



Trump short on foreign policy wins

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ANALYSIS



Activists have intensified efforts to extend legal rights to embryos and fetuses. Personhood arguments now surface in not only abortion restrictions but also disputes involving pregnancy loss, child support and taxes.

ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Embryo personhood debate gains notice

HHS guidelines add to movement's momentum after Dobbs decision

Risa Cromer
Purdue University
THE CONVERSATION

About 100,000 babies were born through in vitro fertilization in 2024, according to the most recent U.S. data. But IVF commonly involves trying to create multiple embryos, because success is never guaranteed. If unused, those embryos can be frozen, discarded, donated to research or donated to another fertility patient.

In the eyes of some anti-abortion activists, those frozen IVF embryos are already children – children who need to be “adopted” into families. And that idea now appears in a federal document: grant guidelines announced by the Department of Health and Human Services in June.

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An embryologist pulls out vials of human embryos from a liquid nitrogen storage container at a California IVF clinic in 2007. Grant guidelines announced by the Department of Health and Human Services in June describe IVF embryos as “children who already exist and are in need of a family.”

SANDY HUFFAKER/GETTY IMAGES

Spike in school supply costs hits parents

Brands cite higher prices from gas, import duties

Christopher Cann, Clayton Park and Erick Trevino
USA TODAY NETWORK

Brandi McGrath usually buys quality, long-lasting school supplies for her 9-year-old son and his teachers. But sharp increases in the cost of folders, pencils and other products have forced her to cut back and search for cheaper alternatives.

“It’s insane how expensive things have gotten,” said McGrath, 48, of Salt Lake City. “I’m looking for every sale I can.”

In Daytona Beach, Florida, Karin Kaiser was similarly struck by the cost of back-to-school shopping this year.

“It is crazy,” she said, estimating that she and her husband spent over \$100 on just notebooks and loose-leaf paper for their two daughters. “That’s not counting what we had to pay for back-to-school clothes, shoes, haircuts.”

The cost of a typical school supply list – including notebooks, paper, pencils and glue sticks – is nearly \$175, almost 8% higher than in 2025, according to an analysis by the Groundwork Collaborative and The Century Foundation, two progressive think tanks.

Some essential items such as lunch boxes, notebooks and tissues cost 20% or more than they did a year ago, the analysis found, pointing in part to the effects of President Donald Trump’s tariff agenda, which the Federal Reserve said raised the cost of many products manufactured overseas for American consumers.

Over the same period, the cost of electronics such as headphones rose 6.6%, the report found. Meanwhile, typical lunch items cost 10.9% more than they did in 2025, the analysis said, citing price hikes on products including blueberries and deli meat.

The rising prices come as Americans are already struggling with inflation and high gas prices stemming from the war with Iran, forcing many to take on debt and stretch their meals.

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Iran says threatened U.S. sanctions will fail

Elwely Elwelly and Menna AlaaElDin
REUTERS

DUBAI – Iran’s foreign minister dismissed the threat of new U.S. sanctions as a sign of desperation on Aug. 23 and said the expected new measures would fail to defeat Tehran.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who is due to hold a press conference at

2 p.m. ET on Aug. 24, has threatened to impose “the toughest sanctions in history” on Iran.

Iran’s economy is already under major pressure from international sanctions, its infrastructure has been hit repeatedly and thousands of people have been killed in air strikes on the Islamic Republic since the United States and Israel launched attacks on Feb. 28.

But Tehran remains defiant after

nearly six months of war and has brought shipping to a virtual standstill in the Strait of Hormuz, refusing to allow unauthorized oil tankers to transit a waterway that is vital for global oil shipments. The effective blockade of the strait has pushed up global oil prices.

Describing what he said were “re-

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