WEALTH ADVISORS

TRUST MATTERS.

July 2026

Point of View – Economy – Markets

Important Information

The views and opinions expressed are those of the speaker and are subject to change based on factors such as market and economic conditions. These views and opinions are not an offer to buy a particular security and should not be relied upon as investment advice. Past performance cannot guarantee comparable future results.

Important Information

Performance quoted is past performance and cannot guarantee comparable future results; current performance may be higher or lower.

Results shown assume the reinvestment of dividends.

An investment cannot be made directly in an index.

Investments with higher return potential carry greater risk for loss.

Investing in small companies involves greater risks not associated with investing in more established companies, such as business risk, significant stock price fluctuations and illiquidity.

Foreign securities have additional risks, including exchange rate changes, political and economic upheaval, the relative lack of information about these companies, relatively low market liquidity and the potential lack of strict financial and accounting controls and standards.

Investing in emerging markets involves greater risk than investing in more established markets such as risks relating to the relatively smaller size and lesser liquidity of these markets, high inflation rates, adverse political developments and lack of timely information.

Fluctuations in the price of gold and precious metals often dramatically affect the profitability of the companies in the gold and precious metals sector. Changes in political or economic climate for the two largest gold producers, South Africa and the former Soviet Union, may have a direct effect on the price of gold worldwide.

Bullet points for July

- Inflation down
- Q1 GDP growth revised up
- WSJ GDP growth forecast revised up
- Strong PMIs
- Strong retail sales
- Housing starts up
- Jump in job openings
- Household net worth surged
- Fed on hold
- 2026/2027 earnings estimates surge
- Record high stock prices
- High P/E ratio

Wars and the stock market

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Stock Market Can Endure War

Military expeditions, wars and revolutions typically don't have a lasting impact on U.S. stocks. The average drop across major geopolitical events since 1939 was just 4%, according to Deutsche Bank, and the rebound was quick.

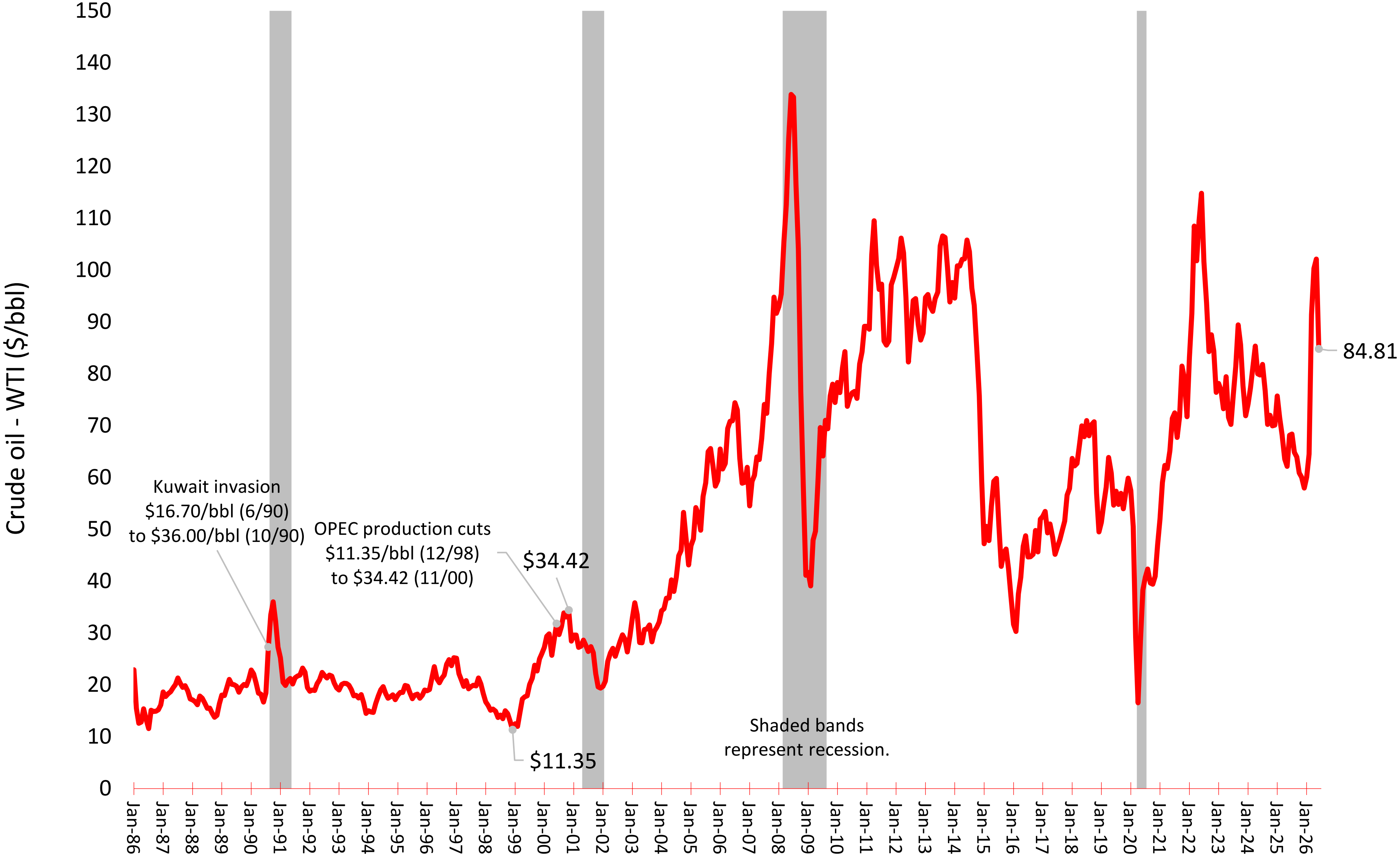
The four great bear markets of the past century—the Great Depression, the 1973-74 oil embargo[1], the dot-com crash and the 2007-09 financial crisis—were much worse for global stocks than either of the world wars, academics Elroy Dimson, Paul March and Mike Staunton point out in a long-term study for UBS.

Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, "The Stock Market Can Endure War", by James Mackintosh, March 30, 2026.

[1] Oil prices tripled from \$3/bbl to nearly \$12/bbl.

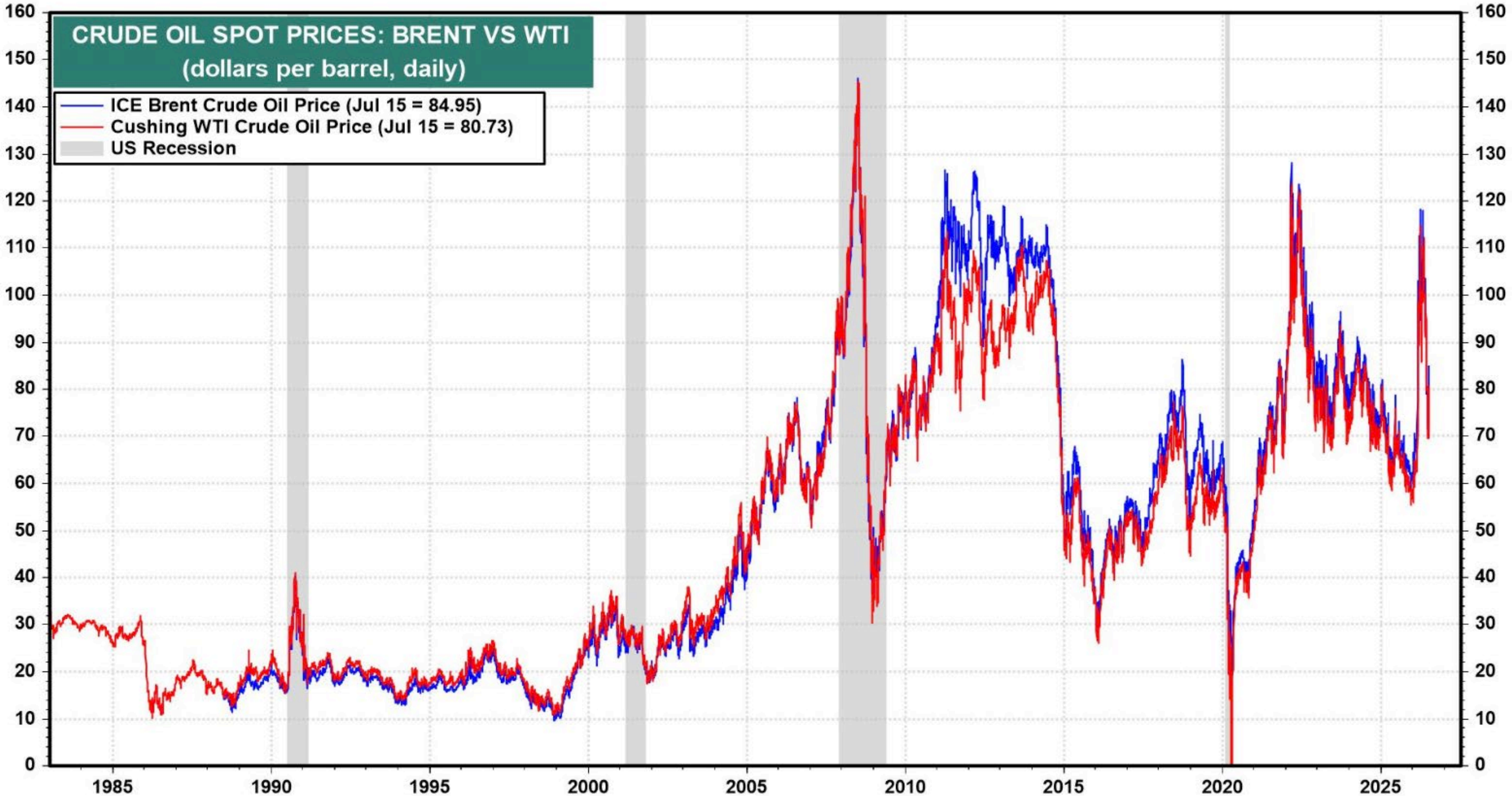
Oil

WTI spot crude oil prices



Source: U.S. Energy Information Agency. Data through June 2026.

