Incumbent senator loses in Louisiana's primary

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RISING COSTS

In 2020, 20.1% of households earning between $60,000 and $100,000 reported experiencing problems affording their energy. In 2024, 32.1% of those households did – a 12 percentage point increase. GETTY IMAGES

Data: 1 in 3 households struggles to pay energy bills

Diana Hernández
Columbia University
THE CONVERSATION

Americans' concerns about being able to afford electricity and home heating fuel have been elevated since the beginning of the Iran war. But recently released nationwide data shows that even before the war began, these concerns were widespread, long-standing and getting worse faster than the data can reflect.

The information is from preliminary reports based on the Residential Energy Consumption Survey, a representative survey of U.S. households conducted every four to five years by the U.S. Energy Information Administration. These early results show that energy insecurity, a hidden hardship defined as the inability to adequately meet household energy needs, affects millions of American households and is worsening quickly.

As a scholar who has spent years sitting in hundreds of homes around the country, hearing firsthand accounts about energy insecurity, I turn to this survey data to quantify the suffering I have witnessed up close.

The latest tranche of data was collected in 2024 and released in March 2026, but full results won't be available for some time. The preceding survey was taken in 2020, but results weren't finalized until August 2025.

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Seniors have historically been among the most protected from high energy bills, partly by programs to assist with energy costs and partly because wealth usually peaks in later life. Even so, the share of older Americans experiencing energy insecurity climbed to 1 in 4 in 2024 from roughly 1 in 5 in 2020. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

A closer look at the data over time reveals that more Americans live with energy insecurity now than in years past. In 2024, 43.6 million American households – 32.9% of all homes – reported experiencing some form of energy insecurity. In 2015, that figure was 31.3%, and in 2020 it was 27.2%.

ANALYSIS

Trump departs China with stalemate

Summit yields modest economic deals, little else

Michael Martina, David Brunnstrom, David Lawder and Mei Mei Chu
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump's visit to Beijing may have produced modest results by the standards of U.S.-China summits but it highlighted a clear benefit for China: After the extremes of last year's trade war, the countries have reverted to their familiar economic and strategic standoff.

Two days of talks between Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping underscored that even after Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs and the ensuing trade detente the two sides reached late last year, Washington and Beijing are still locked in the contest that Trump inherited when he started his second term.

For the United States, that means that the most troubling aspects of the relationship – from what it considers Beijing's mercantilist trade policies to its efforts to increase its military clout in the Indo-Pacific – remain largely unaddressed.

But for Xi it offers some breathing room and a return to a more predictable set of challenges. He appeared to describe the change with a new framework for the countries' relations he called "constructive strategic stability."

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The meeting in Beijing between President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping did not secure any public commitment from China to help the United States end the war in Iran. EVAN VUCCI/POOL/REUTERS

UAE reports drone strike at nuclear power plant

Tala Ramadan
REUTERS

DUBAI – A drone strike caused a fire at a nuclear power plant in the United Arab Emirates, officials in Abu Dhabi said on May 17, at a time when progress appears to have stalled in efforts to end the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran and restart shipping in the Gulf.

Emirati officials did not attribute blame for the attack and there were no immediate claims of responsibility. The UAE's defense ministry said investigations were underway to determine the source of the attack.

The UAE has previously accused Iran of attacking its energy targets in what it has called an escalation of the conflict in the region.

The drone hit an electrical generator outside the inner perimeter of the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant, the Abu Dhabi Media Office said. Radiological safety

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The United Arab Emirates' defense ministry said investigations were underway to determine the source of the attack on the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant in the Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi. BARAKAH NUCLEAR POWER PLANT/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES FILE

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