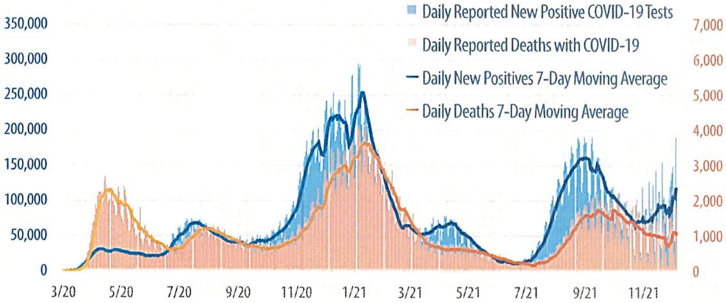
First Trust

COVID-19 TRACKER

The World Health Organization has confirmed that despite cases being detected in at least 38 countries, there has yet to be a death linked to the Omicron variant.[1]

Daily Reported New Positive COVID-19 Tests vs. Daily Reported Deaths from COVID-19 in the U.S.

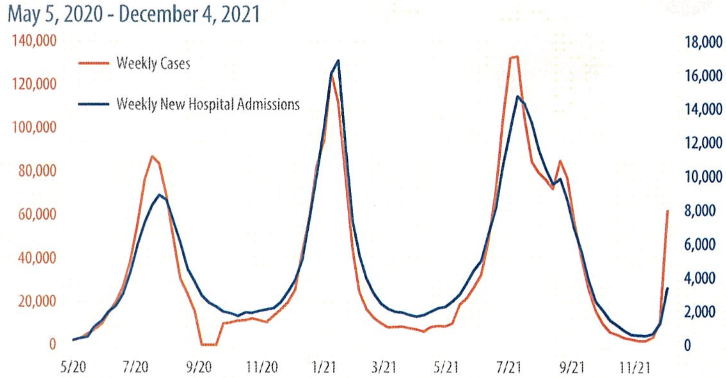
March 1, 2020 - December 7, 2021



Sources: CDC.gov, First Trust Advisors

South Africa Cases vs. Hospitalizations

May 5, 2020 - December 4, 2021



Sources: ourworldindata.org, First Trust Advisors

Studies of Vaccine Effectiveness Against COVID-19 When Different Variants Predominated

As of September 15, 2021

Country	Population	Vaccine	Dominant Variant(s)	Vaccine Effectiveness*
Israel	Healthcare Workers	Pfizer	Alpha	65% (45-79)
United States (California)	General Population 18+	Pfizer/Moderna	Epsilon, Alpha	68% (29-86)
United States	Preprocedural Adult Patients	Pfizer/Moderna	Ancestral strain	80% (56-91)
Qatar	General Population 12+	Moderna	Delta	80% (54-93)
		Pfizer	Delta	36% (11-54)
Israel	General Population 16+	Pfizer	Alpha	92% (91-92)
Israel	General Population 16+	Pfizer	Alpha, Ancestral Strain	90% (83-94)

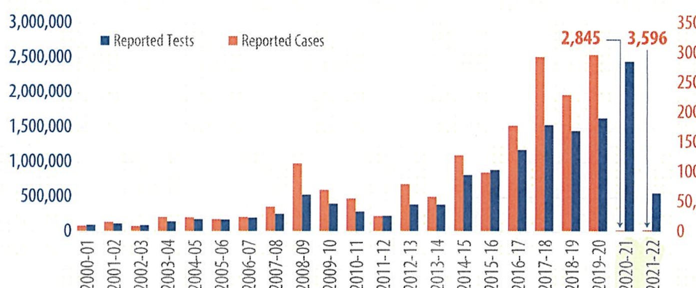
Sources: CDC.gov, First Trust Advisors

*The 95% Confidence Interval for the study is displayed in the paranthesis

The U.S. Department of Labor estimates **10% or more (at least $87 billion) of the pandemic-related unemployment benefits paid out by the federal government as of September 30th were lost to "improper payments," with a "significant portion attributable to fraud."[2]**

U.S. Influenza Reported Tests vs. Reported Cases

As of November 20, 2021

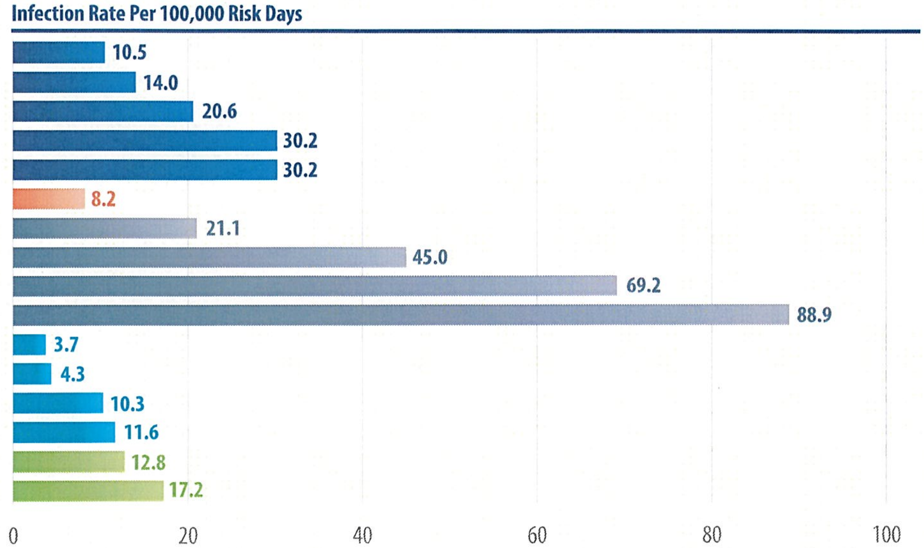


Sources: CDC.gov, First Trust Advisors

Infection Rate by Type of Immunity

Measuring period: August – September 2021

Immunity-Conferring Event	Time Elapsed From Event	Infection Rate Per 100,000 Risk Days
Recovered	**4-6 months**	10.5
	6-8 months	14.0
	8-10 months	20.6
	10-12 months	30.2
	12+ months	30.2
Fully Vaccinated + Booster	**0-2 months**	8.2
Fully Vaccinated	**0-2 months**	21.1
	2-4 months	45.0
	4-6 months	69.2
	6-8 months	88.9
Recovered then Vaccinated	**0-2 months**	3.7
	2-4 months	4.3
	4-6 months	10.3
	6-8 months	11.6
Vaccinated then Recovered	**4-6 months**	12.8
	6-8 months	17.2



Sources: Israel Ministry of Health, Israel Institute of Technology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, First Trust Advisors

[1]theguardian.com (December 4, 2021); [2]cnbc.com (December 2, 2021)

