



WILDFIRE SEASON

RAIN HELPED DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES FIREFIGHTERS CONTAIN A BLAZE IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN THIS WEEK, BUT OFFICIALS WARN THAT DRY CONDITIONS WILL RETURN. **A2**

WORKING IN THE U.S.

Older Americans say it's a good time to find a job



Commuters walk through the World Trade Center Transportation Hub in New York. In the U.S., 43% of those aged 15-34 believe it's "a good time" to find a job, well below the 64% of those aged 55 and older who say the same. *Mark Lennihan, AP file*

Younger people aren't buying it, a new poll finds.

Nicholas Riccardi *Associated Press*

For years, younger Americans have been more optimistic about the job market than older Americans, even through the depths of the Great Recession. But in an abrupt shift, a new poll released Monday finds young people's confidence has plummeted over the past two years — while their elders remain more upbeat.

The gap between young and older Americans' views of the job market now is greater than in any other country among the 141 surveyed, according to the Gallup World Poll. In the United States, 43% of those aged 15-34 believe it's "a good time" to find a job in the area where they live, well below the 64% of those aged 55 and older who say the same.

Around the world, it's the opposite. Globally, the median share of younger people who say it's "a good time" to find work in their local job market is 48%, compared with 38% among older people.

The findings reveal a generational rift in Americans' views of economic opportunity, with young people feeling increasingly downtrodden about job prospects, while older people still largely think it's a good time to find work. The schism is likely to continue fueling generational divides in politics, where younger voters have focused on economic issues such as housing costs and have registered less faith in institutions. "It's an incredibly new phenomenon," Benedict Vigers of Gallup said of young

A recent poll shows about 8 in 10 adults younger than 35 describing the U.S. economy as very or somewhat poor. Only about 6 in 10 adults 55 and older say the same, although a majority still see the U.S. economy negatively.

Americans' pessimism. He added that last year was the first time in Gallup's decades of polling that young Americans were more pessimistic about the job market than their peers in other developed countries. "Has this happened in most other advanced economies? The answer is a resounding no."

FINDING A NEW JOB

Young people, with fewer physical limitations and family responsibilities — along with an ability to adapt more quickly than older counterparts — normally are more optimistic about their ability to land work. But the new Gallup analysis finds the U.S.

is one of only five countries where younger people are at least 10 points more pessimistic about the availability of work than older ones, joining China, Hong Kong, Norway, Serbia and the United Arab Emirates.

Among the 141 countries surveyed, younger Americans ranked 87th in job market expectations. Even that is striking, Vigers said, because young Americans have long stood out globally for their optimism about job opportunities. Other countries, such as New Zealand and Canada, had lower levels of optimism among the youngest group, but there was no significant generational divide.

The divergence between younger and older Americans happened suddenly. Every U.S. age group registered a drop in confidence in the job market after 2023 — following a post-COVID rebound in 2021 and 2022 — but those 34 and younger saw the largest decline in recent years. The share of younger Americans saying it was "a good time" to find a job plunged by 27 percentage points from 2023 to 2025. That's comparable to the rate of decline for young people during the 2008 global financial crisis, which also saw a drastic drop in confidence for older Americans.

But that hasn't happened in the past few years. In fact, older Americans' views have barely dropped.

Older Americans also have a sunnier view of the economic landscape more generally, according to recent polling. About 8 in 10 adults younger than 35 describe the U.S. economy as very or somewhat poor, according to an AP-NORC poll conducted in April. **SEE WORKING IN THE U.S., A3**

MICHIGAN EDUCATION

House approves school snow day forgiveness plan for 60 counties

The bill also would provide four to five extra snow days to any other schools covered by a state of emergency declaration during the 2025-26 school year.

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LANSING — The Michigan state House on Thursday approved a bill that would forgive up to four additional snow days for schools in dozens of Northern Michigan counties that had multiple closures due to a mid-March winter storm.

Sponsored by Rep. Parker Fairbairn, R-Harbor Springs, the measure passed with bipartisan support on Thursday.

It now moves to the state Senate for consideration.

Fairbairn said with weeks to go before the end of the school year, it's all the more important the Senate passes the bill and sends it to the governor for her signature.

Without additional days, some districts may have to extend their schedules further into the summer, which could affect building maintenance and summer plans for students and their families, he said.

"While I believe that, as a rule, schools should make up any missed days beyond the statutorily provided six, I think that there needs to be some grace extended under such exigent circumstances," Fairbairn said.

Furthermore, he said, "locally elected school boards should be given flexibility to make decisions that best serve their students, families and communities."

In March, dozens of northern counties were affected by severe winter storms that brought historic snowfall, bitter winds and sheets of ice, prompting thousands to lose power, schools to close and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to declare a state of emergency. **SEE MICHIGAN EDUCATION, A3**



A Michigan House bill approved Thursday provides a snow day forgiveness plan for schools in 60 counties after spring storms. *Submitted*

Michigan diesel prices are nearly twice what they were a year ago

Costs have surged 92 cents per gallon in one month.

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Michigan drivers paid an average of \$6.21 per gallon for diesel fuel on Thursday, marking the highest point on record, according to AAA.

The latest statewide average was up 8 cents per gallon since Wednesday, and up 92 cents over the past month. This time last year, drivers were spending \$3.49 for diesel.

Drivers across the country have been paying more to fill their gas tanks since early March, following a joint military strike by the United States and Israel on Iran. Ongoing turmoil in the Middle East has reduced the global oil supply, resulting in

price hikes and industry uncertainty.

To make matters worse, refineries in the Great Lakes region have experienced issues in recent weeks, according to Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at Gas-Buddy. Those issues required maintenance that disproportionately affected diesel production.

On Thursday, De Haan said he expected diesel prices in the Great Lakes region to peak in the next couple of days before starting to decline as refinery restarts lead to some relief.

Average diesel prices as of Thursday for some of Michigan's largest metro areas were:

- Ann Arbor: \$6.20
- Flint: \$6.17
- Grand Rapids and Muskegon: \$6.27
- Jackson: \$6.24
- Lansing: \$6.25
- Marquette: \$5.94
- Detroit: \$6.19
- Saginaw and Bay City: \$6.27
- Traverse City: \$6.28

Each metro region, with the exception of Marquette, set a new record Thursday. Marquette peaked at \$6.06 on May 4 before a slight decline.

Nationally, drivers were paying \$5.67 per gallon of diesel, holding steady from a week ago.

