



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on July 2, 2026

GOP Rep. Nehls: Affordability? I'm Having Lobster Tails and Rib Eyes

As President Trump did a month ago, Representative Troy Nehls (R-Texas) gave the Democrats a soundbite that will be seen in advertisements before November's mid-term elections. And perhaps in the 2028 presidential election.

Nehls pooh-poohed Americans worried about affordability. He told a reporter on the steps of the Capitol that he would eat big lobster tails and juicy rib eyes to celebrate July 4. And no worries about gas prices. Stopping Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, he said, is worth the pain at the pump.



AP Images
Troy Nehls

Nehls reprised Trump's sentiments from mid May when he said he thinks nothing about the financial situation of Americans.

But 54 percent of Americans live paycheck to paycheck.

PabloReports: How do House Republicans make the case that you're fighting for affordability when you go back to your districts?

Nehls: Affordability? What are you talking about? I'm gonna go there tomorrow. I'm gonna get me a couple of big lobster tails. I'm gonna get me some... pic.twitter.com/mFenNE9m6x

— MeidasTouch (@MeidasTouch) [June 30, 2026](#)

"I'm OK With" High Gas Prices

A reporter asked Nehls how Republicans would discuss affordability with constituents when they return home for the July 4 recess.

"Affordability — what are you talking about?" he replied:

I'm gonna go there tomorrow ... over the Fourth. I'm gonna get me a couple of big lobster tails. I'm gonna get some nice rib eyes. I'm going to sit in my backyard with my family, my neighbors, and we're going to be enjoying the Fourth, celebrating 250 years, the birthday [of America]. We're gonna be celebrating the greatest president in my lifetime, Donald J. Trump. Maybe watch some fireworks.

The tone-deaf reply didn't stop there.

Nehls claimed that Americans understand higher gas prices because of the war in Iran, and said Trump made clear that energy companies cannot price gouge consumers. The increases are "temporary," he



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said.

“I think that the overall goal and objective is to make sure Iran never has a nuclear weapon,” he said:

So, I’m OK with the increase in fuel.

Reporter: *Do you think the 60 percent of Americans who are living paycheck to paycheck can afford lobster tails and rib eyes and all of that?*

Nehls: *Maybe the 60 percent of Americans don’t work as hard as I do.*

Trump Comment, Life Not Affordable

Nehls echoed Trump, the “greatest president of [his] lifetime.”

In May, when the war in Iran [had boosted](#) gas prices to nationwide average of \$4.51, Trump insinuated he doesn’t much care. The important thing, he said, is Iran’s nuclear weapons. Trump was crystal clear when a reporter asked how much Americans’ financial situation is motivating him to make a deal with Iran.

“Not even a little bit,” [Trump replied](#):

The only thing that matters when I’m talking about Iran — they can’t have a nuclear weapon. I don’t think about Americans’ financial situation. I don’t think about anybody. I think about one thing — we cannot let Iran have a nuclear weapon. That’s all.

Another reporter asked whether what he said is true, that he really isn’t worried about how the war is affecting Americans.

Replied Trump:

The most important thing by far — including whether our stock market, which, by the way, is at an all-time high — but including whether or not our stock market goes up or down a little bit, the most important thing by far is Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon. Every American understands.

In fact, they don’t understand, as the economic data and repeated polls show.

Early this month, [Ramsey Solutions reported](#) the dire financial condition of many Americans:

- 34% of Americans (approximately 88 million adults) in 2026 describe their financial situation as “struggling” or “in crisis,” up from 22% in 2021 — a 55% increase in five years.
- Difficulty providing the basics of life (housing, bills, food) has increased in the last five years — though homeowners have had the least difficulty.
- In 2021, 42% of Americans said they were living paycheck to paycheck. Today, that number is up to 54%.
- Five years ago, 44% of Americans said they worried about money every single day, and that figure has climbed to 53% in 2026.



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Early this month, [Gallup reported](#) that two-thirds of those surveyed said gas prices have “caused financial hardship for their household,” the same thing a similar number said when President Joe Biden’s economic policies sent prices sky high in 2022.

