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Capital Snapshot: *State of the Union, First 2026 Primaries & DHS Shutdown*

March 2026

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119th Congress Calendars

2026 Senate Calendar

- There are currently 115 legislative session days scheduled for the rest of 2026.
- The Senate's next recess begins March 30, which is a two-week break for Easter/Passover.
- The Senate's annual August recess is scheduled for August 10 to September 11.
- The Senate will have its biennial election year October recess from October 5 to November 6.
- The Senate's last day of session for the 119th Congress is currently scheduled for December 18, though that could get pushed closer to Christmas if Congress needs to pass an omnibus package or Continuing Resolution (CR) before the end of 2026.

JOHN BARRASSO
Majority Whip

DICK DURBIN
Democratic Whip

UNITED STATES SENATE 119th Congress, 2nd Session

2026

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	①⑥	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
18	①⑨	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
25	26	27	28	29	30	31								29	30	31				
Senate Convenes January 5, 2026																				
APRIL							MAY							JUNE						
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JULY							AUGUST							SEPTEMBER						
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26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30			
							30	31												
OCTOBER							NOVEMBER							DECEMBER						
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11	①⑫	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						27	28	29	30	31		

Red days = Senate not in session

○ = Federal Holiday

2ND SESSION CONVENES - JANUARY 5, 2026
TARGET ADJOURNMENT - DECEMBER 18, 2026

2026 House Calendar

- There are currently 88 legislative session days [scheduled](#) for the rest of 2026.
- The House's next recess begins March 30, which is a two-week break for Easter/Passover.
- The House's annual August recess will run from July 27 to August 28; the House's recess will begin and end two weeks earlier than the Senate's.
- The House, like the Senate, will have its biennial election year October recess from October 5 to November 6.
- The House's last day of session for the 119th Congress is currently scheduled for December 17.

STEVE  SCALISE			MAJORITY LEADER		
January			February		
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31					
November			December		
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31					

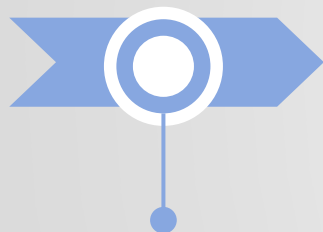
Congressional Key Dates for Winter/Spring 2026

First primary elections of the 2026 midterms cycle were held in: Arkansas, North Carolina, and Texas

Deadline for House appropriations programmatic and language requests for: Defense; Energy & Water; DHS; Interior & Environment; Labor-HHS-Education; & T-HUD

Tentative target week for the White House to release President Trump's FY 2027 budget proposal

February 14



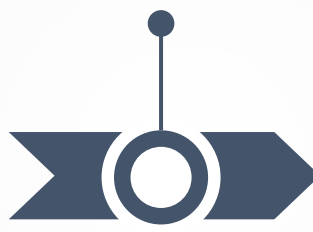
March 3



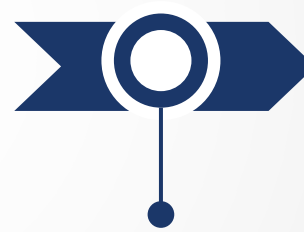
March 13



March 20



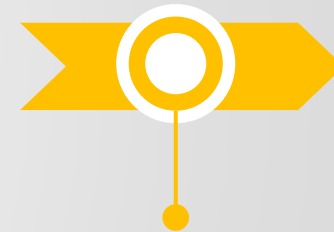
March 30 – April 10



Week of March 30



Late March – Early April



The partial government shutdown commenced at 12:01 am ET after Congress failed to extend FY26 funding for DHS and its affiliated agencies

Deadline for House appropriations programmatic and language requests for: Ag-FDA; CJS; FSGG; Leg. Branch; MilCon-VA; & Nat. Sec., Dept. of State

Congressional recess for Easter and Passover

Senate appropriations request deadlines for FY27 (anticipated)



Congressional Updates

Rep. Mark Amodei Announces Retirement

- On February 6, Rep. Mark Amodei (R-NV-2) [announced](#) he will retire at the end of his current term and will not seek re-election in November.
- Rep. Amodei is one of the most senior Republican members of the House Appropriations Committee, having served on the committee since 2013. He is the Chairman of its Homeland Security Subcommittee.
- Rep. Amodei is currently in his 8th term. He has always represented Nevada's 2nd congressional district, which consists of the largely rural northern half of the state. The district also includes Reno and the state capital of Carson City, as well as the Nevada portion of Lake Tahoe.
- Rep. Amodei is the only Republican member of Nevada's congressional delegation, despite President Trump's winning the state by 3.1% in 2024.
- The district will likely stay in Republican hands during the midterm elections later this year; President Trump won the district by 14 points in 2024. If 2026 proves to be a very strong year for Democrats it could flip, but that is unlikely: a Democrat hasn't won the district at any level since 2010.



Rep. Mark Amodei (R-NV)

Rep. Ryan Zinke Announces Retirement

- On March 2, Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-MT-1) announced he will retire, and will not seek re-election in November, citing health concerns.
- Rep. Zinke is a member of the House Appropriations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee.
- Rep. Zinke is currently serving his third term in the House, and his second representing Montana's 1st congressional district.
 - Montana's 1st district spans the western portion of the state, including Missoula and Bozeman.
 - During Rep. Zinke's first term in Congress (2015-2017), he represented the entire state of Montana as the state's at-large Congressman.
- Rep. Zinke left Congress in 2017 to become President Trump's first Interior Secretary, a position he held through January 2019.
- The district will likely stay in Republican hands during the midterm elections later this year, but Democrats have an outside chance at winning the seat in a strong blue year.
 - While President Trump won the district by 11% in 2024, in that same election, former Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) won the district by 1%.
 - In 2020, President Trump won the district by 7%.
 - In 2018, the last Trump midterm election year, former Sen. Tester won the district by 11%.



Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-MT)

Rep. Burgess Owens Announces Retirement

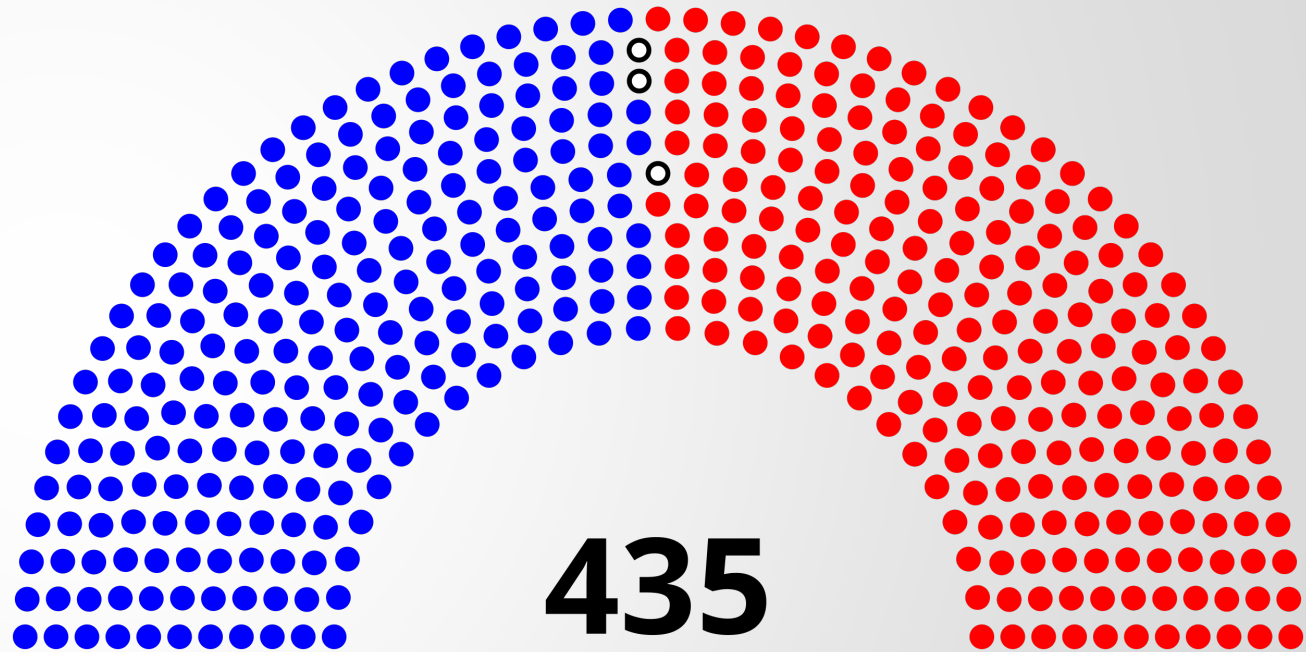
- On March 4, Rep. Burgess Owens (R-UT-4) announced he will retire, and will not seek re-election in November.
- Rep. Owens is a member of the House Education and the Workforce Committee and is the Chair of the Committee's Higher Education and Workforce Development Subcommittee.
 - He also serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.
- Rep. Owens is currently serving his third term in the House, representing Utah's 4th district.
 - Utah's 4th district includes the central portion of Utah, including the southwest parts of the Salt Lake City metro area.
- While it's not mentioned in his retirement announcement, it is possible that Rep. Owens is retiring due to Republicans' losing a seat in the state's new 2026 congressional map.
 - The new 1st district, which is where Rep. Owens would likely have to run if he had pursued re-election, will be a solidly blue Salt Lake City-based seat.



Rep. Burgess Owens (R-UT)

Current Party Breakdown in the U.S. House

- There are now a total of 56 Members of the House who have announced their plans to not run for re-election in 2026, either to retire or to seek another public office, comprising 23 Democrats and 33 Republicans.
- Additionally, five Members have already resigned in the 119th Congress, while four Members have passed away.
- The House currently stands at **218 Republicans** and **214 Democrats**, with three vacancies. This is just a ***one-vote majority*** for House Republicans (ties result in a failed vote).
- Once vacancies are filled in various special elections in the coming months, the tally will be **220 Republicans** and **215 Democrats**, just a two-vote majority.



Overview of Current House Vacancies and Special Elections

District	Former Representative	Special Election Date	Race Rating
Georgia-14	Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R)	March 10, 2026	Safe R
New Jersey-11	Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D)	April 16, 2026	Likely D
California-01	Late Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R)	August 4, 2026	Safe R

Senator Steve Daines Announces Retirement

- On March 4, Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT) announced he will not seek re-election to his seat and will retire at the end of his current term.
- Sen. Daines serves on the following Senate committees:
 - Energy and Natural Resources
 - Chair, National Parks Subcommittee
 - Finance
 - Foreign Relations
 - Chair, Europe and Regional Security Cooperation Subcommittee
 - Indian Affairs
- Sen. Daines is currently serving his second term term in the Senate, having first been elected to his seat in November 2014.
 - Prior to serving in the Senate, he served one term in the U.S. House as Montana's at-large Congressman from 2013 to 2015.
- Kurt Alme, the U.S. Attorney for Montana, filed to run for the Republican nomination for the Senate seat right before the state's filing deadline.



Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT)

Senator Markwayne Mullin to become the next DHS Secretary

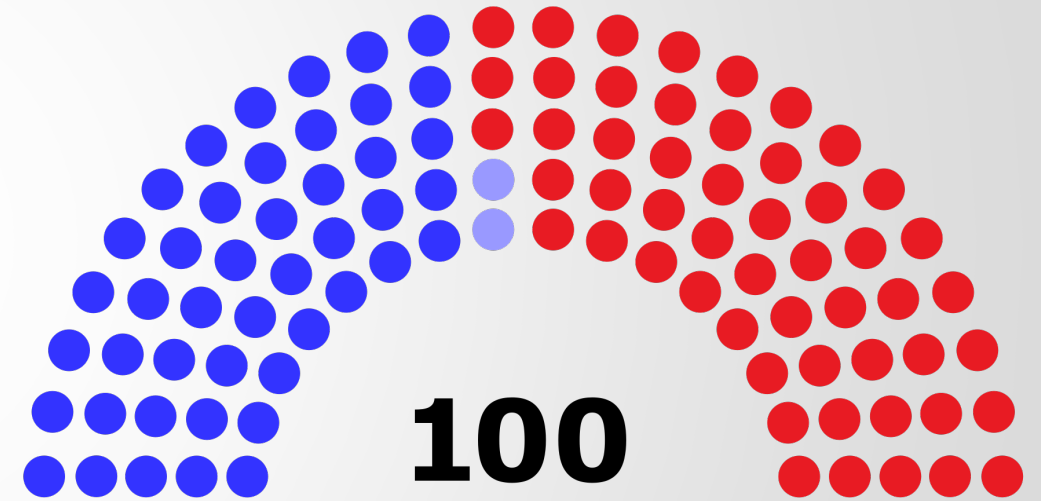
- On March 5, President Donald Trump announced that Sen. Markwayne Mullin (R-OK) will become the next U.S. homeland Security Secretary, effective March 31. He will replace outgoing DHS Secretary Kristi Noem, who is stepping down.
- Sen. Mullin serves on the following Senate committees:
 - Appropriations
 - Chair, Legislative Branch Subcommittee
 - Armed Services
 - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP)
 - Chair, Employment and Workplace Safety Subcommittee
 - Indian Affairs
- Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt (R) will appoint a replacement for Sen. Mullin in the coming weeks. The replacement will serve until the next regularly scheduled election for the seat.



Sen. Markwayne Mullin (R-OK)

Current Party Breakdown in the U.S. Senate

- Republicans currently hold a 53-47 majority, which is the same majority they held when they last controlled the Senate (Jan. 2021).
- Two independent Senators caucus with the Democrats: Senator Angus King (I-ME) and Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT).
- Vice President J.D. Vance, who also serves as the Senate President, can cast a tie-breaking vote if the final vote on any legislation or nominee is tied at 50-50.
- Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA) is the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. He previously held the position from Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2021, as well.
- To date, 10 sitting Senators have announced they will not be seeking re-election in 2026. This comprises six Republicans and four Democrats.
- Additionally, Sen. Markwayne Mullin will be vacating his Senate seat on March 31 to become the next Homeland Security Secretary.





