

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. Distribution and use of this material are governed by our Subscriber Agreement and by copyright law. For non-personal use or to order multiple copies, please contact Dow Jones Reprints at 1-800-843-0008 or visit [www.djreprints.com](http://www.djreprints.com).

<https://www.wsj.com/finance/investing/dow-jones-stocks-worst-april-1932-74fe82ac>

MARKETS & FINANCE | INVESTING

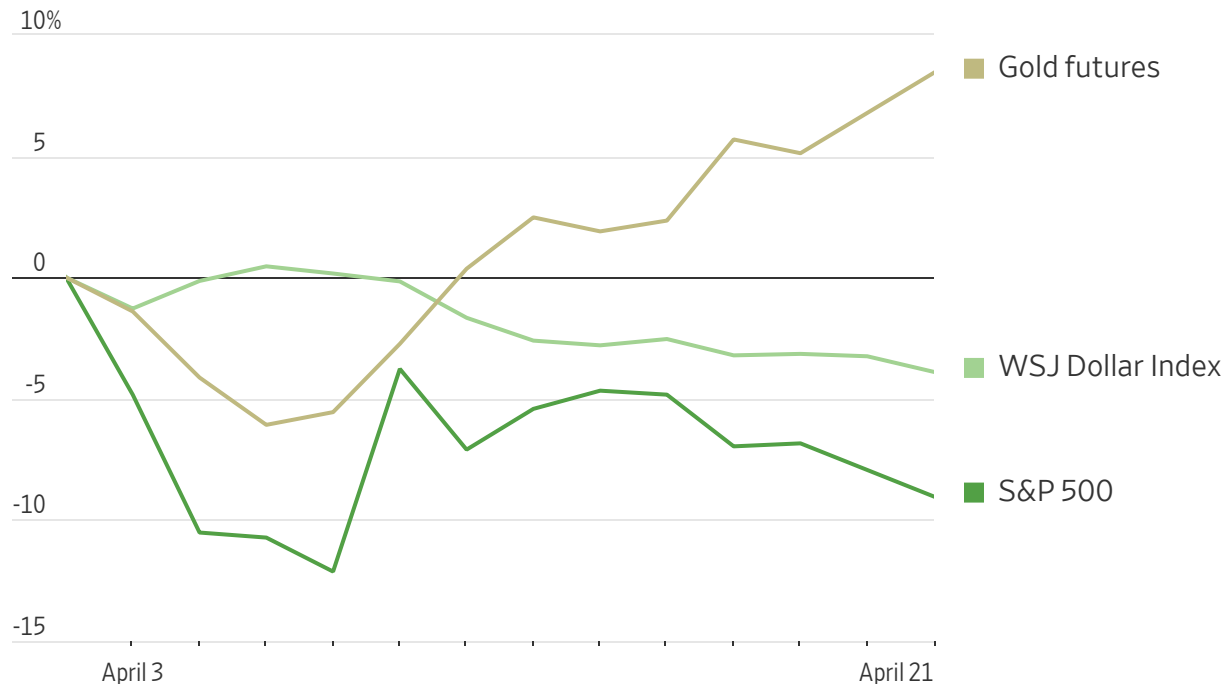
# Dow Headed for Worst April Since 1932 as Investors Send ‘No Confidence’ Signal

Few think administration’s negotiations with trade partners will yield results soon enough to ease the strain

By [Hannah Erin Lang](#) [Follow](#)

April 21, 2025 9:00 pm ET

## Performance since April 2 ‘Liberation Day’



Note: Gold based on most-active contract.

Sources: Dow Jones Market Data (dollar); FactSet (gold, S&P 500)

The Trump rout is taking on historic dimensions.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average shed almost 1,000 points on Monday and is headed for its worst April performance since 1932, according to Dow Jones Market Data. The S&P 500's performance since Inauguration Day is now the worst for any president up to this point in data going back to 1928, according to Bespoke Investment Group.

Worries about trade restrictions and [the prospect](#) of President Trump firing Federal Reserve Chairman [Jerome Powell](#) have investors bracing for greater losses ahead. Corporate earnings reports are rolling in, along with executives' tariff-dented outlooks for the months ahead. Few think the [administration's negotiations](#) with trade partners will yield results soon enough to ease the strain.

