



PUBLIC OPINION

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Iran's Hormuz moves leave sailors stranded

Imad Creidi
REUTERS

DAMMAM, Saudi Arabia – Iran's publication of a new map asserting its control over the Strait of Hormuz risks extending an already punishing ordeal for thousands of mariners trapped on

ships in the Gulf.

Over 20,000 sailors are stuck on around 2,000 vessels in the Gulf, many of them unable to leave ship, lacking adequate supplies of food and fresh water, and fearful of an uncertain future at sea in a war zone. Sailors interviewed in recent weeks have described the hard-

ships and anxieties of their experience, and a federation representing them warns of dire conditions.

"The only thing we do here is plan how to spend the night and pray to God that we do not get hit during an attack," Indian sailor Salman Siddiqui said by phone from his stranded ship last

month.

When Reuters traveled on a resupply boat to vessels moored off the Saudi coast, sailors on a tanker gathered by the handrail to wave, a rare moment of contact with the outside world.

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Rural hospitals close in increasing numbers



Activists protest cuts to Medicaid, in 2025 in Washington, DC. Federal Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements are a critical revenue source for rural hospitals, which tend to serve large numbers of Medicaid patients.

TASOS KATOPODIS/GETTY IMAGES FOR PEOPLE'S ACTION INSTITUTE

Closures have domino effect on communities, residents

Shayann Ramedani
and Daniel R. George

Penn State
THE CONVERSATION

Some Pennsylvania hospitals are being pushed beyond the brink of closure.

Taylor Hospital in Ridley Park closed in April 2025, Crozer-Chester Medical Center in Upland closed in May 2025, and Heritage Valley Kennedy Hospital, formerly the Ohio Valley Hospital, in Kennedy Township closed in June 2025.

Rural hospitals are particularly vulnerable.

The UNC Sheps Center, which tracks rural hospital infrastructure in the United States, has documented 195 rural hospitals that have closed or converted to outpatient facilities since January 2005. Closures have far outpaced the opening of new rural hospitals during this period.

As a physician who has trained in rural communities and a researcher who studies community well-being and public health, we see that every rural hospital closure exerts a domino effect on surrounding communities and residents. This can be difficult to quantify but manifests as lost jobs and economic



A 2022 study found that when a rural hospital closes, hospitals nearby see a measurable spike in inpatient admissions and emergency room visits that can cause significant financial strain. GETTY IMAGES

decline, poorer health and a pervasive sense of fraying community fabric.

Our 2022 study found that when a rural hospital closes, hospitals nearby see a measurable spike in inpatient admissions and emergency room visits that can cause significant financial strain. It's a phenomenon we called "the

bystander effect" of hospital closures.

Closures can sometimes feel random, but they are predictable consequences of the combination of health policy and market forces.

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COVID-19 tax relief may be possible for some

Susan Tompor
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

DETROIT – Oodles of taxpayers – from the very well off to the barely making it – could be owed a chunk of change from the Internal Revenue Service after a complex court decision involving what rules did and didn't apply during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like anything else relating to taxes, it's not going to be simple to get your money – or even to figure out if you're owed a refund related to some penalties and interest assessed years ago. These refunds are not automatic; you won't stumble upon a check out of the blue here. Most taxpayers will need to rush to file a special tax form by July 10 if they hope to see any relief.

The National Taxpayer Advocate began publishing a series of online blogs in late April to better explain the potential refunds – and why many everyday households need to act now to potentially get some cash.

We're looking at the 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 tax years.

You could be affected if you filed a tax return late between Jan. 20, 2020, and July 11, 2023.

The well-to-do can likely pay tax professionals to figure things out and file the form called a "Claim for Refund and Request for Abatement" by July 10 to lock in any potential refund. The rest of us need to step back, take a breath and dig up some paperwork to figure out if we're owed any money. The potential size of the refunds will vary significantly among taxpayers, starting at perhaps around \$100 to possibly a few thousand dollars or more for many individuals.

Some higher-income taxpayers reportedly could be owed hundreds of thousands of dollars or more. Some big corporations are eyeing massive amounts of money.

Expect to hear more before July about how people could be able to get special income tax refunds. But remember, the deal doesn't apply to everyone and you must take a pre-emptive step by July 10, if you qualify.

The National Taxpayer Advocate notes that the issue is widespread, not just limited to a select group. We're talking about self-employed workers, those who receive W-2s on the job, small businesses, large corporations and more.

Maybe, you did not withhold enough in federal income taxes out of each paycheck during the pandemic years and you owed so much for the year that you faced an underpayment penalty. Maybe, you are self-employed or had

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