WEEKLY HIGH FREQUENCY DATA

Indicator	Date (2021)	Level	2019 Level	% Change 2019	% Change MOM	% Change WOW
Initial Jobless Claims	December 10	206,000	227,000	-9.3%	-23.7%	9.6%
Continuing Jobless Claims	December 3	1,845,000	1,726,000	6.9%	-12.5%	-7.7%
ASA Staffing Index[1]	December 6	107.1	97.3	10.1%	0.1%	4.2%
Weekly Retail Sales[2]	December 11	16.0%	4.6%	NA	NA	NA
Box Office Receipts	December 10-16	$56,140,059	$162,246,278	-65.4%	-36.8%	-20.4%
Rail Car Traffic (cars)	December 10	513,366	520,849	-1.4%	2.1%	-2.7%
Steel Production (net tons)	December 13	1,818	1,844	-1.4%	-2.0%	0.6%
Hotel Occupancy	December 5-11	57.4%	60.4%	-4.9%	-6.8%	4.7%
OpenTable State of the Restaurant Industry[3,4]	December 16	NA	NA	-13.0%	-11.5%	-0.5%
TSA Checkpoint Data[3]	December 16	1,859,206	2,205,476	-15.7%	0.3%	4.4%
Supply of Motor Gasoline in the US (Mbbl/d)	December 10	9,472	9,411	0.6%	2.5%	5.7%
Global Commercial Flights[3]	December 16	92,439	112,960	-18.2%	4.4%	0.1%

Level is at a new recovery best

Source: First Trust Advisors, Bloomberg, Department of Labor, Redbook Research, Box Office Mojo, Association of American Railroads, American Iron and Steel Institute, Hotel News Now, OpenTable, Transportation Security Administration, Energy Information Administration, American Staffing Association, Flight Radar 24

2019 Level and % Change 2019 are from the same week in 2019, unless otherwise noted. MOM = Month-over-Month; WOW = Week-over-Week.

All data is for the U.S. except for commercial flights.

[1] The baseline value for the ASA Staffing Index was set at 100 in June 2006.

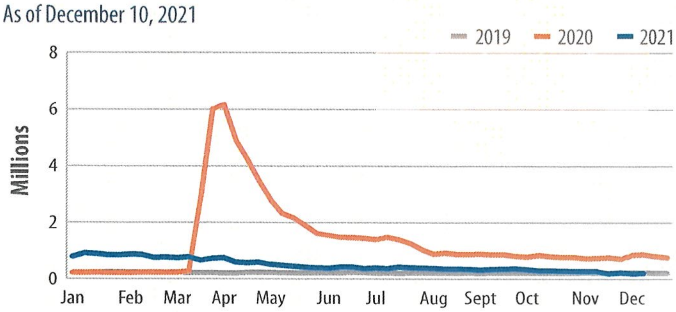
[2] Data for level and 2019 level are both Year-over-Year (YOY)% changes.

[3] Data is provided daily instead of weekly; the 7-day moving average is shown.

[4] Data shows change in seated diners from 2019 to 2021 at restaurants on the OpenTable network across all channels: online reservations, phone reservations, and walk-ins. % change MOM and WOW are the current reading minus the month ago and week ago reading, respectively.

INITIAL JOBLESS CLAIMS

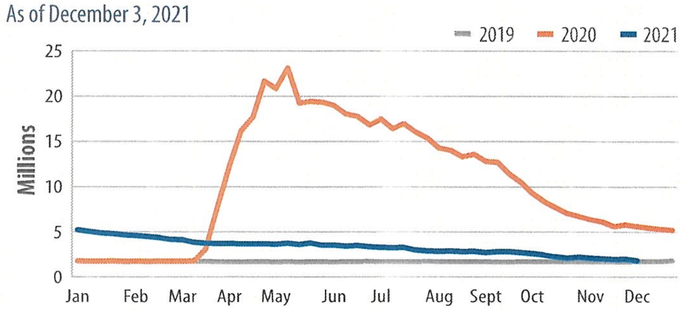
As of December 10, 2021



Sources: Bloomberg, Department of Labor, First Trust Advisors

CONTINUING JOBLESS CLAIMS

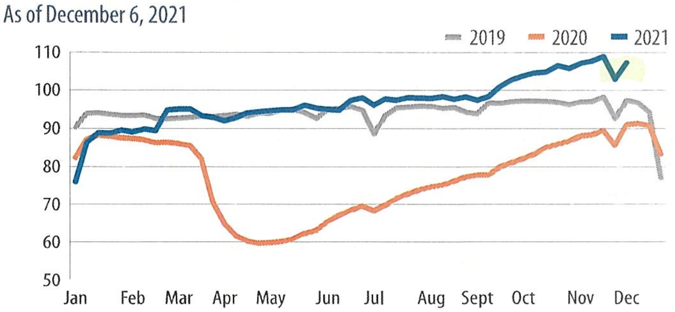
As of December 3, 2021



Sources: Bloomberg, Department of Labor, First Trust Advisors

ASA STAFFING INDEX

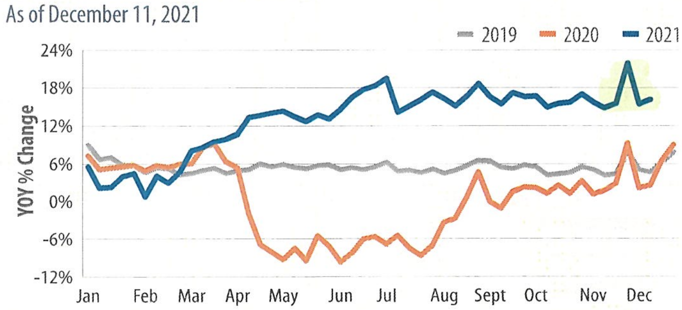
As of December 6, 2021



Sources: American Staffing Association, First Trust Advisors

WEEKLY RETAIL SALES

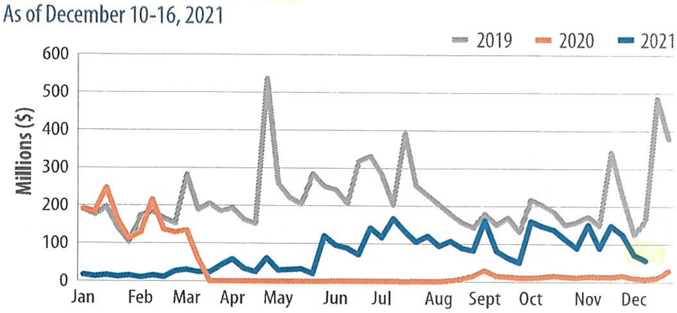
As of December 11, 2021



Sources: Bloomberg, Redbook Research, First Trust Advisors

BOX OFFICE RECEIPTS

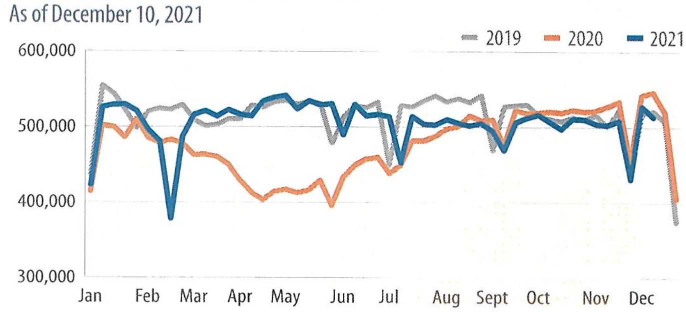
As of December 10-16, 2021



Sources: Box Office Mojo, First Trust Advisors

RAIL CAR TRAFFIC (CARS)

