

# AFFORDABILITY AGENDA

# **RESTORING** **THE AMERICAN DREAM**

The New Democrat Coalition's Affordability Agenda is about renewing the promise of the American Dream, that every American should not just be able to get by, but get ahead.

New Dems believe everyone in America should be able to afford the essentials for a quality life — housing, health care, food, child care, education, retirement, and more — with enough left over to buy that new car, take that vacation, and save for your future.

The New Dem Affordability Agenda offers a clear strategy to get this done. Our goal is to lower everyday costs in the short and long-term, promote competition to boost consumer choice, break down regulatory barriers across the government that prevent us from meeting the needs of the American people, and act in a fiscally-responsible way.

Making this vision a reality calls for big, bold ideas that will directly lower costs, address the broken systems, and put the wellbeing of hardworking families front and center. New Dems intend to chart a path to a better future for the American people, not by simply reversing the Trump Administration's unaffordable and ineffective agenda, but by developing and implementing concrete policies that lift up all Americans.

Our plan focuses on lowering five of the core costs that are unaffordable for working Americans:

## **I. Groceries and Household Essentials**

Supporting small and family farmers, strengthening domestic supply chains, and leveling the playing field to better promote competition and drive down prices.

## **II. Health Care**

Making health care more affordable and accessible for everyone by creating more competition, transparency, and accountability across sectors.

## **III. Housing**

Cutting red tape and reducing regulatory barriers to build at least four million new homes over the next 10 years.

## **IV. Energy**

Fast-tracking new and innovative energy sources and developing a 21st century grid to power our future while keeping costs low and predictable for every household.

## **V. Families**

Expanding support for child and elder care so that families can afford to work and age with dignity and peace of mind.

*The Affordability Agenda contains components of previously released New Dem policy frameworks, including the:*

[Rural Revitalization Agenda](#)

[Health Care Action Plan](#)

[Housing Affordability Agenda](#)

[Framework to Achieve Energy Independence, Security, and Affordability](#)

[Tax Framework](#)



# *POLICY* PRIORITIES

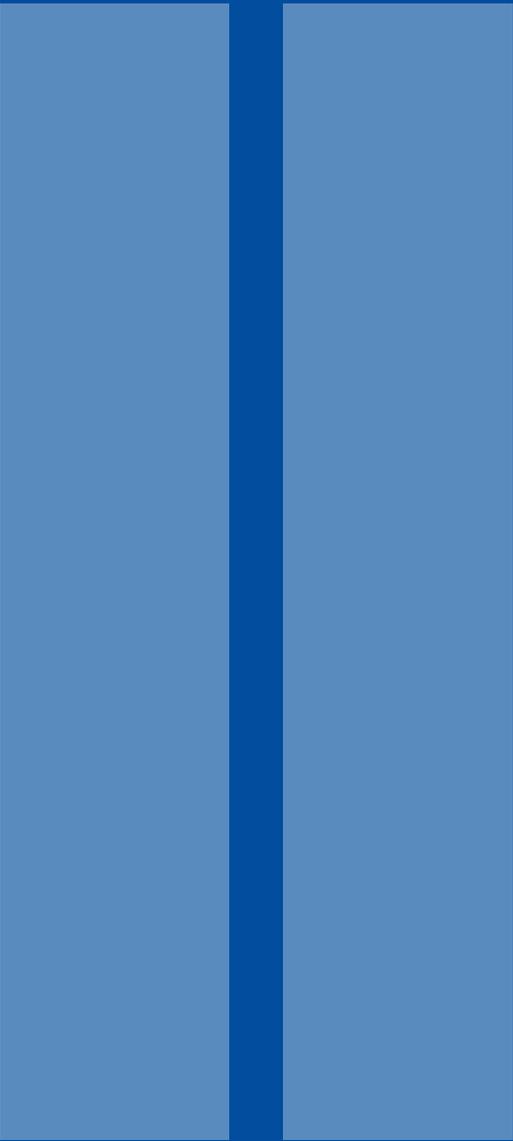


# Groceries & Household Essentials

*Everyday costs for Americans — groceries, the internet, furniture, and more — are increasingly too expensive. New Dems are working to advance durable policies that make groceries, internet bills, and household essentials more affordable for working families.*



