

DEFEND **AMERICA**
ACTION

REPORT · OCTOBER 2026

The Keystone State *Affordability* Crisis

*Trump drives costs higher across the commonwealth while ripping away
Pennsylvanians' health care and food assistance.*

DEFEND AMERICA ACTION

DefendAmericaAction.org

A REPORT • OCTOBER 2026

Trump is driving up the cost of nearly everything Pennsylvanians need while *tearing away* their health care and food assistance.

Donald Trump is driving up the cost of nearly everything Pennsylvanians need while tearing away their health care and food assistance. The economy ranks as Pennsylvanians' most pressing problem, nearly half of voters say they are worse off financially than a year ago, and more than half say they have trouble paying for utilities and groceries. Electricity prices have risen twice in the past year despite Trump's promise to cut energy costs in half, Pennsylvanians have paid \$3 billion more for gas since Trump started his war with Iran, and health insurance premiums skyrocketed for 421,996 Pennsylvanians after Trump and Republicans ended ACA tax credits.

Meanwhile, Trump and Republicans are ripping away the help families depend on: around 307,250 Pennsylvanians have already lost their ACA, Medicaid, or CHIP coverage, another 310,000 could lose Medicaid when new requirements begin in January, and more than 235,000 Pennsylvanians have fallen off food assistance, while Pennsylvania hospitals stand to lose \$22.5 billion because of the Trump-GOP health care cuts. At the same time, Trump's trade war with Canada, the commonwealth's largest export market, and his war with Iran are pushing the price of everything higher. The average Pennsylvania family has already had to spend an estimated \$4,700+ 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 Pennsylvania are the ones paying the price.

— BY THE NUMBERS

The Keystone State affordability crisis, in figures.

\$4,700+

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

Joint Economic Committee

44%

Of Pennsylvania voters say they are financially worse off than a year ago. 73% say Trump is doing a fair or poor job.

Franklin & Marshall College Poll

+208%

Average ACA premium increase for the 421,996 Pennsylvanians who counted on tax credits — gone this year.

Center for American Progress

307,250

Pennsylvanians who have already lost ACA, Medicaid, or CHIP coverage since the Trump-GOP cuts passed.

Georgetown CCF · Pennie

310,000

Additional Pennsylvanians who could lose Medicaid when new work rules begin January 1.

PA Department of Human Services

\$22.5B

Loss PA hospitals face over the next decade from Trump-GOP Medicaid cuts.

State Health & Value Strategies

235,000+

Pennsylvanians off SNAP since the Trump-GOP cuts — a 12% drop, including nearly 68,000 children.

Center on Budget & Policy Priorities

\$3B+

Extra Pennsylvanians have paid for gas since Trump's war with Iran — \$548 per household on average.

Joint Economic Committee

— SECTION 01 · COST OF LIVING

Cost-of-living is Pennsylvanians' *top concern*.

The economy ranks as the commonwealth's most pressing problem, according to the August Franklin & Marshall College Poll, and it is the top concern of every partisan group. Nearly half of Pennsylvania voters (44%) say they are worse off financially than a year ago. More than half say it is difficult to pay their utility bills (57%) or to pay for groceries (55%), and nearly four in five had difficulty paying for at least one basic expense. Only 15 percent rate the Trump administration's handling of inflation positively, down from 31 percent last October, 73 percent say Trump is doing only a fair or poor job, and just one in three believes his policies have helped them personally. The average Pennsylvania family has had to spend an estimated \$4,700 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.

— *Grocery costs keep climbing.*

Grocery prices are now more than 4 percent higher than when Trump took office, with ground beef at a record of more than \$7 per pound and coffee at more than \$9 per pound. More than 1.7 million Pennsylvanians don't have enough food, Feeding Pennsylvania's CEO told state senators in July, and the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank distributed 830,000 more pounds of food in fiscal 2026 than the year before. Allegheny County Executive Sara Innamorato said families are now asking, "What can we afford this week?"

“*Families are now asking, “What can we afford this week?”*”

— ALLEGHENY COUNTY EXECUTIVE SARA INNAMORATO

— SECTION 02 · JOBS

Pennsylvania workers are *losing good jobs*.