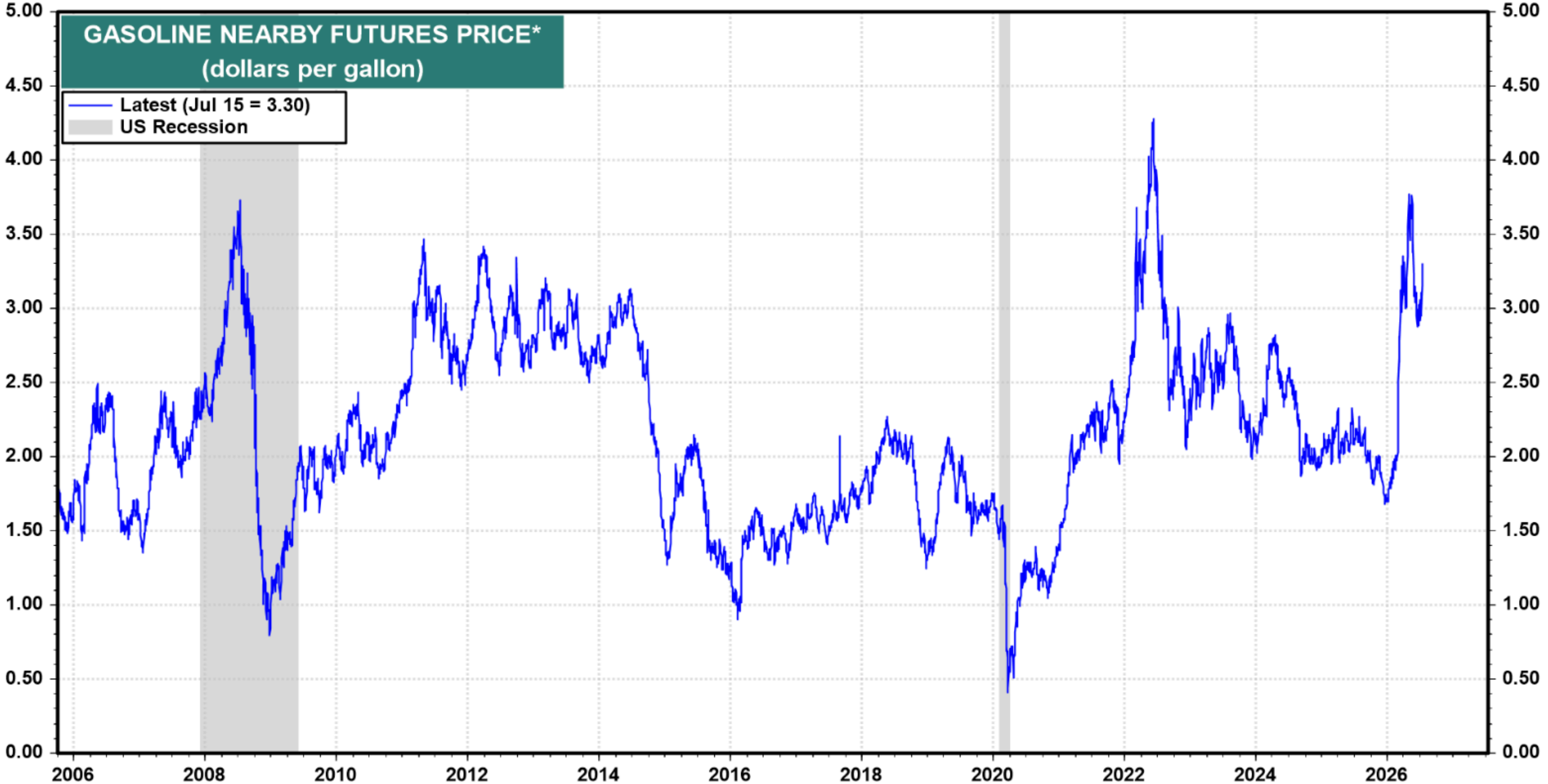
Brent and WTI spot crude oil prices



Source: LSEG Datastream and © Yardeni Research. Intercontinental Exchange, Ice Futures Limited, and Refinitiv.

Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, July 16, 2026.

Gasoline prices

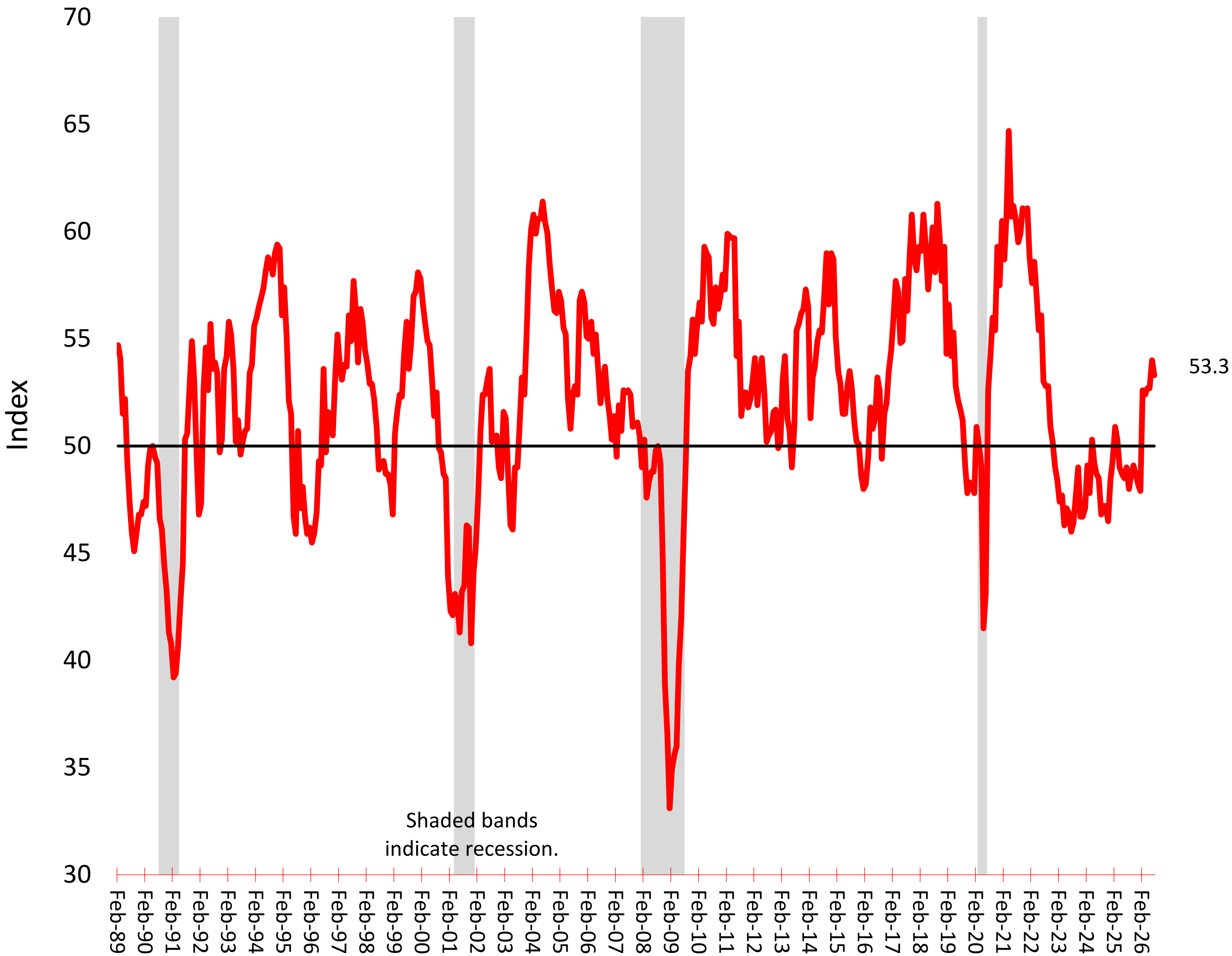


Source: LSEG Datastream and © Yardeni Research. New York Mercantile Exchange.
* NYMEX-RBOB Gasoline.

Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, July 16, 2026.

Economic data

ISM manufacturing PMI – jumped



June at 53.3.

June new orders 56.0.

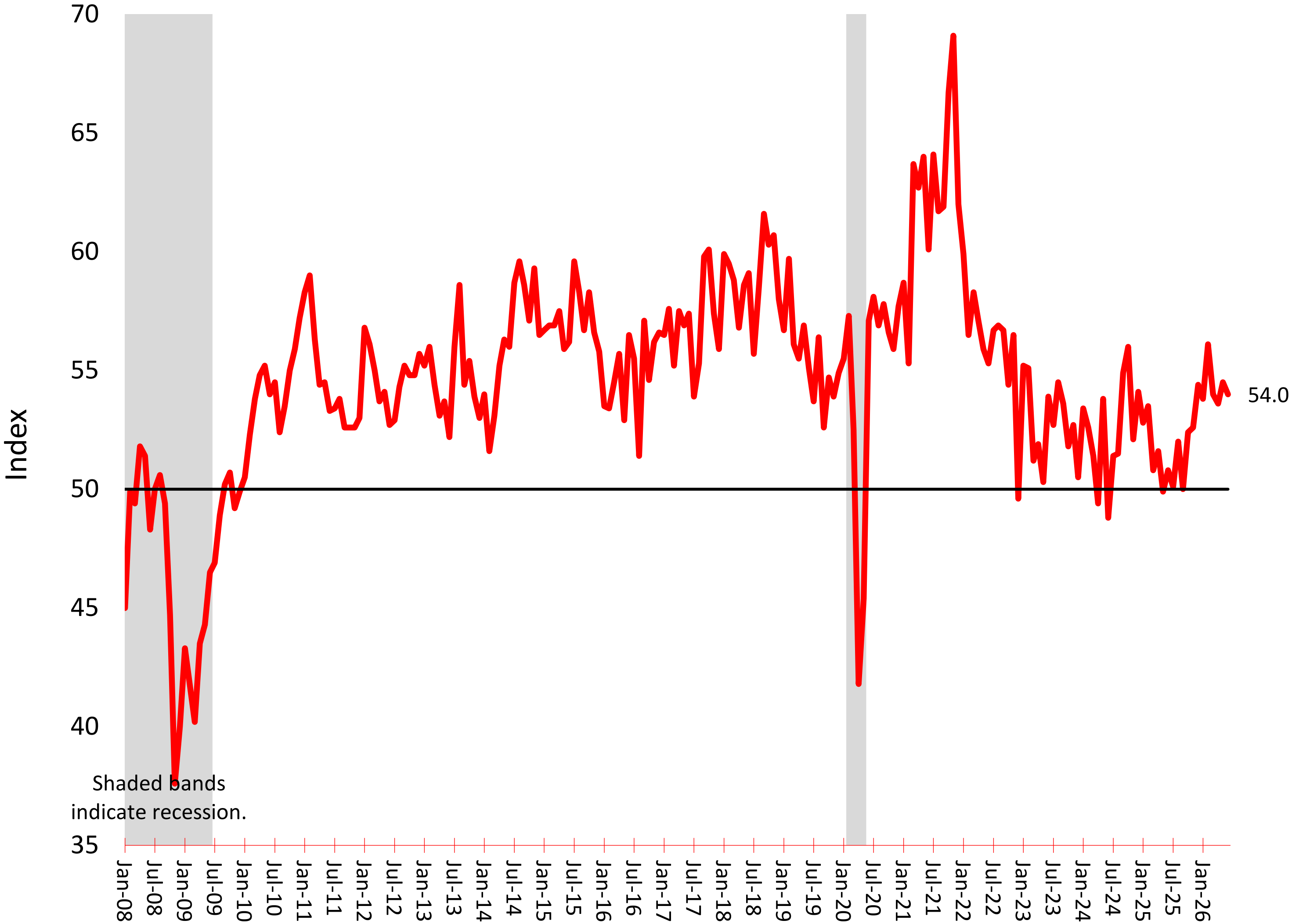
Note the historic volatility in the manufacturing PMI.

Note how this indicator has slumped well below 50 even during periods of strong economic expansion, eg. 1995, 1999, 2003, 2013, 2016.

Source: Copyright 2026, Institute for Supply Management. Data through June 2026.
ISM: “A reading above 50 percent indicates that the manufacturing economy is generally expanding; below 50 percent indicates that it is generally contracting. A Manufacturing PMI® above 48.7 percent, over a period of time, generally indicates an expansion of the overall economy.”

Economic data

ISM services PMI



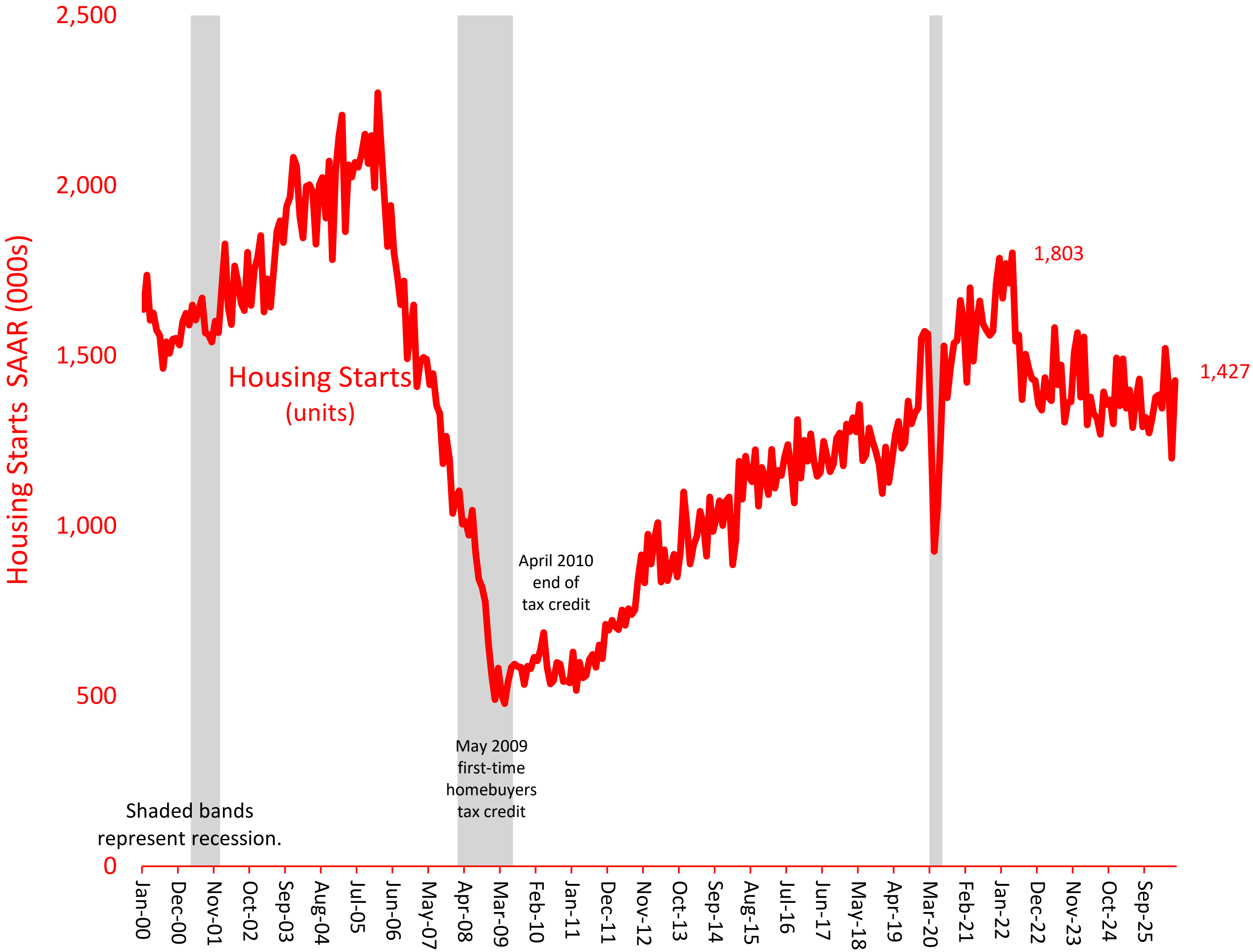
June at 54.0.

June new orders 55.1.

Services comprise 89% of the U.S. economy[1] and 91% of total nonfarm jobs.

Source: Copyright 2026, Institute for Supply Management; data through June 2026. This data series was created in 2008. ISM: “A reading above 50 percent indicates that the services sector economy is generally expanding; below 50 percent indicates that it is generally contracting.” “A Services PMI® above 50.1 percent, over time, generally indicates an expansion of the overall economy.” [1]Value added as a percent of GDP.