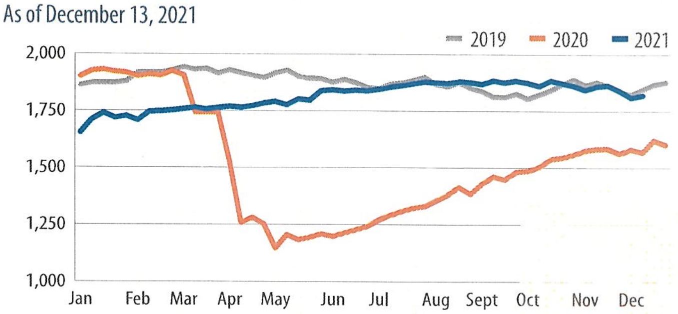
As of December 10, 2021



Sources: Bloomberg, Association of American Railroads, First Trust Advisors

STEEL PRODUCTION (NET TONS)

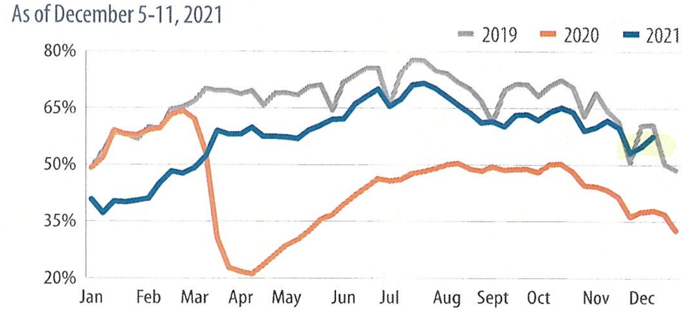
As of December 13, 2021



Sources: Bloomberg, American Iron and Steel Institute, First Trust Advisors

HOTEL OCCUPANCY

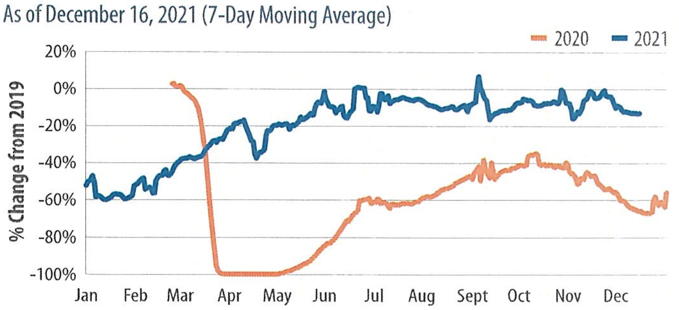
As of December 5-11, 2021



Sources: Hotel News Now, First Trust Advisors

OPENTABLE STATE OF THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

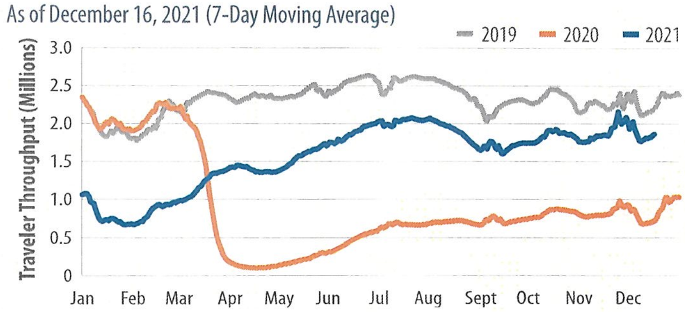
As of December 16, 2021 (7-Day Moving Average)



Sources: Open Table, First Trust Advisors

TSA CHECKPOINT DATA

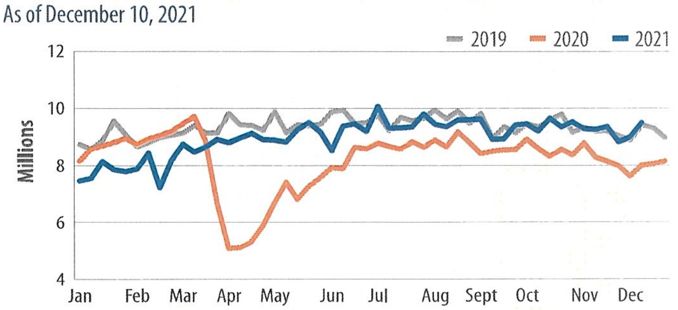
As of December 16, 2021 (7-Day Moving Average)



Sources: Transportation Security Administration, First Trust Advisors

SUPPLY OF MOTOR GASOLINE IN THE U.S. (MBBL/D)

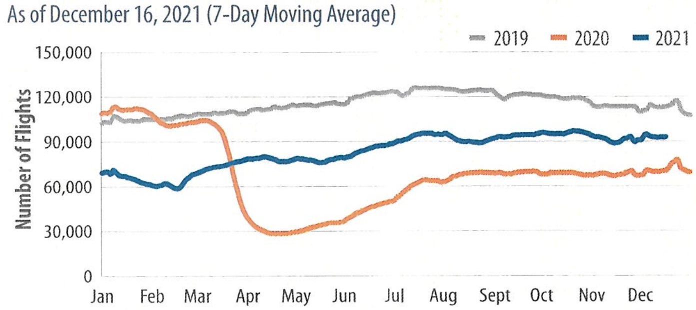
As of December 10, 2021



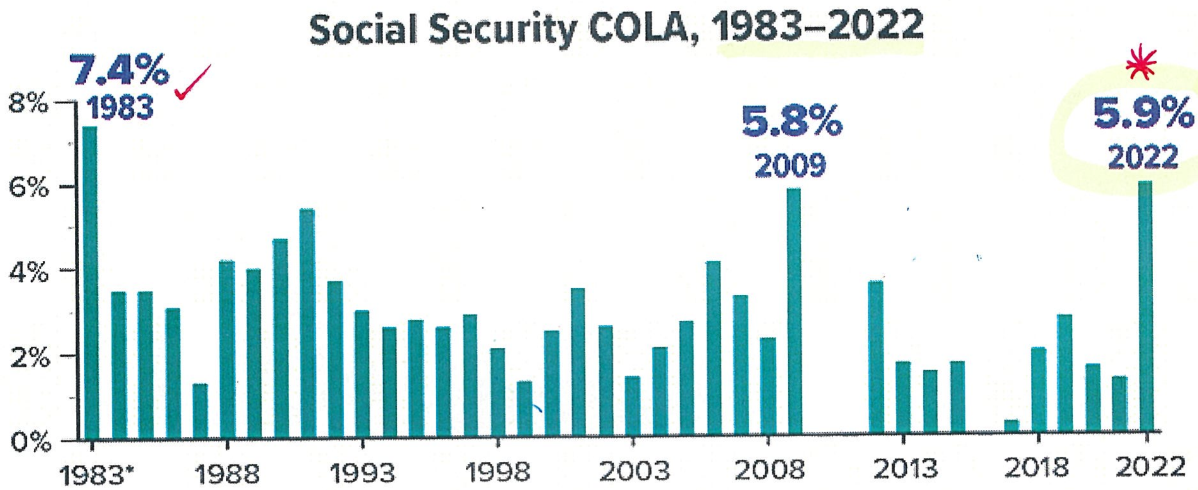
Sources: Bloomberg, First Trust Advisors