1. Invest and grow through smarter, durable trade policy to lower costs for consumers and give American industries certainty.
    - a. Restore Congress' power and responsibility to oversee international trade and roll back the Unaffordable Trump Tariffs that are raising the cost of living for families and the cost of production for American businesses, farmers, and producers.
    - b. Secure global markets for U.S. products and industries by preventing predatory foreign trade practices and protecting American workers from being undercut by foreign countries.
  2. Help bring down the costs of groceries and promote a more affordable and competitive marketplace by supporting family farms, investing in small and medium-sized producers, manufacturers and retailers, and holding corporations accountable for unwarranted price hikes.
    - a. Invest in programs and technical assistance supporting small and mid-size agricultural producers, like the Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program, to drive competition and lower prices amongst agriculture producers.
  3. Restart the Affordable Connectivity Program, which provided a discount on broadband services to eligible low-income households, to lower internet bills.
  4. Crack down on corporate bad actors that drive-up costs in order to promote competition and fair pricing of goods.
  5. Increase the minimum wage and ensure workers' voices have a seat at the table so they receive the benefits and pay they deserve.
- b. Help small and mid-size ranchers meet U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) certification standards by providing technical assistance, getting more food onto shelves, increasing competition, and lowering costs.
  - c. Create a federal land-link pilot program, helping retiring farmers pass their land and knowledge to beginning farmers to lower food costs and keep more land in production.
  - d. Address land speculation by foreign and large investors and provide flexibility in USDA lending and subsidy programs for small and mid-size farmers to keep farmland affordable.
  - e. Invest in, and reverse harmful Republican cuts to, federal nutrition programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to help low-income families afford food.



# Health Care

*New Dems believe every American deserves quality, affordable health care, from providers they trust, when and where they need it. This agenda will help realize that vision with lower prices and expanded access.*



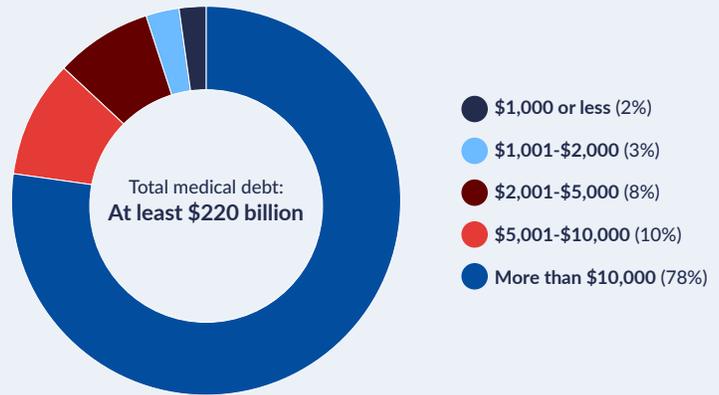
1. Foster robust competition and transparency across the health care delivery system to protect families from crushing debt and bankruptcy.

- a. Extend Medicare’s \$2,100 annual prescription drug out-of-pocket cap and its \$35 monthly insulin cap to individuals with private insurance.
- b. Require transparency across the prescription drug industry – from pharmaceutical companies to pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) – to stop price gouging and lower drug costs for families.
- c. Fully protect patients from surprises on their medical bills by increasing enforcement of the No Surprises Act (P.L. 116-260) ban on surprise billing.
- d. End the harmful practice of reporting medical debt to credit bureaus and end overly aggressive debt collection practices like those that block families from getting stable housing.<sup>1</sup>

2. Protect and strengthen the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicare, and Medicaid as cornerstones of American health and financial security.

