

To: Interested Parties
From: National Women's Law Center
Re: People Are Struggling With Rising Costs and Economic Hardship
Date: September 14, 2026

The National Women's Law Center partnered with YouGov on a national survey of adults from August 12 to August 18, 2026, to better understand the public's views, opinions, and attitudes on key NWLC issue areas.

A key finding is that while people continue to struggle with rising costs and economic hardship, and face difficulty affording basic needs like health care, groceries, and gas, these concerns and struggles are heightened for women. Respondents shared how rising costs are impacting their lives and adjustments they've had to make over the last three months, including driving their car less, keeping their home at unsafe or unhealthy temperatures, going hungry, or forgoing important health care, including health insurance. Meanwhile, the Trump administration continues to pursue unpopular policies that not only fail to address the most critical issues to people, but that are raising their costs of living and making the situation worse for people and families.

In the midst of a persistent affordability crisis, many continue to face increasing difficulties in affording the most basic expenses and needs.

When it comes to high prices and the cost of living, health care, groceries and food, and utility payments are among the top costs that adults are worried about being able to afford.

- 70% of adults say they are worried about being able to afford the cost of health care for themselves and their families, including 75% of women.
- 69% of adults say they are worried about being able to afford the cost of groceries and food for themselves and their families, including 72% of women.
- 65% of adults say they are worried about being able to afford utility payments (water, electricity, and heating/AC) for themselves and their families, including 69% of women.
- 65% of adults say they are worried about being able to afford gas for themselves and their families, including 69% of women.
- 63% of adults say they are worried about being able to afford housing for themselves and their families, including 68% of women.

In response to economic challenges, people are seeing their daily lives upended. Over the last three months:

- Over 1 in 4 adults (28%) drove their car less or used a different form of transportation because they could not afford the cost.
- One in 5 adults (20%) canceled or skipped a doctor's appointment because they could not afford the cost.
- Nearly 1 in 6 adults (16%) skipped filling a prescription, delayed filling a prescription, or took less of their medication because they could not afford the cost.
- Over 1 in 8 adults (13%) did not have enough to eat because they could not afford the cost.
- Nearly 1 in 8 adults (12%) kept their home at a temperature that they felt was unsafe or unhealthy because they could not afford the cost.
- Nearly 1 in 8 adults (12%) went at least one month without health insurance because they could not afford the cost.

Inflation and the cost of living remain top concerns for people and many blame Trump.

- 84% of adults say they have seen, read or heard somewhat or a lot about inflation and the cost of living in the past couple of weeks.
- 93% of adults say that they support bringing down inflation and the cost of living, and 69% of adults say the country is headed on the wrong track on the issue.
- 84% of adults say their elected representatives should be doing more to bring down the cost of living.
- For those who say the country is on the wrong track on inflation and cost of living, 82% say Donald Trump is responsible, and 56% say Republican leaders in Congress are responsible.

Guaranteeing access to affordable health care is an overwhelmingly popular policy that people want to see their elected representatives pursue.

- 87% of adults say that they strongly or somewhat support guaranteeing access to affordable health care, and 56% of adults say the country is on the wrong track on the issue of access to affordable health care.
- 69% of adults say the country is on the wrong track on the **cost** of health care. For those who feel the country is on the wrong track on access to health care, 76% hold Donald Trump responsible and 65% hold Republican leaders in Congress responsible.
- 90% of women support guaranteeing access to affordable health care, including 90% of Black women.

- 74% of adults say their elected representatives should be doing more to guarantee access to affordable health care.

Despite the Trump administration's ongoing attacks on working women, substantial majorities support equal opportunities for women at work.

- 78% of adults say they support removing barriers to equal opportunities for women at work, including 81% of women.

There are high levels of support for guaranteeing access to affordable, high-quality child care – including among people who aren't parents.

- 81% of adults say that they support guaranteeing access to affordable, high quality child care, including 86% of parents with children under 18.
- 51% of adults say the country is on the wrong track on affordable, high quality child care. For those who say the country is on the wrong track, 68% say Donald Trump is responsible, and 64% say Republican leaders in Congress are responsible.
- 63% of adults say that their elected representatives should be doing more on the issue.
- 63% of adults support offering free, universal child care. 55% of adults say offering free, universal child care would help them and/or their families, and that number shoots up to 71% for mothers with kids under 18.

The vast majority of people surveyed support affordable long-term care.

- 89% of adults say that they support guaranteeing access to affordable long-term care for older adults and disabled people, including 89% of women.
- 54% of adults say the country is on the wrong track on affordable long-term care. For those who say the country is on the wrong track, 66% say Donald Trump is responsible, and 61% say Republican leaders in Congress are responsible.
- 72% of adults say that their elected representatives should be doing more on the issue.

Donald Trump's policy agenda is completely out of touch with what the public wants.

- Only 23% of adults support making it harder for people to access federal assistance that helps them pay for food and health care.
- Only 19% of adults support eliminating programs that help women enter high paying, non-traditional occupations such as the trades or in STEM.

- Only 18% of adults support passing laws that require colleges and universities to stop teaching classes focused on women's studies.
- Only 25% of adults support requiring schools teach abstinence-only sex education in order to receive federal funding.

There is overwhelming support for policies that would advance gender justice. For example:

- 82% of adults say that they support guaranteeing the right to be free from sex-based discrimination, including harassment, in the workplace and in school, including 82% of women, and 92% of LGBTQ+ people.
- 80% of adults support funding programs that serve domestic violence and sexual assault survivors, including 80% of women.
- 83% of adults support improving access to voting for all eligible voters.
- 78% of adults support prohibiting discrimination in health care; 66% of adults say prohibiting discrimination in health care would help them and/or their families.
- 76% of adults support making sure billionaires and corporations pay their fair share in taxes. 72% say doing this would help them and their families.
- 74% of adults support guaranteeing rights and access to birth control and contraception, including 79% of women.