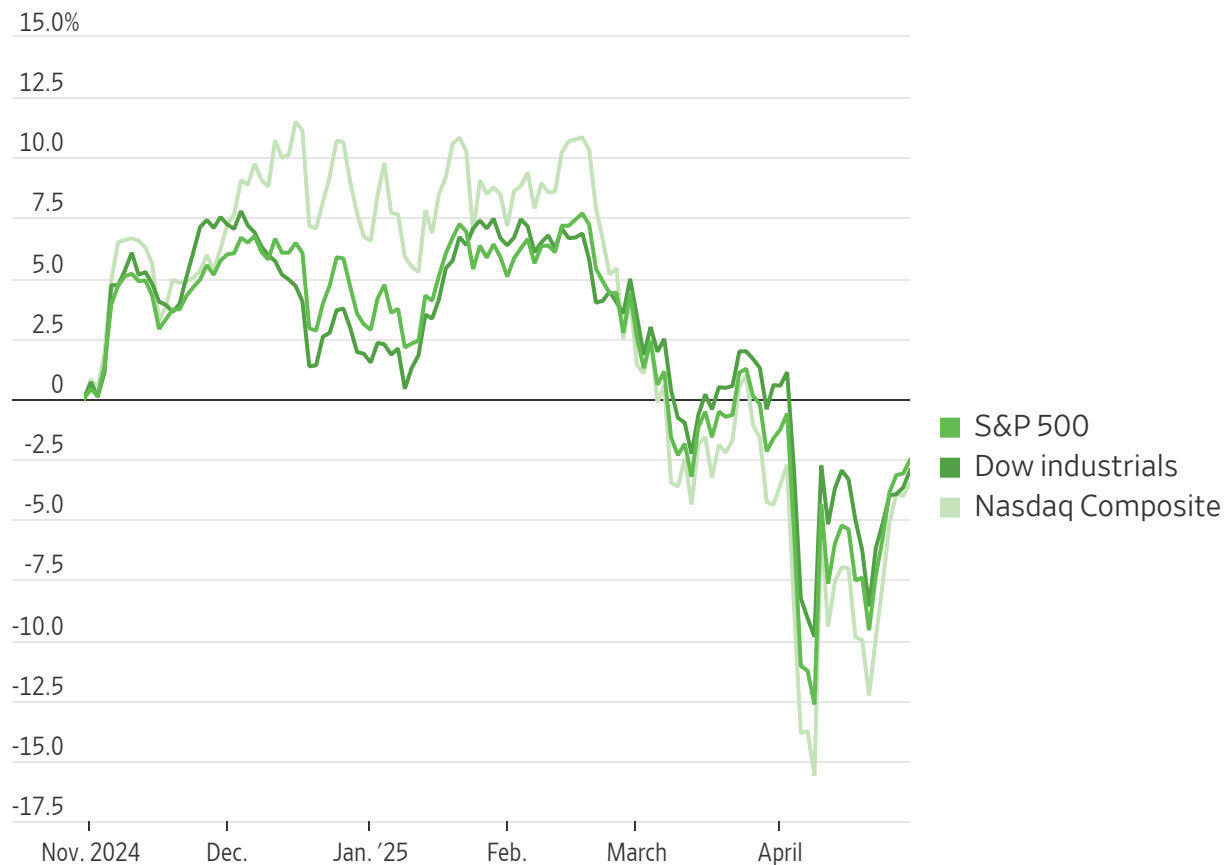
Meanwhile, counterweights that usually strengthen when stocks fall—such as government bonds and the U.S. dollar—[are also under pressure](#), leaving investors with few havens to wait out the storm.

“It’s the hallmark of the ‘no confidence’ trade,” said Scott Ladner, chief investment officer at Horizon Investments. The Charlotte-based firm trimmed its U.S. equity position several weeks ago to favor more international stocks. “It’s impossible to commit capital to an economy that is unstable and unknowable because of policy structure.”

Here’s how markets have reacted as threats have multiplied:

## **Stocks**

## Index performance



As of April 29, 5:15 p.m. ET

Source: FactSet

In the weeks after [Donald Trump's](#) presidential victory, major U.S. stock indexes soared, lifted by investors' hopes for tax cuts and a deregulatory push that could boost corporate earnings. But the administration instead pressed ahead with [aggressive tariffs](#) that threaten to raise prices and slow economic growth.

