



The Philadelphia Inquirer

ALWAYS ASKING. ALWAYS PHILLY.

War pushes inflation to highest rate in 3 years

Gas prices have surged as the Iran conflict ripples through the economy, raising April inflation 3.8% from 2025.

By Andrew Ackerman and Federica Cocco
Washington Post

The war in Iran is driving a sharp increase in inflation, as surging gasoline prices ripple through the American economy, dealing a blow to a White House that has staked its economic credibility on bringing costs down.

The Labor Department's Consumer Price Index rose at a 3.8%

Trump on the economy

Amid the war with Iran, he says he doesn't "think about Americans' financial situation." A3

annual pace in the year ending in April, up from 3.3% in March and much hotter than the 2.4% in February.

Higher energy prices accounted for much of the month-to-month gain in prices in April of 0.6%. Gas prices rose 5.4% last month and were up about 30% over the past year. Shelter costs, which had been artificially suppressed by a data quirk tied to last fall's government shutdown, rebounded in April.

The overall increase marks the steepest year-over-year rise since May 2023 — when inflation hit a

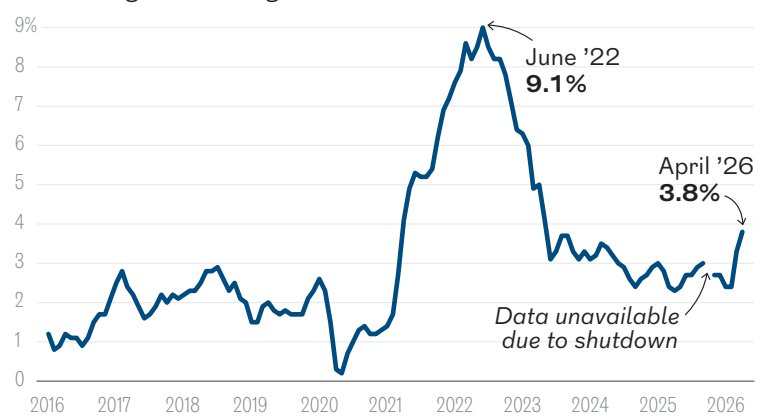
4% pace — and the second consecutive month in which the conflict in the Middle East has measurably pushed prices higher for American consumers. Core inflation, which strips out volatile food and energy prices, rose 2.8% over the year ending in April, up from 2.6% in March.

The White House, through spokesperson Kush Desai, acknowledged the inflation increase but said the jump is a temporary disruption from the Iran conflict. He pointed to declining drug and hospital prices, as well as wage gains in manufacturing and construction as evidence that President Donald Trump's broader economic agenda remains on track. Trump has also proposed suspending the federal

→ SEE INFLATION ON A9

U.S. Inflation Rate Increases

The Consumer Price Index rose 3.8% from April of 2025. April prices rose 0.6% from March 2026, with gas prices alone rising 5.4% during the month.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Steve Madden / Staff Artist



Maria Hernandez holds her granddaughter Selene, 1, during a Mother's Day vigil for her husband, Erasmo Zavala Almanza, held at their home in Temple, Berks County. The girl was critically wounded in the shooting that killed her mother. Michele Swigart Uhrich / For The Inquirer

He helped police after a tragedy. Then ICE arrived

Erasmo Zavala Almanza aided the investigation of his daughter's slaying. He sought a visa. Instead, he faces deportation.

By Jeff Gammage
Staff Writer

In October, Erasmo Zavala Almanza traversed the streets of Reading during a silent march for victims of domestic violence, court records say, walking to represent his 20-year-old daughter, Selena.

Eight months earlier she had been shot to death by the father of her newborn girl. The father also shot the baby, then turned the gun on himself.

The 2-month-old child, critically wounded, survived through the fast action of police officers at the scene, the expertise of surgeons and nurses during months of hospitalizations, and the love of Zavala Almanza and his wife, who became full-time caregivers and court-appointed guardians to their



A photo of Erasmo Zavala Almanza on the phone of his wife, Maria Hernandez. A hearing on his case is set for Wednesday.

orphaned granddaughter.

The Berks County district attorney recognized Zavala Almanza's assistance in the homicide investigation by providing certification for him to seek what is called a U visa. That visa offers a path to live permanently in the United States for undocumented victims and

witnesses who help the police solve serious crimes.

But now Zavala Almanza, a Mexican citizen, can no longer financially provide for his granddaughter, Selena, nor assist in her recovery. He is being held in immigration detention at the Moshannon Valley Processing Center in Clearfield County, Pa., facing deportation to Mexico.

On April 15, three months after the federal government received Zavala Almanza's application for a U visa, ICE agents appeared at his home in Temple, Berks County, and arrested him for immigration violations.

His detention marks part of a dramatic change in what was longstanding ICE policy, which acknowledged that all U visa applicants have immigration violations, that they must disclose those violations — and that those transgressions would be forgiven through the award of a U visa.

It also departs from what Congress intended when it created the U visa in 2000, by passing the Victims of Trafficking and Violence

→ SEE DETAINED ON A6

U.S. INTELLIGENCE SHOWS IRAN RETAINS MISSILE LAUNCHERS

Assessments say Tehran has operational access to 30 of its 33 missile sites along the Strait of Hormuz, suggesting that its military remains far stronger than President Trump has asserted.

By Adam Entous, Maggie Haberman, and Jonathan Swan
New York Times

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration's public portrayal of a shattered Iranian military is sharply at odds with what U.S. intelligence agencies are telling policymakers behind closed doors, according to classified assessments from early this month that show Iran has regained access to most of its missile sites, launchers, and underground facilities.

Most alarming to some senior officials is evidence that Iran has restored operational access to 30 of the 33 missile sites it maintains along the Strait of Hormuz, which could threaten U.S. warships and oil tankers transiting the narrow waterway.

People with knowledge of the assessments said they show — to varying degrees, depending on the level of damage incurred at the different sites — that the Iranians can use mobile launchers that are inside the sites to move missiles to other locations. In some cases they can launch missiles directly from launchpads that are part of the facilities. Only three of the missile sites along the strait remain totally inaccessible, according to the assessments.

Iran still fields about 70% of its mobile launchers across the country and has retained roughly 70% of its prewar missile stockpile, according to the assessments. That stockpile encompasses both ballistic missiles, which can target other

→ SEE IRAN ON A5

CAMPAIGN 2026

Rivals fault Street's tenure at party's helm

The Philly lawmaker led Pennsylvania Democrats for three years. His 3rd District opponents point to electoral defeats.

By Anna Orso
Staff Writer

When State Sen. Sharif Street was elected to be the first Black chair of the Pennsylvania Democratic Party in 2022, he inherited a fractured coalition led by some powerful people who had outwardly opposed his ascent to the role.

At the time, Gov. Josh Shapiro, who backed another candidate for the post, said publicly that an elected official like Street should not run the party because they could blur the lines between what's best for the organization and their personal ambition.

Now, after Street spent three

years leading the state party before stepping down amid a run for Congress, some still question his time at the helm.

During his tenure from June 2022 to August 2025, voter registration among Democrats in the state dropped precipitously, fundraising stagnated, and Pennsylvania Democrats had a disastrous 2024 that saw all five of the party's statewide nominees lose. Some insiders blamed organizational gaps and said state party leaders failed to bring the coalition together.

Street, 52, the scion of an established political family from North Philadelphia who is now locked in a tightly contested race for a seat in Congress, was chair of the state Democratic Party during a volatile period for the party nationally. He absorbed the blame for failures that were not unique to Pennsylvania, such as the erosion of registered Democrats and then-Vice President Kamala Harris' loss to President

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