- a. Extend the ACA Premium Tax Credits to ensure health care is affordable for millions of families.<sup>2</sup>
- b. Reverse Republicans’ harmful cuts to Medicaid, modernize the program so it can expand coverage, and remove unnecessary red tape that prevents people from getting care.
- c. Leverage Medicare’s buying power to negotiate lower prices on more drugs, bypassing middlemen and passing savings directly to seniors and taxpayers.
- d. Streamline and modernize the prior authorization process so that patients don’t have to navigate red-tape to get insurance companies to cover doctor-prescribed treatment.

(1) Share of aggregate medical debt in the U.S., by the amount of debt individuals owe, 2021



Note: To reduce the influence of the highest debt holders on the total, KFF used a conservative method to calculate medical debt for respondents with extremely high debt amounts. This approach removes the highest debt values from the calculation. This analysis is limited to those owing over \$250 in medical debt.

Source: KFF analysis of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)

(2) Families Face High Premium Increases Unless Tax Credit Enhancements Are Extended

Annual premium for benchmark marketplace coverage for a family of four, based on national average premium



Annual income for a family of four, \$ and % of federal poverty level (FPL)

Note: The example family includes two 40-year-old adults, a 10-year-old child, and a 5-year-old-child. Premium costs differ for states with different poverty level standards than the national standard (Alaska and Hawaii) and for states that provide additional financial help beyond federal subsidies. In certain states, some children and/or their parents with incomes above 138% of the federal poverty level are eligible for Medicaid, CHIP, or a Basic Health Plan, making them ineligible for premium tax credits.

Source: CBPP calculations for 2026

- e. Safeguard Medicare’s guaranteed benefits and take steps to preserve the program’s sustainability for decades to come.
- f. Crack down on fraud and abuse in Medicare and Medicaid without cutting benefits or reducing access for the people who rely on these programs.
- g. Reinstate Medicaid funding for reproductive health organizations.

