

REPORT · SEPTEMBER 2026

# The Old Dominion *Affordability* Crisis

*Trump deliberately tears Virginians from their jobs and health care while his failed agenda drives costs higher across the commonwealth.*

A REPORT · SEPTEMBER 2026

# Trump is deliberately *tearing* *Virginians'* financial security away.

Donald Trump is deliberately tearing Virginians' financial security away. He has ripped tens of thousands of workers from their jobs, wiped out six years of federal job growth in under a year, and dragged the commonwealth toward two straight years of job losses. Cost-of-living is now a defining issue in the commonwealth – and for good reason. Inflation and the cost-of-living rank as Virginians' most pressing issue, more than four in ten residents now say they are worse off financially than a year ago, electricity rates have climbed over 28 percent since Trump took office, Virginians have paid \$2 billion+ more for gas since Trump started his war with Iran, and health insurance premiums jumped for hundreds of thousands of Virginians after Trump and Republicans ended ACA tax credits. Nearly half of Virginia renters are also cost-burdened.

Meanwhile, Trump and Republicans are ripping away the help families depend on: more than 300,000 Virginians stand to lose their health care, and over 125,000 Virginians have already lost food assistance, while Virginia hospitals stand to lose \$26 billion because of the Trump-GOP health care cuts. At the same time, Trump's tariffs and his war with Iran are pushing the price of everything higher, compounding a cost-of-living crisis that Virginians name as their top concern. The average Virginia family has already had to spend an estimated \$3,200+ more on everyday essentials since Trump took office, and the squeeze is only deepening.

Throughout his second term, the President and Republicans in Congress have worked in lockstep to reward their rich and powerful friends at the expense of everyone else. They are obliterating the economic security of millions across the country, and working families in Virginia are the ones paying the price.

— BY THE NUMBERS

# The Old Dominion affordability crisis, in figures.

**\$3,200+**

More the average Virginia family has spent on everyday essentials under Trump.

*Joint Economic Committee*

**23,500**

Net federal civilian jobs lost in Virginia in 2025 – wiping out six years of federal job gains in 11 months.

*WHRO · VCIJ*

**300,000+**

Virginians who stand to lose health care coverage due to Trump-GOP Medicaid and ACA cuts.

*Office of the Governor*

**\$31B**

Virginia hospitals stand to lose over the next decade from Trump-GOP Medicaid cuts and a new CMS rule.

*Virginia Mercury*

**+28%**

Rise in Virginia electricity rates since Trump took office again in January.

*Heatmap News*

**\$2B+**

Extra Virginians have paid for gas since Trump started his war with Iran – \$702 per household on average.

*Joint Economic Committee*

**125,000+**

Virginians already off SNAP food assistance since the Trump-GOP bill – a nearly 15% drop.

*Center on Budget & Policy Priorities*

**94,000**

Fewer Virginians enrolled in ACA coverage as premiums have skyrocketed.

*Virginia Mercury*

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**SECTION 01 · COST OF LIVING**

## Cost-of-living is Virginians' *top concern*.

Virginia residents are facing high prices due to Trump's economic policies. Inflation and the cost-of-living rank as the commonwealth's most pressing issue, according to the latest Commonwealth Poll, and nearly half of Virginia voters believe things are headed in the wrong direction. A January Wason Center poll found that 62 percent of Virginians disapprove of Trump's job performance, with inflation and the cost of living again topping the list of issues facing the commonwealth. Virginians' view of current economic conditions has fallen to its lowest level since the 2022 inflation spike, according to Roanoke College, as renewed inflation driven largely by gas and energy prices from Trump's war in Iran strains household budgets. More than four in ten Virginians (42%) now say they are worse off financially than they were a year ago, and their expectations for the year ahead essentially match the lowest reading in the survey's 15-year history. The average Virginia family has had to spend an estimated \$3,200 more on everyday essentials under Trump, according to the Joint Economic Committee. Trump's tariffs alone cost American households an average of \$1,000 in 2025 and are expected to cost hundreds more in 2026.