Housing starts – plunged in May



1.427 million starts in June.

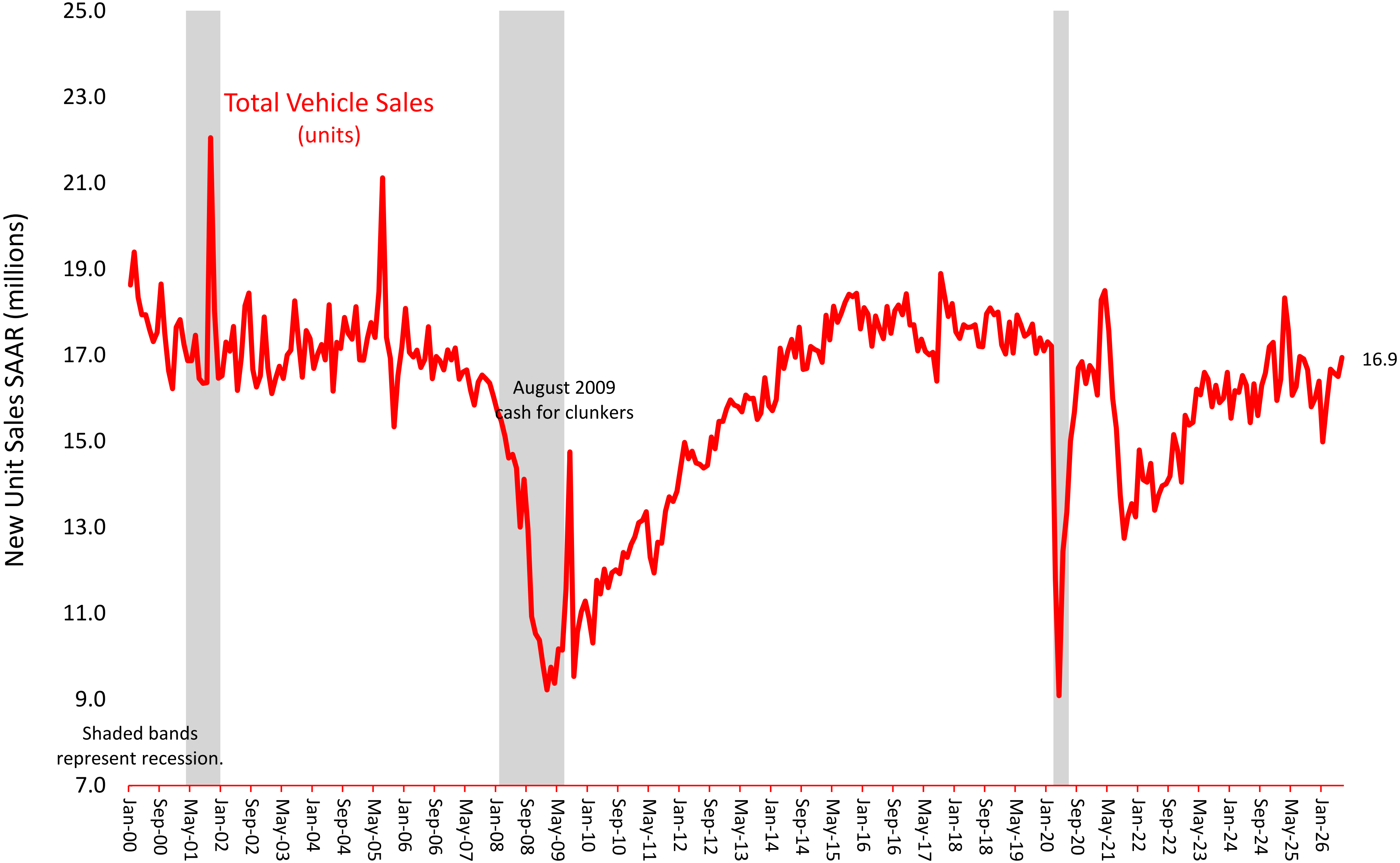
June permits at 1.367 million.

"Housing Supply Gap Exceeds 4 Million Homes in 2025."[1]

Sources: BEA and U.S. Census Bureau. Data through June 2026.

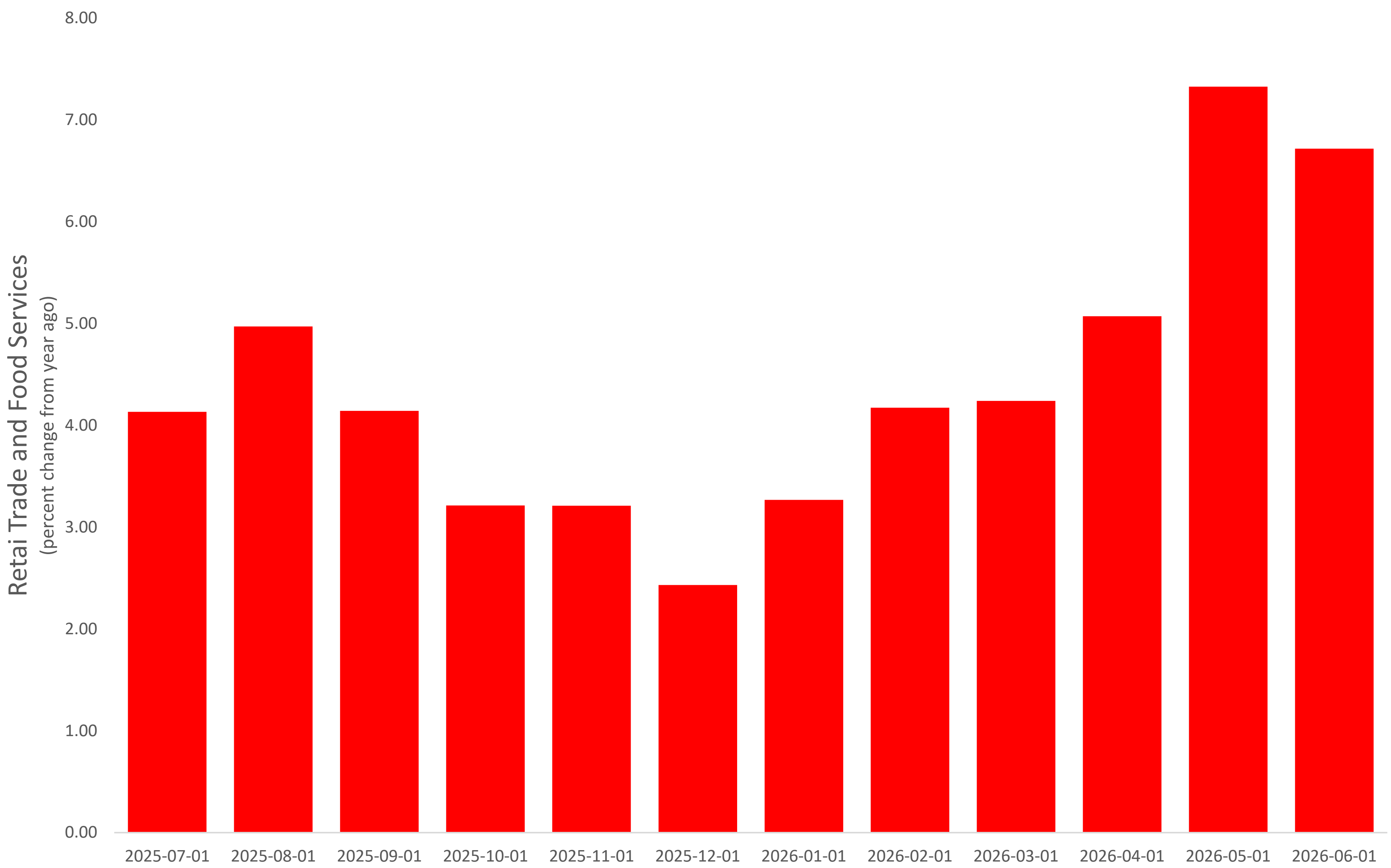
[1] Realtor.com. "Housing Supply Gap Exceeds 4 Million Homes in 2025", by Hannah Jones and Danielle Hale. March 3, 2026.