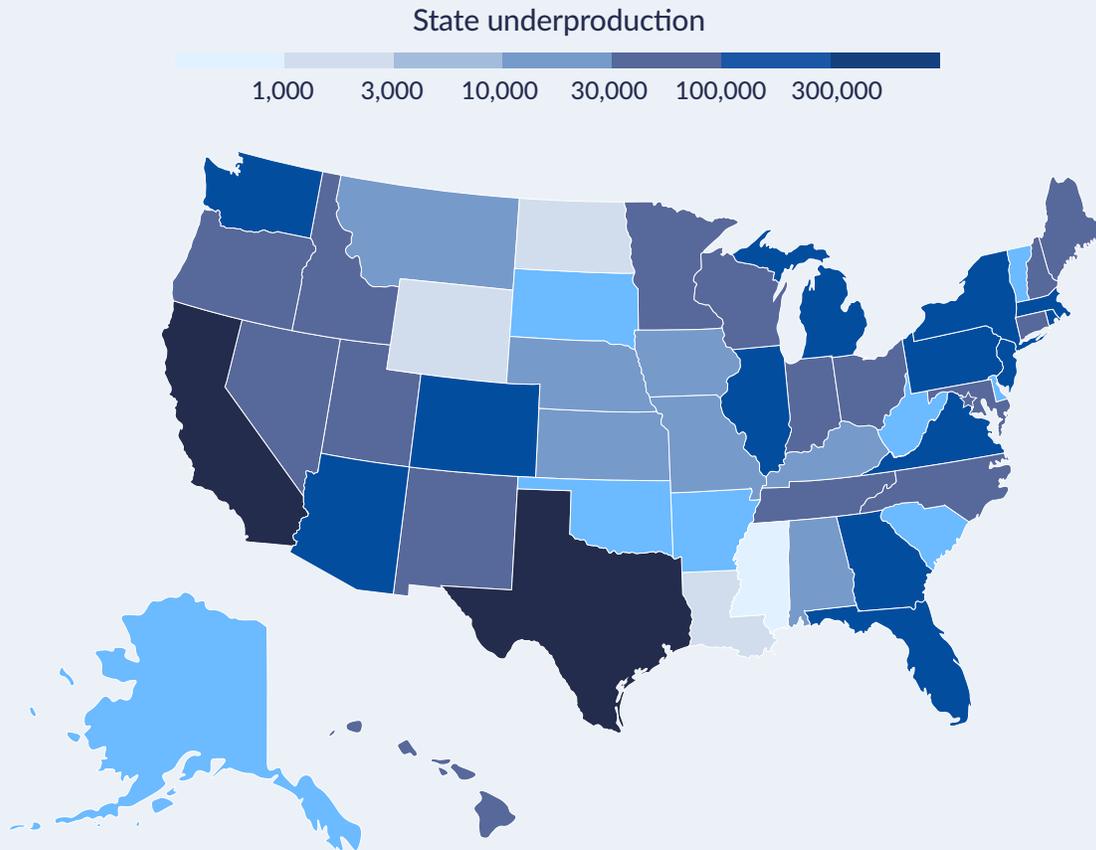


# Housing

*America needs to build nearly four million homes to meet demand. This agenda will help make housing cheaper and more available by getting more housing built, on the market, and into the hands of families.*

