THE EAGLE'S VIEW

IN THIS ISSUE:

Around EWS and ATA

Chris Tully, CFP®, RICP®, CIMA®,
Managing Partner

Moving to Mullica Hill has been a welcome change and we're looking forward to an "Open House" on June 6th during Harrison Township Day. Plenty of decorating is still ongoing, so you'll have to forgive us! But we've been excited to have clients visit the office for review meetings, and we're excited for others to see our building soon. Our new space will allow us to expand – potentially doubling employees – so we're excited to have found what could be a permanent home for years to come.

ATA (Aerie Tax & Advisory) had a successful tax season to kick off our new prep and filing service. As a reminder, EWS hired Matt Persichetti, CPA, to work with our wealth management clients who desire to have a more integrated offering (combining tax into financial planning and investments). ATA – as an entity – was created for legal and marketing purposes, but is owned by Jess, Steff, and I, just as EWS is. Plenty of lessons learned along the way, and we're excited to continue refining the process. We'll be communicating those lessons learned with our ATA clients shortly as a commitment to continuous improvement. All constructive criticism is welcome! We truly believe this combination of services will allow us to add additional value to our current and future clients in an impactful way. Planning and strategy work is next, along with more proactive "quarterly estimate" planning, for those clients who need to pay the IRS along the way.

Markets Are Up — But This Is No Time to Relax

The past quarter brought welcome news for investors: markets continued their upward trend, and many of you have seen meaningful gains in your portfolios. The war in Iran caused a dip, mostly in March, but losses have been erased, and stock indices are back to all-time highs. That's genuinely good news, and we should take a moment to appreciate it. But as your advisory team, our job isn't just to celebrate the wins — it's to make sure you're positioned well for what might come next. And right now, there are a few things worth watching carefully.

Valuations Are High — What That Means for You

One of the most important gauges of whether stocks are "cheap" or "expensive" is something called the price-to-earnings ratio, or P/E ratio. Think of it this way: if you were buying a small business, you'd want to know how much you're paying relative to how much profit that business generates. The P/E ratio does exactly that for publicly traded companies. Today, the overall market's P/E ratio is well above its long-term historical average. That doesn't mean stocks will fall tomorrow — markets can stay expensive for a long time — but it does mean there is less of a cushion if something goes wrong. High valuations tend to lead to more modest returns over the long run, and they tend to amplify losses when turbulence hits.

Geopolitical Risk Is Real, Even When Markets Ignore It

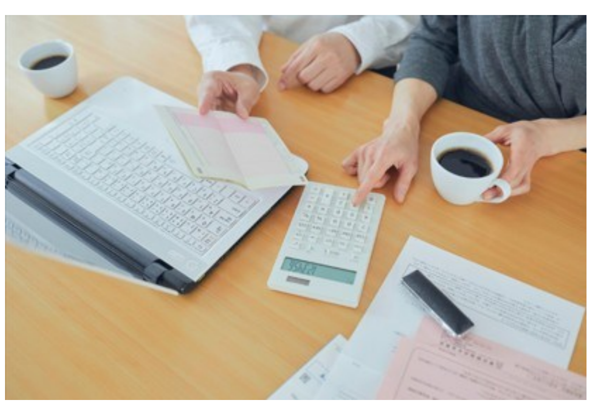
Financial markets have a remarkable tendency to look past geopolitical uncertainty — until they can't. The ongoing tensions involving Iran are a good example of a risk that is real but not yet fully priced in by markets. Any significant escalation in that region could affect global energy supplies, disrupt trade routes, and shake investor confidence quickly. We've seen before how fast sentiment can shift when an overseas conflict moves from a headline to a market event. We're not predicting that happens — but prudent planning means we don't wait for it to happen before we think about it.

What This Means for Your Portfolio

None of this is a reason to panic, move to cash, or abandon a long-term investment strategy. History is clear that trying to time the market — getting out before a drop and back in before the recovery — rarely works and often backfires. What it does suggest is that now is a smart time to review whether your portfolio still reflects your actual risk tolerance and time horizon. If the thought of a 20% drop in your portfolio would cause you significant stress or force a life change, that's important information. A well-diversified portfolio with an allocation that lets you sleep at night is your best defense against an uncertain world.

For our retirement accounts, we're in the process of conducting full rebalances. For non-retirement accounts – where taxes, particularly capital gains, are important to keep in mind – we're looking to strategically shift by reducing or increasing specific funds and categories.

As always, we're here to talk through your specific situation. The goal isn't to predict the future — no one can do that reliably. The goal is to make sure that whatever the future brings, you're prepared for it.



