

# Giving credit where credit is due: COVID-19 and the private auto business

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1

## Overview

### Section 1: The onset of a pandemic

- Industry responds quickly through significant and unprecedented policyholder relief
- Historically favorable results even including the effects of relief and stagnant/declining rates

### Section 2: The tide turns

- Regulators and consumer groups call for additional relief with isolated success
- Claims frequency rebounds as restrictions dissipate at the same time supply chain pressures drives alarming severity rise

### Section 3: What does 'normal' look like?

- Poor recent underwriting results trigger push for rate hikes in environment still characterized by considerable behavioral uncertainty
- Longer-term threats haven't gone away as inflation presents near-term challenges

### Section 4: Auto insurtech in transition

- The pandemic accentuated the importance of key foundational aspects of the insurtech model for personal auto-focused companies
- Operational and go-to-market approaches continue to evolve in underwriting and distribution

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2

## Section 1: The onset of a pandemic

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**Pre-March 2020 backdrop**

- Safety improvements such as advanced driver assistance systems positively impact frequency over the long term, but severity increases through the use of new, more costly technologies
- Leading carriers introduce and enhance the use of telematics in the rating process
- Key competitive threats include emergence of autonomous vehicle technology, the sharing economy and the rise of insurtech disrupters
- Pricing stabilizes, competition increases with loss costs generally in check post-2017
- Original 2020 outlook for modest underwriting profitability, continuing 2018-2019 trend

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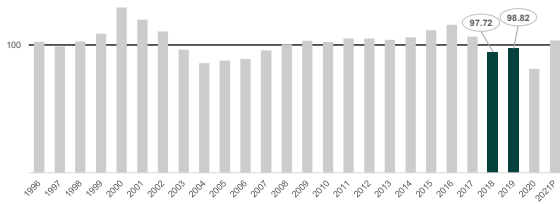
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**Private auto combined ratios by year (%)**  
Fell below 100% in 2018-2019 for the first time in more than a decade

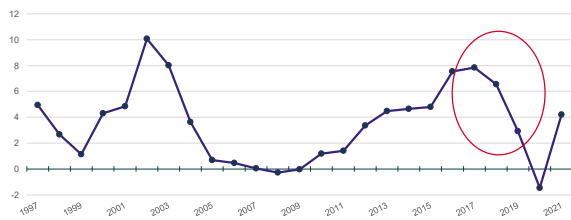


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Date compiled April 22, 2022  
P = preliminary based on incomplete results  
Results for 1998-2020 from Insurance Information Institute (I.I.I.) annual statements  
Source: S&P Global Market Intelligence  
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**Pricing cycle on a downward trajectory pre-pandemic**  
Private auto direct premiums written growth by year (%)



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Date compiled April 22, 2022  
Results for 1997-2020 from Insurance Information Institute (I.I.I.) annual statements  
Results for 2021 from the state pages of annual statements  
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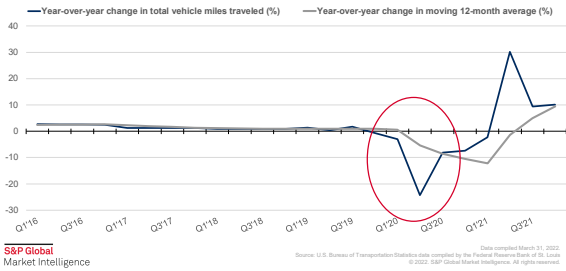
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**Stay-at-home restrictions cause miles driven to tumble**



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**Carriers respond with pandemic relief to various effects**