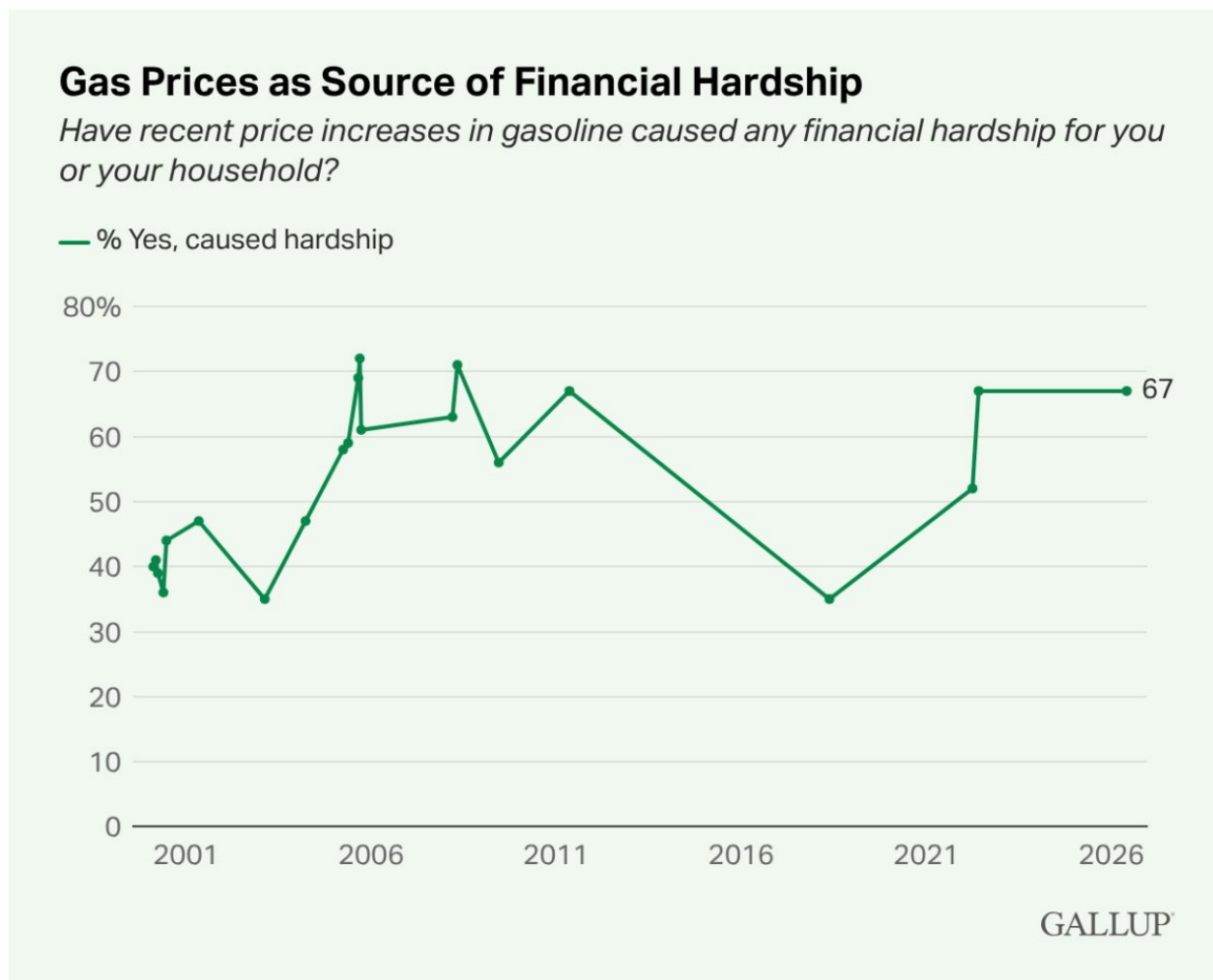
As well, 17 percent said the hardships were “severe.”

Reporter: “To what extent are Americans’ financial situations motivating you to make a deal?”

Trump: “Not even a little bit... I don’t think about Americans’ financial situation.”