Vehicle sales



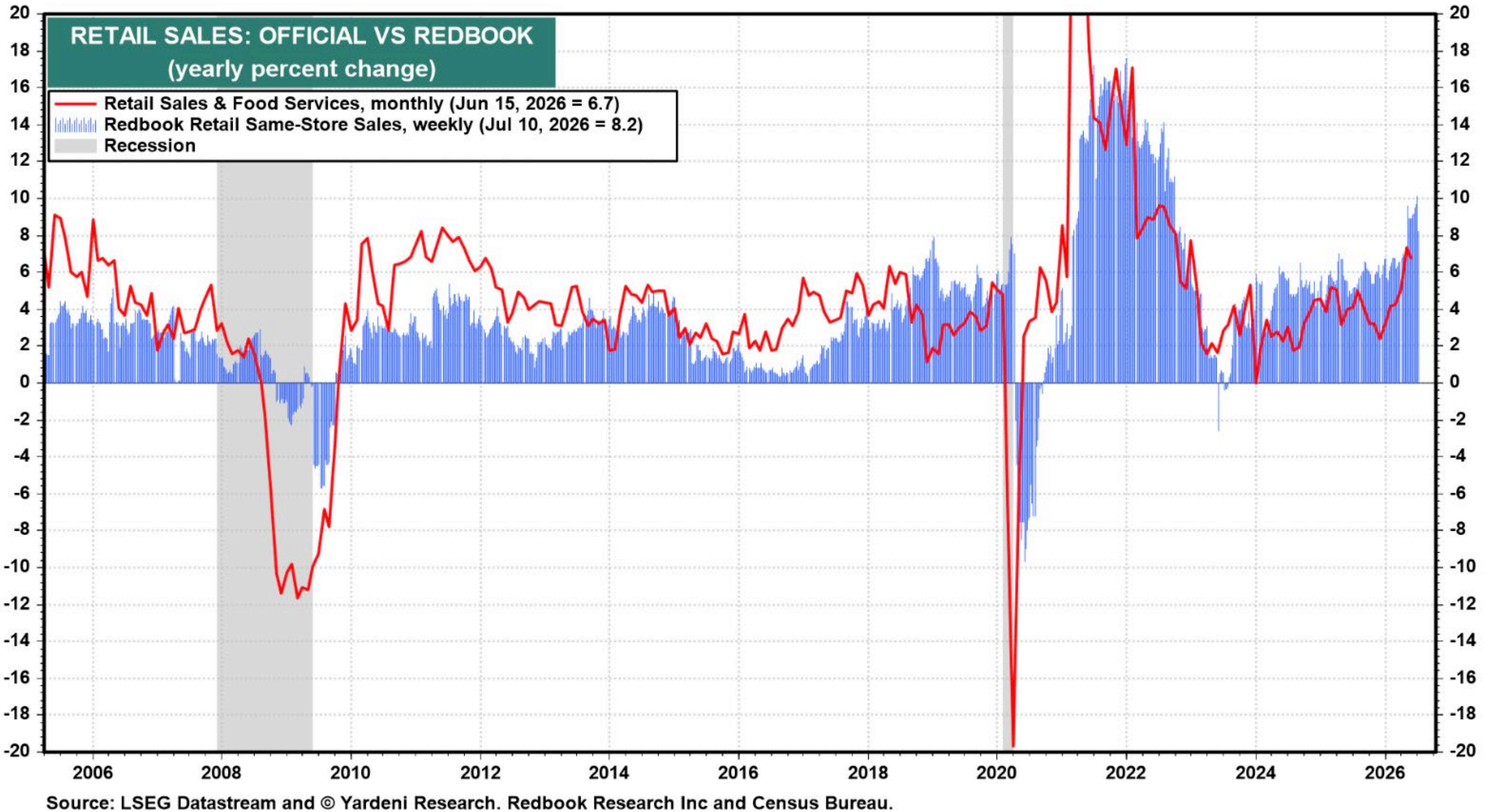
Sources: BEA. Data through June 2026.

Retail sales



Source: FRBSL, data through June 2026.

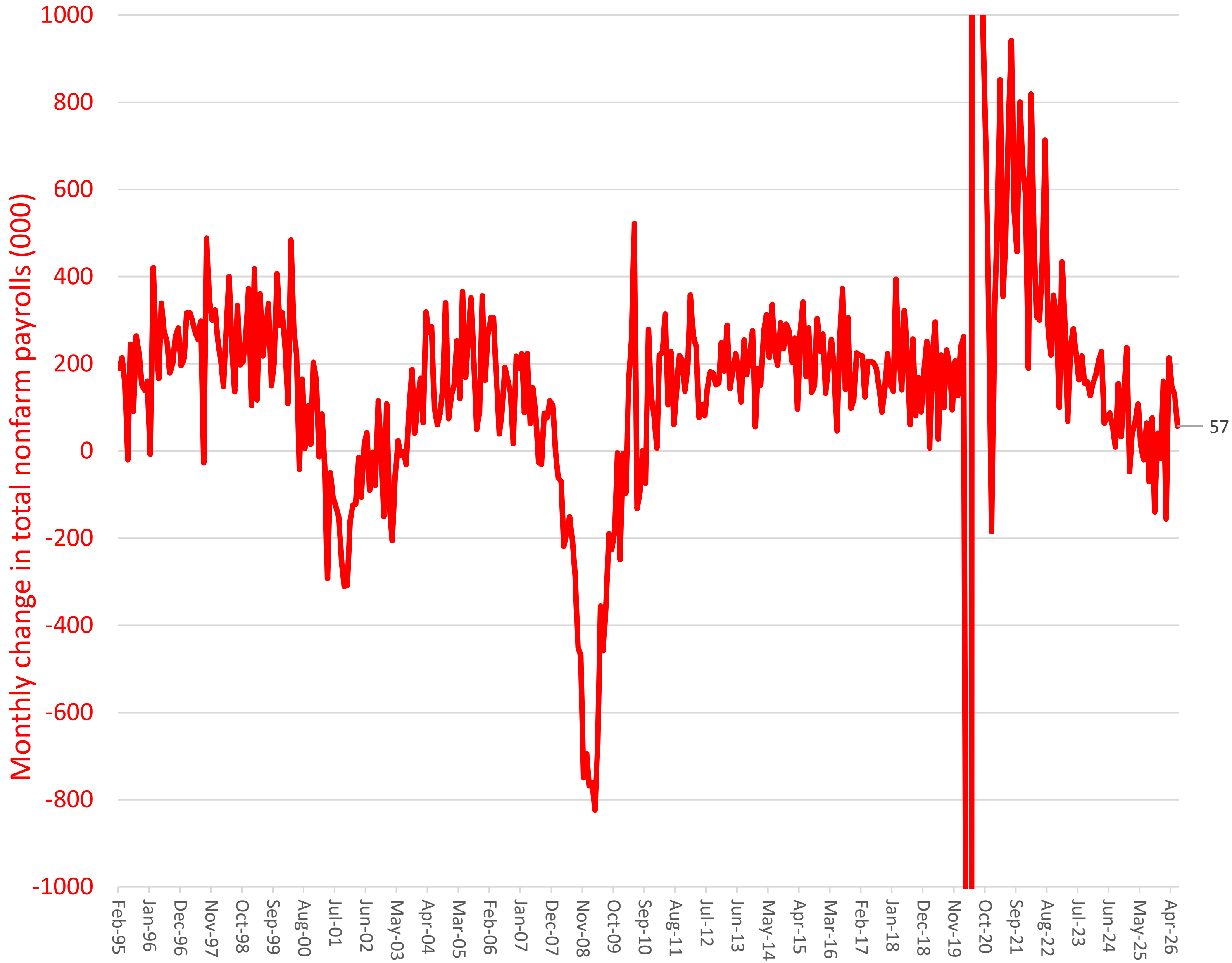
Retail sales & food services – strong



 Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, July 16, 2026.

Economic data

Net new job formation



57,000 jobs gained in June on the establishment survey.

