

#46: President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
January 20, 2021



Stocks surged on Wednesday -- Inauguration Day -- marking a peaceful end to a contentious presidential election. The S&P 500 continued an ascent to its historic peak by rising 53 points today, or 1.39% and closing at 3,851. The Dow Jones Industrial Average jumped 257 points, or 0.83% to close at 31,188. The Nasdaq Composite advanced an impressive 260 points, or 1.97%, closing at 13,457. Finally, the Russell 2000 gained 10 points, or 0.44% to close at 2,161.

In a socially distanced blustery winter day in Washington D.C., Joseph R. Biden, Jr. took the oath of office to become the 46th President of the United States and issued a call of unity and urged Americans to overcome division. At his side, Kamala Harris, the daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, was sworn in as the first woman Vice President of the United States.



No matter partisan affiliation, Americans can be proud of democratic institutions that provide guiderails for the peaceful transition between administrations, even despite bitter elections. President Biden reminded the country that, “disagreement should not lead to disunion”. Some may view America’s often bitter politics for national weakness. We believe that underlying those politics, if Americans maintain a commitment to the principles and institutions of this country, it creates national strength, political differences notwithstanding.

Later in the day, President Biden signed executive orders including a national mask mandate on federal property, revoking a permit for the Keystone XL oil pipeline, and reversing a travel ban from several largely Muslim and African countries. In total, President Biden signed 17 executive orders or actions, far more than any of his modern predecessors.

Ever focused on business, the stock market cheered upbeat earnings from bell weather companies, Netflix and Proctor and Gamble. The market has never seemed to be too worried about the chaos and rancor of the presidential election, seeming instead to foresee today’s events where the principles and institutions of the country guided a transition of administrations. The market also seemed quite interested in the testimony of nominee Janet Yellen during her confirmation hearing as Secretary of the Treasury. Ms. Yellen, a former Federal Reserve Chair, called for “big” spending to fight the pandemic and to put a short-term backstop behind the economy.