Key Legislative and Policy Updates

Appropriations – FY26 Progress

- Last month, Congress finalized FY26 appropriations bills apart from funding for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Talks between Democratic leadership and the White House are ongoing on the spending bill.
 - On February 8, Senate Democrats released a list of [proposed immigration and enforcement reforms](#), which Republicans quickly rejected.
 - Both sides remain far apart on reforms being pushed by Democrats, in response to the deaths in Minnesota by ICE agents.
- On February 3, President Trump signed a two-week CR through February 13 to fund DHS. On February 13, Congress failed to reach a funding agreement and the government began a partial shutdown. This marks the third shutdown during the FY 2026 appropriations cycle.
- Both chambers began a weeklong recess on February 16 and were expected to take up the DHS issue upon their return but have made little public progress to date on these negotiations.
- On February 26, the White House made a counteroffer to Democratic proposals. The document has not been made public and is being reviewed by Democratic leadership.
- The partial shutdown is entering its third week and has affected operations at agencies under the DHS, including TSA, FEMA, and CISA. Some affected federal employees have been furloughed while others are working without pay. ICE and CBP are continuing to operate with funding provided in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA, [P.L. 119-21](#)) which passed last year.

Appropriations – FY 2026 Prognosis



Outgoing DHS Secretary Kristi Noem

- With the federal government in a partial shutdown, negotiations among congressional leaders and the administration remain at an impasse. Some of the sticking points have included reforms to judicial warrants, federal agent identification displays, and restricting agent face coverings.
- On February 22, DHS issued a [press release](#) on the effects of the partial shutdown, including the emergency operating status of TSA and FEMA, the suspension of CBP Global Entry, and a pause on airport police escorts for members of Congress.
- In his February 24 State of the Union address, President Trump stated “Democrats in this chamber have cut off all funding for the Department of Homeland Security - it's all cut off. All cut off. They have instituted another Democrat shutdown.”
- On March 5, House Republicans attempted another vote on an amended version ([H.R. 7744](#)) of the FY2026 Homeland Security bill text ([H.R. 7147](#)) which previously stalled in the Senate in January. The updated measure passed in a [221-209](#) vote. Four Democrats joined all 217 voting Republicans in supporting the bill.
 - Senate passage is unlikely, however.

Appropriations – Looking Ahead to FY27

- Congress kicked off its FY27 appropriations process with the release of House Appropriations Committee [guidance](#) on February 25.
- The committee guidance has set programmatic, language, and Community Project Funding request submission deadlines, which include:

AG-FDA: March 13
CJS: March 13
Defense: March 20
E&W: March 20

FSGG: March 13
Homeland Security: March 20
Interior: March 20
L-HHS Education: March 20

Leg Branch: March 13
MilCon-VA: March 13
SFOPS: March 13
T-HUD: March 20

- House Appropriations Committee Chair Tom Cole (R-OK) announced the schedule of member day hearings, which allow House members to testify on their specific funding priorities.
- The ongoing standoff on Homeland Security funding has affected the release of the FY27 President's Budget Request (PBR) to Congress. The pending release of the PBR, which will detail the administration's funding priorities, is expected in the coming weeks.
- House and Senate committees will begin holding budget hearings with relevant Trump administration officials over the next few months.



House Appropriations Committee
Chair Tom Cole (R-OK)

Trade – Supreme Court IEEPA Decision

- On February 20, the Supreme Court issued its [decision](#) in the consolidated *Learning Resources, Inc. v. Trump* and *Trump v. V.O.S. Selections, Inc.* cases. The Court held (6-3) that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) does not authorize the President to impose tariffs, striking down the February executive orders (EOs) on imports from [China](#), [Mexico](#), and [Canada](#) and the April 2025 reciprocal tariff [EO](#) on imports from most other countries. The Supreme Court did not address the issue of refunds, which is likely to be addressed by CBP and the lower courts. For more information, see Arnold & Porter's [client advisory](#) on the decision.
- President Trump has taken the following executive actions:
 - EOs [terminating](#) IEEPA-based tariffs and [clarifying](#) suspension of duty-free *de minimis* treatment for all countries will continue.
 - A [proclamation](#) imposing 10% tariffs on most imports under Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974. Under Section 122, the President can impose tariffs of up to 15% for up to 150 days in response to a balance of payments emergency. Extension beyond 150 days requires congressional approval. On February 21, President Trump [announced](#) the tariff will be increased to 15%, although no official action has been taken as of this writing.



U.S. Supreme Court

Trade – Country-Level Negotiations



President Donald Trump and
Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

- The Supreme Court's decision has caused uncertainty for bilateral trade agreements and multiple countries are reportedly reconsidering their deals.
 - Earlier in February, the Trump administration reached trade deals with Argentina, Bangladesh, India, and North Macedonia, and finalized deals with Ecuador, Indonesia, and Taiwan.
 - On February 6, the White House issued a joint statement on the U.S.-India trade deal. The deal lowered reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods from 25% to 18% and removed the additional 25% tariff based on India's Russian oil purchases. The United States granted India certain Section 232 tariff concessions and India committed to purchasing \$500 billion of U.S. products and to remove certain non-tariff barriers. While U.S.-India talks continued into the week of February 23, India's opposition party is calling on Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to amend the deal in light of the Supreme Court decision.
 - On February 23, European Parliament International Trade Committee Chair Bernd Lange said discussions related to the EU-U.S. trade deal were paused due to the Supreme Court tariff decision.
- On February 17, President Trump announced Japan intended to invest about \$36 billion across three U.S. energy and manufacturing projects as part of the country's \$550 billion investment commitment. The projects include a 9.2-gigawatt gas power plant in Portsmouth, Ohio; a facility to manufacture synthetic diamonds in Georgia for use in semiconductor applications; and a deepwater crude oil export facility in Texas.

Trade – Section 232 Update

- Products subject to Section 232 tariffs remain unaffected by the Supreme Court decision. The Administration will likely use additional Section 232 investigations to reconstitute its tariff regime, along with Section 301 investigations and other tariff authorities.
- Section 232 investigations are currently ongoing into [pharmaceuticals](#), [commercial aircraft and jet engines](#), [polysilicon](#), [unmanned aircraft](#), [wind turbines](#), [medical consumables and equipment](#), and [robotics and industrial machinery](#). The Trump Administration also announced Phase I findings for [semiconductor](#) and [critical minerals](#) investigations. On February 23, the Wall Street Journal [reported](#) the Department of Commerce (DOC) was considering initiating Section 232 investigations into large-scale batteries, cast iron and iron fittings, plastic piping, industrial chemicals, and power grid and telecom equipment.
- On February 17, U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer [suggested](#) that the Administration could modify some aspects of its Section 232 steel and aluminum derivative tariffs. Amb. Greer's comments followed [reporting](#) on February 13 that the DOC was considering narrowing the scope of products subject to the “derivative” tariffs and initiating new Section 232 investigations into specific goods; however, other White House officials dismissed this idea.



U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer

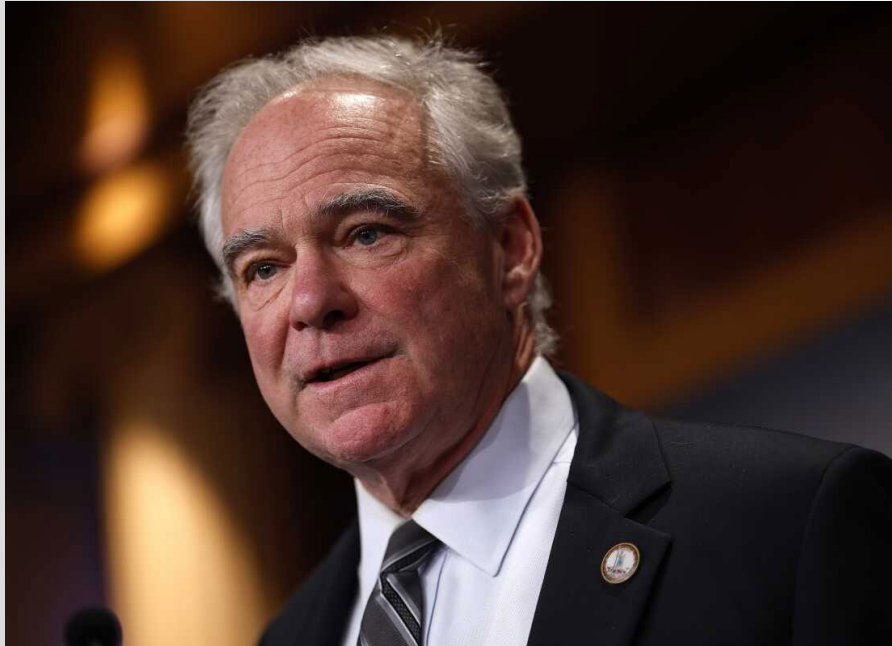
Defense – Action in Iran

- On February 28, the U.S. and Israel launched a large-scale offensive campaign (“Operation Epic Fury”) against Iran’s military infrastructure, missile systems, and regime leadership, resulting in the death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.
 - In a [press conference](#) on March 2, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Gen. Dan Caine revealed the Department of War (DOW) has no timetable for ending the strikes, and Secretary of War Pete Hegseth declined to rule out putting American troops on the ground in Iran.
- President Trump [said](#) the goal of the operation is to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and “to defend the American people by eliminating imminent threats from the Iranian regime.”
- Six American service members have died from Iran’s retaliatory attacks thus far. The death toll could rise in the coming days and weeks.



Secretary of War Pete Hegseth

Defense – Congressional Response to Iran Strikes



Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA)

- Congressional Democrats argue President Trump violated the Constitution by initiating hostilities in Iran without Congressional authorization. War Powers Resolutions are expected in both chambers this week.
- Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) introduced a joint resolution ([S.J.Res.104](#)) with the support of Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) to force a vote on their War Powers Resolution to ensure any U.S. participation in hostilities against Iran is explicitly authorized by Congress.
 - A vote on the motion to discharge the joint resolution failed on the Senate floor on March 4, [47-53](#).
- Reps. Ro Khanna (D-CA) and Thomas Massie (R-KY) led similar legislation in the House – [H. Con. Res. 38](#). On March 5, the resolution failed in a [212-219](#) vote. The vote was nearly party-line, with two Republicans supporting, and four Democrats opposing.

Tax – Congressional Developments

- Tax Writers Release IRS Administration Reform Bill. On February 26, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Mike Crapo (R-ID) and Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR) [introduced](#) bipartisan legislation to reform the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
 - The Taxpayer Assistance and Service Act ([S.3931](#)) is a package of administrative reforms from members of Congress, with input from the National Taxpayer Advocate.
- House Tax Panel Investigates Non-Profits. On February 10, the House Ways and Means Committee held a [hearing](#) on foreign influence in “American non-profits.”
 - Chairman Jason Smith (R-MO) led Republicans in [calling out](#) foreign actors for corrupting America’s political discourse and discussed reforms to Form 990 to increase transparency into 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) entities.
 - Rep. Lloyd Smucker (R-PA) previously introduced the Foreign Grant Reporting Act ([H.R.8290](#) – 118th) and indicated he is working on the bill.
- IRS CEO to Testify on OBBBA Implementation. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) CEO Frank Bisignano is [slated](#) to appear in front of the House Ways and Means Committee on March 4 to discuss implementation of the OBBBA ([P.L.119-21](#)) and the ongoing 2026 tax filing season.



Chairman Jason Smith delivers opening remarks for the House Ways and Means Committee.

Tax – Administration Updates

- On February 23, the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) [concluded](#) their review on rules for “Trump Accounts.” The IRS previously issued [guidance](#) on the [pilot program](#) contributing \$1,000 to children born from 2025-2028.
 - The IRS issued [interim guidance](#) allowing business owners to elect up to a 100% bonus depreciation deduction for qualified property under Section 168(k).
 - The IRS also issued [interim guidance](#) on the special depreciation allowance for qualified production property under Section 168(n).
- On February 18, the IRS issued additional [interim guidance](#) stating that companies can reduce income subject to the corporate alternative minimum tax (CAMT) by not-yet-expensed domestic R&D costs.
 - The guidance addresses industry concerns that the OBBBA R&D tax break would subject companies to the 15% CAMT and reduce overall savings.
- On February 25, the IRS issued a [notice](#) to propose modified regulation under [Section 987](#) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC).
 - The guidance would allow “qualified business units” to return to the “earnings and capital” approach, for determining currency gains and losses.
- During his State of the Union address, President Trump [pledged](#) to provide new tax-advantaged plans, like 401(k)s to private sector employees. Modeled after the low-fee federal Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), it would provide a maximum \$1,000 annual match from the federal government.
 - [Reporting](#) indicates that the President would likely need to work with Congress to expand the eligibility of the Saver’s Match that was enacted in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 ([P.L.117-328](#))



President Trump delivers State of the Union, celebrating OBBBA tax provisions.

Financial Services – Key Policy Developments

- On February 23, White House Crypto Council Executive Director Patrick Witt [reported](#) that the gap between crypto firms and major banks over stablecoin yield has “shrunk considerably.”
 - Negotiators are yet to compromise on whether stablecoin issuers should be allowed to offer interest or rewards.
 - The administration’s goal to reach a compromise by March 1 was [not met](#) –following negotiators’ [third meeting](#) –but Blockchain Association CEO Summer Mersinger [emphasized](#) that thoughtful negotiations continue.
 - The Senate Banking Committee’s markup of crypto market structure legislation remains [postponed](#).
- On February 19, the White House [described](#) President Trump’s [plan](#) to ban investors from owning more than 100 single-family homes.
 - The White House is considering the Renewing Opportunity in the American Dream (ROAD) to Housing Act ([S.2651](#)) as the vehicle, rather than the House-passed Housing for the 21st Century Act ([H.R.6644](#)).
 - The Senate is reconfiguring its housing package to reconcile with the House version.
- On February 13, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent [said](#) the Senate Banking Committee is expected to begin processing Kevin Warsh’s [nomination](#) to serve as Federal Reserve (Fed) Chair.
 - On February 4, Senate Banking Chair Tim Scott (R-SC) [said](#) he does not believe Fed Chair Jerome Powell committed any wrongdoing as the Department of Justice continues a probe into Chair Powell.
 - Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC) continues to [oppose](#) any Fed nominees until the probe concludes.

Financial Services – Administration Developments

- On February 16, Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) Chairman Mike Selig [announced](#) that the agency filed an amicus brief in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals asserting its exclusive authority to regulate prediction markets.
 - The [announcement](#) was published in tandem with an [op-ed](#) in the Wall Street Journal, supporting Crypto.com in its legal dispute with the Nevada Gaming Control Board.
 - On February 12, the CFTC [announced](#) an Innovation Advisory Committee with executives from cryptocurrency, prediction markets, online trading platforms, traditional exchanges, and sports betting firms.
- On February 25, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency [issued](#) a notice of proposed rulemaking requesting input on regulating stablecoin issuers and custody activities.
 - Directed by the Guiding and Establishing National Innovation for U.S. Stablecoins Act (GENIUS, [P.L.119-27](#)) passed in July 2025, this notice marks the first guidance for companies looking to qualify as regulated stablecoin issuers.
- On February 15, reports [indicated](#) that Department of the Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence [Josh Hurley](#) would soon leave his position.
 - Under Secretary Hurley, the top sanctions official in the Trump administration, is reportedly departing over tension with Secretary Bessent on sanctions policy.