GLOBAL COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS

As of December 16, 2021 (7-Day Moving Average)



Sources: Flight Radar 24, First Trust Advisors



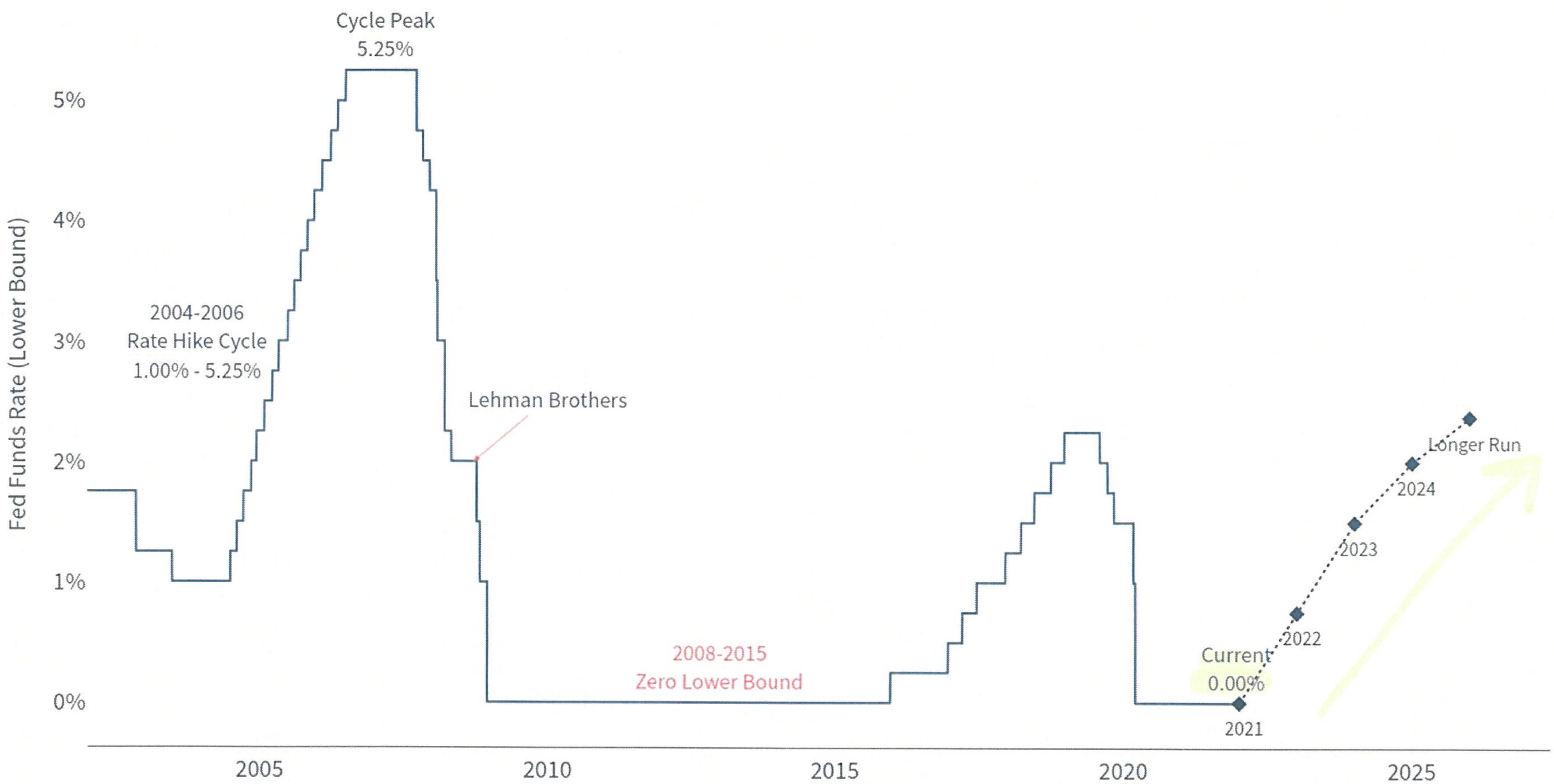
There was no COLA in 2010, 2011, and 2016.

*The 1983 COLA was applied to benefits payable from July 1982 to December 1983.

Sources: Social Security Administration, 2021; The Senior Citizens League, August 11, 2021