Many investors still wrote off the president's threats as mere bluster, a negotiating tactic meant to spur concessions from other countries. That changed on April 2, when Trump revealed steep tariffs that sent markets [into a tailspin](#).

## Treasurys

## Treasury yields



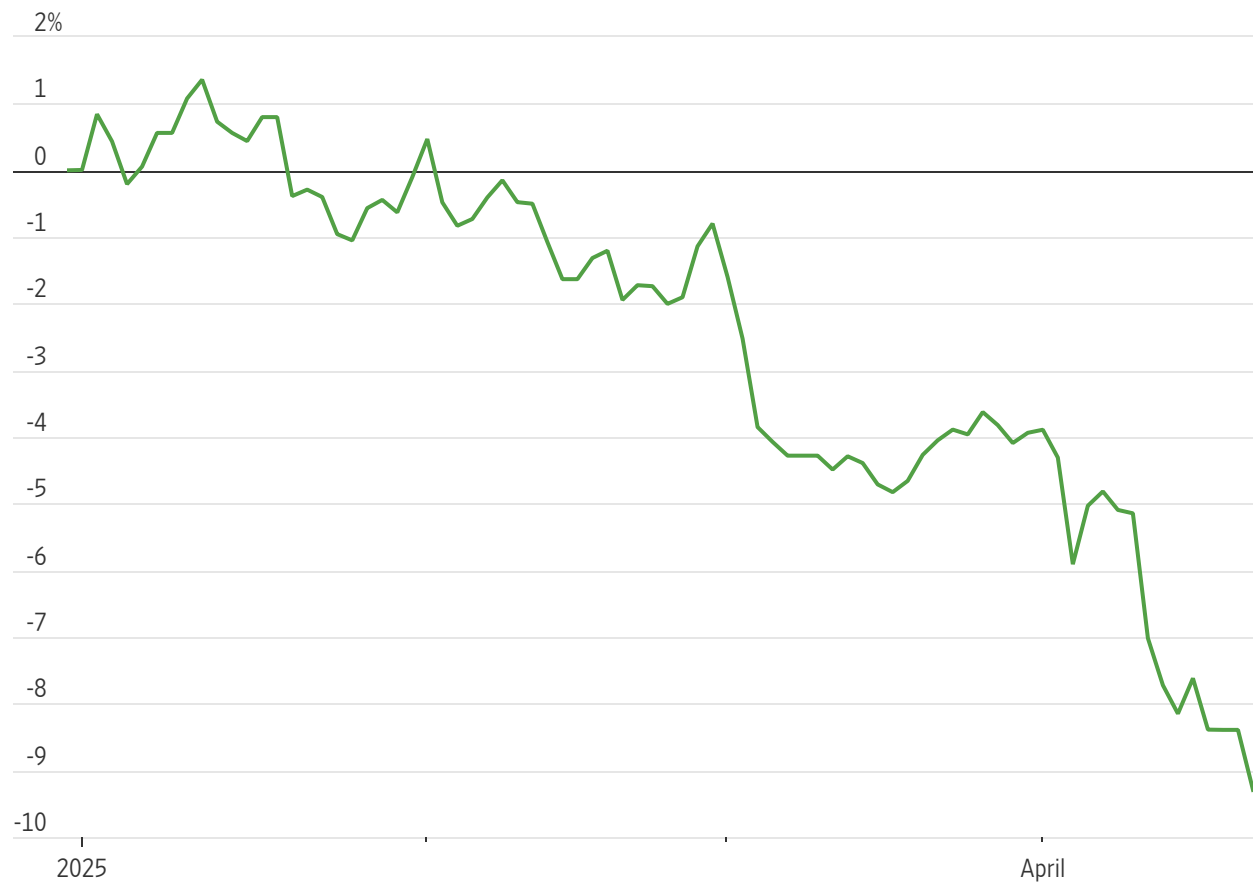
Source: Tullett Prebon

Markets still haven't recovered—even after the president [rolled back](#) and delayed many of his tariff plans.

Typically, bond prices rise when stocks fall, offering a hedge for investors during stock market turmoil. But that hasn't been the case in recent weeks. Yields on 10-year U.S. Treasurys, a key benchmark for borrowing costs, have increased 0.16 percentage point in April. Bond yields rise as prices fall, meaning investors are selling U.S. government bonds—widely considered one of the safest and most dependable assets—even when stocks are falling.