CFTC Chairman Mike Selig testifies before Congress.

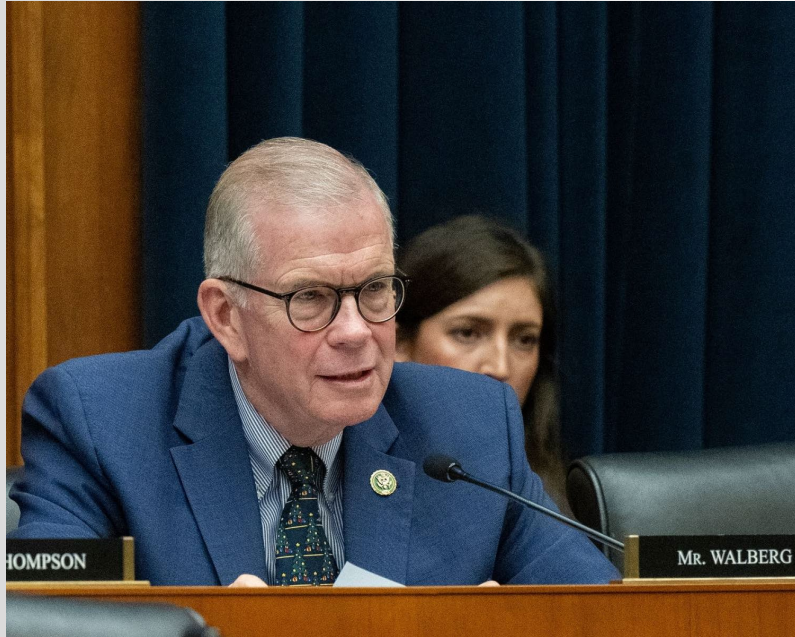
Artificial Intelligence – Congressional Developments

- Last month, reports indicated that the White House may be working on an AI legislative package with Rep. Jay Obernolte (R-CA-23) and Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX). Rep. Obernolte has long been working on an AI legislation package that would include federal preemption of state-level AI laws.
- On February 18, House Science, Space, and Technology Committee Chairman Brian Babin (R-TX-36) and Research and Technology Subcommittee Chairman Obernolte sent a [letter](#) to the Government Accountability Office requesting a review of existing federal and state laws and regulations governing AI. A review of existing rules and regulations was recommended in the House Bipartisan AI Task Force [report](#) from December 2024.



Rep. Jay Obernolte (R-CA)

Artificial Intelligence – Congressional Hearings



House Education and Workforce Committee
Chairman Tim Walberg (R-MI)

- In February, the House Education and Workforce Committee continued its “Building an AI-Ready America” hearing series:
 - On February 3, the House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions held a hearing titled “[Building an AI-Ready America: Adopting AI at Work](#).” The hearing focused on ways to integrate AI into the workplace to help boost productivity while protecting workers.
 - On February 11, the House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Workforce Protections held a hearing titled “[Building an AI-Ready America: Safer Workplaces Through Smarter Technology](#).” The hearing focused on integrating AI and other advanced technologies into the workplace to prevent injuries, improve worker health, and boost productivity.
 - On February 24, the House Education and Workforce Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee held a hearing titled “[Building an AI-Ready American: Teaching in the AI Age](#).” The hearing was overall bipartisan as committee members sought information on best practices for teachers using AI and what additional resources may be needed.
- On February 24, the House Science, Space, and Technology Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee held a [hearing](#) on “Powering America's AI Future: Assessing Policy Options to Increase Data Center Infrastructure.” The hearing focused on the nexus of energy policy, data center development, and AI innovation.

Artificial Intelligence – Administration Developments



President Donald Trump

- In February, disagreements between President Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Anthropic led to threats to label the AI company as a supply chain threat.
 - On February 26, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei rejected the Pentagon's demands to grant the DoW full access to AI model. Anthropic has a standing policy restricting the military's use of Claude, banning the technology's use to surveil American citizens or to empower autonomous weapons.
 - On February 27, the administration followed through on its threat with President Trump [posting](#) on social media that all agencies will stop use of Anthropic's AI models.
 - Later that night, OpenAI announced a [deal](#) with the DoW to use their AI model. According to OpenAI, the deal includes all the safeguards Anthropic was publicly pushing for.
- During President Trump's State of the Union speech, he announced that his administration has made agreements with major tech companies to construct power plants for data centers to help avoid spike in energy costs for consumers.

Technology – Congressional Updates

- On February 10, House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC) Chair Brian Mast (R-FL-21) and House China Select Committee Chair John Moolenaar (R-MI-2) led a [letter](#) to urging the Secretaries of State and Commerce to enhance engagement with allies on stronger semiconductor manufacturing equipment (SME) export controls.
 - They argued that SME export controls are critical to compete with China and emphasized the need for countrywide restrictions to better cover chokepoint SME, raising concerns that such equipment may be diverted for prohibited purposes after export to China.
- Last month, Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) told reporters that she and Sen. Jim Banks (R-IN) plan to introduce the Senate-companion to the Artificial Intelligence Oversight of Verified Exports and Restrictions on Weaponizable Advanced Technology to Covered High-Risk Actors (AI OVERWATCH) Act ([H.R. 6875](#)). The bill passed HFAC on January 21 and awaits full House consideration.
 - The bill would enhance congressional oversight of advanced semiconductor exports to certain countries and ban exports of NVIDIA Blackwell chips to “countries of concern,” including China.
 - Sen. Warren also plans to introduce a bill with Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR) on tracking advanced AI chip end-users. Neither bill has been introduced yet.



Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)

Technology – Congressional Updates



HFAC Subcommittee on South and Central Asia Chair Bill Huizenga (R-MI)

- On February 24, the House Foreign Affairs South and Central Asia Subcommittee held a [hearing](#) focused on Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) export control enforcement, as well as Chinese AI capabilities and semiconductor sales to China. Lawmakers expressed bipartisan concern about Chinese AI advancements, and support for an increased BIS budget.
 - Assistant Commerce Secretary for Export Enforcement David Peters emphasized the need to strengthen the deterrence structure to better combat malign uses of dual-use technologies. He asked Congress to approve larger financial penalties for violations of the Export Control Reform Act and to double the statute of limitations to 10 years.
 - Assistant Secretary Peters confirmed that China has not yet received any NVIDIA H200 chips following the Trump Administration’s approval of the sale in January.
- On February 12, the Senate Commerce Committee passed 8 bipartisan bills, including the MAP for Broadband Funding Act ([S. 2585](#)), National Programmable Cloud Laboratories Network Act ([S. 3468](#)), and SAT Streamlining Act ([S. 3639](#)).

Data Privacy – Congressional and Administration Updates

- The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) remains in limited operation status amid the lapse in FY27 funding for DHS.
 - Reauthorization of the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015 is dependent on the DHS appropriations agreement.
- On February 11, former CISA Acting Director Madhu Gottumukkala appeared before House appropriators for an [oversight hearing](#) on the potential impacts on the DHS shutdown.
 - In his [written testimony](#), Dr. Gottumukkala said CISA would designate 888 of its 2,341 employees as “excepted” during a shutdown so the agency can sustain essential functions, such as “sharing timely vulnerability and incident information, maintaining our 24/7 operations center and operating cybersecurity shared services.” He predicted delays in cyber response, security assessments, stakeholder engagements, training, and special event planning.
 - CISA postponed its stakeholder engagement sessions on the Cyber Incident Reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act of 2022 (CIRCIA) [rulemaking](#). The first town hall meeting was scheduled for March 9.



Former CISA Deputy Director
Madhu Gottumukkala

Data Privacy – Administration Updates



CISA Acting Director Nick Andersen

- On February 26, Gottumukkala was removed from his position and reassigned to serve as DHS's Director of Strategic Implementation. The new Acting Director is [Nick Andersen](#), formerly CISA's Executive Assistant for Cybersecurity. DHS has not provided a reason for the leadership change.
 - During the first Trump administration, Andersen held various roles at the Department of Energy (DOE) and the White House related to cybersecurity policy.
- The Senate has yet to hold a hearing on the President's nominee for CISA Director, Sean Plankey.
 - The White House renominated Plankey after his confirmation was blocked by Sen. Rick Scott (R-FL) last year.

Data Privacy – Congressional Updates

- On February 26, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee passed the Health Care Cybersecurity and Resiliency Act ([S. 3315](#)) in a 22-1 vote. The bill now awaits consideration on the Senate floor.
 - The bill would direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) and CISA Director to coordinate on improving cybersecurity in the healthcare and public health sectors. It would require HHS to develop and implement a cybersecurity incident response plan, issue guidance on cybersecurity readiness for rural healthcare providers, update the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to require the use of modern data cybersecurity tools, and create a new grant program to help entities adopt cybersecurity best practices.
 - It passed with a substitute amendment, which adds a provision directing the HHS to “convene a working group to examine how to streamline and reduce duplicative reporting for cybersecurity incidents,” and removes a provision requiring HHS to update the breach reporting portal.
 - Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) was the sole member to vote against the measure.



Senate HELP Chair
Bill Cassidy, MD (R-LA)

Health Care – Congressional Updates

- On February 11, the House Energy & Commerce (E&C) Health Subcommittee held a [hearing](#) titled, “Health Subcommittee: Lowering Health Care Costs for All Americans: An Examination of the Prescription Drug Supply Chain.” This was the second hearing in the Committee’s series of affordability hearings.
 - Republicans largely focused on pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) practices and highlighted recent successful PBM reform efforts.
 - Democrats emphasized strengthening and expanding the Inflation Reduction Act’s (IRA) drug negotiation authority and increasing transparency around the Trump administration’s most-favored-nation (MFN) drug pricing agreements and the TrumpRx platform.
- On February 17, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chairman Bill Cassidy (R-LA) released a [report](#) titled “Patients and Families First: Building the FDA of the Future,” which proposes legislative and regulatory reforms to modernize the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
 - The report addresses the FDA review process, approach to clinical trials, use of artificial intelligence (AI), rare disease therapies, increasing competition and innovation, biosimilars, medical device review, clinical decision support tools, and food safety.
 - Recommendations are expected to influence congressional discussions around FDA reform, particularly ahead of upcoming User Fee reauthorizations.
- On February 25, the Senate HELP Committee held a confirmation [hearing](#) for Casey Means to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service and Surgeon General of the Public Health Service.
 - Senators questioned Dr. Means about her views and record on issues such as vaccine safety, metabolic disease, links between social media and mental health, pesticides, and pharmaceutical advertisements.
 - Dr. Means outlined her would-be priorities as U.S. Surgeon General: addressing the chronic disease epidemic by improving metabolic health, building trust in public health authorities, and alleviating the patient volume and burden of care on providers.
 - Dr. Means reportedly has not yet secured the votes needed to be confirmed.
- While conversations regarding an extension of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) premium tax credits (ePTCs) have largely dissipated, congressional discussions on affordability and broader health care reform continue ahead of midterm elections. On February 23, House Majority Leader Steve Scalise hosted a dinner with White House and Congressional leaders to discuss next steps on health care and other priorities, though, notably, “reconciliation 2.0” was not discussed.

Health Care – Administration Updates

- On February 5, President Donald Trump and Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Mehmet Oz announced the launch of TrumpRx.gov, an online platform for the direct-to-consumer (DTC) sale of discounted prescription drugs.
 - The TrumpRx website allows American consumers to browse select prescription medications. Consumers can select the drug form, dosage, and count, and the website displays the list price of such drugs alongside the discounted price. Consumers can claim a coupon on the website to redeem at their local pharmacy and purchase the drug at the discounted price. For select specialty drugs, the website also provides information for consumers to call participating pharmacies and have the prescription drug mailed to them.
 - The 43 drugs available on the platform appear to be limited to drugs manufactured by the pharmaceutical companies that made MFN drug pricing deals with the administration.
- On February 24, during his State of the Union address, President Trump touted his achievements in health care, including efforts to lower prescription drug prices and offer more “affordable” health care plans.
 - President Trump also urged Congress to codify the President’s MFN drug pricing deals.
- The White House continues to focus on lowering prescription drug prices and other priorities in the Great American Healthcare Plan, including “holding big insurance companies accountable” and “maximizing price transparency.”



President Donald Trump
announces TrumpRx

Health Care – Agency Updates

- On February 12, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. [announced](#) changes to the HHS leadership team.
 - Chris Klomp, the current Director of Medicare and Deputy Administrator of the CMS, will now become Chief Counselor of HHS. Kyle Diamantas and Grace Graham will be promoted to FDA Senior Counselors, while John Brooks will become a CMS Senior Counselor.
 - Additionally, Deputy Secretary Jim O’Neill and General Counsel Mike Stuart [reportedly](#) are also leaving their current roles for other positions within the administration. Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, current Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), will now [reportedly](#) also serve as acting director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- On February 13, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) [released](#) a “Request for Information: 340B Rebate Model Pilot Program.”
 - The [RFI](#) solicits information from stakeholders on the potential use of rebates to effectuate the 340B ceiling price, the criteria that should be required for the approval of pharmaceutical manufacturer rebate plans, and the impacts on all stakeholders. The comment period has been extended from March 19, 2026, to April 20, 2026.
- On February 18, FDA leaders, Commissioner Marty Makary and Chief Medical and Scientific Officer Vinay Prasad, published an [article](#) titled, “One Pivotal Trial, the New Default Option for FDA Approval — Ending the Two-Trial Dogma” in the New England Journal of Medicine.
 - The article announced that a one-trial requirement will be the FDA’s new default standard, and it outlines the justification for establishing a single-trial default for drug approvals, instead of two trials. The leaders note that this change can help reduce drug development costs and streamline product release, leading to lower costs for patients.

Health Care – Agency Updates

- On February 23, the FDA’s Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) and Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) [announced](#) draft [guidance](#) focused on genome editing and RNA-based therapies that target genetic, cellular, and molecular abnormalities and are designed to address the underlying cause of a disease. The plausible mechanism framework aims to accelerate the development of personalized therapies for rare and ultra-rare diseases.
- HHS leadership [changes](#) aim to accelerate the adoption of President Trump’s Great Healthcare Plan and the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) agenda.
 - The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has [rescheduled](#) its postponed February meeting for March 18-19. The agenda includes "discussions on COVID-19 vaccine injuries and Long-COVID and ACIP recommendation methodology.”
 - Stakeholder comments for the Global Benchmark for Efficient Drug Pricing ([GLOBE](#)) Model and Guarding U.S. Medicare Against Rising Drug Costs ([GUARD](#)) Model were due on February 23, 2026. CMS is now expected to move forward in the review process.