Investing in the Tools That Serve You Better

Jessica Ortega CFP®, RICP®
Partner, Chief Operating Officer

We have begun a top-to-bottom review of the technology we use every day, and the reason is straightforward: we want every hour our team spends to go toward the work that matters most to you.

Over the next few quarters, we'll be conducting a structured evaluation of our core technology platforms — the tools we use to manage your portfolio, build and monitor your financial plan, coordinate tax strategy, and stay in communication with you throughout the year.

What This Means for You

The most direct benefit of this work is simple: more of our time goes to you.

Right now, like most advisory teams, we spend a portion of each week on tasks that are necessary but not where our value truly lies — re-entering data between systems, manually compiling information before meetings, tracking down updates that should flow automatically. Every hour recovered from that kind of work is an hour we can reinvest in the things that actually move the needle for your financial life.

In practice, that means more proactive outreach when your situation warrants it, more time for in-depth planning conversations, more capacity to take on the kind of coordination work — with your family, your estate attorney, etc. — that tends to fall through the cracks when schedules are tight. It also means a team that arrives at every meeting fully prepared, with your current financial picture up-to-date, so we can spend our time together on decisions and strategy rather than getting up to speed.

The goal isn't to do less by utilizing more technology and automation. It's to make sure the human side of this relationship — the advice, the judgment, the conversations — gets as much of our attention as possible.

Our Standard Doesn't Change

Any technology we adopt or expand will be evaluated against the same standard that guides every decision we make: does it serve our clients' best interests as our fiduciary obligation requires? Any AI or automation tools we utilize are only introduced where they make our advice more informed and our service more consistent — never as a shortcut that reduces the quality of care you receive. We'll share more as this work progresses.

Tax Season Takeaways

Matt Persichetti, CPA
Director of Tax & Accounting

We have officially wrapped up our first tax season through Aerie Tax and Advisory (ATA) and it was a successful one. While getting to work with a lot of great people, I was able to learn more about what makes them curious about the world of tax. A lot of questions stemmed from the legislation changes from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) signed into law on July 4th, 2025.

Included were major updates to the tax code including no tax on overtime, no tax on tips, enhanced senior deduction - more commonly known as no tax on Social Security, and the additional deduction for car loan interest payments. The OBBBA also made many of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) updates to the tax regulations permanent. The biggest and most common impact across clients' returns from this was the increased standard deduction. We'll dive into detail deeper about these topics and the impact they had on clients this past tax season.

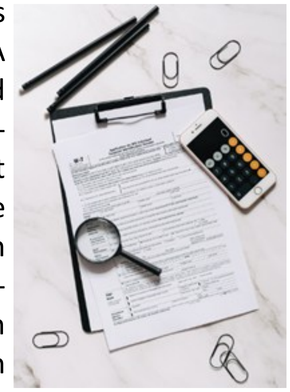
No Tax on Tips and Overtime

No Tax on Tips and Overtime was a big influence from the OBBBA on returns this year. Until 2028, eligible workers can deduct up to $25,000 worth of tips from their federal income, with single filers with modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) less than $150,000 ($300,000 for married filing jointly) seeing the full benefit. Also ending in 2028, single filers can deduct up to $12,500 ($25,000 for married filing jointly) of qualified overtime pay. The same MAGI thresholds apply for taxpayers to see the full benefit. These deduction amounts are phased out if your MAGI exceed these thresholds. The deduction for interest payments on car loans applies only to vehicles when final assembly took place within the US. Taxpayers are allowed to deduct up to $10,000 worth of interest paid on loans originating after December 31st, 2024.

Enhanced Senior Deduction

The biggest change that affected our client's returns this past return filing season was the enhanced senior deduction or "no tax on Social Security". While Social Security benefits technically are still taxable in the same 0%, 50%, 85% brackets that they have been historically, the enhanced senior deduction in effect wipes away the tax calculated on the benefits received. The deduction is an extra $6,000 (per person) for individuals with MAGI of $75,000 or less filing single ($150,000 married filing jointly). Households where both spouses were 65 and older received an additional $1,600 each ($2,000 total for single filers meeting the 65 years of age requirement).

Increased Standard Deduction



Prior to 2017's TCJA, standard deduction amounts for single filers was $6,350 and $12,700 for married couples filing jointly. Once passed, the TCJA just about doubled these amounts to $12,000 and $24,000 for single and married filing jointly respectively. In the 2025 tax year the standard deduction has increased to $15,750 and $31,500 respectively. One of the biggest developments that helped a lot of taxpayers this past filing season was the increased standard deductions (along with the new deductions listed on schedule 1-A). A household with a couple that filed their return married filing jointly in 2025 and both age 65 and older received a standard deduction of $46,700 as opposed to filing their 2017 return with a standard deduction of only $12,700. There's a $34,000 difference!