Federal Funds Rate

Target range lower limit



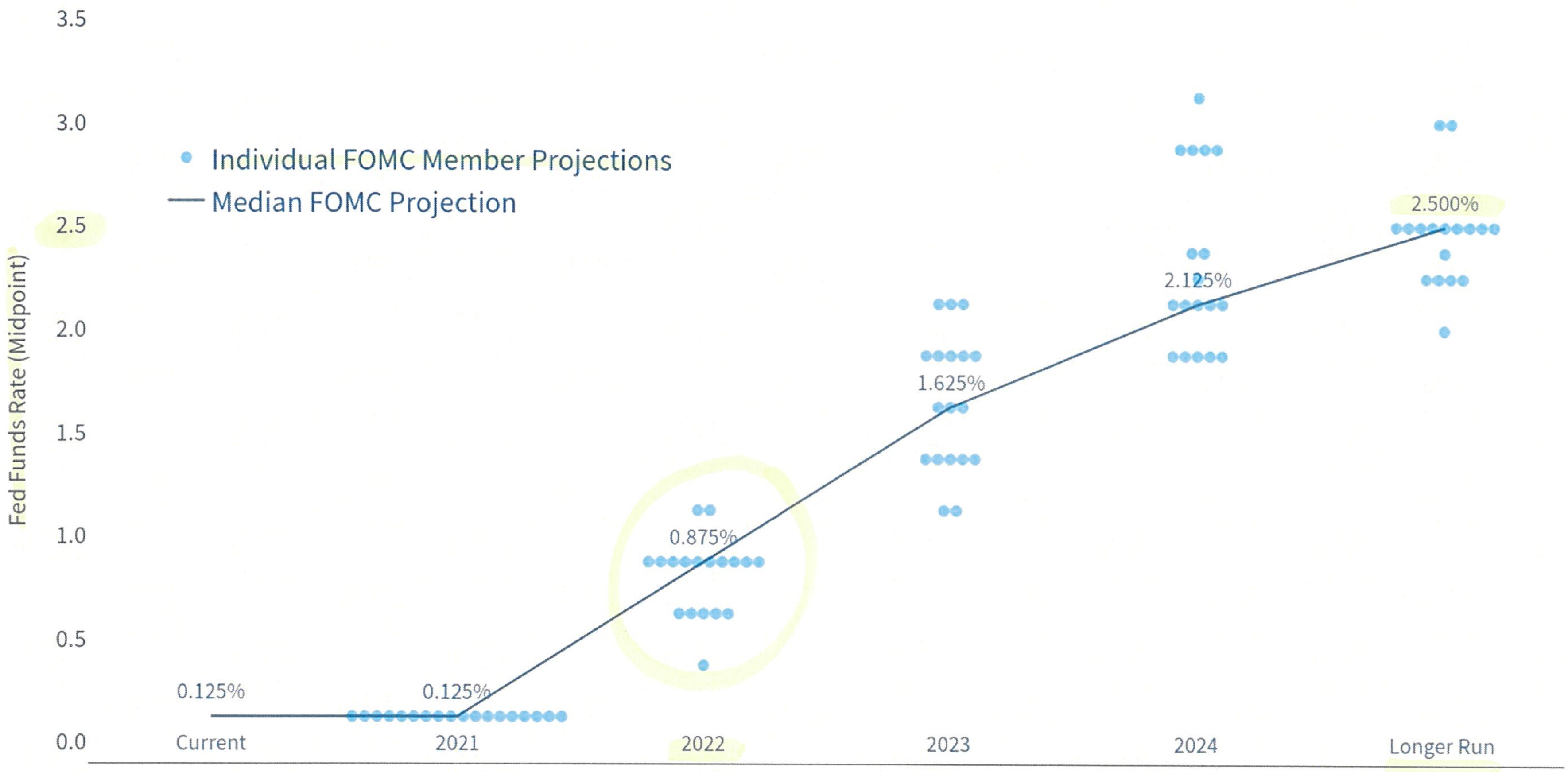
Latest data point is Dec 2021

- The Fed has kept interest rates at the zero lower bound since the pandemic began.
- This policy could reverse in 2022 with one or two Fed rate hikes.
- This change in Fed policy could push interest rates higher in the coming years.

Source: Federal Reserve

Federal Reserve Dot Plot

FOMC Participants' Projections of the Federal Funds Rate



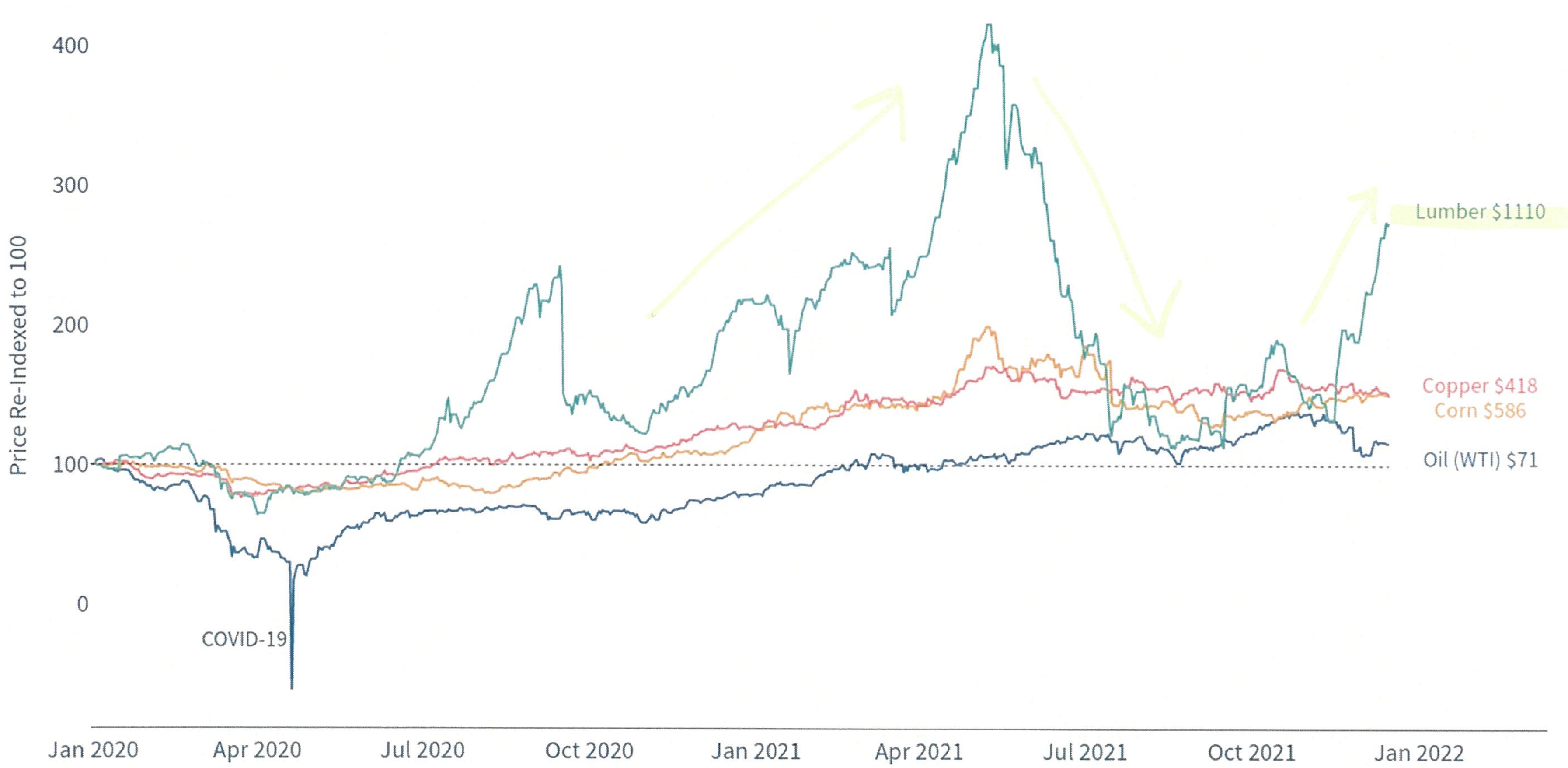
- Each quarter, the Federal Open Markets Committee updates their economic projections, including expectations for the federal funds rate.
- Their forecasts show that rates could begin rising in 2022.
- The goal of the Fed is to achieve a strong unemployment rate and stable inflation.