Plant closures and cutbacks are costing Pennsylvanians good jobs. JBS [filed notice](#) in June that closing its Souderton beef plant would affect over 1,500 workers. A last-minute deal [saved](#) around 400 jobs, but beef operations ended Aug. 14, and the shutdown was expected to eliminate 1,500 union-represented jobs. The president of UFCW Local 1776 [testified](#) in July that his union has lost over 6,000 jobs since Trump's election, blaming tariffs and immigration policy.

JBS · SOUDERTON

[Filed notice](#) to close its Souderton beef plant, eliminating 1,500 union-represented jobs — a last-minute deal [saved](#) about 400.

AMAZON FRESH · PHILADELPHIA AREA

[Filed notice](#) in January of layoffs affecting 983 workers in the Philadelphia area.

LEHIGH VALLEY HEALTH NETWORK / JEFFERSON HEALTH

[Cut](#) between 600 and 700 jobs.

CLEVELAND CLIFFS · STEELTON

Plant [closed](#) after [laying off](#) 559 workers.

CORSA COAL · SOMERSET COUNTY

332 miners [lost their jobs](#).

VOLVO / MACK TRUCKS · MACUNGIE

[Announced](#) hundreds of layoffs, [citing](#) tariffs.

PENN MEDICINE · UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA HEALTH SYSTEM

[Cut](#) 300 jobs.

PHILIPS RESPIRONICS · WESTMORELAND COUNTY

[Cut](#) 196 jobs.

PRYSMIAN • SCHUYLKILL COUNTY

Closed a Schuylkill County facility employing 150.

SNYDER OF BERLIN • SOMERSET COUNTY

Ceasing operations in Somerset County by the end of 2026.

SECTION 03 · HEALTH CARE

Pennsylvania 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. After Trump and Republicans ripped away ACA tax credits, premiums skyrocketed for 421,996 Pennsylvanians, and premiums for those who counted on the credits increased by an average of 208 percent this year. A 60-year-old Pennsylvania couple making \$85,000 saw annual premium costs rise by \$16,271 to \$23,496. Pennsylvania regulators have now approved another 15.97 percent average increase for 2027, on top of an average 21.5 percent increase in 2026. Nearly 202,000 Pennsylvanians have cancelled their ACA coverage through Pennie as premiums have skyrocketed, and 105,250 Pennsylvanians who relied on Medicaid or CHIP have lost their coverage after the passage of the Trump-GOP cuts. Another 310,000 Pennsylvanians could lose their health care when new Medicaid work requirements and six-month eligibility checks begin January 1, according to the state Department of Human Services, and 450,000 are anticipated to become uninsured between 2025 and 2034.

Pennsylvania hospitals on the brink.

Pennsylvania hospitals stand to lose \$22.5 billion over the next decade because of the Trump-GOP Medicaid cuts, and hospitals and clinics face a \$229 million funding loss and a 5.0 percent spike in uncompensated care demand from the loss of the tax credits. Since the Trump-GOP law passed, 53 health care facilities are at risk of cuts or closure, or have already closed. Bradford Regional Medical Center closed its emergency room and inpatient services; Temple University Hospital, Grand View Hospital, and Warren General Hospital closed obstetrics or labor and delivery units; and Pottstown Hospital closed its ICU.

Everyone pays more.

The 6,400,900 Pennsylvanians with employer-sponsored insurance are staring down a double-digit cost hike, with employers projecting health plan costs to rise 11.1 percent nationwide in 2027. More than 153,000 Pennsylvania children already lack health insurance, the highest number in 10 years.

SECTION 04 · SMALL BUSINESS

Pennsylvania small businesses are *suffering*.

Trump's tariffs are squeezing the commonwealth's businesses. Pennsylvania importers paid \$7.8 billion across all tariffs between March 2025 and January 2026, including \$4.5 billion in tariffs the Supreme Court struck down in February and that small businesses are still waiting to have refunded. Small businesses that offer health coverage will see an average 10.28 percent premium increase in 2027, after a 12.7 percent increase in 2026, and PECO's default electricity price for small business customers rose roughly 17 percent on June 1.

Trump's trade war with Canada hits Pennsylvania's largest export market.