## The dollar

## U.S. Dollar Index (DXY)

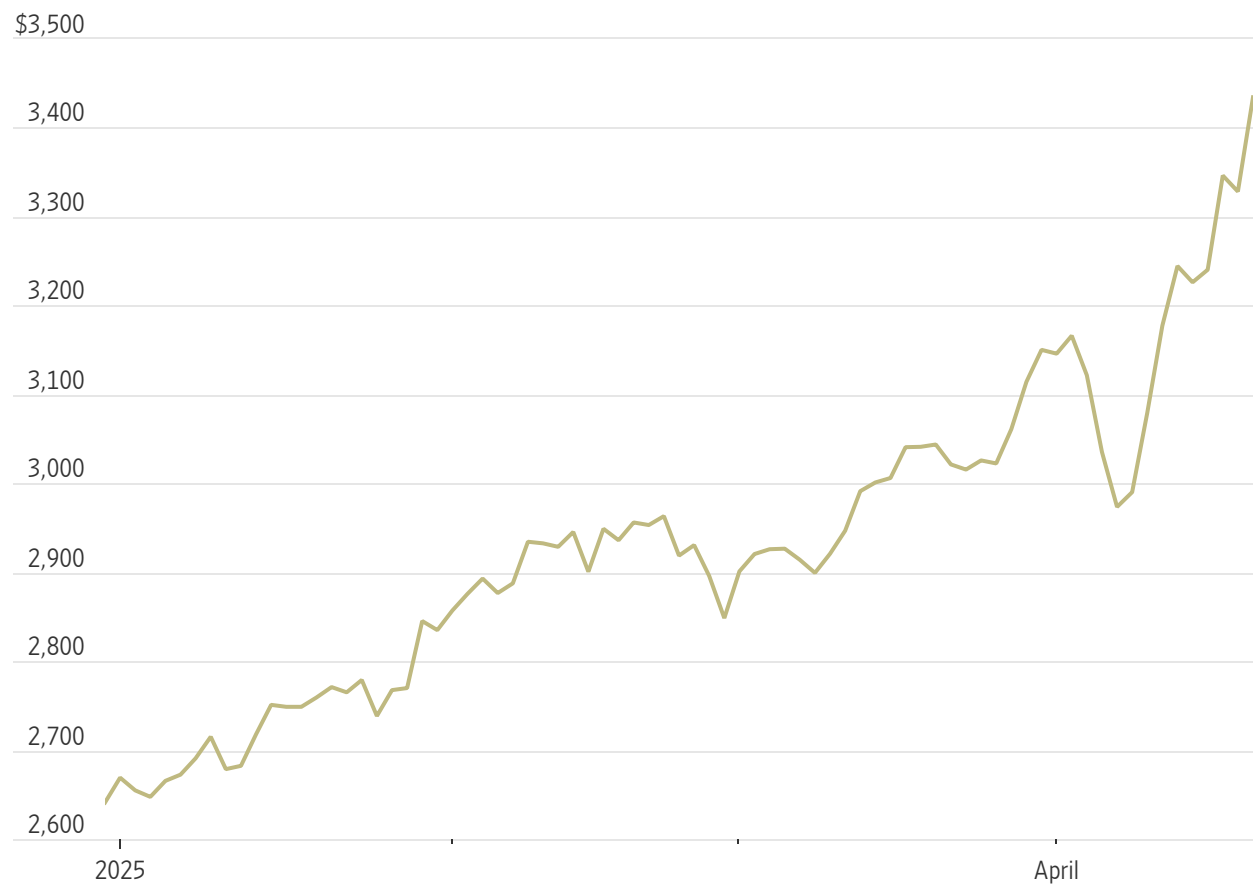


Source: FactSet

Concerns about the economy, along with fears about Trump's growing feud with the Fed, are weighing on the U.S. dollar. The ICE U.S. dollar index, a measure of the dollar against a basket of major currencies, slipped more than 1% on Monday to its lowest level in three years.

## Gold

## Gold futures price



Source: FactSet

With other defensive plays falling short, investors have piled into one of oldest hedges there is: gold. Future prices for the precious metal reached another all-time high on Monday.