Source: Federal Reserve

Commodities

Economically Important Commodities

Futures contract prices of oil (WTI), corn, copper and lumber



Latest data point is Dec 15, 2021

Source: Clearnomics, Bloomberg

Wage Growth

Year-over-year change in the average hourly earnings of production and non-supervisory employees in the private sector

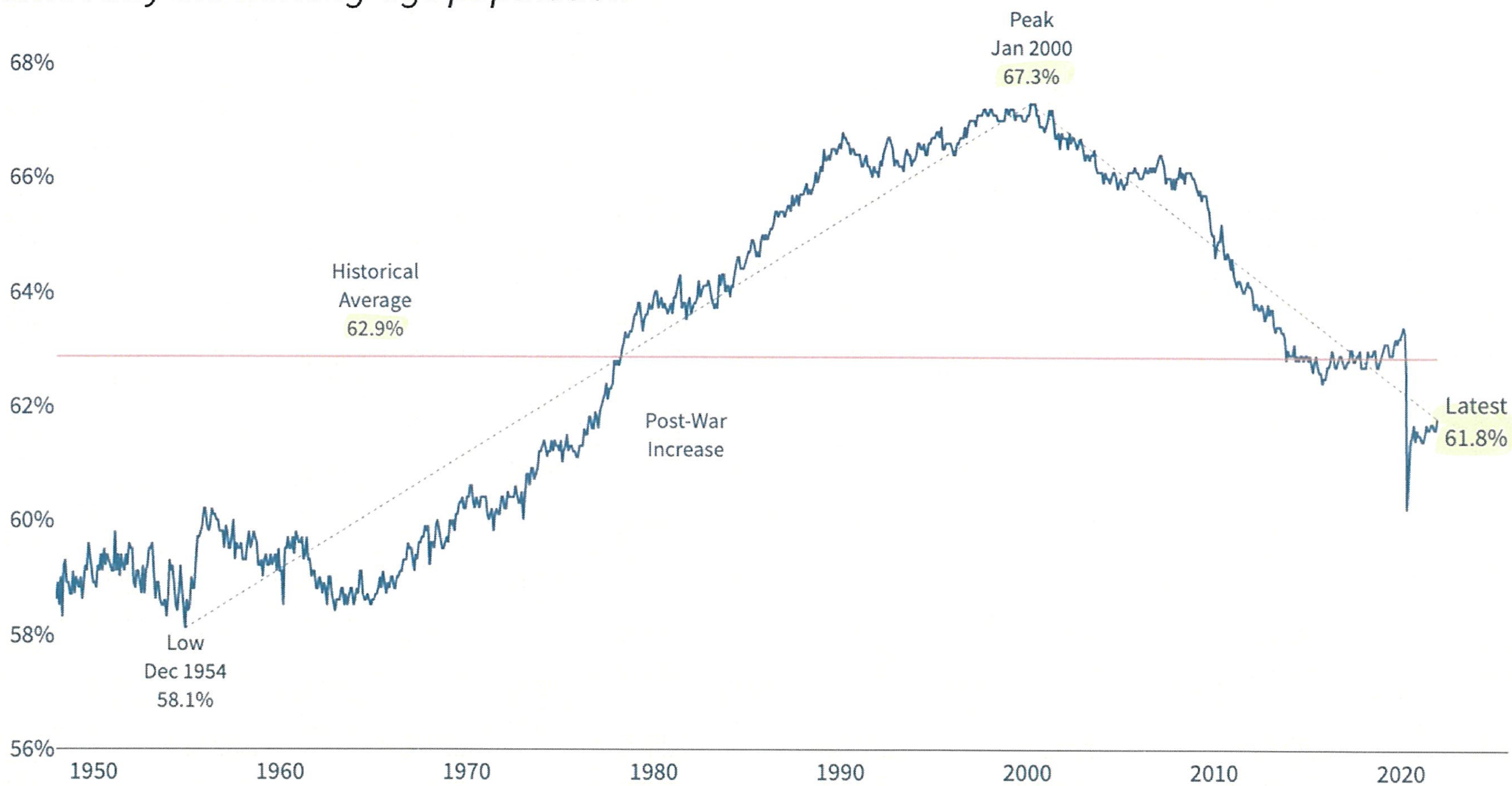
Latest data point is Nov 2021

- Wages have begun to rise for many workers as the recovery continues and labor markets tighten.
- Whether wages continue to rise will depend on labor market slack and the economic recovery in the coming years.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Labor Force Participation

Percentage of the population working or actively seeking work divided by the working-age population



Latest data point is Nov 2021

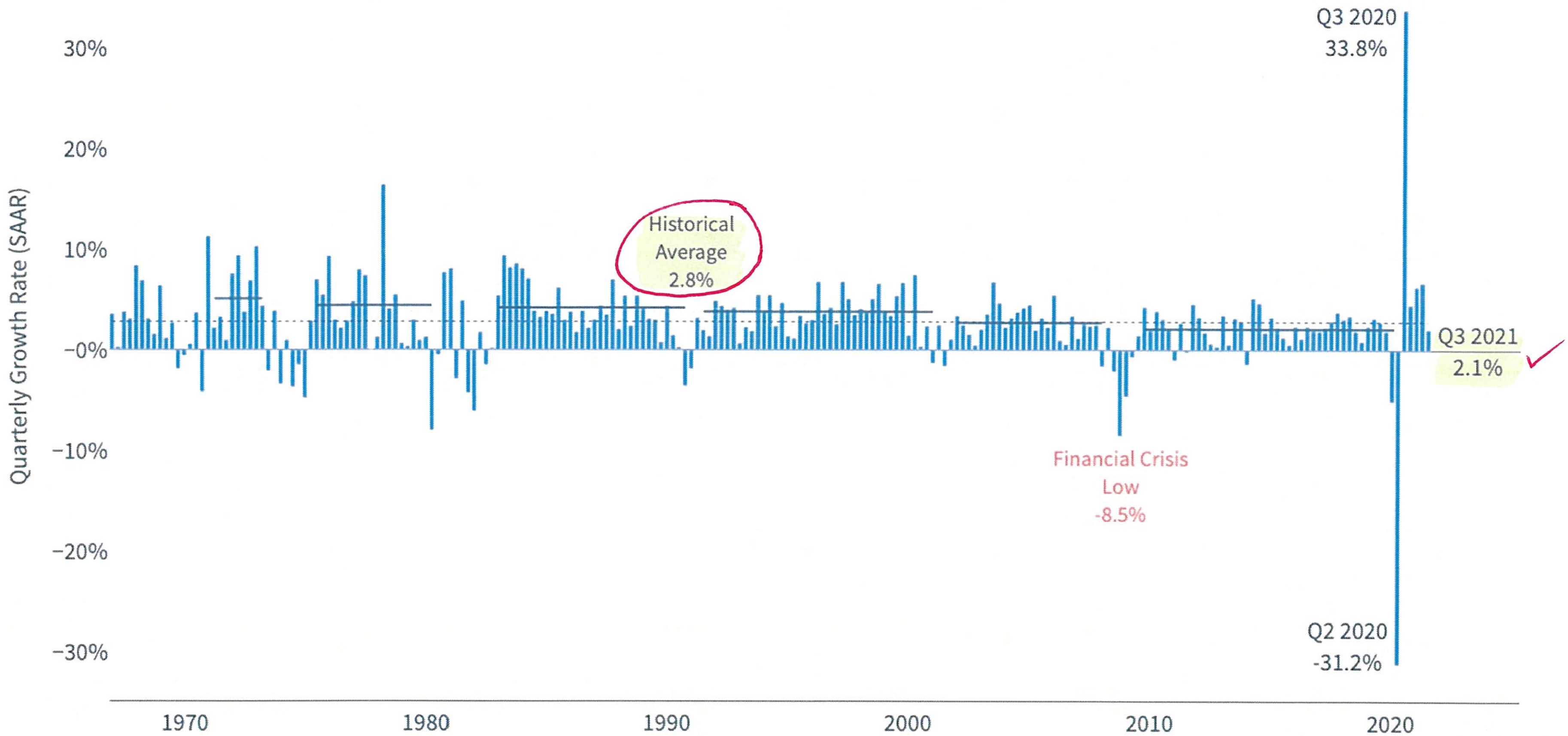
- The labor force participation rate is simply the percentage of the working age population in the labor force.
- The declining labor force participation rate has clearly been a defining factor during this cycle.
- This is a result of long-term trends such as retiring baby boomers, advances in technology, and globalization.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

