



PERSPECTIVES Memo

Supreme Court deals a blow to presidential authority

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Key takeaways

- The Supreme Court ruled today that the administration's sweeping tariff measures were unlawful, marking a significant setback for the policy framework.
- Across assets, this shift in the fiscal backdrop was reflected in a modestly softer dollar and slightly higher yields along the 10- and 30-year maturities as investors priced a marginally wider deficit path.
- Equities traded firmer, with risk assets responding to expectations of reduced trade friction – a dynamic seen as supportive for operating margins and global growth sentiment.

What happened?

The Supreme Court issued a 6 – 3 ruling striking down the President's attempt to use the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) as authority to impose tariffs. The Court held that IEEPA does not grant the President the power to levy tariffs, reaffirming that the Constitution assigns tariff-setting and other taxing powers to Congress under Article I. Chief Justice Roberts, writing for the majority, emphasized that while IEEPA allows the President to regulate or restrict importation during national emergencies, the statute's detailed list of powers does not include imposing duties. The Court noted that when Congress has delegated tariff authority in the past, it has done so explicitly and with clear limits – none of which appear in IEEPA. The opinion also highlighted that no President has used IEEPA to impose tariffs in the law's 50-year history, underscoring that the government's interpretation would significantly expand executive authority. Estimates show that roughly \$130 billion in IEEPA-based tariffs collected since 2025 may now be subject to refund claims, depending on how lower courts and Customs handle challenges.

Some in the majority concluded that the statutory text alone resolved the case, while others pointed to the broader principle that Congress does not delegate major economic powers through ambiguous language. The ruling further clarified how emergency-powers statutes interact with congressional authority. While IEEPA grants flexibility in responding to foreign threats, the Court stressed that emergency contexts do not override constitutional limits on revenue-raising powers. The opinion reinforced that the President may restrict or regulate trade under IEEPA but cannot convert those authorities into tariff-setting power without explicit congressional direction.

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What does it mean for investors?

The Supreme Court's tariff ruling narrowed the scope for rapid, large-scale actions, setting clearer boundaries while still leaving markets to sort through several operational questions. The administration's response has remained measured, with officials pointing to alternative statutory tools that could partially offset any lost revenue capacity. At the same time, the broader fiscal backdrop is becoming more sensitive to assumptions about tariff effectiveness, and policymakers are increasingly aware that any sustained slippage in effective rates could complicate deficit projections and put incremental pressure on the long end of the curve. Refund claims also remain unresolved, forcing smaller import-reliant firms into a prolonged wait while lower courts determine viability and timing. Any meaningful repayments would carry fiscal implications and could shape expectations for issuance, though steady demand and reserve-management purchases have kept absorption concerns contained.

Markets interpreted the ruling as a modest positive for the global trade backdrop. The dollar edged lower, long-end yields rose slightly on expectations of a softer fiscal position, and equities advanced on prospects of reduced supply-chain friction. Apparel and other goods exposed sectors outperformed, reflecting uneven industry level sensitivity to tariff shifts.

The inflation outlook has become more nuanced as the rollback or uncertainty surrounding IEEPA-imposed duties introduces mild downward pressure on the one-year CPI path, though most price effects are already reflected. Refunds could briefly lift demand and near-term inflation even as the Fed stays data-dependent. Markets now see a slightly higher chance of a June hold, with a July cut still likely. As trade policy shifts toward a more structured framework, investors will watch replacement tariffs, fiscal trends, and inflation data. Given the evolving backdrop and contained inflation risks, our base case anticipates two further rate cuts by end-2026.

Uncertainty around trade and tariff policy is likely to persist in the coming months as the Trump administration works to reconcile the SCOTUS ruling with its broader aim of generating tariff revenues. Importantly, this ruling does not alter the macro backdrop and is not expected to affect aggregate index-level corporate profitability. Given this initial assessment, we continue to encourage investors to remain aligned with their planned asset-allocation frameworks.



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Glossary

IEEPA is the federal emergency-powers law that allows the President to regulate or restrict importation but does not authorize tariffs.

Tariffs are taxes or duties on imported goods that can only be imposed by Congress under the Constitution.

Article I, Section 8 is the constitutional provision granting Congress the exclusive power to levy taxes, duties, and tariffs.

Section 122 allows the President to impose temporary tariffs of up to 15% for 150 days to address balance-of-payments deficits or urgent trade imbalances.

Section 232 authorizes tariffs when imports are found to threaten U.S. national security following a Commerce Department investigation.

Section 301 allows the U.S. Trade Representative to investigate and retaliate against unfair foreign trade practices, including by imposing tariffs. [congress.gov]

Section 338 permits the President to impose up to 50% additional duties on countries that discriminate against U.S. commerce

CPI or Consumer Price Index is a measure of the average change over time in prices paid by consumers for a standardized basket of goods and services, used to track inflation.

The **S&P 500** Index includes 500 leading US companies capturing approximately 80% coverage of available US market capitalization.

The **NASDAQ** Index is a stock market index that tracks the performance of over 3,000 technology-heavy and growth-oriented companies listed on the NASDAQ stock exchange.

Treasuries are bonds issued by the US government.

USD is the currency code for the US Dollar.



Appendix

Historical performance

	02.20.2021 - 02.20.2022	02.20.2022 - 02.20.2023	02.20.2023 - 02.20.2024	02.20.2024 - 02.20.2025	02.20.2025 - 02.20.2026
Performance					
S&P 500	11.3%	-6.2%	22.0%	23.0%	12.2%
NASDAQ	-1.7%	-12.2%	33.7%	28.6%	14.4%
30-Year US Treasury	-0.3%	-27.6%	-6.2%	-1.0%	5.3%
10-Year US Treasury	-2.9%	-13.1%	0.0%	2.4%	8.3%
2-Year US Treasury	-1.7%	-2.2%	3.8%	4.8%	5.0%
Gold	6.2%	-2.7%	9.9%	45.0%	70.4%

Source: Deutsche Bank AG, LSEG Datastream; Data as of February 20, 2026.

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