Education – Congressional Updates

- Several congressional committees spent February holding education-related hearings, including [impacts of OB3 on higher education](#), [fraud in childcare](#), and [federal investments in K-12 education](#).
- Republican education leaders conducted oversight of fraud in federal education programs:
 - On February 6, Sens. Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) and Jon Husted (R-OH), co-chairs of the HELP Education Fraud Task Force, sent a [letter](#) to Education Secretary Linda McMahon expressing support for combating fraud in federally funded education programs.
 - Senate HELP Chair Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and House Education and Workforce Chair Tim Walberg (R-MI-5) probed Minnesota Governor Tim Walz’s administration on the alleged childcare fraud in the state, including a [letter](#) to the Children, Youth, and Families Commissioner and a [letter](#) on the administering of federal nutrition programs.
- On February 26, the Senate HELP Committee held a [markup](#) of the Mathematical and Statistical Modeling Education Act ([H.R. 730/S. 1602](#)) and Home School Graduation Recognition Act ([H.R. 6392/S. 3747](#)), both advancing out of committee. The Understanding the True Cost of College Act of 2025 ([H.R. 3153/S. 1558](#)), endorsed by several higher education associations, was scheduled for consideration but was pulled from the markup.
- House Education and Workforce Committee Ranking Member Bobby Scott (D-CA-3), along with Rep. Donald Norcross (D-NJ-1) and Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI), introduced the Rebuild America’s Schools Act ([H.R. 7340/S. 3777](#)) to create a \$130 billion grant program to support K-12 schools’ physical and digital infrastructure. The legislation is not expected to advance in a Republican-controlled Congress.



House Education and Workforce Committee Ranking Member Bobby Scott (D-VA) and Chair Tim Walberg (R-MI)

Education – Administration Update

- An [investigation](#) was launched into Tufts University and the National Student Clearinghouse on potential FERPA violations related to sharing student data as part of a broader study related to student voting and political engagement.
 - ED issued [guidance](#) for institutions using the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement data, warning them not to do so until the investigation is complete.
- Resolution [agreements](#) were announced with 31 institutions of higher education (IHEs) ending partnerships with The Ph.D. Project, an organization focused on getting more underrepresented students in front of university classrooms via a Ph.D.
 - Last March, ED [opened](#) Title VI investigations into 45 IHEs' partnerships, leading to these agreements. ED alleged the Ph.D. Project violated civil rights law by limiting eligibility based on race. According to OCR, ED remains in active negotiations with the 14 schools that did not sign the agreement.
- An [investigation](#) was initiated into Portland Public Schools (PPS), alleging race-based discrimination.
 - According to the OCR complaint, PPS allocated a \$1.2 billion bond for wraparound services and academic interventions exclusively for black students.
- [Guidance](#) was published outlining ways to utilize Title II Part A funds to implement innovative teacher workforce strategies, including strategic staffing models.
- [Guidance](#) was released on IHEs' responsibilities, under Title IV, to support borrowers in preventing student loan default, which followed ED's Dear Colleague [Letter](#) (DCL) from May 2025.
- Updated foreign funding [disclosures](#) were posted, requiring IHEs receiving federal financial assistance to report foreign gifts and contracts valued at \$250,000 or more annually.
 - Since January 2025, ED has opened new Section 117 investigations into several universities over concerns regarding incomplete or untimely disclosures.



President Donald Trump and Education Secretary Linda McMahon

Education – Administration Update

- A [notice](#) of information collection for the 2027-2028 FAFSA form was released, the first step in designing next year's form.
 - Due to recent improvements in the FAFSA rollout and form streamlining, more students are qualifying for aid. Public comments are due on April 14.
- Final [priorities](#) and definitions on meaningful learning opportunities were published, effective March 16.
 - The final priorities largely mirrored the draft proposal but expanded eligibility for paraprofessionals and other licensed educators and clarified the definitions of strategic staffing and high-quality instructional materials.
- A proposed [rule](#) addressing continued references to “regional” accreditation was shared.
 - ED stated it does not recognize regional accreditors and, under the Higher Education Act, IHEs must be accredited by a “nationally recognized accrediting agency.” Public comments are due on March 19. Another [rule](#) to alleviate existing barriers to new accrediting agencies being recognized by ED was also released. ED also announced the [Accreditation, Innovation, and Modernization \(AIM\)](#) negotiated rulemaking committee, set to begin in April.
- Labor Assistant Secretary Henry Mack announced the Department of Labor would open a new round of [Strengthening Community College Training Grants](#) to support workforce development partnerships between community colleges and employers.
 - The grants would support the expansion of short-term training programs and improvements to data systems to better track workforce outcomes. The expansion comes as the Pell Grant program faces a projected \$5.4 billion shortfall for FY 2026, according to a Congressional Budget Office [report](#).



Education Secretary Linda McMahon

Education – Administration Update

- On February 23, ED announced two additional interagency [agreements](#) (IAAs) with the Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and State to shift several programs and functions to other federal departments.
 - In November 2025, ED announced seven [IAAs](#) across several agencies to improve coordination, reduce duplication, and align program administration with agencies whose missions and structures more closely match the work involved.
- On February 27, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced the end of nearly two dozen [partnerships](#) with institutions of higher education and think tanks, accusing these entities of “woke indoctrination.”
 - The list includes Brown, Carnegie Mellon, Columbia, George Washington, Georgetown, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, MIT, Middlebury College, Princeton, Queen’s University in Ontario, St. Louis, Tufts, William & Mary, and Yale as well as the Atlantic Council, Brookings Institution, Center for a New American Security, Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Council on Foreign Relations, Henry L. Stimson Center, and New America.



Energy and Environment – 2009 Endangerment Finding



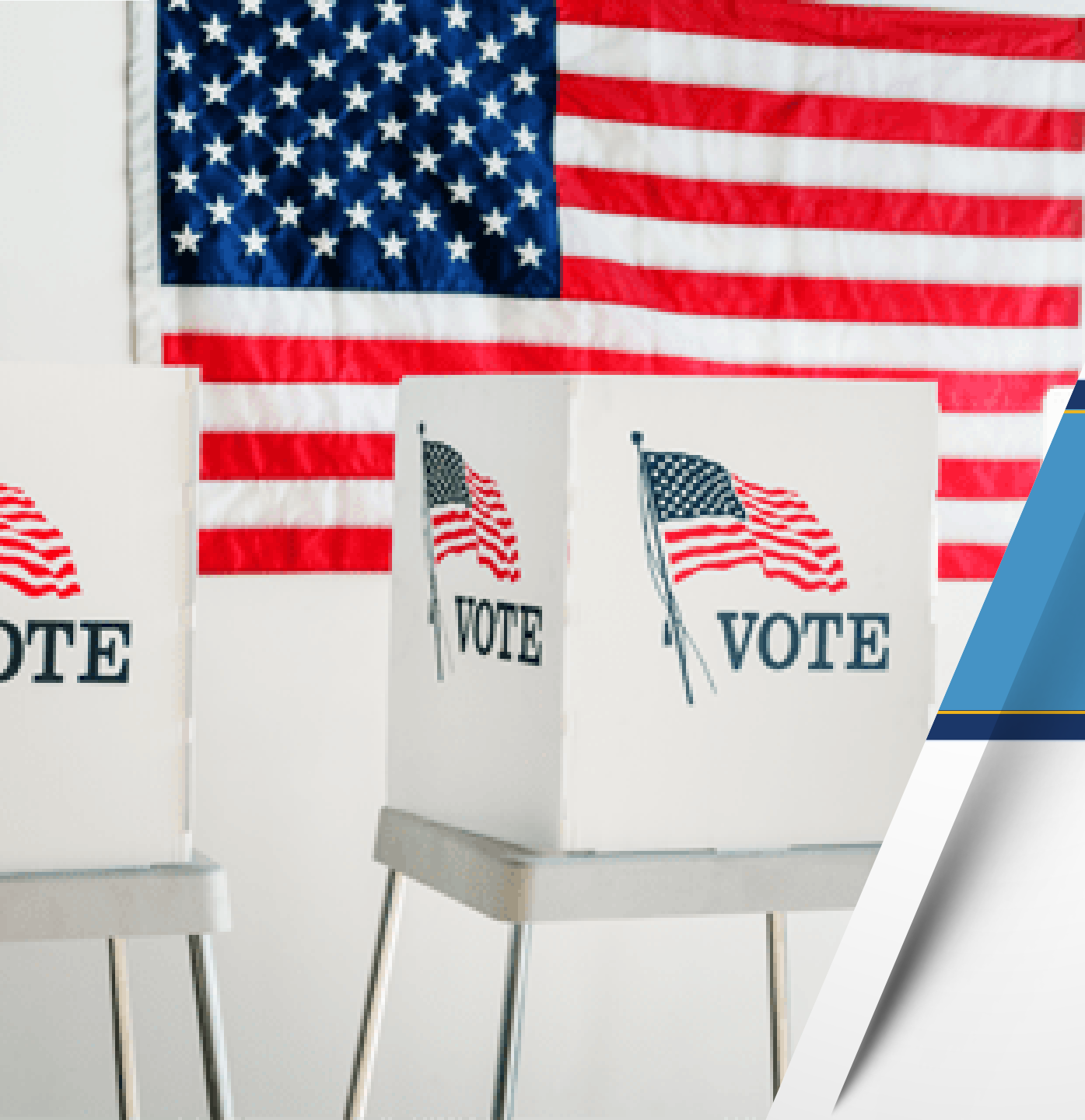
President Trump and EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin

- On February 12, President Trump and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lee Zeldin unveiled a final rule repealing the 2009 Endangerment Finding, which provided the legal basis for federal regulation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions under the Clean Air Act.
- The final rule is expected to expand deregulatory actions, including an easing of GHG emission controls on power plants.
- The administration has called the repeal the “single largest deregulatory action in U.S. history.”

Energy and Environment – Energy Tax Credit Guidance

- On February 12, the IRS released [interim guidance](#) to help taxpayers determine when energy projects may lose eligibility for certain clean energy tax credits.
 - The guidance helps companies determine whether power plants, energy storage systems, or related equipment are receiving “material assistance” from a “prohibited foreign entity” and thus would become ineligible for certain energy tax credits established by the Inflation Reduction Act ([P.L. 117-169](#)) and modified by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act ([P.L. 119-21](#)).





2026 Midterm Elections

House Outlook for 2026 Midterms

- Democrats need to flip a net of **3 seats** in 2026 to win control of the House (218 is needed for a simple majority).
 - **Currently: 218 Republicans** and **214 Democrats**, with three vacancies
 - **Once vacancies are filled: 220 Republicans** and **215 Democrats**
- **On average, since the 1930s, the party in power loses about 24-28 House seats in the midterms.**
 - Republicans are likely to gain 6-12 seats via mid-decade redistricting, while Democrats are expected to gain 6-8 new seats, though pending litigation could impact these numbers.
- **Only 15-20 toss-up seats are expected out of the 435, most of which are currently held by Republicans.**
- Due to high political polarization, redistricting gains for both parties and limited toss-up seats, the 2026 midterms for the House are expected to be very close despite the party in power usually losing seats in the midterms.



House Outlook for 2026 Midterms – Early Ratings of Key Races

Republicans		
TOSS-UP (14)	LEANS REPUBLICAN (6)	LIKELY REPUBLICAN (14)
Juan Ciscomani (AZ-6)	ME-2 Open (Golden)	Nick Begich (AK-AL)
AZ-1 Open (Schweikert)	Don Davis (NC-1)	Eli Crane (AZ-2)
Darrell Issa (CA-48)	Mike Lawler (NY-17)	Jeff Crank (CO-5)
David Valadao (CA-22)	Marcy Kaptur (OH-9)	Jeff Hurd (CO-3)
Gabe Evans (CO-8)	Rob Bresnahan (PA-8)	Anna Paulina Luna (FL-13)
M. Miller-Meeks (IA-1)	Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-1)	IA-2 Open (Hinson)
Zach Nunn (IA-3)		KY-6 Open (Barr)
Tom Barrett (MI-7)		Bill Huizenga (MI-4)
MI-10 Open (James)		Ryan Zinke (MT-1)
Tom Kean Jr. (NJ-7)		Nick LaLota (NY-1)
Ryan Mackenzie (PA-7)		Monica De La Cruz (TX-15)
Scott Perry (PA-10)		TX-35 New
Jen Kiggans (VA-2)		Rob Wittman (VA-1)
Derrick Van Orden (WI-3)		Bryan Steil (WI-1)

SAFE GOP PICKUP (3)
Emanuel Cleaver (MO-5)
TX-9 New
TX-32 New

Total seats rated Safe Republican: 188
Total seats rated Safe, Likely, or Leans R: 208