- Stock insurers mostly offer 15%-25% credits for the months of April and May 2020. Some relief extends into June on a national basis, then selective amounts by geography.
  - Reduces premiums written and earned immediately upon issuance, raises loss ratios
- Mutual insurers and reciprocal exchanges mostly opt to issue policyholder dividends
  - No direct impact on premiums or loss ratios; dividend ratios spike 144 basis points to 22-year high
- No. 2 private auto insurer issues no credits or dividends, but offers 15% discount on next renewal
  - Significant drag on premiums written through Q3'2020; premiums earned through Q4'2020
- Some carriers introduce COVID-19 premium adjustment factor to reduce rates temporarily through a mechanism that can be quickly withdrawn as conditions changed
  - Pressure on written and earned premiums into 2021 as factors required prior approval in many states
- Various accommodations for policyholder financial hardship
  - Upward pressure on expense ratio (+147 bps); general expenses surge by 17.7%

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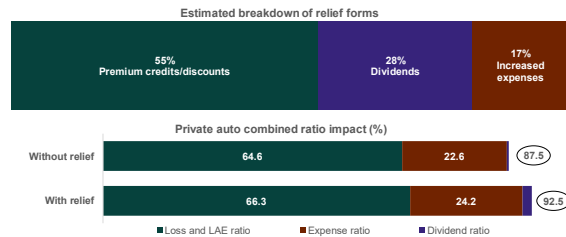
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**Estimated minimum dollar value of COVID-19 relief**  
\$14.5 billion through premium credits, dividends, higher expenses



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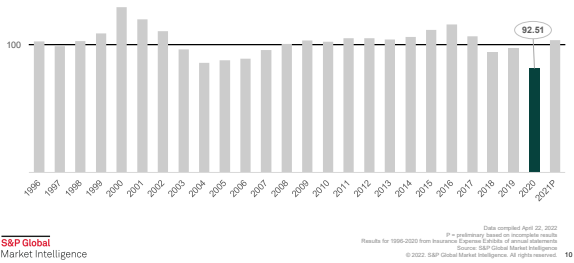
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### Private auto combined ratios by year New 25+ year low in 2020 even with impact of pandemic relief



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### Section 2: The tide turns

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11

### Regulators, consumer groups push for more relief through 2021 despite emergence of worrisome trends

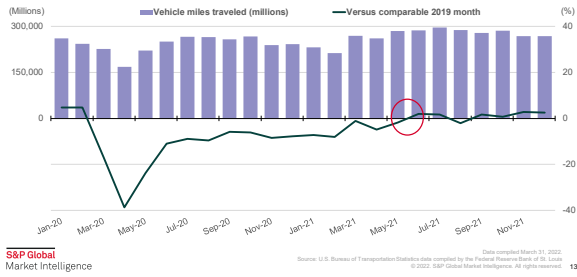
- California Department of Insurance COVID-19 relief data calls require companies to detail premium credits, other measures by business line on a quarterly basis<sup>1</sup>
- Consumer Federation of America claims “nearly \$30 billion windfall” for private auto insurers<sup>2</sup>
- Some states, including California, require responses to COVID-19 questions in rate filings
- Policyholder class-action litigation filed against leading insurers in Nevada, elsewhere
- Insurer pushback premised upon:
  - Expectations for imminent return to work/school and resulting impact on claims frequency
  - Rebound in vehicle miles traveled data from internal and external sources
  - Supply chain pressures on repair costs, parts availability
  - Sustained increases in used vehicle valuations beginning in the summer of 2020
  - Uncertainty about the duration of pandemic’s impact on underwriting profitability

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1-California COVID-19 Premium Relief Report Submissions  
2-Consumer Federation of America release  
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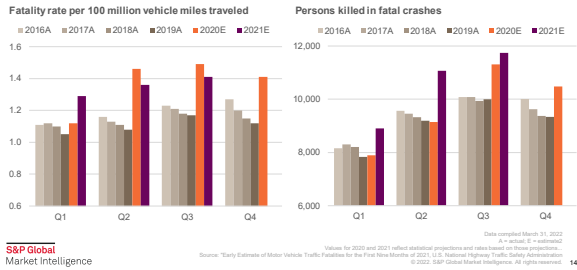
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### Vehicle miles traveled return to 2019 level in June 2021