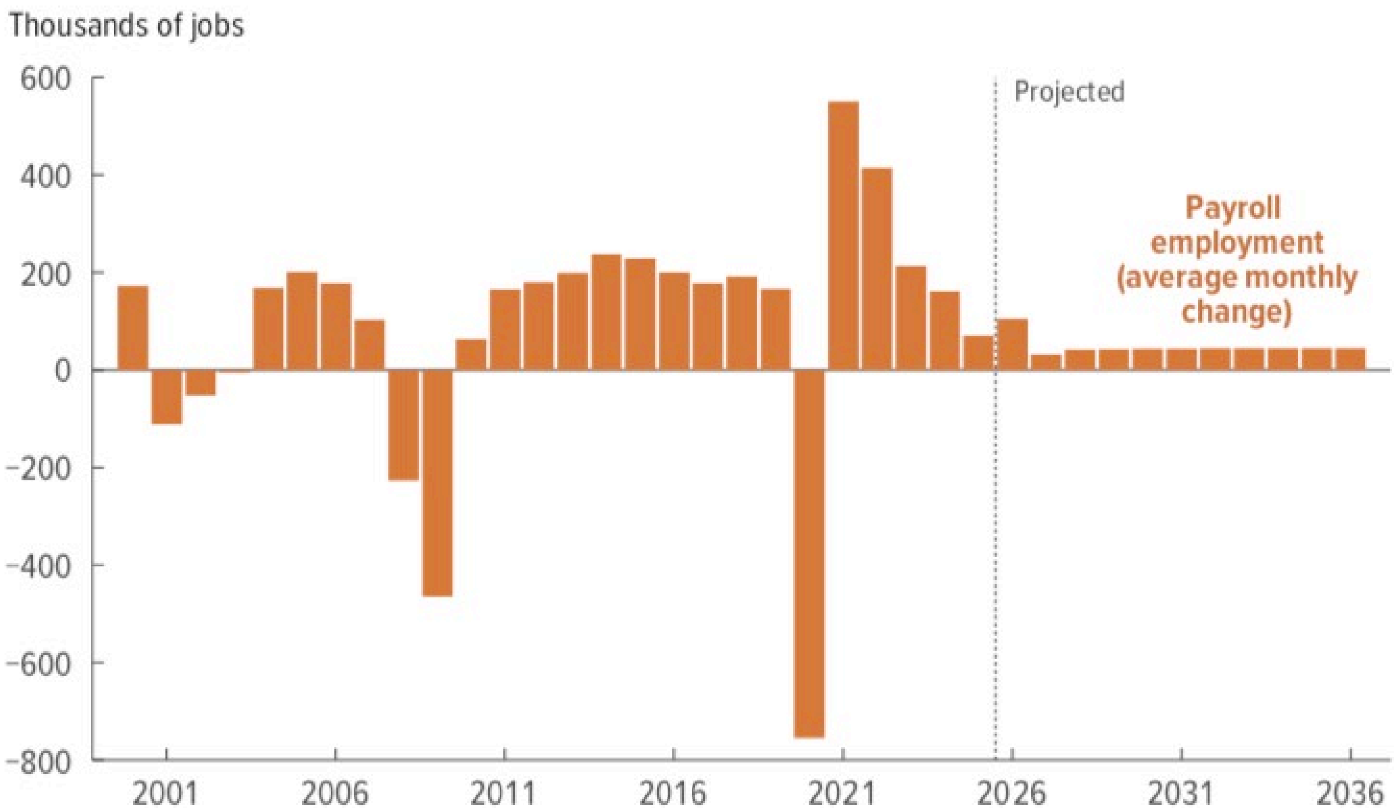
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data through June 2026.

Net new job formation – much slower ahead

Employment

In 2026, employment growth is projected to rebound as overall economic activity increases. In later years, fewer jobs are added to payrolls per month, on average, in CBO's projections, because of the aging population and weaker demand for labor.

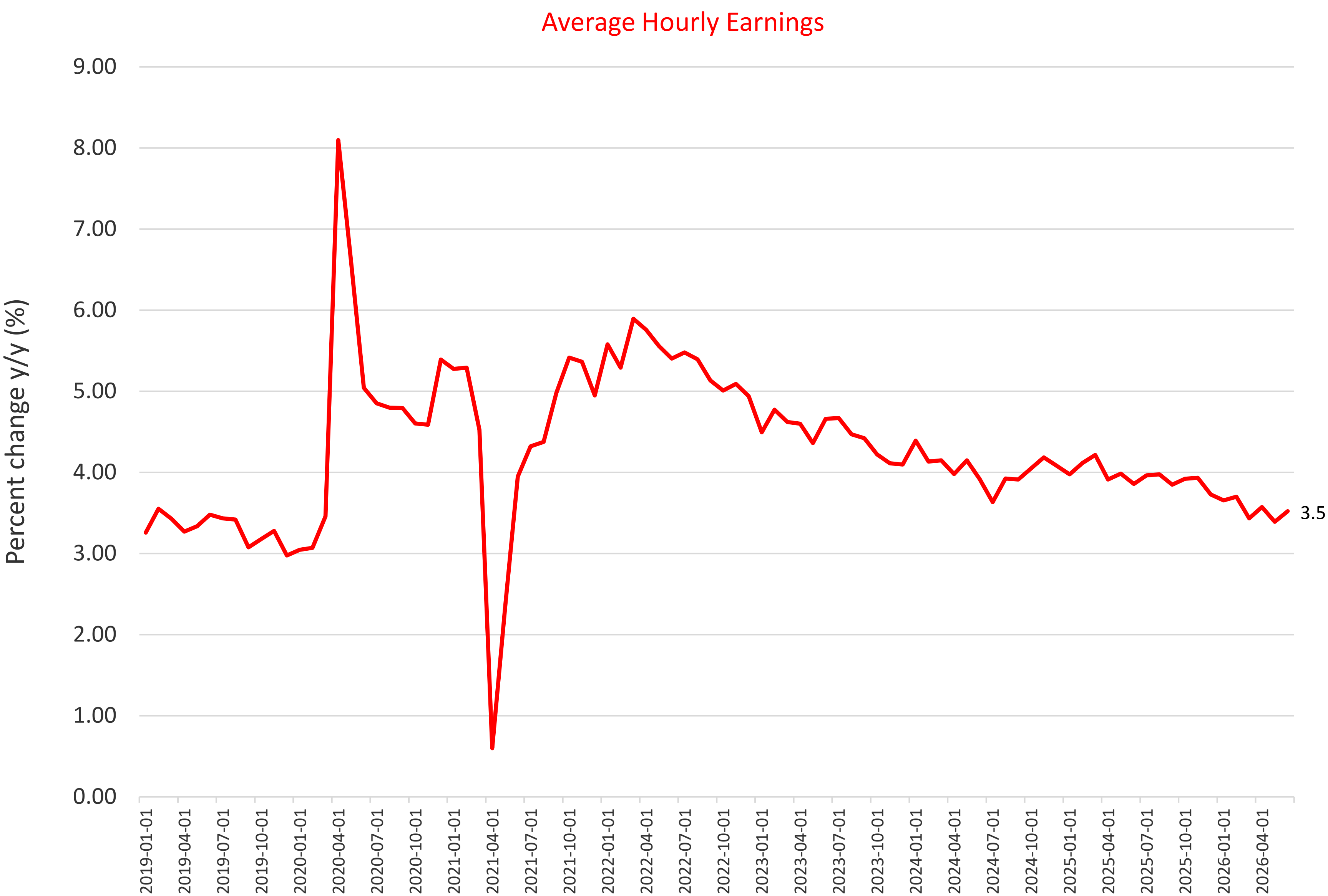
See Figure 2-5 on page 41.



"From 2028 to 2036, payroll employment grows at an average rate of 44,000 jobs per month, which is slower than its growth in recent years."

Source: Congressional Budget Office, *The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2026-2036*, February 2026.

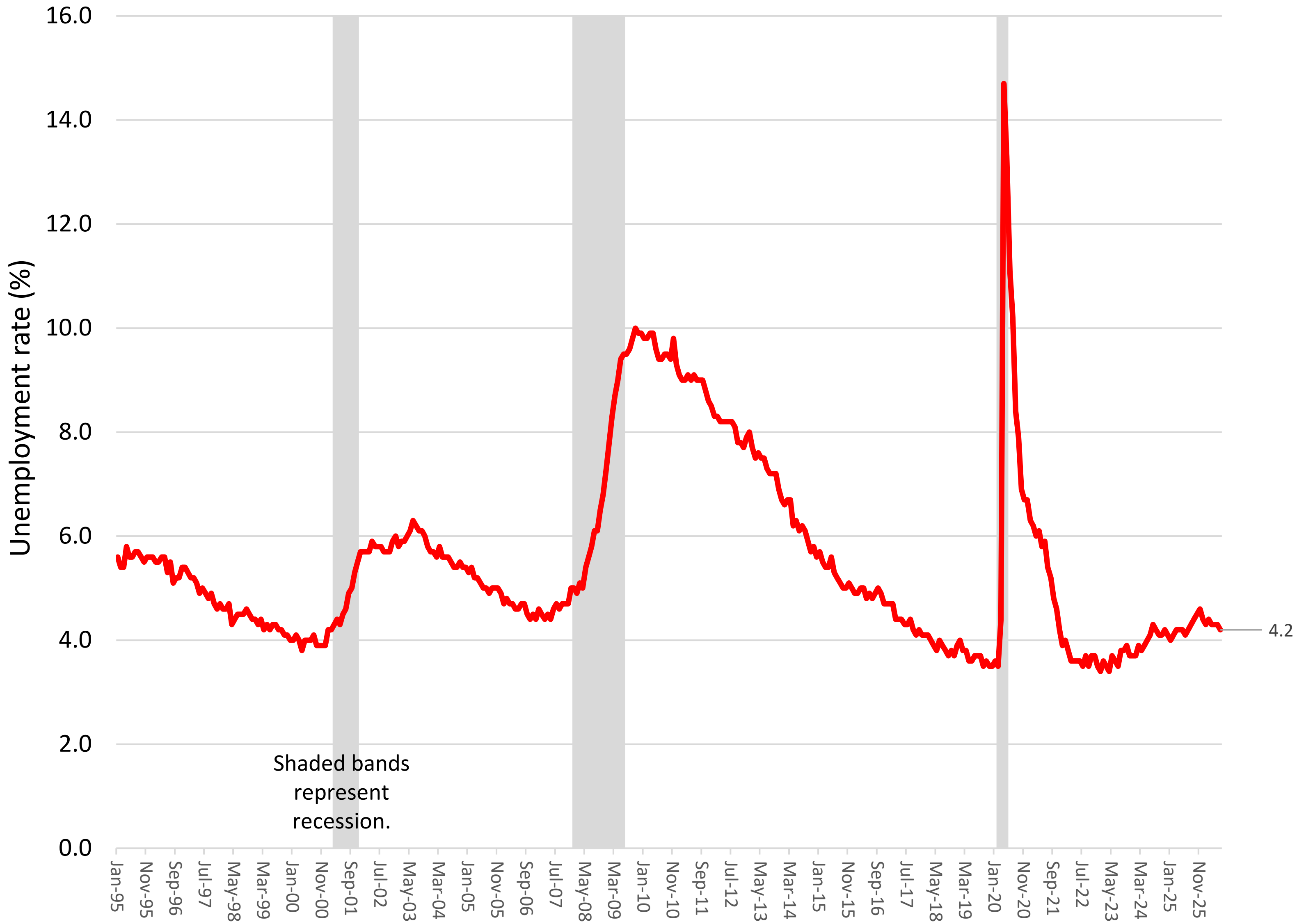
Average hourly earnings – y/y rate of change



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data through June 2026.