## VIX

## Cboe Volatility Index

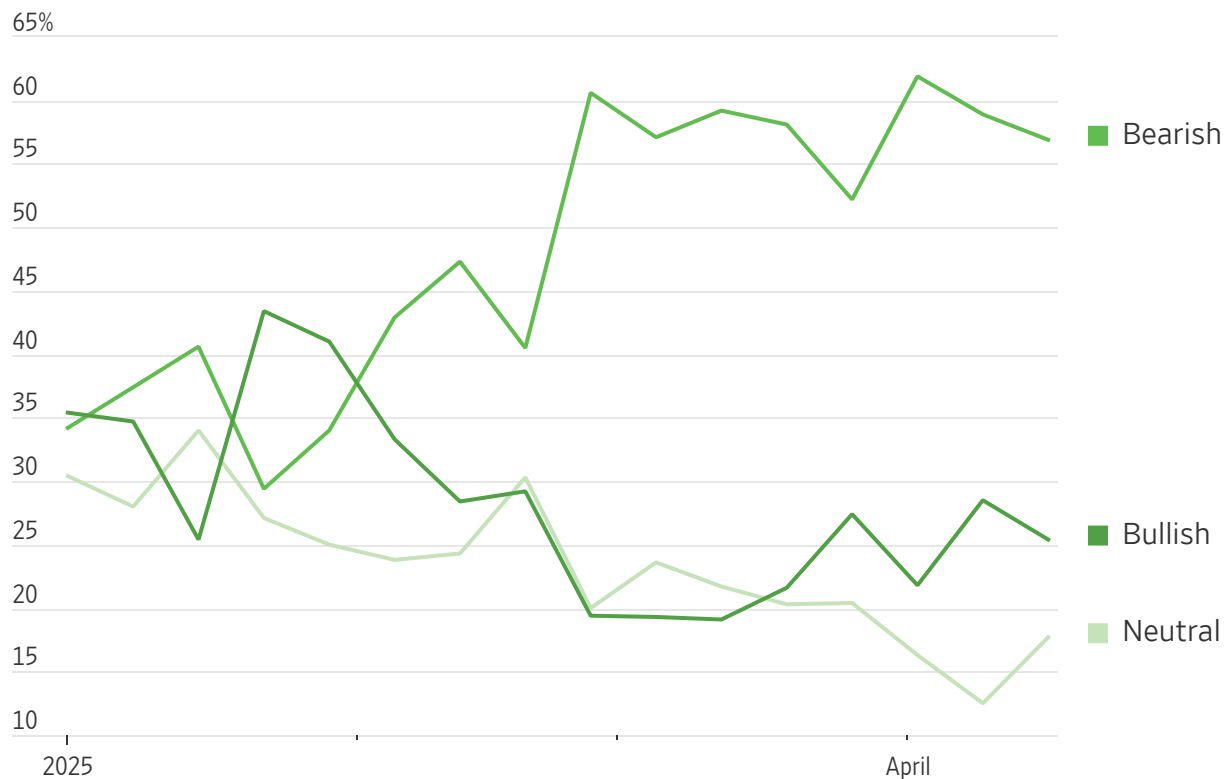


Source: FactSet

The markets' "fear gauge" remains elevated, with worries about the trade war and the broader economy adding up to expectations for more volatility ahead.

## Sentiment

## Investor sentiment



Note: Bearishness measures expectations that stock prices will fall over the next six months. Bullishness measures expectations that stock prices will rise over the next six months. Neutral sentiment measures expectations that stock prices will stay essentially unchanged over the next six months,  
Source: American Association of Individual Investors

The mood on Wall Street is darkening as a result. Bearishness levels—or expectations that stock prices will fall—among ordinary investors have hovered above 50% for eight consecutive weeks, according to a weekly survey from the American Association of Individual Investors. That is the longest-lasting bear majority on record, the investor group said, based on data going back to 1987.

Write to Hannah Erin Lang at [hannaherin.lang@wsj.com](mailto:hannaherin.lang@wsj.com)

*Appeared in the April 22, 2025, print edition as 'Dow Nears the Worst April Since 1932'.*

## Further Reading

**Dow Industrials Fall, Capping Another Tough Week on Wall Street**