The commonwealth exported about \$14 billion in goods to Canada last year, about 27 percent of its total exports. After Trump imposed his latest 50 percent tariffs on Canadian goods, Canada retaliated with tariffs of 15 to 50 percent on about \$20 billion worth of U.S. goods, including steel, aluminum, cheese and farm equipment. About \$2.85 billion in Pennsylvania export sales will be hit, according to the state Department of Community & Economic Development, and a new analysis from Swarthmore and Baruch College economists estimates Pennsylvania faces roughly \$862 million in exposure to Canada's retaliatory tariffs, the most of any state. "There's so much chaos," said the president of a Westmoreland County machining company, who pays a 50 percent tariff on the Canadian aluminum he buys, has had to raise prices, and estimates about 20 percent of his business is affected by Canada's tariffs. Trump has threatened still more tariffs on Canadian vehicles, auto parts and steel next year.

Trump's war in Iran is crushing Pennsylvania farmers.

Trump's war with Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz to oil traffic, including 30 percent of the world's fertilizer supply, just as Pennsylvania farmers were starting spring planting. In Fayette County, corn, soy and wheat farmer Mike Reskovic watched nitrogen fertilizer jump from \$500 to \$700 a ton within weeks, with other farmers later paying close to \$1,000 a ton. Roughly 60 percent of Pennsylvania farmers cut back on fertilizer because of the price runup, according to PennAg Industries Association. Diesel is hitting just as hard. At the peak of planting season, it cost Pennsylvania farmers \$1,592 more to fill a typical farm fuel tank than a year earlier, according to the Joint Economic Committee, and diesel stood at \$6.54 a gallon on Oct. 9, up 64.6 percent from a year ago. Rick Telesz, who farms 700 acres in western Pennsylvania, told NPR his combine alone burns 150 gallons a day at about \$6 a gallon and that he'll be lucky to break even this year.

— SECTION 05 • HOUSING

The Keystone State *housing crunch*.

A Pennsylvania worker must earn \$28.87 an hour to afford a modest two-bedroom rental, well above the commonwealth's median wage of \$24.56. Pennsylvania's median home sale price hit a record \$320,000 in May, and mortgage rates have climbed past 7.5 percent, up from 5.99 percent just days before Trump started his war with Iran. Owning a home in Pennsylvania now takes about 24 percent of median income, up from 18 percent in 2019. Pennsylvania families have spent \$1,022 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.

SECTION 06 · ENERGY & GAS

Pennsylvania energy costs & gas prices *skyrocketing*.

Trump promised Pennsylvanians he would cut energy prices in half within 12 months of taking office. That deadline passed in January, and bills have gone the other way. Families in Pennsylvania paid \$210 more for electricity in 2025 under Trump than in 2024, and \$194 more in just the first half of 2026 than in the same stretch of 2024. After PECO and PPL raised supply rates last December, prices rose again on June 1: PECO up 6.67 percent, Met-Ed up 7.6 percent, West Penn Power up 10.3 percent, and Penelec up 11.88 percent. Pennsylvanians feel the strain: 57 percent of voters say it is difficult to pay their utility bills, and PECO shut off electric service to roughly 17,000 customers from January through April, a more than 14 percent increase over the same period last year.

Trump's war with Iran is driving up gas prices.

Regular gas in Pennsylvania averaged \$4.45 a gallon on Oct. 9, up \$1.17, or 35.6 percent, from a year ago, after peaking at \$4.68 in May. Pennsylvanians have paid \$3 billion more for gas since the war began, with Pennsylvania households paying \$548 more on average. Diesel hit an all-time record of \$6.61 a gallon on Sept. 22.

SECTION 07 · HELP RIPPED AWAY

Help *ripped away* from Pennsylvanians.

Trump's budget cuts are ripping away vital assistance for food, health care, and more from hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians. Trump and Republicans in Congress cut \$187 billion in food assistance, which helped almost two million Pennsylvanians put food on the table. Compared to last July, when Trump and Republicans passed their cuts to food assistance, Pennsylvania has already lost over 235,000 SNAP participants, a 12 percent drop, including nearly 68,000 children. Starting October 1, Trump's law shifted SNAP administrative costs onto the commonwealth, forcing Pennsylvania to cover millions more in costs.

DEFEND AMERICA ACTION

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Working Pennsylvanians 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 the Franklin & Marshall College Poll and Pennsylvania Department of Human Services to the Joint Economic Committee, KFF, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and Pennsylvania's independent newsrooms.

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