U.S. Economy

U.S. Economic Growth

Quarterly GDP, year-over-year percentage change



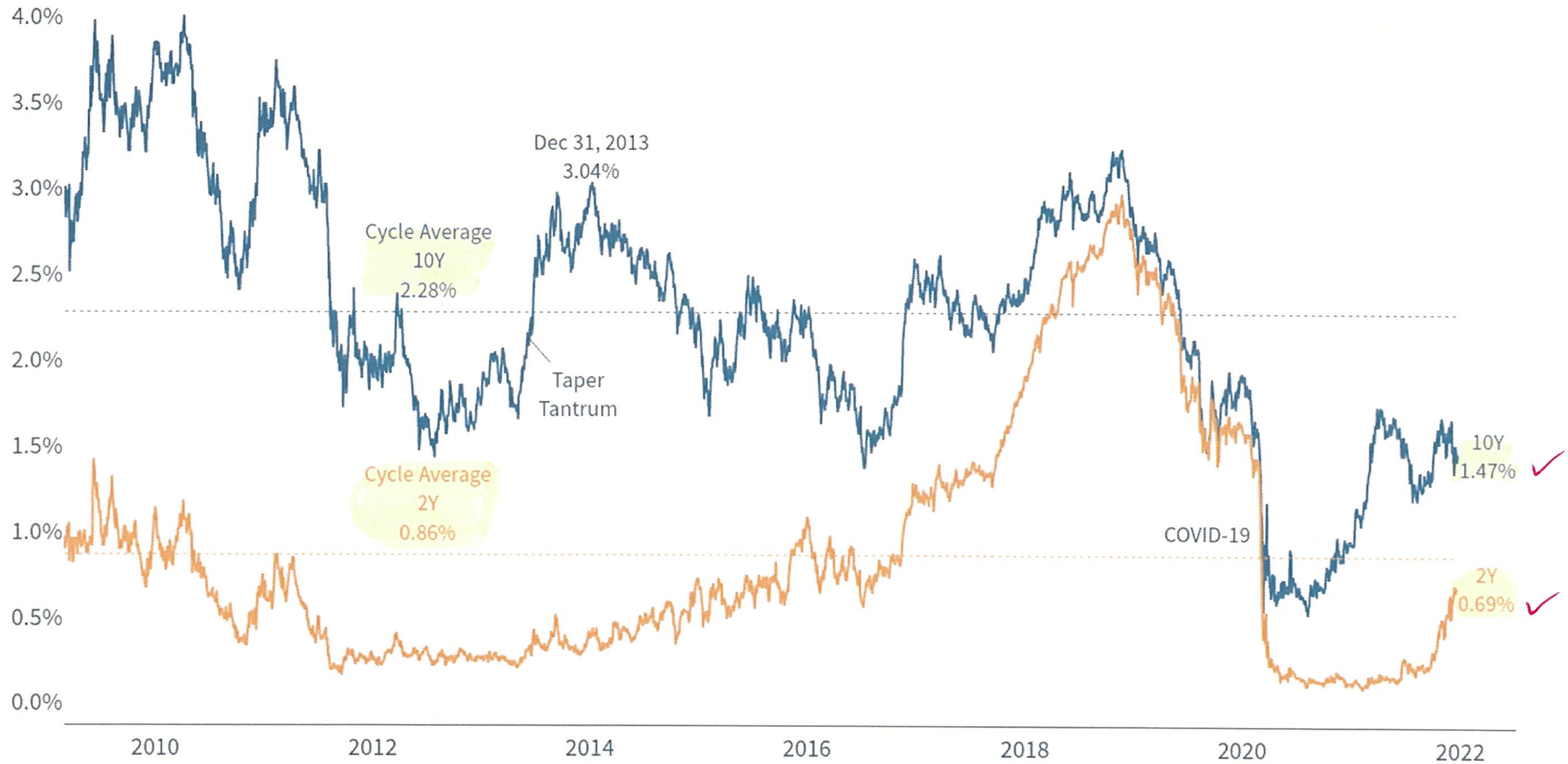
Latest data point is Q3 2021

- The economy has reached new historic levels and is still growing rapidly.
- The GDP declines and advances since the pandemic began have been among the largest in history.
- Stimulus from Congress and the Fed, along with strong consumer balance sheets, helped spur a strong recovery.