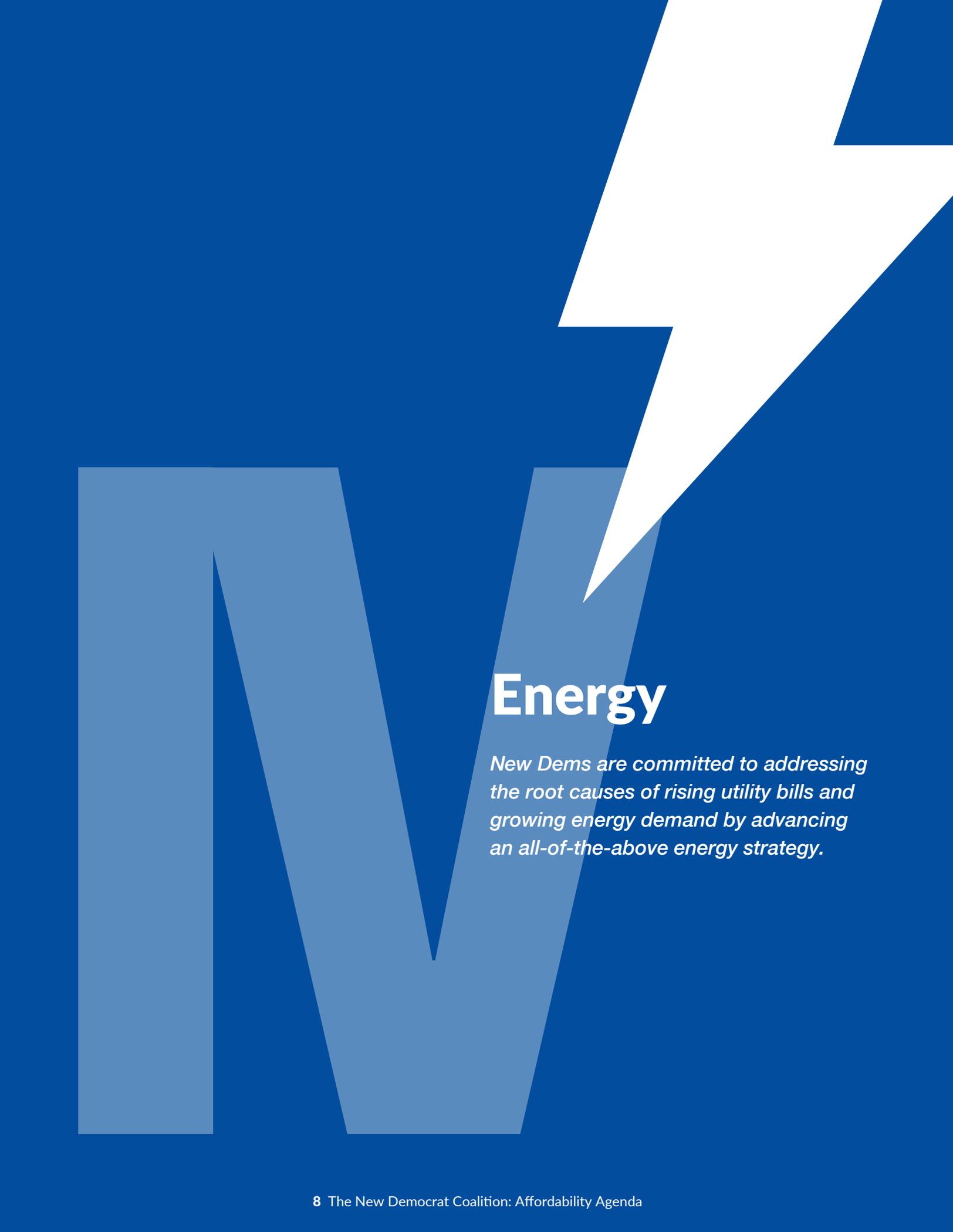


## Housing Gap in 2023: 3.78 Million



Source: Up For Growth

1. Cut red tape and increase the flexibility of federal resources for state and local governments to expeditiously build and rehabilitate more housing across the country.
2. Convert vacant commercial properties and underutilized properties like empty parking lots into housing units.
3. Invest federal resources in innovative construction technologies, like the use of robotics, 3D printing, and modules, to accelerate the building of new homes.
4. Eliminate unfair tax breaks for private equity and large investors that give them a competitive advantage over families in the housing market.
5. Increase the number of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits allocated to each state to accelerate construction of affordable housing units across the country.
6. Ensure innovative housing models like Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), which are small, secondary homes on the same property as a main house, are supported by the federal finance system.
7. Incentivize local communities to build new housing units by providing funding for community benefits like co-locating housing construction to public transportation, job hubs, and education.



# Energy

*New Dems are committed to addressing the root causes of rising utility bills and growing energy demand by advancing an all-of-the-above energy strategy.*



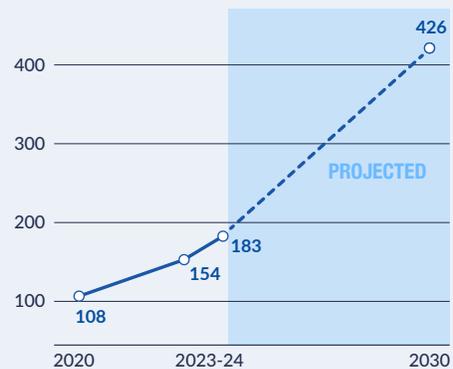
<b>(3) CLEAN ENERGY JOB LOSSES BY PROJECT STATUS</b>			
PROJECT STATUS	# OF PROJECTS	JOB LOSS OR DELAYED	INVESTMENTS LOST OR DELAYED
CANCELED	74	49,808	\$35,386,100,000
DELAYED	25	32,397	\$7,145,422,001
GRANT CANCELED	167	71,953	\$10,369,986,600
LAYOFFS	57	11,293	\$147,000,000.00