I can’t believe he actually said this. What a surreal and unbelievable statement from a president. pic.twitter.com/5rIALYM75Y

— Ben Swann (@BenSwann_) [May 12, 2026](#)



Similarly, [CNN reported](#) that “76% of Americans call cost-of-living issues their biggest economic problem.”

“Strong majorities are pessimistic about the economy as a whole — almost 7 in 10 believe a recession is likely in the next year — and about their own ability to cover expenses and make purchases,” CNN continued.



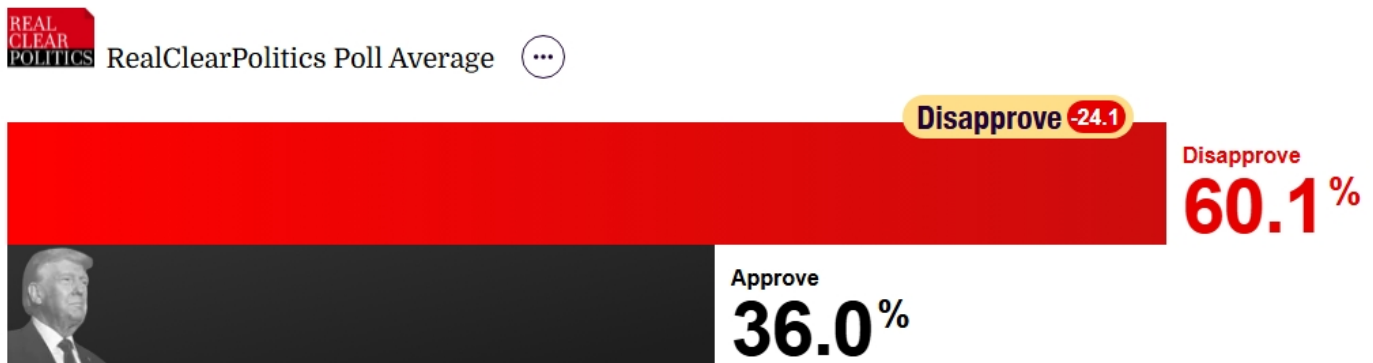
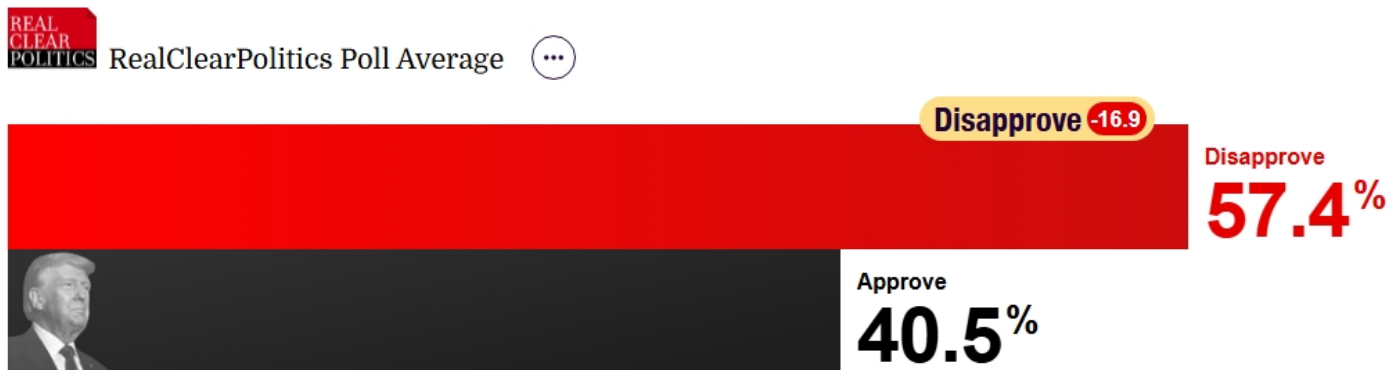
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As well, those polled say they've altered their spending habits, and dramatically so:

- 61 percent buy cheaper groceries;
- 59 percent spend less on extras and entertainment;
- 44 percent drive less;
- 31 percent delay medical treatment;
- 30 percent charge necessities on credit cards;
- 27 percent took extra jobs to pay bills; and,
- 26 percent had trouble finding affordable housing.