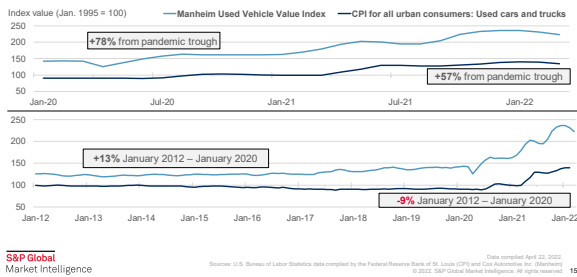
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### Motor vehicle fatalities rise on less-congested roads Spike in fatality rate reverses long-term trend



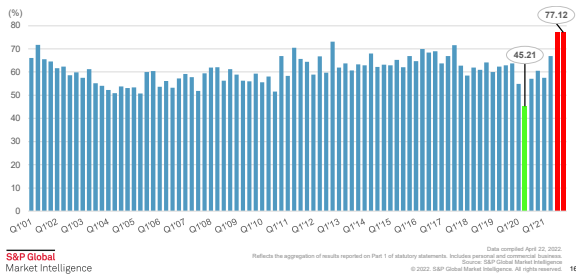
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### Costs to replace totaled vehicles surge to new highs Pandemic-era and longer-term views



15

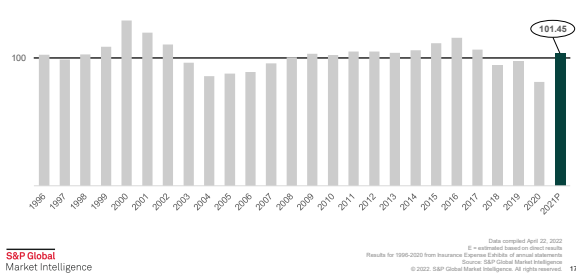
### From feast to famine in 5 quarters: Auto physical damage loss ratio surges to 20+ year high in Q3'21 after bottoming in Q2'20



16



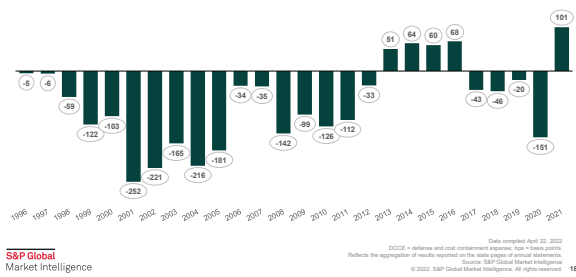
### Private auto combined ratios by year: Dismal H2'2021 pushes result back above 100% for 1st time since 2017



17



### Net impact of private auto physical damage line on P&C results: Difference in P&C loss and DCCE ratio with and without (bps)



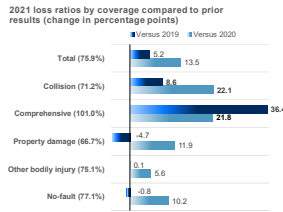
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### Uneven impact by coverage

New York supplement data for top 10 private auto insurers

- **Collision:** Inflation affecting used vehicles, parts, body components, labor, etc.
- **Bodily injury:** Mixed impact across geographies. Delayed court dockets may be contributing. Medical cost inflation less than other categories.
- **Comprehensive:** More frequent severe weather events such as hailstorms, derechos, thunderstorms with straight-line winds, etc. Surging theft of vehicles and vehicle components such as catalytic converters. (Stolen vehicles ▲16.5%<sup>1</sup> between 2019 and 2021.) Coverage not universal purchased, however, limiting exposure to some degree.



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### Novel rate filing challenges emerge

- Nontraditional approaches to frequency and severity trend selection in developing rate indications to reduce or eliminate effects of aberrant 2020 results, including by:
  - Uneven weightings to prior accident years to emphasize pre-pandemic periods
  - Exclusion of accident year 2020 data altogether even when data became available
  - Selective application of pre-pandemic results for determining frequency trends, while leaving severity approached unchanged
  - Heavy weighting to accident years that include the third quarter of 2021 (and exclude the second quarter of 2020) when data emerges
  - Haircuts to pre-pandemic frequency trends to reflect expectations for different post-pandemic policyholder behavior
- Requests for significant additional data to justify selections of weightings/trends in addition to COVID-19 questionnaires in some states
- Filing backlogs in select prior-approval states due to work-from-home status, staffing issues

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### Section 3: What does 'normal' look like?