Source: Climate Power

1. Ensure sufficient, reliable, and affordable energy is available and delivered when and where it is needed by guaranteeing a level playing field for all forms of energy (whether solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, natural gas, or nuclear).
2. Defend clean energy investments that create jobs, expand domestic manufacturing, drive innovation, lower energy bills, and support energy upgrades for homeowners.<sup>3</sup>
3. Reform permitting rules to make it easier, faster, and cheaper to build energy transmission and generation infrastructure.
4. Invest in biofuels to lower costs at the gas pump, grow markets for American farmers, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
5. Develop and implement policies that incentivize and lower barriers for grid transmission development to efficiently get energy from where it is generated to where it is needed.
6. Change how electric grid costs are allocated to protect consumers from unfairly bearing the costs of manufacturing and data center development.
7. Require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to solicit recommendations on protecting residential ratepayers from increased costs associated with large energy loads to protect families from unfairly carrying data center energy costs.<sup>4</sup>
8. Develop a National Data Center Strategy at the Department of Energy to ensure that the benefits and costs associated with data center development are spread amongst communities, not overburdening certain areas.
9. Invest in energy efficiency and home heating and cooling through programs like the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to lower home energy costs for working families.
10. Ensure that not one drop of our strategic petroleum reserves is sent to foreign adversaries like China, as has been done during the past two administrations.

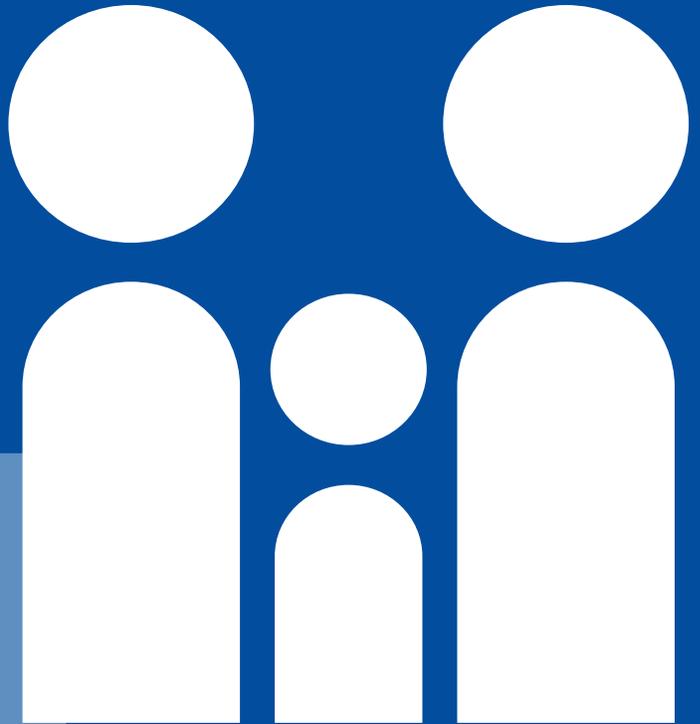
**(4) Electricity consumption at U.S. data centers is expected to more than double by 2030**

Total electricity consumption by U.S. data centers (terawatt-hours)



Note: 2030 projection is based on IEA's "base case" scenario, which assumes current industry forecasts and regulatory conditions persist.

Source: International Energy Agency, "Energy and AI, April 2025."



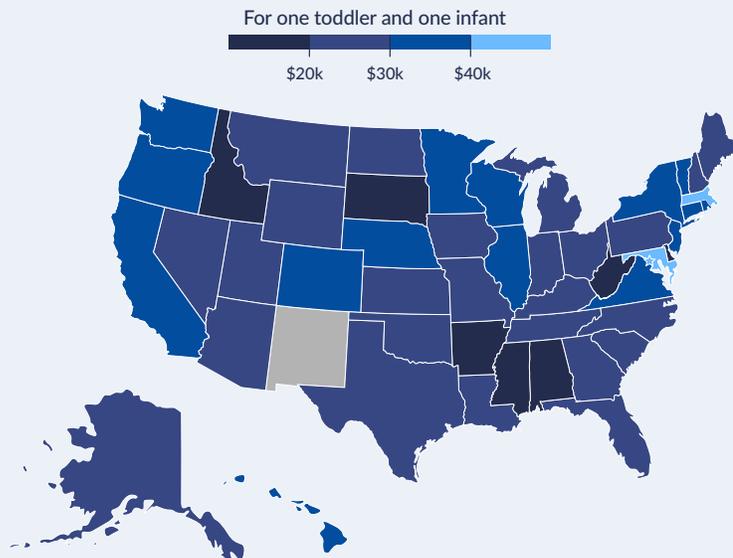
# Families

*The cost of raising children and aging with dignity has become unaffordable and inaccessible. New Dems are advancing commonsense policies to lower costs and support families and seniors.*