Source: U.S. BEA, NBER

Interest Rates

10-year and 2-year yields since 2010



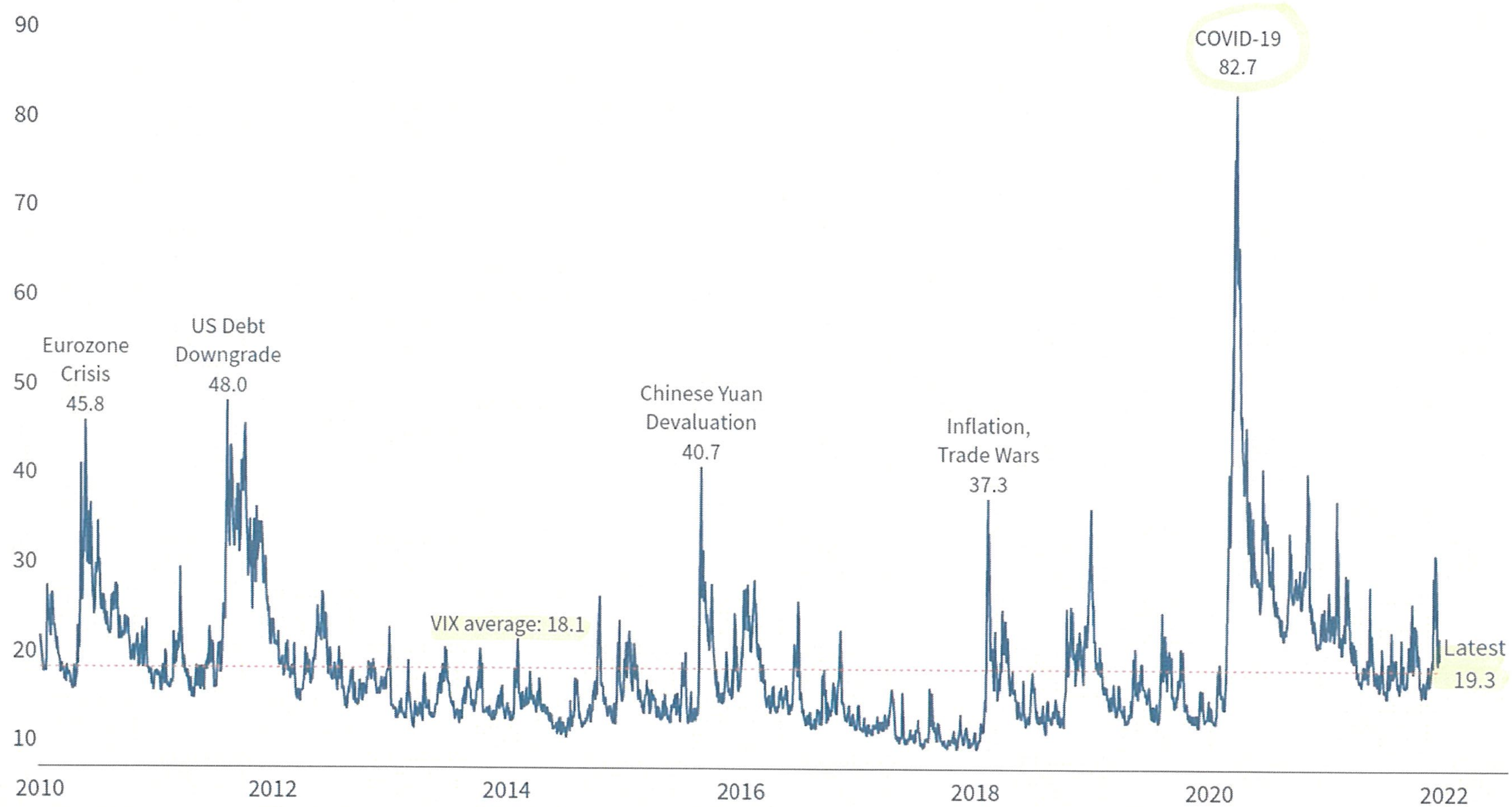
Latest data point is Dec 15, 2021

- Many interest rates have risen this year as the recovery continues and inflation fears grow.
- The 10-year Treasury yield has jumped since the start of the year and many expect it could continue to increase.

Source: Federal Reserve

Stock Market Volatility

CBOE VIX Index



Latest data point is Dec 15, 2021

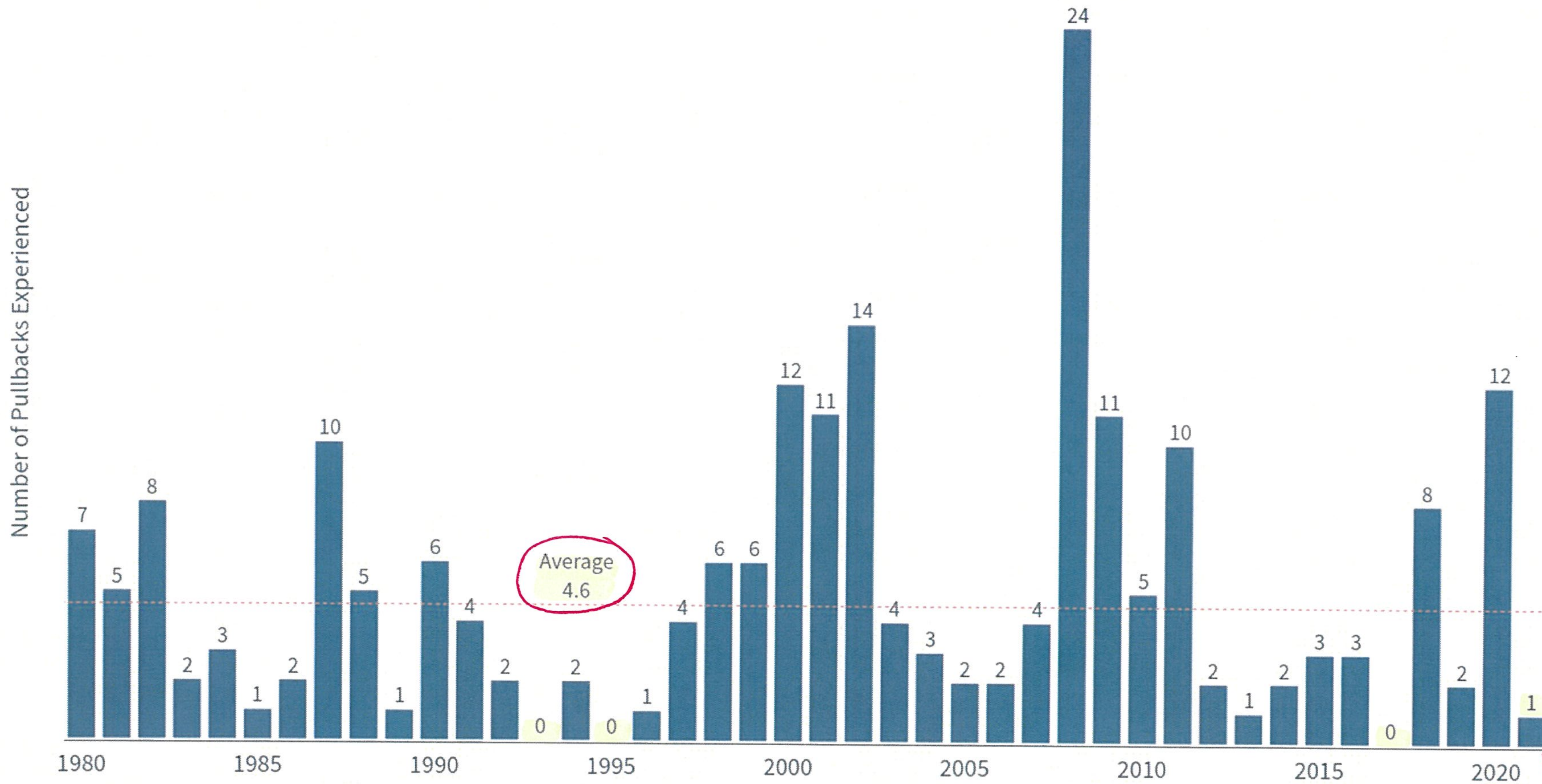
- Volatility has risen due to concerns over inflation and new variants.
- It is not unusual for uncertainty to rise for short periods without notice.
- Volatility is a normal part of investing. Investors should stay disciplined by looking past short-term market turbulence.

Source: CBOE

Volatility

Stock Market Pullbacks

The number of 5% S&P 500 pullbacks experienced by investors each year



Latest data point is Dec 16, 2021

- Investing in the stock market is inherently uncertain. Large pullbacks can occur at any time.
- Investors experience several large pullbacks each year with very few exceptions.
- Over the long run, stocks are still the best way to protect and create wealth. Staying invested is thus an important discipline.

Source: Clearnomics, Standard & Poor's