As of today, the [Real Clear Politics polling data show](#) Trump's job approval rating is in the tank: 57.4 percent disapprove. Just 40.5 percent approve. Difference: -16.9 percent.

On the economy, which Trump and Nehls don't worry about, [his rating is worse](#): 60.1 percent disapprove, while 36 percent approve. That's a -24.1 percent spread.



The message is lost on Trump, who recently declared that "I love the inflation."

In December, [he said](#) "affordability is a hoax."

Reporter: Are you concerned, Mr. President, about the latest inflation number which came out this morning?

Trump: No, I love it. I love the inflation. pic.twitter.com/vktX6C9lbk

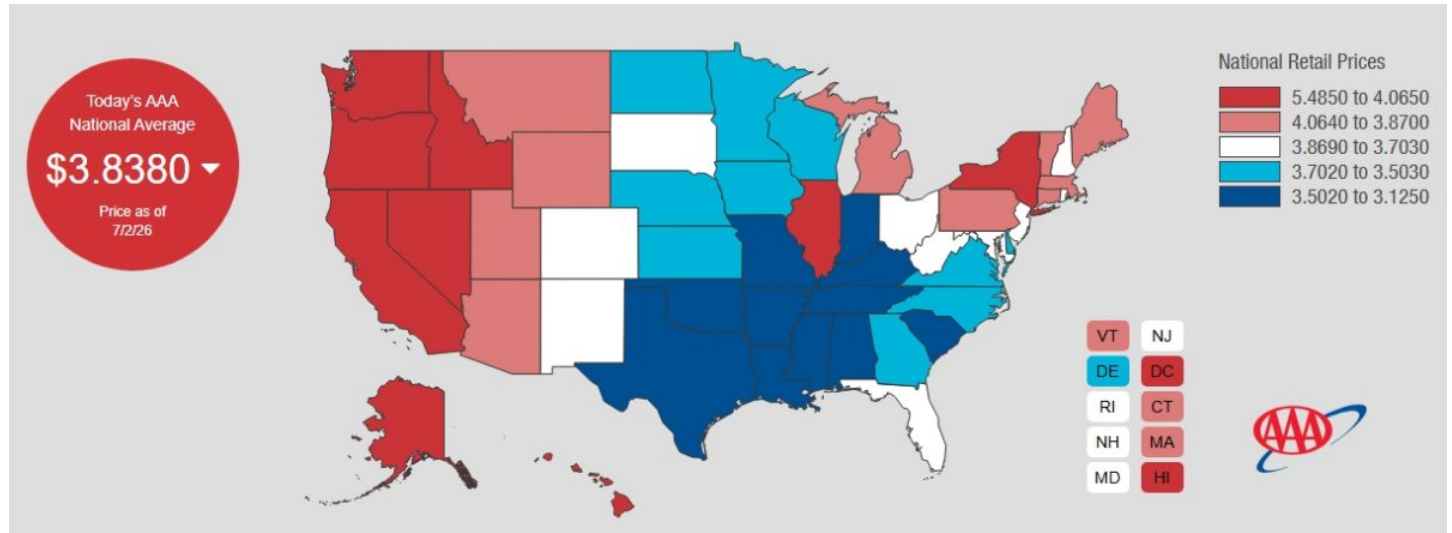
— Acyn (@Acyn) [June 10, 2026](#)



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In May inflation leapt to 4.2 percent, “marking its highest level since April 2023, from 3.8% in April,” [Trading Economics.com reported](#). The increase is “the third consecutive monthly acceleration in headline inflation, with energy costs jumping 23.5% (vs 17.9% in April), due to the energy shock triggered by the conflict with Iran. Gasoline prices soared 40.5%, after a 28.4% gain.”

Average gas prices today are \$3.83.



Nehls vs. the Average American

Nehls “earns” \$174,000 annually. The average salary for an American at the end of 2025 [was \\$66,622](#). Difference: \$107,378.

Nehls collects a whopping 161.2 percent more salary than most of his constituents. Thus, those constituents earn a paltry 38 percent of Nehls’s big salary.

Most likely, they won’t chow down on big lobster tails and rib eyes on July 4.



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