1. Create a national paid family and medical leave program that covers all working people regardless of where they live or work, including updating the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to reflect the needs of today's workforce.
2. Ensure leave programs allow more entrepreneurs and employees of small businesses to access this critical benefit without risking their jobs or financial stability.
3. Support parents by expanding access to the Child Tax Credit (CTC), Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC), and Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP), to reduce child poverty, provide meaningful support to working families, and help parents afford high-quality child care.<sup>5</sup>
4. Provide a tax refund for expenses related to family caregiving so that taking care of aging, disabled, or sick loved ones doesn't break the bank.
5. Create a senior care cost reduction program that provides a stipend to low-income seniors to help offset the costs of assisted living expenses.
6. Encourage public-private partnerships that expand care options and paid leave access, providing flexible, locally tailored solutions while leveraging federal support.
7. Support state-driven child care affordability innovations by launching federal pilot programs that explore cost-sharing partnerships among families, employers, and government to lower monthly child care expenses and strengthen workforce participation.

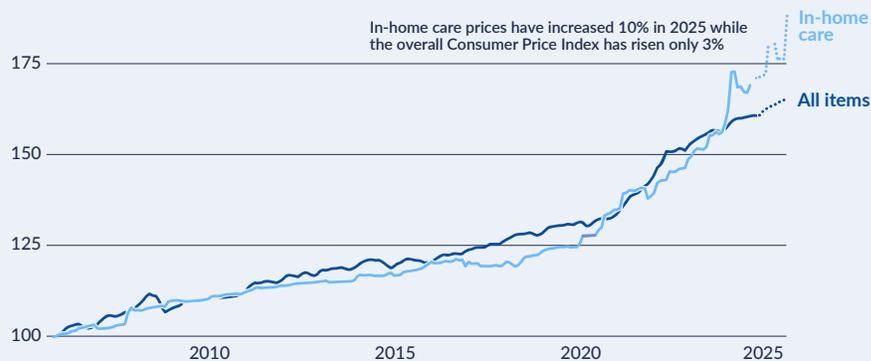
### (5) Average annual cost of daycare center tuition for two children in 2024



Source: Child Care Aware; Map: Axios Visuals

### (6) In-home care price index

Monthly; December 2005 to September 2025; 100 is indexed to December 2005 values

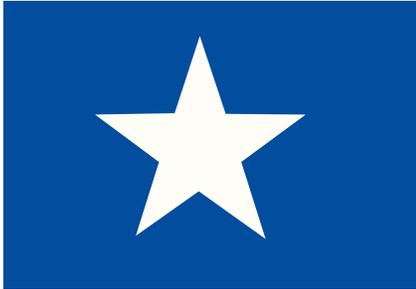


Source: BLS; Note: Defined as care of the elderly, disabled or convalescent at home. Data is seasonally adjusted; Chart: Axios Visuals

8. Ensure universal pre-K access to support working parents and bolster learning opportunities and school readiness for children.
9. Strengthen and stabilize the home health and long-term care workforce by investing in targeted training, credentialing, and career pathways for home health aides and direct care workers.<sup>6</sup>



***NEXT***  
**STEPS**



# New Dems are laser-focused on making life more affordable for everyday Americans.

We will continue engaging with our House and Senate colleagues to enact meaningful legislation to lower costs — and we will continue urging the White House to repeal harmful policies that have led to higher prices for everything from groceries, clothing, furniture, and more. Congress and the President have the power right now to take actions that will directly make life easier for people across the country. New Dems will be relentless in pursuing the enactment of these policies and in pushing our colleagues to act.

