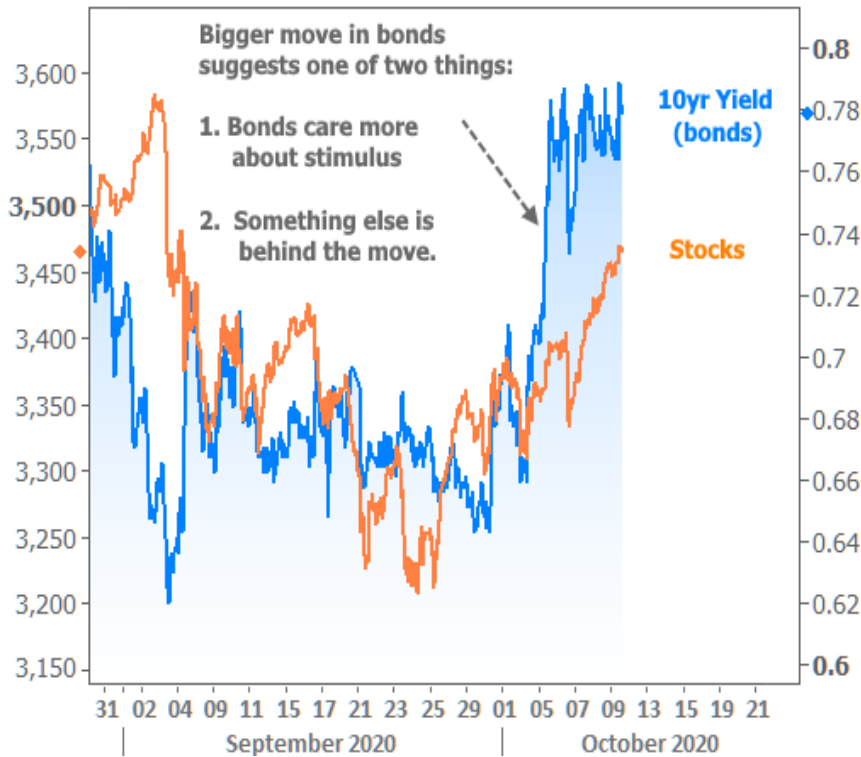


While these numbers certainly would have bounced back from their recent lows either way, there's widespread bipartisan agreement that the relatively fast passage of a large, initial stimulus bill made the bounce **much bigger and faster** than it otherwise would have been. There's similar agreement that additional stimulus is nothing short of mandatory in order to avoid more dire economic outcomes.

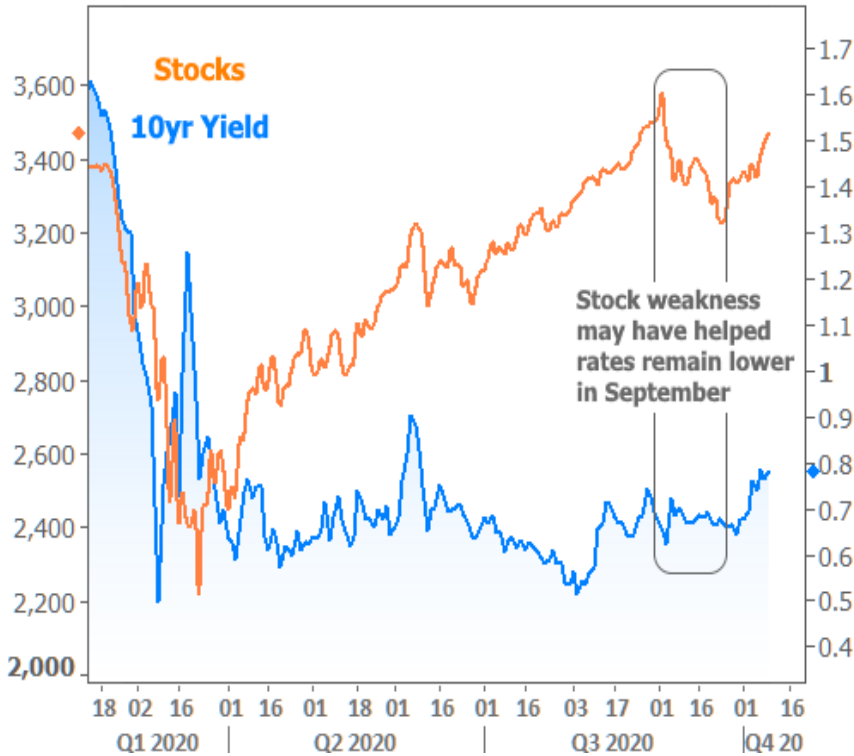
These outcomes matter greatly to both stocks and bonds (aka rates). That was apparent this week as both stocks and rates made their **biggest** moves lower after Trump tweeted that stimulus was on hold until after the election. Subsequent stimulus headlines continued driving smaller pockets of volatility throughout the week.