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### Section 4: Insurtech in transition

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### Insurtech model well-suited for pandemic era

- Pandemic spurred digital adoption.
- Machine learning and automation.
  - One of the hurdles for insurtech startups is lack of data.
    - Telematics.
    - Alternative data.
      - Consumer reporting agencies, DMVs, Census, IRS, OpenStreetMap, Wikidata, Open Data portals from U.S. cities.
- Fast quoting.
  - Can get a quote in 10 seconds.
- Flexible policies and payments options.
  - Prepaid accounts
  - 30-day policies

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29

### Full-stack still on track

- Insurtech startups still becoming carriers, either starting as full-stack or starting as a digital agency and adding underwriting operations.
- Trend still well underway in the P&C sector, though not as many personal-auto-focused companies lately.
- Roughly even split between those that acquire an existing carrier and those that form a new one.
  - Some do both.
- Full-stack model offers some advantages.
  - More revenue potential as the carrier receives the entire policyholder premium off a sale while brokers receive just a percentage.
  - Control over the entire insurance process.
  - Potential for investment income.
  - Unique structures like reciprocal exchanges.

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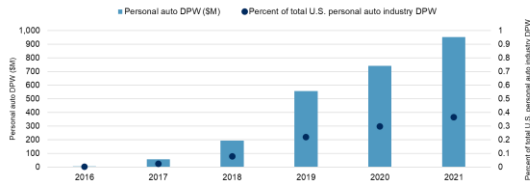
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### Full-stack still on track

Full-stack insurtech startups are growing quickly, but still account for less than 1% of the US personal auto insurance market



Data compiled April 27, 2022. DPW = direct premium written. Based on the state pages of annual industry statements submitted to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners. This chart uses rounded figures to avoid distorting the overall data acquired. Excludes insurance companies that were formed as subsidiaries of large institutions. Source: S&P Global Market Intelligence. © 2022 S&P Global Market Intelligence. All rights reserved.

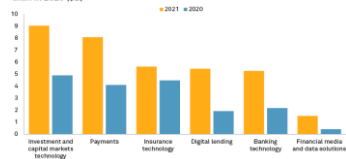
31



### Full-stack still on track

- Full-stack startups have faced some headwinds of late.
  - Elevated losses and expenses.
  - Lackluster performance of publicly traded companies.
- But venture capital funding to the U.S. fintech space remains ample, including insurtech

All categories of private US fintechs raised more venture capital in 2021 than in 2020 (\$B)



Data compiled Jan. 26, 2022. This analysis is based on offerings that completed in the time period shown and uses a best effort approach to capture only the portion of the offering that was raised during that time period, excluding transfers that occurred prior to that time frame. Reflects private placements completed by private, U.S.-based fintech companies, as defined by S&P Global Market Intelligence, in the time period shown. Excludes debt financings. Data are the assumed closing date of the offering as of the time the data was compiled. Rounds might be subsequently updated. Source: S&P Global Market Intelligence. © 2022 S&P Global Market Intelligence. All rights reserved.

32



### Personal auto distribution

- Embedded insurance gaining more traction
  - Online auto dealers and rental sites
  - Brick-and-mortar auto dealers
    - Dealer asks whether the car buyer wants a quote. If so, the buyer receives a text, scans license and receives a bindable quote from the insurer.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Embedded insurance removes the cost of agents and marketing. It could attract a more lucrative base of policyholders that are less cost-sensitive.	Embedded insurance does not have human experts involved in the insurance sale. The product partner has ultimate control over the checkout process.
Opportunities	Threats
Embedded insurance will open new channels for distribution through partnerships with companies offering non-insurance products and services.	Partners could drop the insurer for hampering the checkout process. The partner might start its own insurance operation.

33