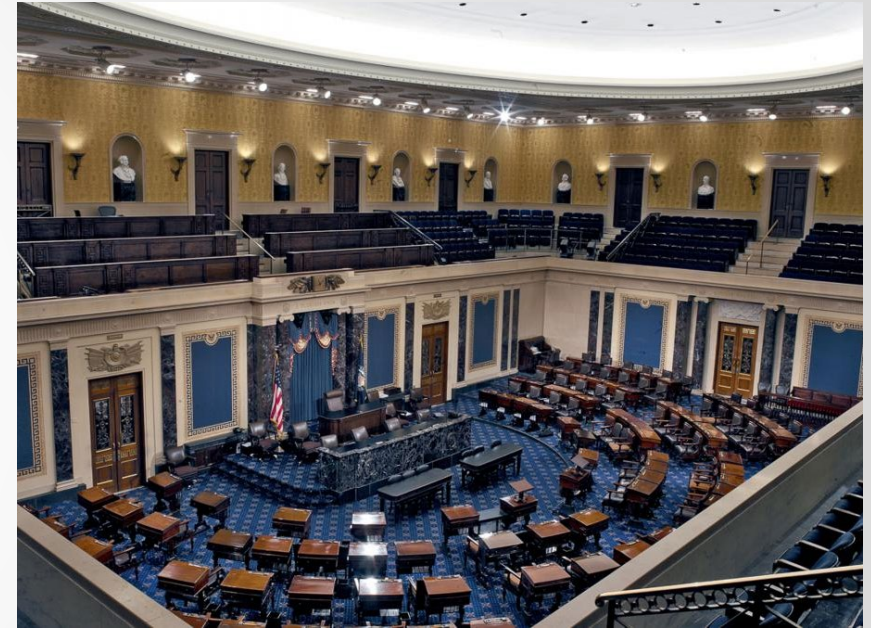
Democrats		
TOSS-UP (2)	LEANS DEMOCRATIC (17)	LIKELY DEMOCRATIC (18)
Greg Landsman (OH-1)	Adam Gray (CA-13)	Jim Costa (CA-21)
Vicente Gonzalez (TX-34)	Derek Tran (CA-45)	Kevin Kiley (CA-6)
	Jared Moskowitz (FL-23)	Jahana Hayes (CT-5)
	Frank Mrvan (IN-1)	Darren Soto (FL-9)
	K. McDonald Rivet (MI-8)	Eric Sorensen (IL-17)
	MN-2 Open (Craig)	Sharice Davids (KS-3)
	NE-2 Open (Bacon)	April McClain Delaney (MD-6)
	NH-1 Open (Pappas)	Maggie Goodlander (NH-2)
	Nellie Pou (NJ-9)	Josh Gottheimer (NJ-5)
	Gabe Vasquez (NM-2)	Steven Horsford (NV-4)
	Susie Lee (NV-3)	Dina Titus (NV-1)
	Laura Gillen (NY-4)	John Mannion (NY-22)
	Josh Riley (NY-19)	Pat Ryan (NY-18)
	Tom Suozzi (NY-3)	Chris Deluzio (PA-17)
	Emilia Sykes (OH-13)	Janelle Bynum (OR-5)
	Henry Cuellar (TX-28)	Val Hoyle (OR-4)
	M. Gluesenkamp Perez (WA-3)	Andrea Salinas (OR-6)
		Eugene Vindman (VA-7)

SAFE DEM PICKUP (3)
CA-1 New
CA-41 New
UT-1 New

Total seats rated Safe Democratic: 176
Total seats rated Safe, Likely, or Leans D: 211

Senate Outlook for 2026 Midterms

- **Currently: 53 Republicans** and **47 Democrats** (includes **two independents**)
- Expected to be **3-4 Toss-Up seats** in the Senate in the 2026 midterms. Georgia has oscillated between Toss-up and Leans D.
 - Democrats will be defending Michigan and Georgia.
 - Republicans will be defending North Carolina and Maine.
- If Democrats win all toss-up seats, Republicans will still lead **51-49**.
- Additionally, if the Senate is 50-50, Republicans would still control the chamber, since Vice President JD Vance (R) is the Senate President through January 2029.
- The president's party has lost an average of four Senate seats in the midterms since 1934, but this trend isn't entirely consistent, especially recently.
 - **For example, in 2018, during President Trump's first term, while Democrats achieved a net gain of 41 seats in the House, Republicans gained a net of two seats in the Senate.**
- Even in a strong Democratic year, Republicans are favored to hold the Senate after the 2026 midterms, due to a favorable map.



Source: UVA Center for Politics, Sabato's Crystal Ball,
270ToWin

Key 2026 Senate Races (Seats Currently Held by Democrats)

State	Democratic Candidates	Republican Candidates	Race Rating
Michigan	Rep. Haley Stevens State Senator Mallory McMorrow Abdul El-Sayed	Former Rep. and 2024 Senate Nominee Mike Rogers	Toss-Up
Georgia	Sen. Jon Ossoff	Rep. Buddy Carter Rep. Mike Collins Derek Dooley	Toss-Up / Leans D
New Hampshire	Rep. Chris Pappas	Former Sen. (MA) Scott Brown Former Sen. John Sununu	Leans D
Minnesota	Rep. Angie Craig Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan	Former State Sen. David Hann 2024 U.S. Senate Nominee Royce White	Likely D

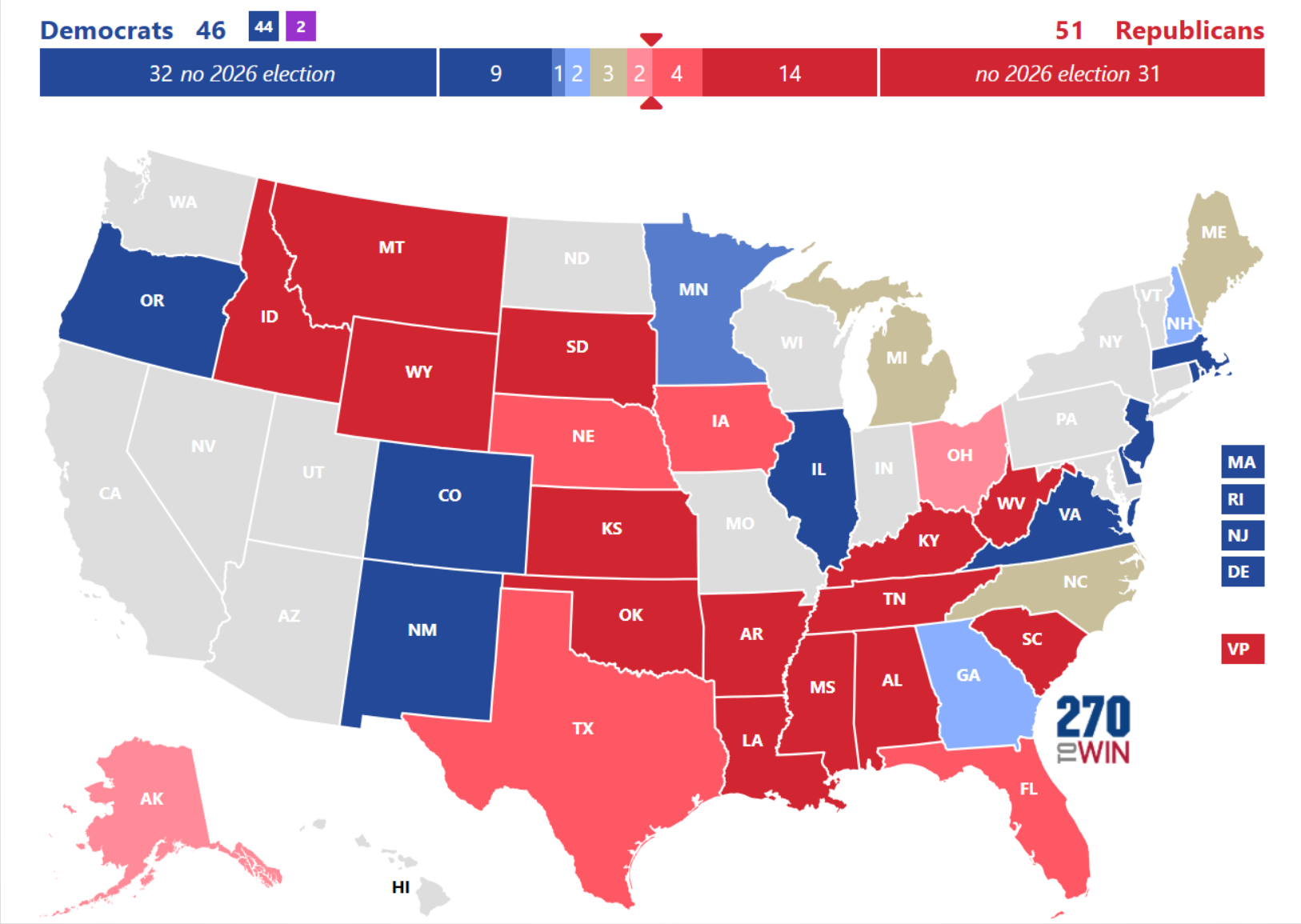
Sources: UVA Center for Politics, Sabato's Crystal Ball

Key 2026 Senate Races (Seats Currently Held by Republicans)

State	Democratic Candidates	Republican Candidates	Race Rating
Maine	Governor Janet Mills Graham Platner	Sen. Susan Collins	Toss-Up
North Carolina	Former Governor Roy Cooper	Former RNC Chair Michael Whatley	Toss-Up
Ohio**	Former Sen. Sherrod Brown	Sen. Jon Husted	Leans R
Iowa	State Rep. Josh Turek State Sen. Zach Wahls	Rep. Ashley Hinson	Likely R
Texas	State Rep. James Talarico^	Sen. John Cornyn Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton	Likely R
Nebraska	Dan Osborn (Independent)	Sen. Pete Ricketts	Likely R
Florida**	Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Vindman (Ret.)	Sen. Ashley Moody	Likely R

Sources: UVA Center for Politics, Sabato's Crystal Ball

Senate Outlook for 2026 Midterms



Sources: UVA Center for Politics, Sabato's Crystal Ball; 270ToWin

Texas 2026 Primary Results

- On March 3, Texas held its primary elections for several political offices, including its U.S. House seats and one of its U.S. Senate seats, as well as for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General.
- U.S. Senate:
 - **Democrats:**
 - **State Rep. James Talarico (D)** defeated **U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett (D)** in the Democratic primary. Talarico will be the party's nominee in the November general election.
 - **Republicans:**
 - **Incumbent Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX)** and **Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton (R)** both advance to a runoff election on May 26, as neither achieved 50% of the vote.



Texas State Rep. James Talarico,
Democratic Nominee for U.S. Senate

Texas 2026 Primary Results

- U.S. House:

- **Democrats:**

- With 74% of the vote in, **former Rep. Colin Allred (D-TX)** leads incumbent **Rep. Julie Johnson (D-TX)** in the primary for TX-33, 44.8% - 33.7%. This race appears to be headed to a May 26 runoff.
 - With 94% of the vote in, **incumbent Rep. Christian Menefee (D-TX-18)** leads fellow **incumbent Rep. Al Green (D-TX-9)** in the primary for the new TX-18, 46.1% - 44.2%. Both candidates were forced to run in the same district after Texas's latest round of redistricting. This race appears to be headed to a May 26 runoff.

- **Republicans:**

- **State Rep. Steve Toth (R)** defeated incumbent **Rep. Dan Crenshaw (R-TX)** in the TX-2 Republican primary.
 - Former professional baseball star **Mark Teixeira (R)** won the Republican nomination for TX-21. He will replace outgoing **Rep. Chip Roy (R-TX)**.
 - **Trever Nehls** won the Republican nomination for TX-22. He will replace his identical twin brother, outgoing **Rep. Troy Nehls (R-TX)**.



Former Rep. Colin Allred (D-TX) [above] &
Incumbent Rep. Julie Johnson (D-TX) [below]



Mid-Decade Redistricting Updates

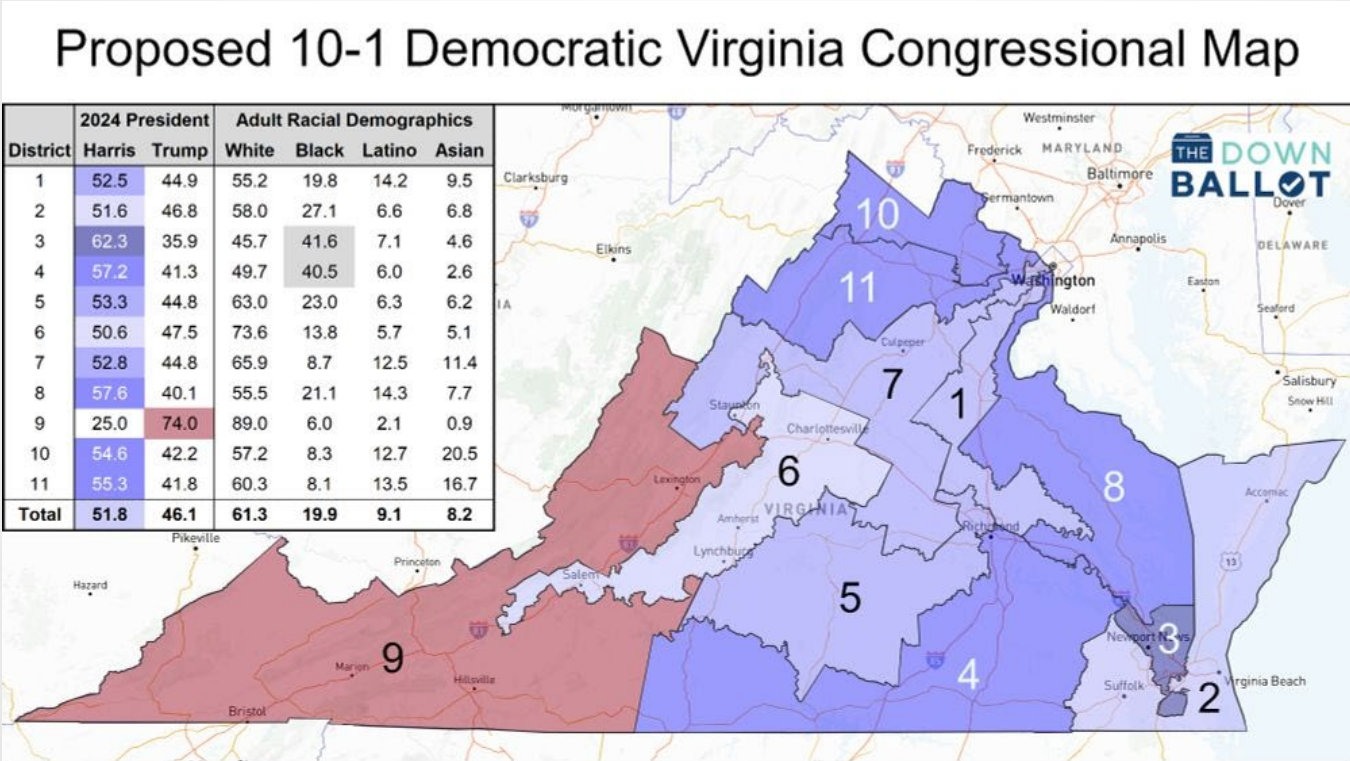
Congressional Redistricting – Virginia

- Democrats in the Virginia state legislature recently passed a constitutional amendment to pave the way for mid-decade redistricting of the state's U.S. House districts.
- The constitutional amendment was then scheduled for a statewide referendum on April 21.
- However, Republican litigation against the constitutional amendment and the new corresponding 10D-1R congressional map has put the status of the statewide vote in doubt.
 - A county judge initially ruled the amendment to be unlawful and prohibited it from being placed on the ballot this year.
 - The Virginia Supreme Court then reversed the decision of the county judge and allowed the referendum to proceed. The state's high court indicated it will hear the case this spring.
 - The case was brought back to the county judge again; the judge paused the referendum on February 19, and the state Supreme Court has not ruled on appeal yet, meaning it is uncertain if the April 21 election will be held.
- Virginia Democrats are still proceeding as if the election will take place, as they have passed a new map that will go into effect for the 2026 midterms if the referendum ultimately passes. Early voting begins on March 6.