If it looks like the two lines above aren't responding in quite the same way, that's because **they're not!** Bonds experienced most of their volatility right at the beginning of the week despite continuing to react to stimulus headlines more readily than stocks throughout the week.



There are quite a few ways to argue both for and against the correlation between rates and stocks. The longer the time frame considered, the more the correlation **breaks down**. Nonetheless, we can see that the stock market correction in September coincided with a flattening-out of interest rates just as they seemed to be bouncing higher.



As stocks found their footing, rates may have simply decided to resume their previous move higher. We can also consider simple chart patterns that suggested bonds had to make a choice at the end of an uncommonly calm and narrow September. In fact, after such a consistent theme in one month, it's not uncommon to see an obvious change of pace and direction in the new month.



The bond market and banks will be closed on Monday in observance of Columbus Day. Bank holidays can affect the mortgage process. Monday won't count as part of the 3-day wait between closing and funding for refinances, and wire transfers will be on hold until Tuesday. In addition, few lenders publish new rate sheets or accept locks on bank holidays.

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Recent Economic Data

Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
Monday, Oct 05				
10:00AM	Sep ISM N-Mfg PMI	57.8	56.3	56.9
Tuesday, Oct 06				
8:30AM	Aug International trade mm \$ (bl)	-67.1	-66.1	-63.6
1:00PM	3-Yr Note Auction (bl)	52		
Wednesday, Oct 07				
7:00AM	w/e MBA Purchase Index	316.0		320.9
7:00AM	w/e Mortgage Refinance Index	3622.3		3346.9
1:00PM	10-yr Note Auction (bl)	35		
2:00PM	Fed Meeting Minutes			
3:00PM	Aug Consumer credit (bl)	-7.22	14.00	12.25
Thursday, Oct 08				
8:30AM	w/e Jobless Claims (k)	840	820	837
1:00PM	30-Yr Bond Auction (bl)	23		

Event Importance:

- No Stars = Insignificant
- ☆ Low
- ★ Moderate
- ★★ Important
- ★★★ Very Important

Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
Friday, Oct 09				
10:00AM	Aug Wholesale inventories mm (%)	0.4	0.5	0.5
Monday, Oct 12				
12:00AM	Columbus Day			
Tuesday, Oct 13				
8:30AM	Sep Core CPI (Annual) (%)	1.7	1.8	1.7
Wednesday, Oct 14				
7:00AM	w/e MBA Purchase Index	311.1		316.0
7:00AM	w/e Mortgage Refinance Index	3612.3		3622.3
8:30AM	Sep Core Producer Prices YY (%)	1.2	0.9	0.6
Thursday, Oct 15				
8:30AM	Sep Import prices mm (%)	0.3	0.3	0.9
8:30AM	Oct Philly Fed Business Index	32.3	14.0	15.0
8:30AM	Oct NY Fed Manufacturing	+10.5	15.00	17.00
Friday, Oct 16				
8:30AM	Sep Retail Sales (%)	1.9	0.7	0.6
9:15AM	Sep Industrial Production (%)	-0.6	0.5	0.4
10:00AM	Oct Consumer Sentiment	81.2	80.5	80.4
10:00AM	Aug Business Inventories (%)	0.3	0.4	0.1

Real Talk

At The Rate Shop, we're not your average mortgage banker. We specialize in bringing you ridiculously low interest rates that will make you wonder what the other guys are doing. In fact the ONLY objection we ever hear is "your rates sound too good to be true". Well they're not, and here is why...

After 15 years in the retail banking world I was frustrated with the high interest rates that came from that business model. As I looked around at all the bloated layers of management and their expensive salaries and the overhead of running a larger company (think rent costs, employee health and benefit costs, payroll taxes, and on and on) it dawned on me that I was a part of the problem, and the solution, for me at least, was so easy to see.

Start my own mortgage brokerage shop. No expensive executive salaries, no expensive building to pay rent at, no unnecessary employees and all the costs that are associated with that. What happens when you cut out all the fat? You can provide lower rates and lower closing costs. It's simple. Now here is the best part, you still get great service from a local Kansas City Lender. My mission is to let everyone know that low rates and great customer service are NOT mutually exclusive.

Thanks for coming along on this journey where Low Rates meet Great Service. The two do NOT have to be mutually exclusive. It's just a lie that the big box mortgage companies have been telling you for years. Don't believe me? Give me a call or shoot me a text on my personal cell phone today and compare my rates and costs up against any other lender in the country, and be prepared to be blown away.

Mike Baker

