

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

August 19, 2026

Dear President Trump:

We write to express our alarm at the damage that your administration's policies are having on American families as they prepare to send their kids back to school. Time and time again, you have proven that you do not care about the affordability crisis, calling it a "hoax"<sup>1</sup> and declaring that affordability "doesn't mean anything to anybody."<sup>2</sup>

As of June 2026, the average household in the United States has had to spend roughly \$3,500 more on goods and services, including an average of \$695 more on housing costs, \$310 more for groceries, and \$504 more on gas.<sup>3</sup> Families already straining to keep food on the table and gas in the tank are being pushed to the brink as back-to-school costs rise beyond reach. The cost of typical school items, including notebooks, lunch boxes, and index cards, is up nearly 8% this year compared to 2025, while the cost of packed lunches is up almost 11%. Estimates show that families will spend roughly \$175 on school supplies and \$3,800 on packed lunches this year per student.<sup>4</sup>

Many back-to-school essentials are manufactured overseas, leaving parents to shoulder the higher prices caused by your reckless tariffs. When a company has to pay a fee to import a product to the United States, they often are forced to pass the cost directly to the consumer. Over the course of 2025, nearly 90 percent of the tariffs' economic burden fell on U.S. firms and consumers.<sup>5</sup> This is painfully clear to parents, one-third of whom say they can't afford back-to-school shopping this year, and as a result, nearly half expect to sacrifice essentials like groceries or bills to make room in their budgets.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2025/12/11/nx-s1-5639957/trump-affordability-hoax-economy-midterms>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/02/us/politics/trump-affordability-economy-messaging.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/democrats/issue-briefs?ID=A3E11D47-AAB6-4508-AB3B-AE2FED661CB5>

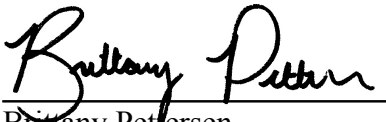
<sup>4</sup> <https://tcf.org/content/commentary/as-students-head-back-to-school-families-face-11-price-hikes/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://libertystreeteconomics.newyorkfed.org/2026/02/who-is-paying-for-the-2025-u-s-tariffs/>

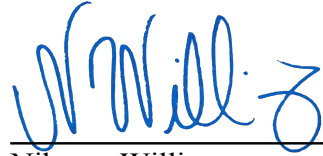
<sup>6</sup> <https://www.creditkarma.com/about/commentary/parents-would-rather-go-into-debt-than-have-to-say-no-to-their-kids-this-back-to-school-season>

You claimed that you would lower costs on “day one,” and yet, nearly 2 years later, families are struggling even more than before. You have repeatedly left questions unanswered, while American families are being squeezed because of your reckless decisions.<sup>7</sup> Lowering prices for them should be a top priority. We urge your administration to immediately take action to lower costs and stress for millions of hard-working parents. We look forward to hearing from you.

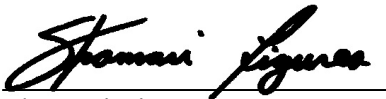
Sincerely,



Brittany Petersen  
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress



Shomari Figures  
Member of Congress



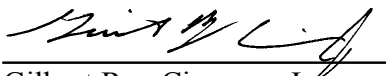
Jasmine Crockett  
Member of Congress



Derek T. Tran  
Member of Congress



George Whitesides  
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress

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<sup>7</sup>[https://pettersen.house.gov/uploadedfiles/letter\\_to\\_president\\_trump\\_regarding\\_back-to-school\\_prices.pdf](https://pettersen.house.gov/uploadedfiles/letter_to_president_trump_regarding_back-to-school_prices.pdf)