



## A birthday hike up to Pinnacle Peak

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A sign shows gas above \$5 a gallon in Washington, DC, on March 11. The last time the average retail price of gas went over \$4 a gallon was August 2022, and Republicans put a relentless focus on gas prices and successfully took back Congress.

## Democrats hoping gas prices influence 2026 elections

### 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



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

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

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## How to vote by mail in the Indiana primary election

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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 at any time at [www.indianavoters.in.gov](http://www.indianavoters.in.gov) or by calling 1-866-IN-1-VOTE.

### When is the deadline to apply for a mail-in ballot?

For the upcoming primary election, the deadline to submit an application for a mail-in ballot is by 11:59 p.m. on April 23.

### What is the deadline for a mail-in ballot?

If your application to vote by mail has been approved by county election officials, they'll mail you a ballot and a pre-paid return envelope. County officials must receive your completed ballot by 6 p.m. on election day.

### Can I still vote by mail after Trump's executive order?

President Donald Trump signed an executive order on March 31 which exerts federal control over voter rolls and mail-in ballots. Voting rights groups as

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## Federal judge blocks law banning college IDs at voting booth

Kristine Phillips  
Indianapolis Star  
USA TODAY NETWORK

A federal judge blocked the enforcement of a law that would've prevented students from using their college IDs to vote, calling the Republican-backed legislation "a solution in search of a problem" that would disproportionately impact young voters.

The ruling issued on April 14 by U.S. District Court Judge Richard Young means that students and young voters can use their college IDs in the upcoming midterm elections on May 5 as a



Young

lawsuit challenging the legislation moves through the court system.

Last year, Gov. Mike Braun signed Senate Bill 10, which prevents college students from using

their state university-issued ID as a form of identification at the voting booth. Republicans called it an election security measure, while Democrats said it's an effort to suppress voter turnout among young people. Advocacy organizations and an Indiana University junior sued Secretary of State

Diego Morales and other Indiana election officials, arguing that the law discriminates against and deprives students and young voters of their right to vote.

In his 34-page decision, Young agreed that the plaintiffs have shown SB 10's "potential for irreparable harm," estimating that about 40,000 young voters could be impacted by the law. He wrote that there's no evidence student IDs have ever caused any confusion in the electoral process, or that they've been used to engage in voter fraud and other voting-related misconduct.

"There is no question about the le-

gitimacy or importance of Indiana's interest in 'protecting the integrity and reliability of the electoral process,'" Young wrote, adding that to prevent students and young voters from using their college IDs, the state of Indiana "must better document the unique problems student IDs raise."

"Without more evidence," Young wrote, "the court cannot conclude that SB 10 is necessary to protect public confidence in Indiana's elections."

By banning the use of college IDs to vote, Young wrote, SB 10 "selectively

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