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SECTION 02 · FEDERAL JOBS

## Trump deliberately *ripped* Virginians from their jobs.

Virginia relies on federal employment more than most other states, and Trump's mass layoffs have deliberately targeted the commonwealth's workers. Trump's DOGE cuts wiped out six years of Virginia federal job gains in just 11 months, driving a net loss of 23,500 federal civilian jobs in 2025. Company layoffs reported to the commonwealth totaled nearly 7,000 workers last year, up roughly 70 percent from 2024 and more than the previous four years combined. The D.C. region ended 2025 with around 56,000 fewer jobs than a year prior, and 96 percent of those losses stemmed directly from federal layoffs, according to Brookings. Virginia lost 47,900 jobs between July 2025 and July 2026, including 19,400 federal jobs, putting the commonwealth on track for two straight years of job losses and its first job losses in a non-pandemic year since the Great Recession. In July, Virginia's unemployment rate stood 0.4 points higher than a year earlier, and the share of Virginians working or looking for work fell to 63 percent.

“*Trump's DOGE cuts wiped out six years of Virginia federal job gains in just 11 months.*”

— WHRO · VIRGINIA CENTER FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

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**SECTION 03 · HEALTH CARE**

## Virginia health care costs are up thanks to *Trump & Republicans*.

The Trump-GOP law cut over \$1 trillion from Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the largest health care cuts in American history. Virginia voters oppose the Trump-GOP law by a 25-point margin (59 to 34 percent), and 70 percent view it unfavorably when told of its impacts on the commonwealth. More than 300,000 Virginians stand to lose their health care because of the Trump-GOP cuts, and the Joint Economic Committee estimates the law will strip coverage from 322,984 Virginians. Already, over 125,000 Virginians who relied on Medicaid or CHIP have lost their coverage after the passage of the Trump-GOP cuts. After Trump and Republicans ripped away ACA tax credits, Virginia insurers proposed average premium increases of 20 percent or higher for 2026. Insurers are now seeking another 16.7 percent average increase for 2027 on top of those hikes, citing the elimination of enhanced federal subsidies as one of the drivers. Enrollment in Virginia ACA health care coverage has already fallen by 94,000 as premiums have skyrocketed.

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*Virginia hospitals on the brink.*

Virginia hospitals stand to lose as much as \$31 billion over the next decade because of the Trump-GOP Medicaid cuts and a new proposed rule. Rural hospitals are particularly vulnerable to these cuts. 13 of the commonwealth's 31 rural hospitals are at risk of closure, according to Virginia's Joint Commission on Health Care. Since the Trump-GOP law passed, 33 health care facilities are at risk of cuts or closure, or have already closed. Medicaid payments account for up to a third of revenue at the commonwealth's rural hospitals.

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**SECTION 04 · FAMILY COSTS**

## Raising a family in Virginia costs *more* under Trump.

This school year will cost families nearly \$4,000 per child, up nearly 11 percent from last year, with a typical basket of school supplies costing 7.7 percent more and typical lunch items costing almost 11 percent more. Trump's tariffs are driving up back-to-school costs for Virginia families because most school supplies, from notebooks to markers to glue, are imported and now arrive at the higher tariff rate. 68 percent of parents say the supplies they normally buy cost more than they did last year, and nearly half of parents (45%) plan to take on debt just to afford back-to-school shopping. Child care in Virginia now costs an average of \$16,796 a year, roughly \$1,400 a month, and commonwealth lawmakers note that families are paying "as much as a mortgage" for care. Meanwhile, 79 percent of Virginia voters now say the cost of college in the commonwealth is too high, up from 70 percent just last winter.

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**SECTION 05 · SMALL BUSINESS**

## Virginia small businesses are *suffering*.

Trump's tariffs are squeezing the commonwealth's small businesses. Virginia is home to over 880,000 small businesses that employ an estimated 1.6 million workers. Northern Virginia small business owners say they have no choice but to pass Trump's tariff costs on to their customers. The Trump-GOP move to rip away ACA tax credits hits small businesses especially hard: 3.3 million small business owners and self-employed workers nationwide were covered by ACA marketplace plans, including many in Virginia.