Economic data

Unemployment rate

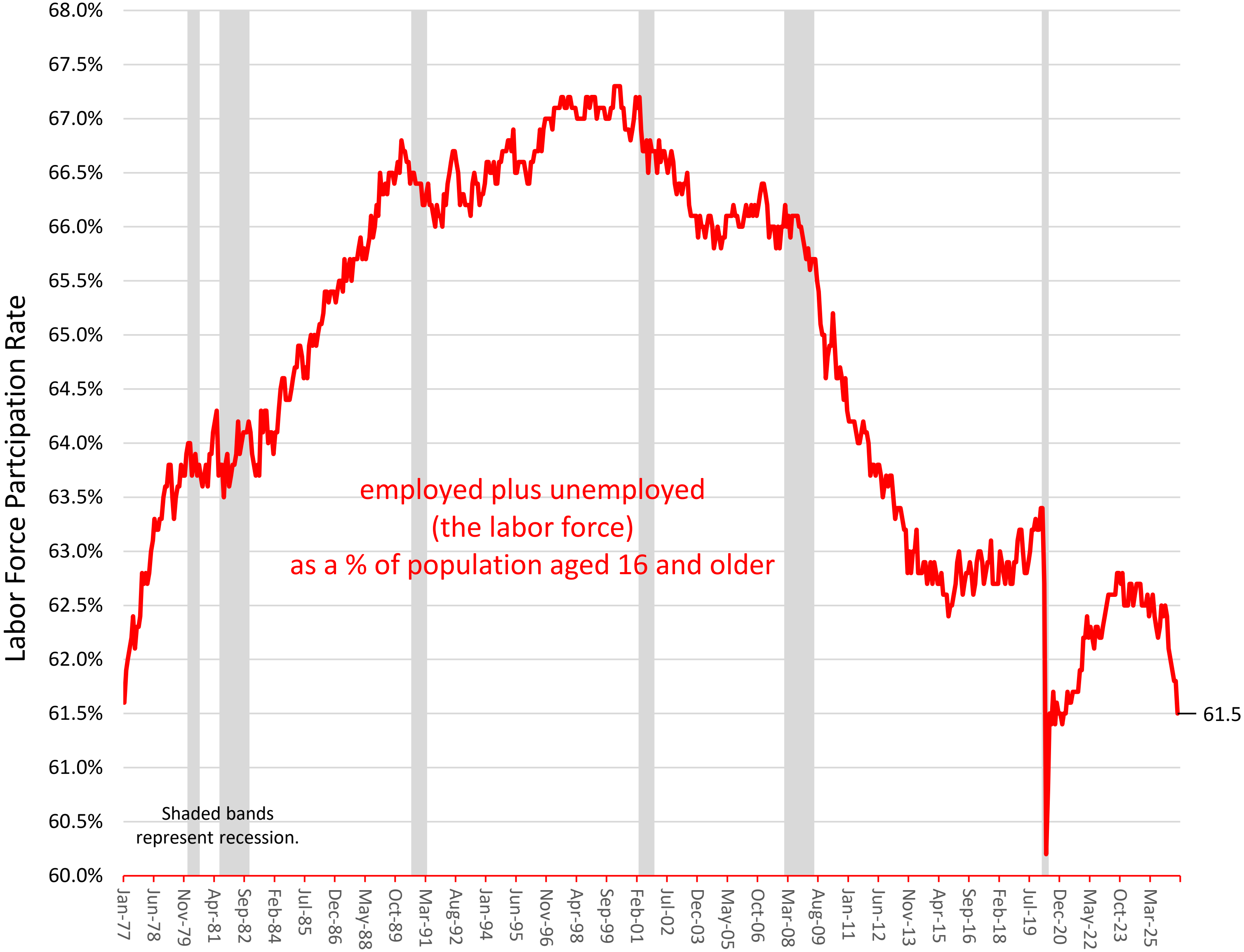


4.2% in June.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data through June 2026.

Economic data - jobs

Labor force participation rate[1] – dropping



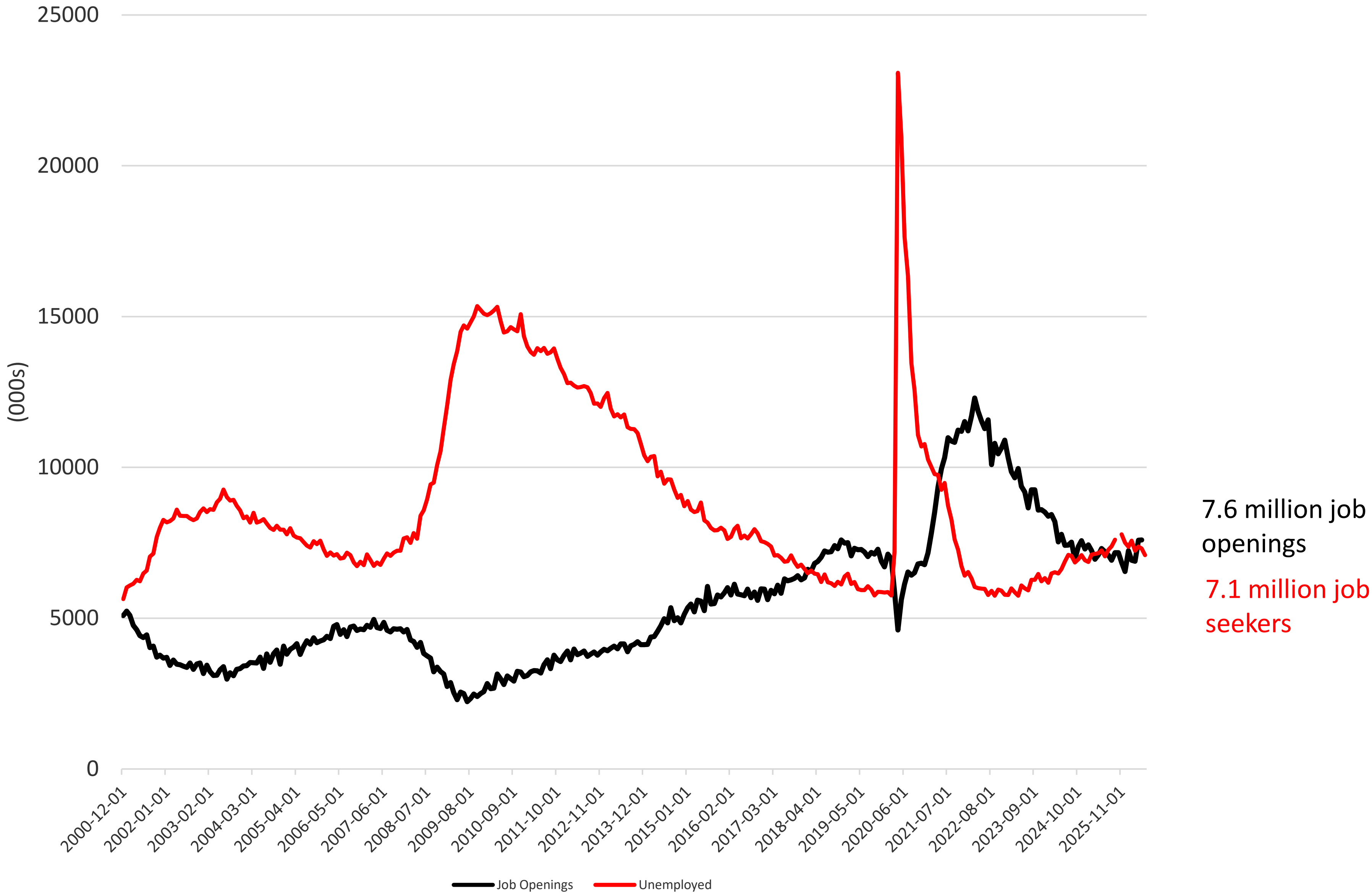
The number of Americans joining and staying in the labor force is declining.

Source: BLS. Data through June 2026.