Congressional Redistricting – Virginia

- If the statewide redistricting referendum vote is held and ultimately passes, the new Virginia [congressional map](#) that would be implemented for the midterm elections is below.



Proposed Virginia Congressional Map, with partisan lean
(based on 2024 presidential election results)

Congressional Redistricting – New York

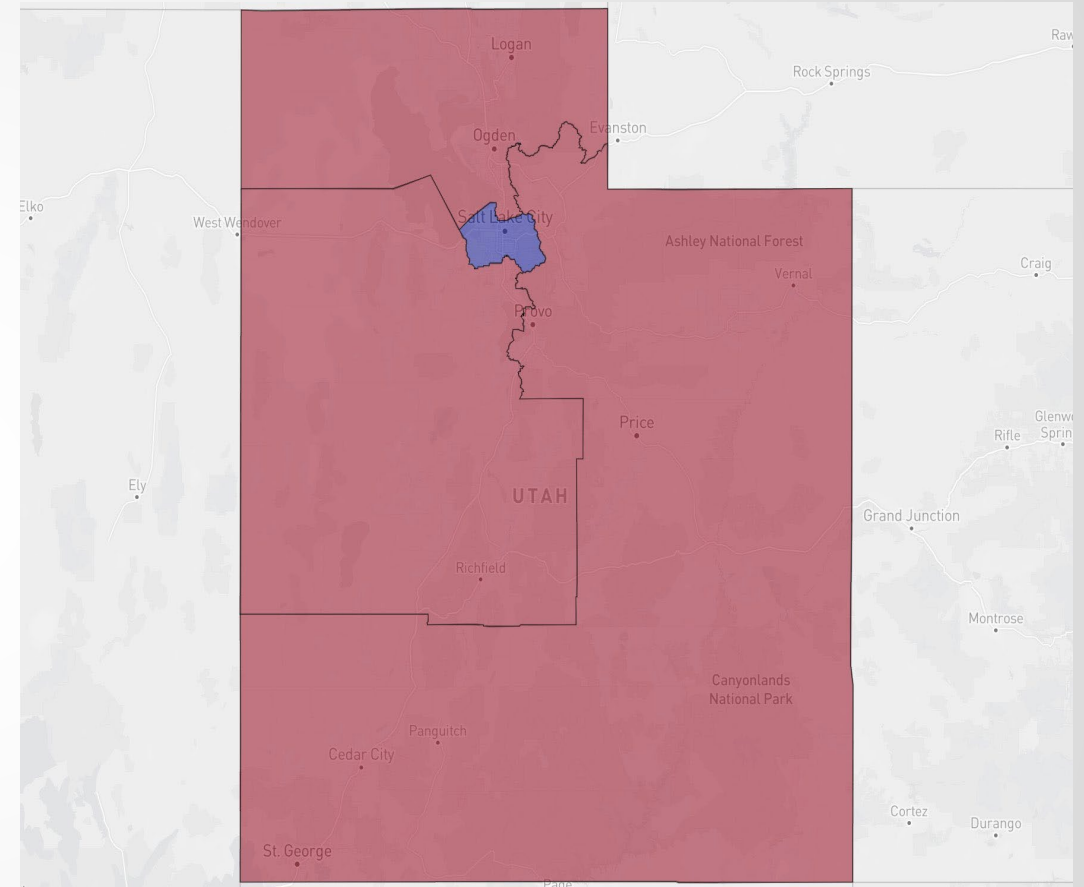
- On January 21, a New York state judge invalidated the boundaries of New York's 11th congressional district, ruling that the current district unconstitutionally diluted the votes of Black and Hispanic residents.
- The 11th district is the only congressional seat in New York City that is represented by a Republican: Rep. Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY). The seat includes southern Brooklyn and Staten Island.
- The state judge ordered New York's bipartisan Independent Redistricting Commission to redraw the boundaries of NY-11 by February 6.
- Republicans formally appealed the decision on January 26; they filed appeals to a mid-level New York appeals court and to the state's highest court, the Court of Appeals.
- The appeal ended up reaching the U.S. Supreme Court, and on March 2, the Court blocked the New York state court ruling, halting the state court order to redraw NY-11.
- As a result of the Supreme Court's ruling, New York's current congressional map will remain in place for the 2026 midterms, meaning Rep. Malliotakis will likely keep her seat this November.



Current NY-11 Rep. Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY)

Congressional Redistricting – Utah

- On February 20, the Utah Supreme Court rejected the Republican-led state legislature's appeal against the state's court-ordered new congressional [map](#).
- The ruling means that, at least for the 2026 elections, the [new map](#) will be in effect.
- The 2026 map for Utah creates a blue Democratic-leaning district (UT-1) in the Salt Lake City area that voted Harris +24 in the 2024 election, meaning Democrats will very likely gain a U.S. House seat for the cycle.
 - Republicans currently hold all four of the state's U.S. House districts.
- The three remaining congressional districts on the new map will be deep red Republican seats: UT-2 is Trump +29, UT-3 is Trump +41, and UT-4 is Trump +32.
- This will mark the first time in 25 years that Utah will have a congressional district that has a partisan Democratic lean.
- While not cited by Rep. Burgess Owens (R-UT), the loss of a Republican seat on the Utah map potentially contributed to Rep. Owens's decision (announced on March 4) to not seek re-election in November 2026.



Utah Congressional Map that will be used for the 2026 midterm elections

2026 Redistricting Outlook– GOP Likely to Have a Small Net Gain of Seats

- Republicans are not currently projected to net as many seats through redistricting as was initially expected, though if Virginia is unable to advance its pro-Democrat maps, then Republicans could see a moderately higher net gain.
- Republicans, while initially expected to achieve a net gain of at least 10 House seats, are now projected to be closer to 2-5 seats total for the 2026 midterms.
- Virginia and Florida are the two biggest wild cards. Virginia Democrats could gain 2-4 new seats if it receives favorable legal rulings on appeal, and if voters are able to vote on, and then approve, their constitutional amendment.
- Florida Republicans are likely to draw a new map this April that would give Republicans 2-5 new seats, though the final plan is still being developed.
- The redistricting efforts will lead to fewer moderate, toss-up seats and more partisan, safe seats for each party, impacting the political dynamics by further increasing political polarization in Congress.

State	Net New Seats
Texas	Republicans +4-5**
Missouri	Republicans +1**
California	Democrats +3-5**
Ohio	Republicans +1-2**
North Carolina	Republicans +1**
Utah	Democrats +1**
Florida	Republicans +2-5
Virginia	Democrats +2-4^
New York	Democrats +1
Maryland	Democrats +1

** = new maps have already been enacted

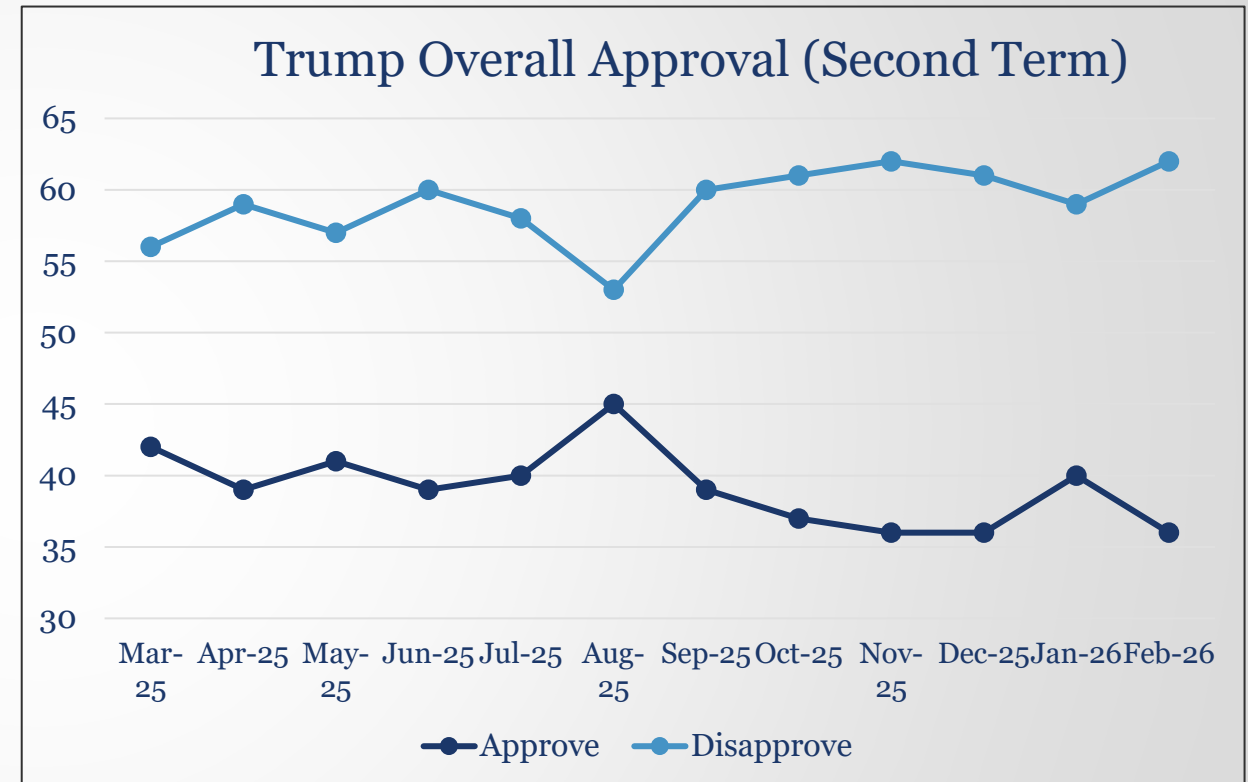
^ = status currently uncertain

Current Public Opinion Polling

*Polling results may vary from poll to poll based on polling methodology and reporting.
Results reported here are for context only.

President Trump's Approval Rating

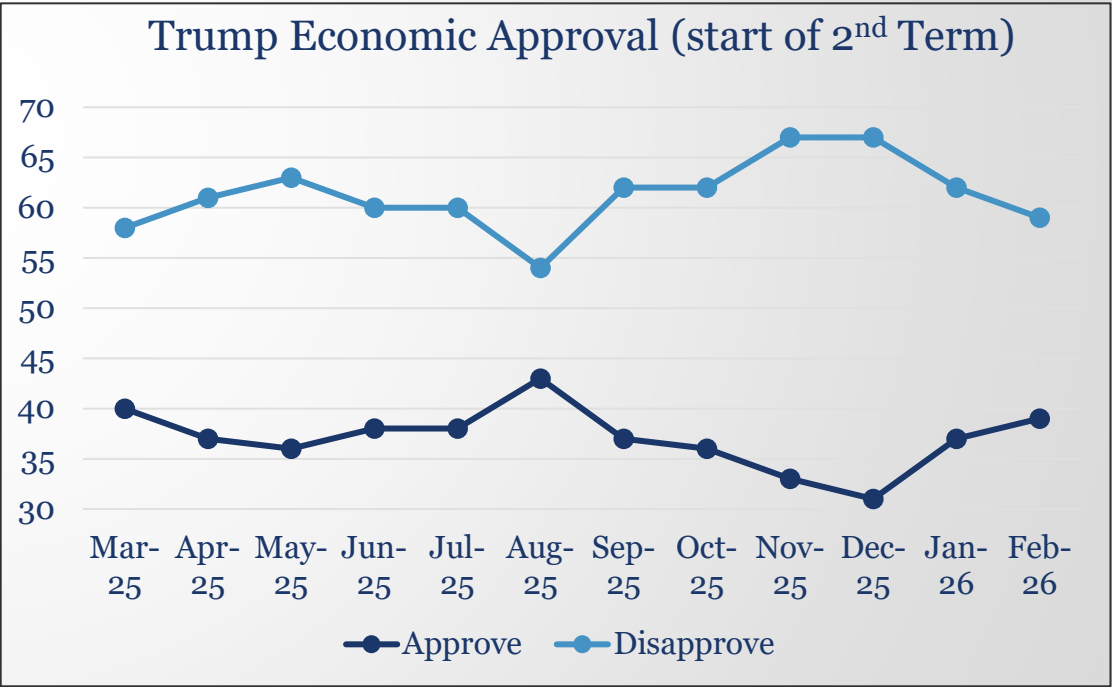
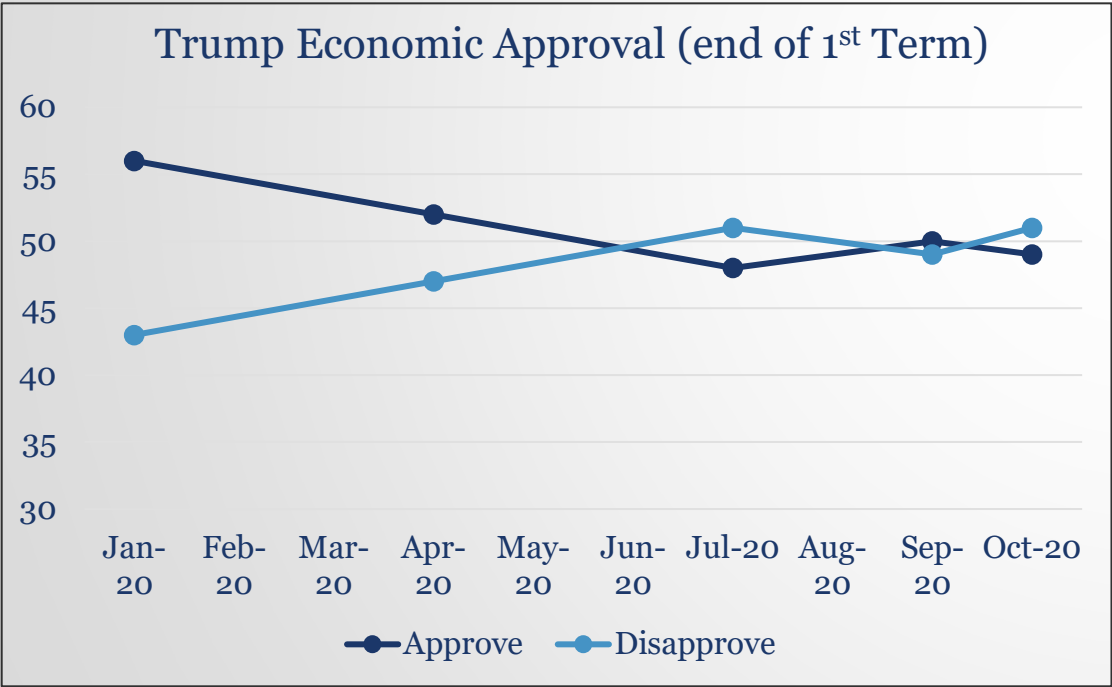
- President Trump's approval rating is currently 36%, according to the February 2026 AP-NORC poll.
- President Trump had a 42% approval rating in the first AP-NORC poll of his second term (March 2025).
- President Trump's approval rating never got higher than 43% in the AP-NORC poll during his first term (Jan. 2017 to Jan. 2021). In August 2025, he reached his highest approval rating across his two terms, 45%, according to the AP-NORC poll.
- The president's current disapproval rating is 62%. His highest disapproval rating in the AP-NORC poll across both of his terms came in December 2017 (67%). The highest disapproval rating of his second term was 62% in November 2025 and again in February 2026.