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### *Tariffs squeeze the Port of Virginia.*

Cargo volumes at the Port of Virginia fell 8.1 percent in 2025, with exports down 7 percent after trading partners retaliated against Trump's tariffs. Economists have warned that prolonged tariffs could trigger cascading job losses across the commonwealth, from longshoremen to truck drivers to warehouse workers, as less cargo moves through Hampton Roads.

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### *Virginia farmers lost their biggest customer.*

Trump's trade war stripped Virginia farmers of their number one buyer. China was the commonwealth's top agricultural export customer, with Virginia's agricultural and forestry exports exceeding \$3.6 billion in 2023. After China retaliated against Trump's tariffs, it stopped buying U.S. soybeans for months in 2025, and Virginia's agricultural exports to China fell by \$49.4 million in the first eight months of the year alone. Even after a trade truce restarted purchases, Chinese buyers continued shifting toward Latin American competitors. At the same time, Trump's tariffs and war with Iran are driving up the cost of critical inputs like fertilizer, herbicides, machinery, and feed.

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**SECTION 06 · HOUSING**

## The Old Dominion *housing crunch*.

Nearly half (46%) of Virginia renters spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Median commonwealth-wide rent has climbed 26 percent over the last four years, and over half of the commonwealth's renters are considered cost-burdened, according to the Virginia Housing Finance Agency. Nearly eight in ten extremely low-income renters are cost-burdened. Virginia families have spent \$686 more on housing costs such as rent and mortgage payments since Trump took office. Homebuilders and homebuyers have been heavily impacted by Trump's tariffs, with builders estimating a typical cost of \$10,900 per home from past tariff actions and more than 60 percent reporting higher costs as a direct result.

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**SECTION 07 · ENERGY & GAS**

## Virginia energy costs & gas prices *skyrocketing*.

Virginia electricity rates are up more than 28 percent since Trump took office again last January. Families in Virginia paid \$170 more for electricity in 2025 under Trump than in 2024, and are projected to have paid \$211 more in just the first half of 2026 than in the same stretch of 2024. Virginians feel the strain: two-thirds of commonwealth voters say they are very or extremely concerned about the cost of their household electricity bills. Trump's war with Iran has pushed gas prices over \$4 a gallon in the commonwealth, and Virginians have paid \$2 billion+ more for gas since the war began, with Virginia households paying \$702 more on average, among the steepest jumps in the nation. For a Virginia family driving the most popular pickup truck, a fill-up now runs \$142 – a roughly 40 percent increase compared to before the war.

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### *Trump killed Virginia energy investments & jobs.*

Since Trump's election, over \$661 million in Virginia energy investments have been lost, cancelled, or stalled, putting hundreds of commonwealth jobs on the line. After Trump and Republicans killed the clean energy tax credits, 32 Virginia projects were put in jeopardy of losing federal credits, among the most of any state. Trump's Interior Department also halted construction on the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind project just before Christmas, a stoppage that cost nearly \$230 million before a federal judge let work resume in January. The delay helped push the project's price tag to \$11.5 billion, and under the project's cost-sharing terms, Dominion customers cover half of any overruns above \$10.3 billion.

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**SECTION 08 · HELP RIPPED AWAY**

## Help *ripped away* from Virginians.

Trump's budget cuts are ripping away vital assistance for food, health care, and more from hundreds of thousands of Virginians. Trump and Republicans in Congress cut \$187 billion in food assistance, which helped 827,800 Virginians put food on the table. Compared to last June, before Trump and Republicans passed their cuts to food assistance, Virginia has already lost over 125,000 SNAP participants, a nearly 15 percent drop. Starting October 1, Trump's law shifts SNAP administrative costs onto the commonwealth, forcing Virginia to shoulder \$153 million in new costs over the next two years or shed even more SNAP enrollees.

# DEFEND AMERICA ACTION

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## *Working Virginians are paying the price. It's time to fight back.*

Defend America Action is a 501(c)(4) organization dedicated to defending working families from the destructive policies of the Trump administration and Congressional Republicans.

Every figure and citation in this report links to its source – from Roanoke College and Virginia Commonwealth University to the Joint Economic Committee, Virginia Mercury, Cardinal News, and the commonwealth's independent newsrooms.

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*DefendAmericaAction.org*

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