New Client Case Study: Planning Strategies in Action

David Koehler, CFP®
Wealth Advisor

A new client came to us after hearing about some of the exciting new and expanded services we're offering at EWS from a relative. He was within five years of his target retirement date with a well-funded portfolio and a straightforward goal: he and his spouse wanted to know if their plan was realistic. Not in theory — specifically. Here were a few of their questions our team helped navigate:

- Could he actually retire within 5 years?
- How much income could their portfolio replace, and could it sustain that over a 25- to 30-year+ time horizon?
- When should they start collecting Social Security?
- How will their taxes change once retired?

Answering these questions well requires understanding how investment decisions, income timing, withdrawal sequencing, and tax exposure interact. We used our planning software to create an analysis that could be stress-tested across multiple scenarios: different retirement dates, Social Security claiming ages, a range of market return assumptions, income needs, etc. Their timeline was achievable — but the sequencing mattered.

Delaying Social Security and bridging the gap with modest portfolio withdrawals produced meaningfully stronger projections. We outlined an approach for portfolio withdrawals based on account types (i.e. tax deferred vs. taxable) to manage income, capital gains, and taxes.

We also discussed a Roth conversion strategy during the early years of retirement — shifting assets from pre-tax accounts into Roth accounts while income and tax rates were lower. Done thoughtfully (while coordinating with a CPA), Roth conversions can reduce the size of accounts subject to Required Minimum Distributions, which would otherwise push taxable income higher in retirement. This strategy may significantly reduce overall taxes long-term and help avoid/limit Medicare IRMAA surcharges (penalties that can add thousands of dollars annually when retirement income crosses certain thresholds).

We share this example to highlight how wealth management can go well beyond investments and why we strive to take a holistic approach to planning. The real impact comes from how individual pieces of a financial plan – such as investments, income, taxes, insurance—work together.

Never Stop Learning—Congrats to Erin

Melissa Phillips, IACCP®
Chief Compliance Officer

One of our Core Values is to "Never Be Satisfied" - what we mean by that is we are always looking to improve ourselves, increase our knowledge, and seek out ways to ensure we're offering the best of everything to our clients.

So in addition to our ever growing library of books in the office, we all attend webinars, conferences, and other learning events throughout the year to ensure we are at the top of our game at all times. This includes adding professional designations—not just for the fancy letters after our names— but we look to find the most useful and practical ones to pursue.

That said, **Erin** had the impressive accomplishment of obtaining two prestigious designations within 18 months (!) —the **Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC®)** and the **Retirement Income Certified Professional (RICP®).** Both awarded by The American College of Financial Services, the ChFC requires in-depth knowledge across various financial planning disciplines, including income tax, insurance, retirement, and estate planning. The RICP is a specialized designation focused on the complex task of developing sustainable retirement income plans, covering strategies for Social Security, long-term care, and effective portfolio withdrawals. **Congrats to Erin on such an achievement!**

News at EWS

Steffanie and **Matt** were presenters at Rowan University to the College of Business Accounting Society and Beta Alpha Psi (The International Honor Organization for Financial Information Students and Professionals). They presented on our firm, each of their respective paths from college to present day, and how Eagle Wealth Strategies recognized the need for an integrated approach of wealth management and tax advisory and planning. They were able to field questions from students on a variety of topics, specifically guidance on internships and entering the workforce in their particular fields.

Future EWS associates? **Steff's** kids spent the day at the office for Take Your Child to Work Day.

David and his family made some Muppet friends on their first trip to Sesame Place

As a long-term – and proud! – board member of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Gloucester County, I wanted to pass along our new annual campaign, **Power the Potential**. Every day, our Clubs provide a safe space, meals, mentorship, and opportunities that help local youth learn, grow, and thrive. This campaign is all about bringing our community together to make that impact even stronger. I know there are many worthy causes, but if interested, here are different ways you can help:

Donations: https://givebutter.com/power-the-potential-m6umeb

- Here's how donations will directly make an impact:
- $25/month supports homework help and academic enrichment
- $50/month helps provide mentorship and youth development programs
- $100/month supports safe afterschool programming for multiple children
- $500+ annually recognizes donors as Power the Potential Champions

Even a small action can make a big difference for the kids who rely on the Clubs every day!

- Chris