Source: AP-NORC Poll, February 5-8, 2026
1,156 adults; Online and telephone interviews
Margin of sampling error: +/- 3.9 percentage points

President Trump's Approval Rating on the Economy

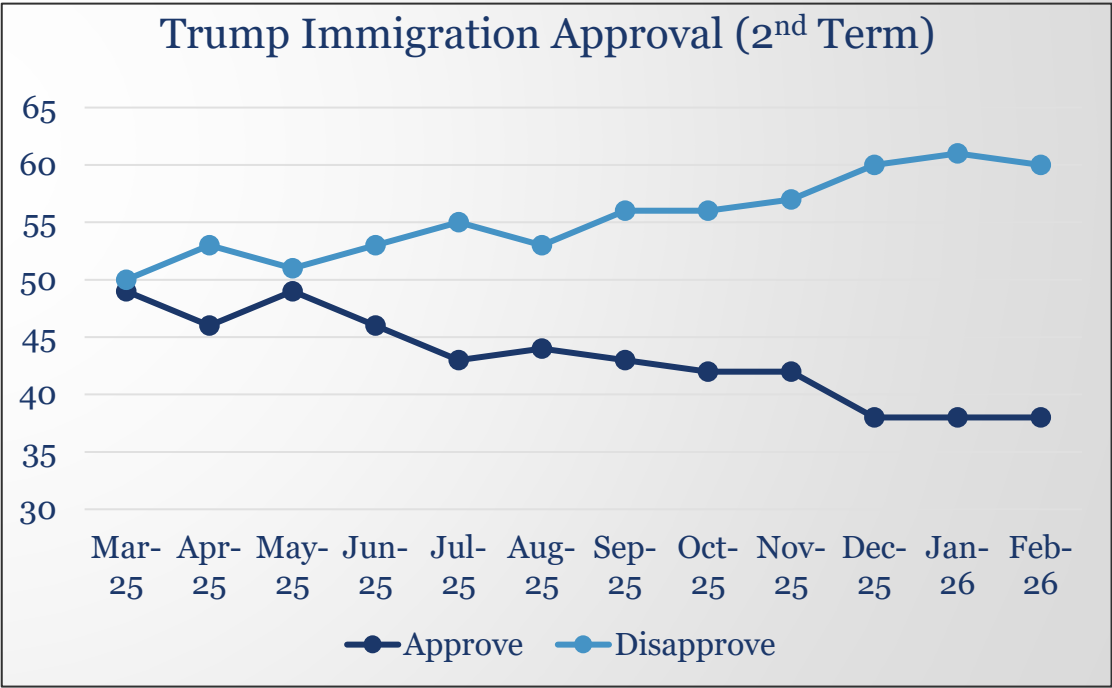
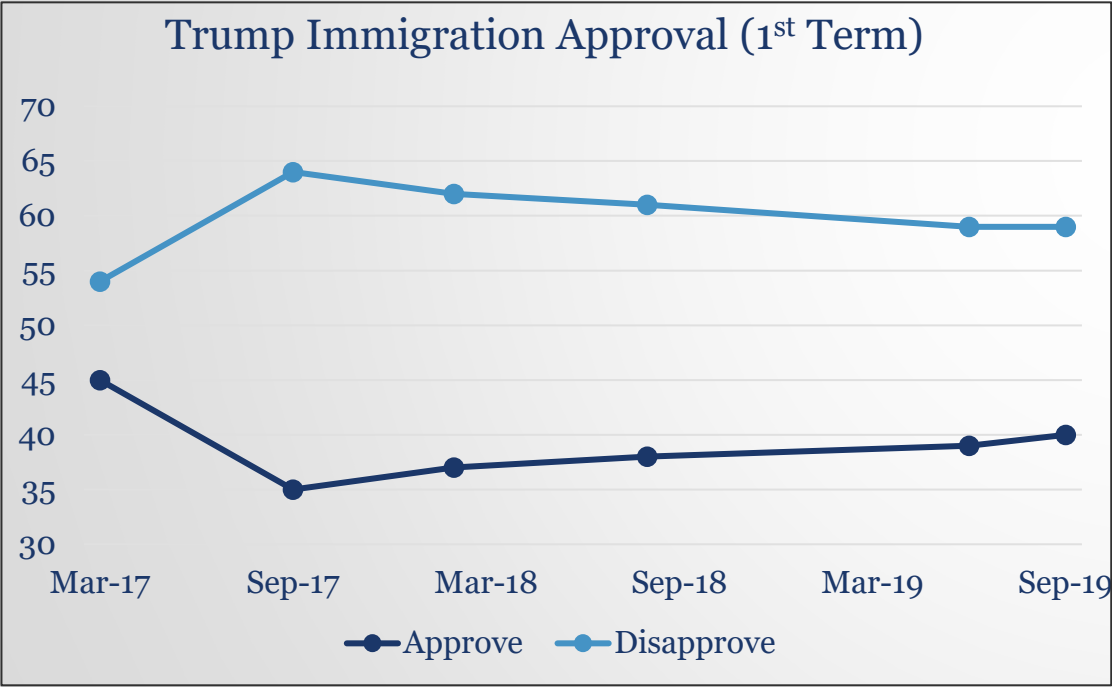
- President Trump currently has low approval ratings on the economy, with just 39% of Americans approving of his handling of the economy.
- 59% disapprove of the president's economic policies. This figure has rebounded slightly, though; President Trump's economic disapproval was at 67% in both November and December 2025, his highest economic disapproval rating to date in either of his two terms in office.
- President Trump enjoyed strong economic ratings in early 2020, though those numbers decreased as the COVID-19 pandemic progressed and worsened. Still, he hovered near 50% on the economy for most of the second half of 2020.



Source: AP-NORC Poll, February 5-8, 2026
1,156 adults; Online and telephone interviews
Margin of sampling error: +/- 3.9 percentage points

President Trump's Approval Rating on Immigration

- In what used to be one of President Trump's strongest issue areas during the 2024 campaign and at the start of his second term in winter 2025, the president has seen his approval ratings on immigration continue to worsen throughout the last nine months (38% approve; 60% disapprove).
- The president's current approval ratings on immigration more closely resemble those of his first term, when he was generally 20-30 points underwater.



Source: AP-NORC Poll, February 5-8, 2026
1,156 adults; Online and telephone interviews
Margin of sampling error: +/- 3.9 percentage points

Voters' Perception of Trump Administration Officials

- In the February 2026 poll, surveyed Americans were asked, “For each of the following, please indicate if you have an unfavorable or favorable impression. If you don't know enough to have an opinion, you can say that too.”

	Very/somewhat unfavorable	Very/somewhat favorable	Do not know/skipped
Vice President JD Vance	49%	32%	19%
Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.	45%	35%	20%
Secretary of State Marco Rubio	39%	30%	31%

Source: AP-NORC Poll, February 5-8, 2026
1,156 adults; Online and telephone interviews
Margin of sampling error: +/- 3.9 percentage points

Voters' Perceptions of Political Party Efficacy

- In the poll, surveyed Americans were asked, “Which party do you trust to do a better job of handling...”

	Republicans	Democrats	Both equally	Neither	Skipped
The economy	31%	26%	11%	32%	1%
Immigration	33%	29%	9%	28%	1%
Healthcare	23%	35%	11%	31%	1%
The cost of living	27%	27%	10%	36%	1%

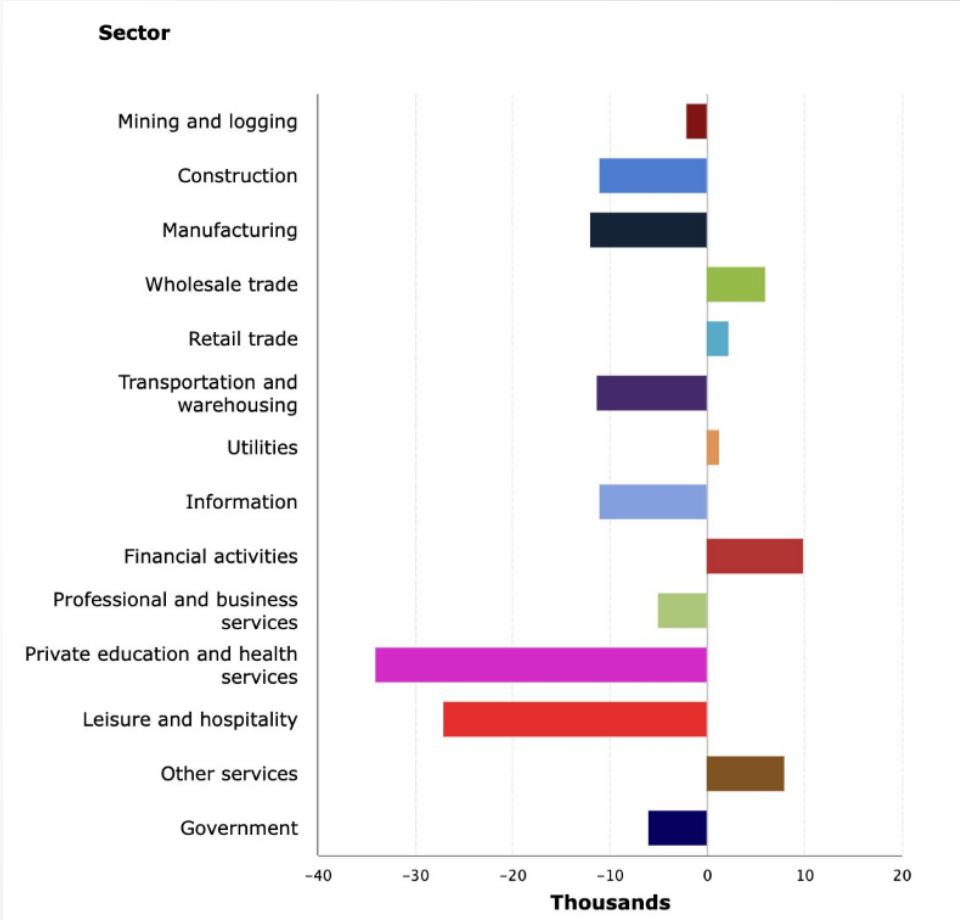
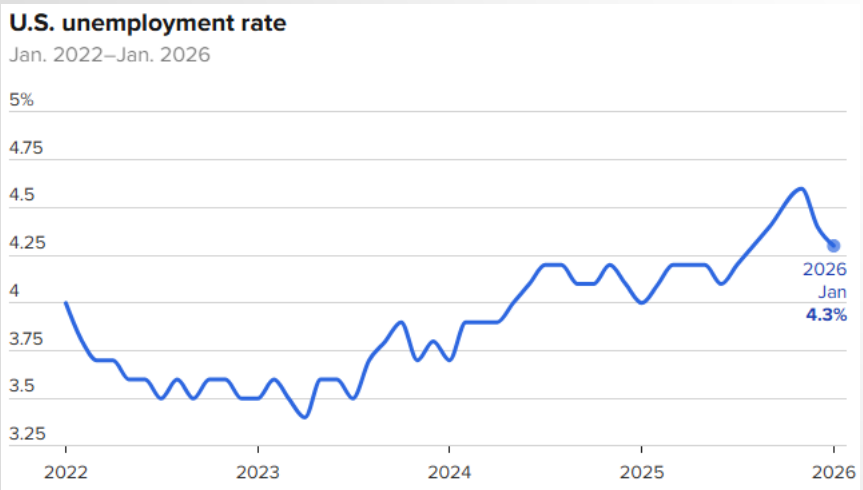
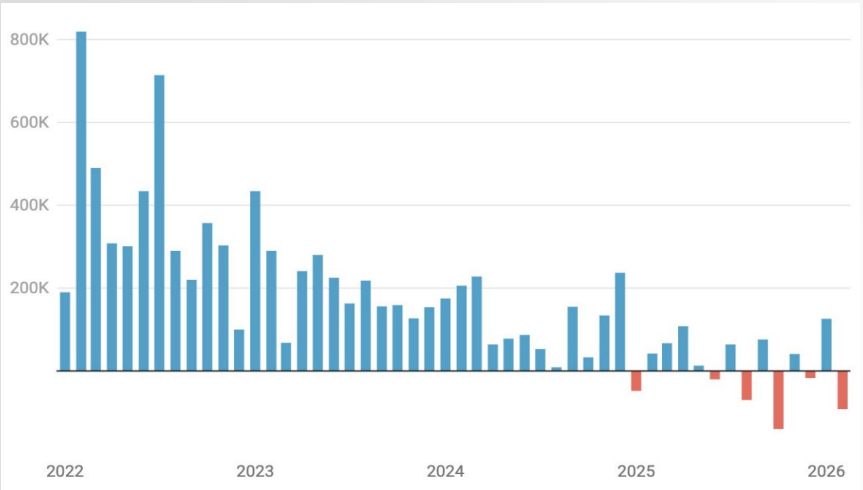
Source: AP-NORC Poll, February 5-8, 2026
1,156 adults; Online and telephone interviews
Margin of sampling error: +/- 3.9 percentage points

Economic Factors That Could Impact the Future Political Landscape

February 2026 Jobs Report

- On March 6, the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) [announced](#) that total nonfarm payroll employment decreased by **-92,000** in February, and that the unemployment rate increased slightly to 4.4%.
 - Economists with the Dow Jones estimated an *increase* of 50,000 jobs, meaning February job growth came in well below expectations.
 - The unemployment rate of 4.4% has not fallen below 4% since April 2024. 4.4% is one of the highest rates since 2021.
- The only two major industries that saw job increases in February were social assistance (**+9,000**) and finance (**+10,000**).
- Almost every other major industry sector saw job losses for the month, including:
 - Health care (**-28,000**); Manufacturing (**-12,000**); Hospitality (**-27,000**); Transportation/Warehousing (**-11,000**); Construction (**-11,000**); Information (**-11,000**); and Professional and Business Services (**-5,000**).
- The January 2026 jobs report was revised down slightly from +130,000 to +126,000. Additionally, revised December 2025 data indicate the job losses that month were even higher than originally reported, going from +54,000 to +41,000 to now **-17,000**.
- The U.S. economy has lost jobs since April 2025. Total net job gains from May 2025 to February 2026 are now -19,000.
- Wage growth for February was 3.8%, which is well above the current 2.4% inflation.

