

## The Case of The Disappearing Rate Cuts

The Fed expected to be able to cut rates 3 times in 2024 as recently as March. Financial markets agreed. But the data that's come out since then has everyone singing a different tune. This week's data was more of an afterthought compared to last week's.



To be sure, these are not earth-shattering "ifs" and "thens." But the market hones in on the subtle differences with which the data dependency is communicated. It didn't help that Thursday morning's Philly Fed Manufacturing Index moved up to the highest levels in 2 years or that the "prices paid" component of the same report moved up much more than economists expected.



Here's how the entire week looked in terms of 10yr Treasury yields.



Friday's reaction to the attacks in Iran is important because it shows us that some geopolitical news is indeed worth a reaction. That was less clear earlier in the week as multiple batches of somewhat similar headlines failed to cause as much movement. The difference on Friday was the uncertainty over the status of Iran's nuclear sites as well as concern that it would be the catalyst for the outbreak of much more significant fighting. The market calmed down quite quickly once it was clear the nuclear sites were not damaged and that Iran was not retaliating. The correlation between stock prices and bond yields further confirms the "flight to safety" trading pattern commonly seen after such news.



In the bigger picture, the past 2 weeks have gone a long way toward making the end of 2023 look like yet another "false start" toward lower rates. Up until then, we had sort of a sideways fighting chance. While we have labeled late 2023 as the 3rd false start of this cycle, it wouldn't meet the purest definition until rates rise back above last October's highs. We're definitely not there yet and we won't know if we'll get there until we see the next round of big ticket economic data in May.

## 30yr Fixed Mortgage Rate Index



In the meantime, home sales remain constrained.



Next week's economic data is fairly muted apart from Friday's PCE price index. This isn't as much of a market mover as the Consumer Price Index (CPI), but it could certainly cause some volatility if it happens to send a different message.