

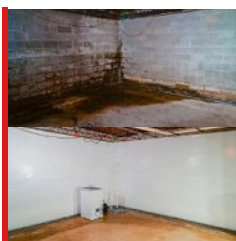
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The Star Press WEEKEND

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Dems hoping gas prices influence 2026 elections



Gas prices are shown in Washington DC, on March 15, amid the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran. Price hikes in gas infuriate Americans more than increases for most other goods, experts say. AARON SCHWARTZ/REUTERS FILE

Poll: 76% of Americans disapprove Trump's handling of fuel costs

Phillip M. Bailey
 USA TODAY

As rising gas prices force Americans to change their spending habits, Democrats are revving their 2026 midterm messaging on the potentially potent issue.

The last time the average retail price to fill up went over \$4 a gallon was August 2022. Republicans put a relentless focus on gas prices and successfully took back Congress, stalling the rest of former President Joe Biden's agenda.

Now, Democratic challengers in swing districts and competitive states are looking to use the same weapon

against Republicans by noting that President Donald Trump's ongoing war with Iran caused prices to skyrocket by more than \$1 per gallon in a matter of weeks.

The issue also helps Democrats position themselves as fighting for economic relief.

Experts say price hikes in gas infuriate Americans more than increases for most other goods.

"It's a sign that people can't do as much as they want," Patrick De Haan, an analyst at GasBuddy, which monitors fuel prices, told USA TODAY.

"That's why rising gas prices become so bitter for Americans. It really feels

oppressive in a different way."

John Mark Hansen, a professor of political science at the University of Chicago, said the price at the pump "is particularly visible for lots of people because we're a very car-dependent society," he said. "When people go to the gas station they have to shell out more cash or get charged more on their credit cards when they fill up."

Global markets determine the price at the pump more than the president or Congress, he said, but Trump's fingerprints are more on the recent spike because the war he started led to the

See **GAS PRICES**, Page 2A

No-cost clinic will take over facility

Mayor: 'Win-win for the community'

Douglas Walker
 Muncie Star Press
 USA TODAY NETWORK

A facility for those with addiction issues will be replaced by a no-cost community health clinic operated by the Muncie Mission.

Mayor Dan Ridenour's administration announced on Wednesday, April 15, that the building now housing the Muncie Crisis Center, at 809 W. Eighth St., will be provided to the mission to expand its medical services.

The new clinic will "serve individuals who currently face barriers to accessing adequate health care," in the process "strengthening the community's support network," according to a news release.

An agreement with the city calls for Muncie Mission to become owner of the property in 2027, the release said.

The mission will also transfer ownership of another property — the former home of Industry Methodist Church, at 1910 S. Mock Ave. — to the city "for future community benefit."

"The Muncie Mission will be responsible for equipping and staffing the clinic and delivering services to the community," the release said.

Ridenour on Wednesday called the plan "a win for the entire Muncie community."

"By working together with the Muncie Mission, we are expanding access to critical health-care services for those who need it most while making thoughtful use of city resources," he said.

See **CLINIC**, Page 2A

How to vote by mail in the Indiana primary election

Katie Wiseman and Kayla Dwyer
 Indianapolis Star
 USA TODAY NETWORK

The Indiana primary election is already underway, but Hoosiers wanting to cast their vote by mail need to send

off their application before the deadline.

It is important to remember you can only vote one way for each election, but there are multiple ways to do so: in person on election day, in person early, absentee by mail or by travel board.

Here's what Hoosiers who plan to

vote by mail need to know.

How to check voter registration status in Indiana

In order to vote, you need to be registered. If you didn't register by April 6,

then you missed the deadline for the May 5 election.

The deadline to register for the general election on Nov. 3 is Oct. 5.

You can check your voter registration

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