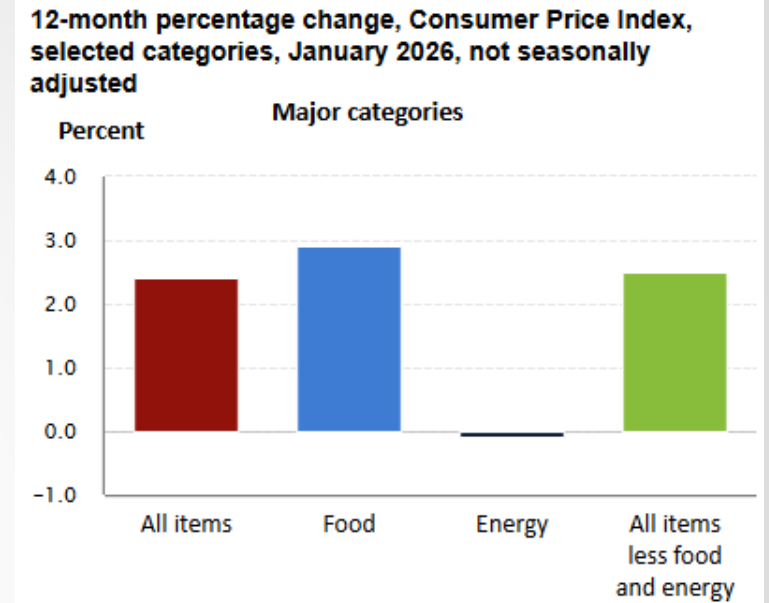
February 2026 Jobs Report – Key Data and Trends



January 2026 Inflation Report

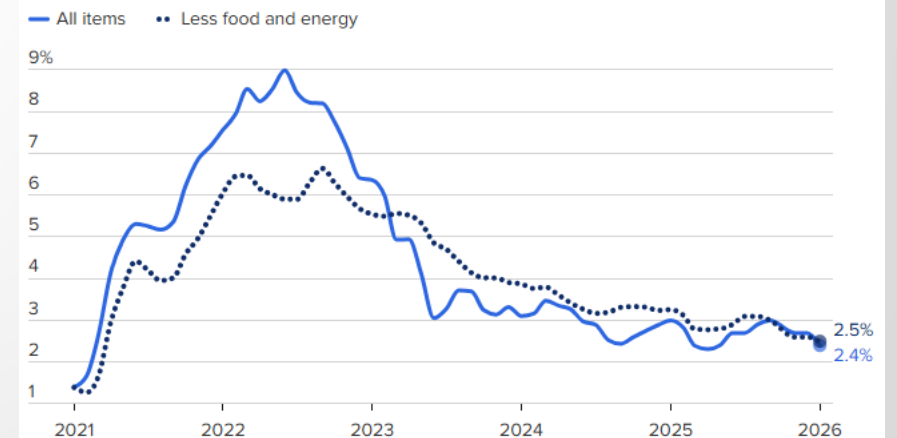
- On February 13, the U.S. BLS [announced](#) the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased 0.2% in January 2026 on a seasonally adjusted basis.
 - This increase was generally in line with experts' predictions.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics also reported that the CPI increased by 2.4% from January 2025.
 - This figure was down 0.3% from December 2025 and was slightly below economists' forecasts of 2.5%.
- “Core CPI,” which excludes food and energy prices, rose by 0.3% in January 2026 and by 2.5% on an annual basis from January 2025.
 - The annual reading was in line with economists' predictions, marking the lowest level since April 2021.

* The BLS is slated to release the February 2026 CPI figures on March 11, 2026.



U.S. consumer price index

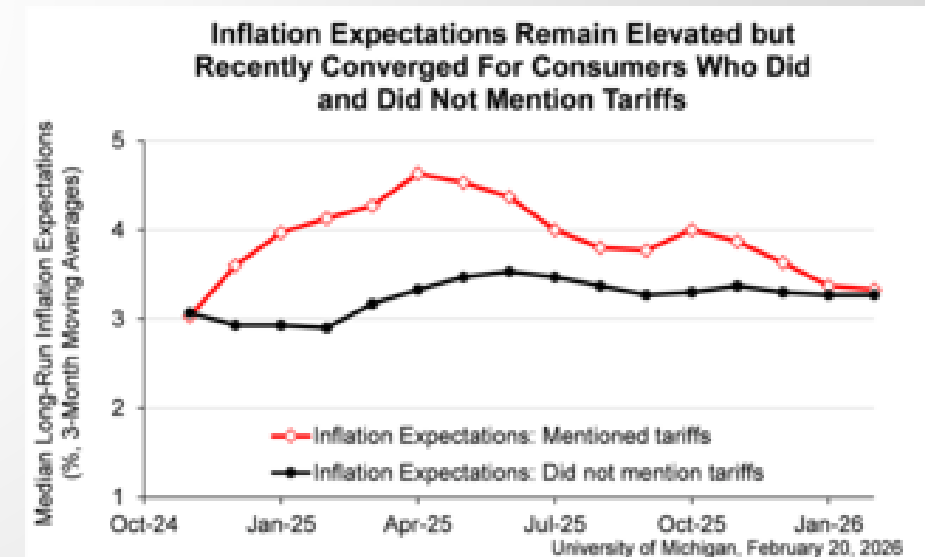
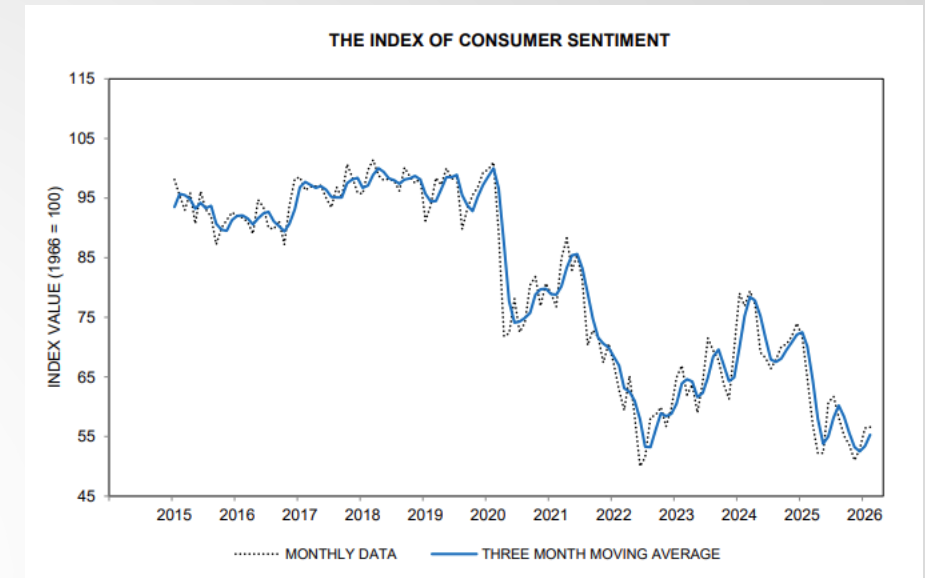
Year-over-year percent change | Jan. 2021–Jan. 2026



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Dept. of Labor; CNBC

Consumer Sentiment Report

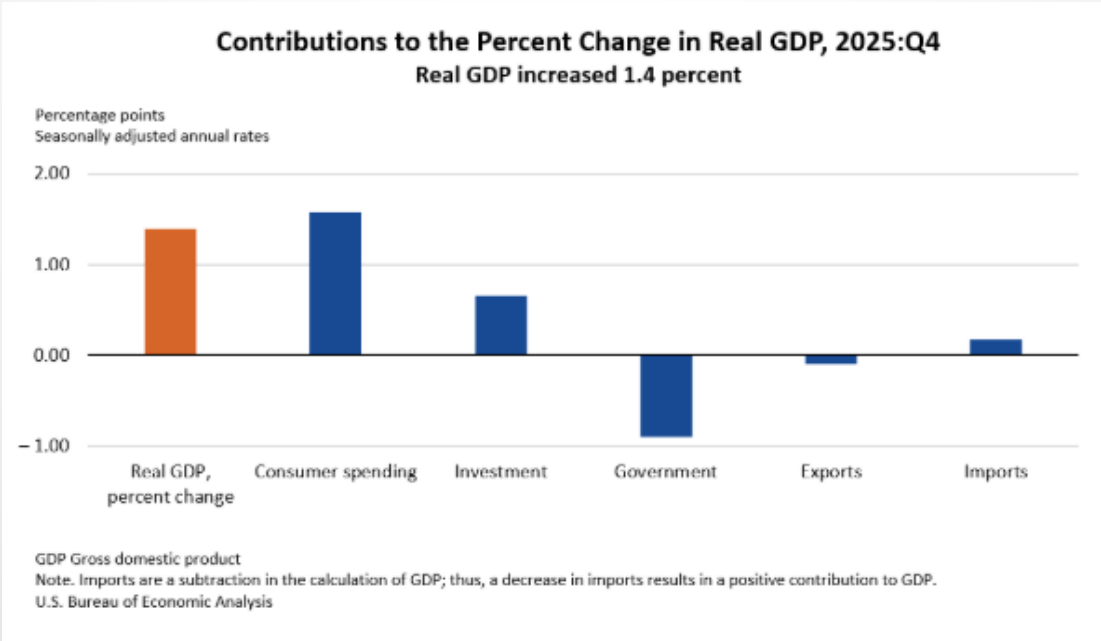
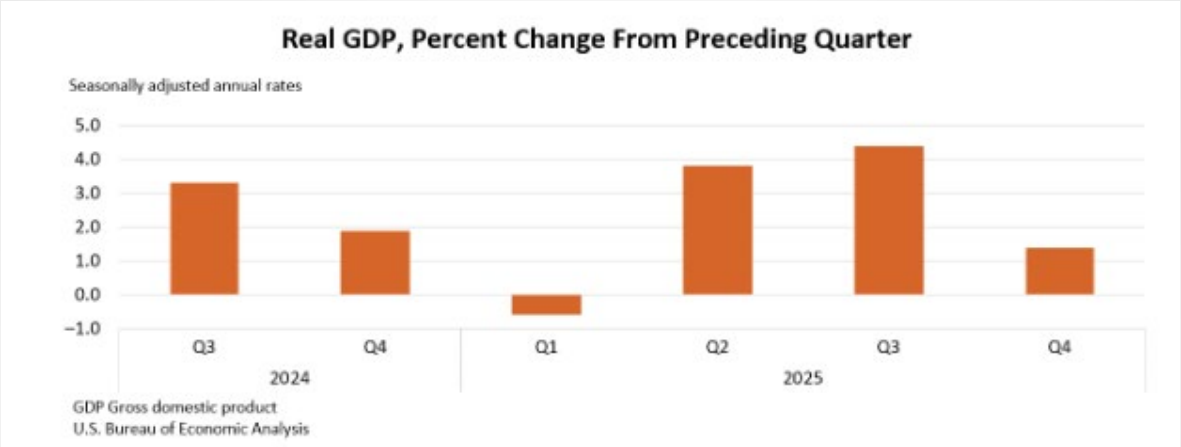
- Consumer sentiment for February 2026 increased to 56.6, which is a 0.4% *increase* from January 2026 (56.4).
 - This is an annual *decrease* of 12.5% from February 2025 (64.7)
 - This remains a sharp decline from the fall and winter of 2024 – consumer sentiment was above 70 for each month from September 2024 to January 2025.
- The Index of Consumer Sentiment varies by political party.
 - 41.8 among Democrats (+0.8 from January 2026)
 - 50.9 among Independents (+0.1 from January 2026)
 - 97.1 among Republicans (+0.3 from January 2026)
- Expectations for personal finances, labor markets, inflation, and business conditions:
 - Year-ahead inflation expectations fell from 4.0% to 3.4%, the lowest reading since January 2025. This month's reading still exceeds those seen in 2024 and remains well above the 2.3-3.0% range seen in the two years pre-pandemic.
 - Long-run inflation expectations held steady at 3.3%, just above the 2.8% and 3.2% range seen in 2024. In 2019 and 2020, long-run inflation expectations were consistently below 2.8%.
 - Uncertainty, as measured by the middle 50% of expectations, is now its lowest since December 2024 for the short run and October 2024 for the long run.



GDP Reports and Economic Outlook

- On February 20, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) [released](#) its “advanced estimate” of U.S. real gross domestic product (GDP) for the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2025. The BEA reported that real GDP *increased* at an annual rate of 1.4% in Q4 2025 (adjusted for seasonality and inflation); real GDP for Q3 2025 remains unchanged at 4.4% from the “[revised estimate](#).”
 - Real GDP increased 2.2% in 2025 (from the 2024 annual level to the 2025 annual level), compared with an increase of 2.8% in 2024.
 - The annualized rate of 1.4% came in well below the Dow Jones estimate for a 2.5% increase.
- The price index for gross domestic purchases increased by 3.7% in Q4; an increase from 3.4% in Q3 2025.
- Personal consumption expenditures (PCEs), which reflect consumer activity, [increased](#) by 2.4% in Q4 2025 (unchanged from the initial estimate), down from a 3.9% increase in Q4 2024, a 3.5% increase in Q3 2025, and the 2.5% increase in Q2 2025, but up from the 0.6% increase in Q1 2025.
- The PCE price index, which is a key inflation variable for the Federal Reserve, increased at a 2.9% annualized pace for Q4 2025. This is slightly higher than the 2.8% figure from Q3 2025.
- The Q4 2025 report did not include data on the personal savings rate, which is personal savings as a percentage of disposable income. The personal savings rate for Q4 2025, as of this estimate, is 3.6%. This is the lowest reading since at least 2023.

Real GDP Growth Over the Last Six Quarters



Thank you



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