[1]Labor force participation rate: the proportion of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years of age and older either at work or actively seeking work.

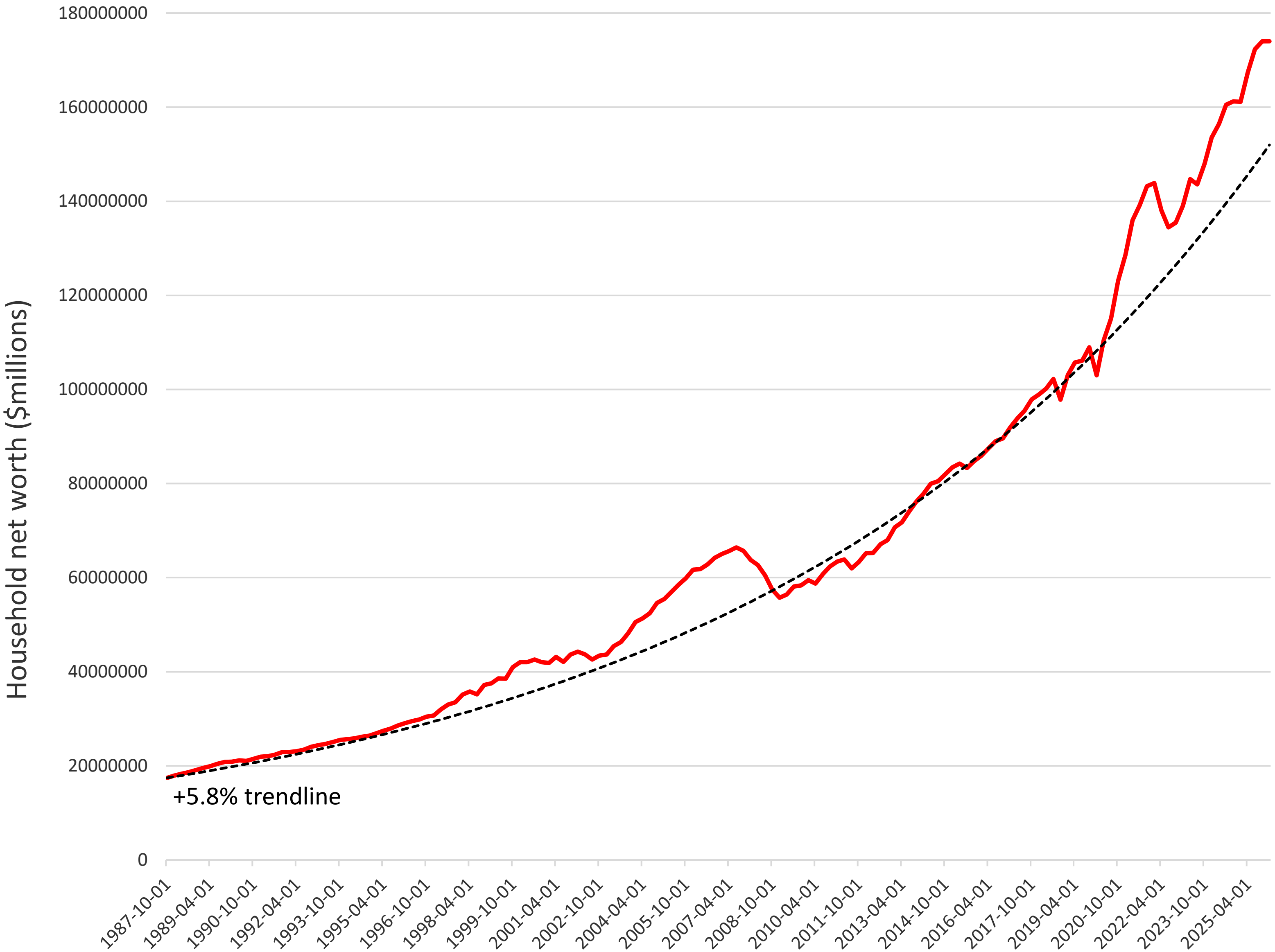
Economic data

More job openings than unemployed job seekers



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data through May 2026 for job openings, June 2026 for unemployed.

Household net worth – the wealth effect



Household net worth has surged.

Source: Federal Reserve, FRBSL. Quarterly data through March 2026, released June 2026.

Consumer spending – the wealth effect

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Shareholders Drive Economy, But Everyone Else is Wary

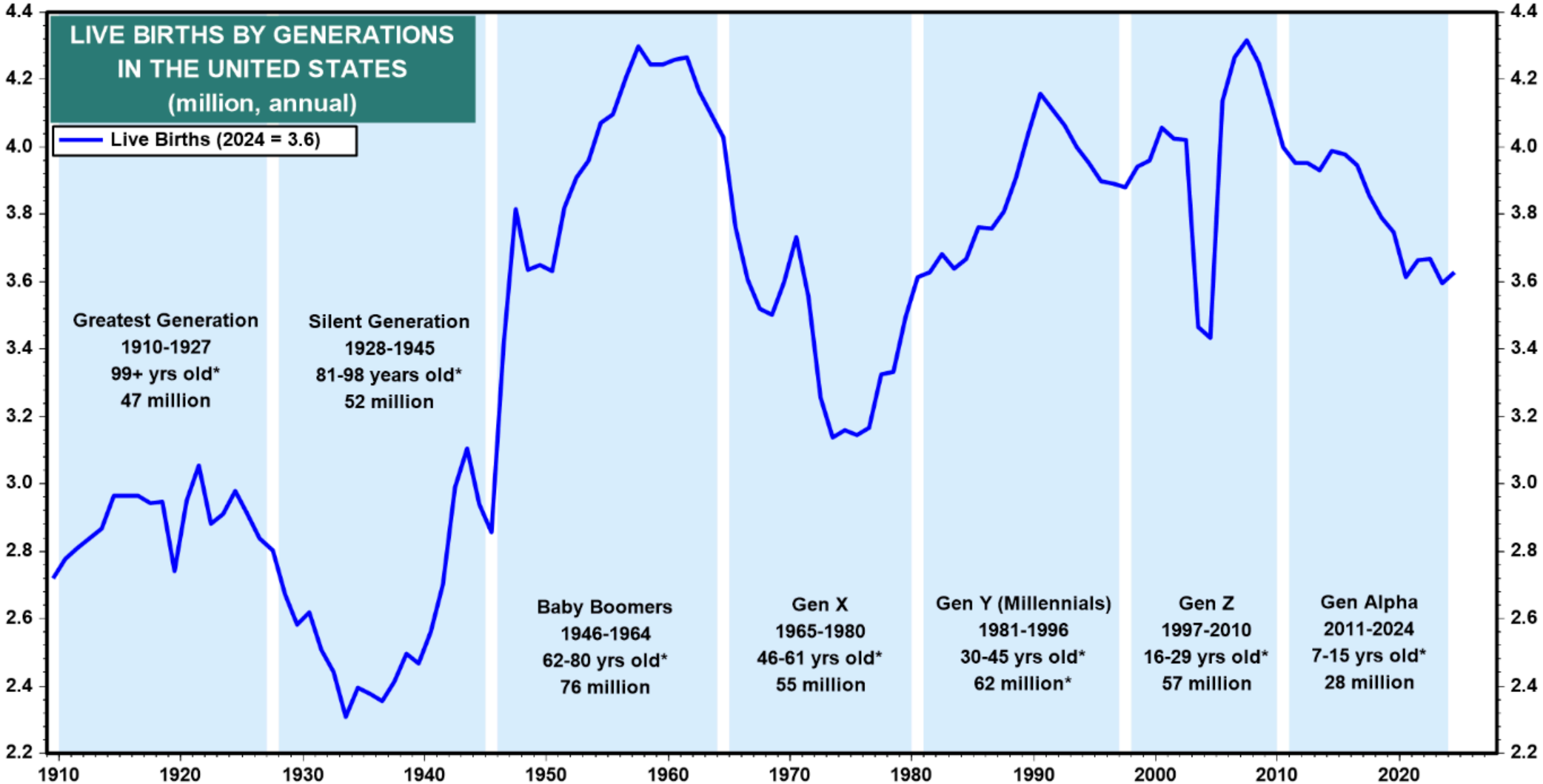
Investors’ rosy feelings about having a lot more money—at least on paper—are powering spending on restaurant meals, business-class airline tickets, home improvement and more, keeping the broader economy humming.

It’s a very different story for everyone else. Americans with large investment portfolios feel markedly better about the economy than those who don’t own stocks, according to the University of Michigan sentiment index.

The phenomenon of people spending more when assets they own go up in value is known as the “wealth effect.” Economists have long found that people increase their spending when they gain wealth. For every $1,000 that their stock portfolio goes up, they might spend $35 to $50 more than they would have otherwise, according to research.

Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, “Shareholders Drive Economy, But Everyone Else Is Wary”, by Rachel Louise Ensign and Rachel Wolfe, November 11, 2025.

Live births in the U.S.

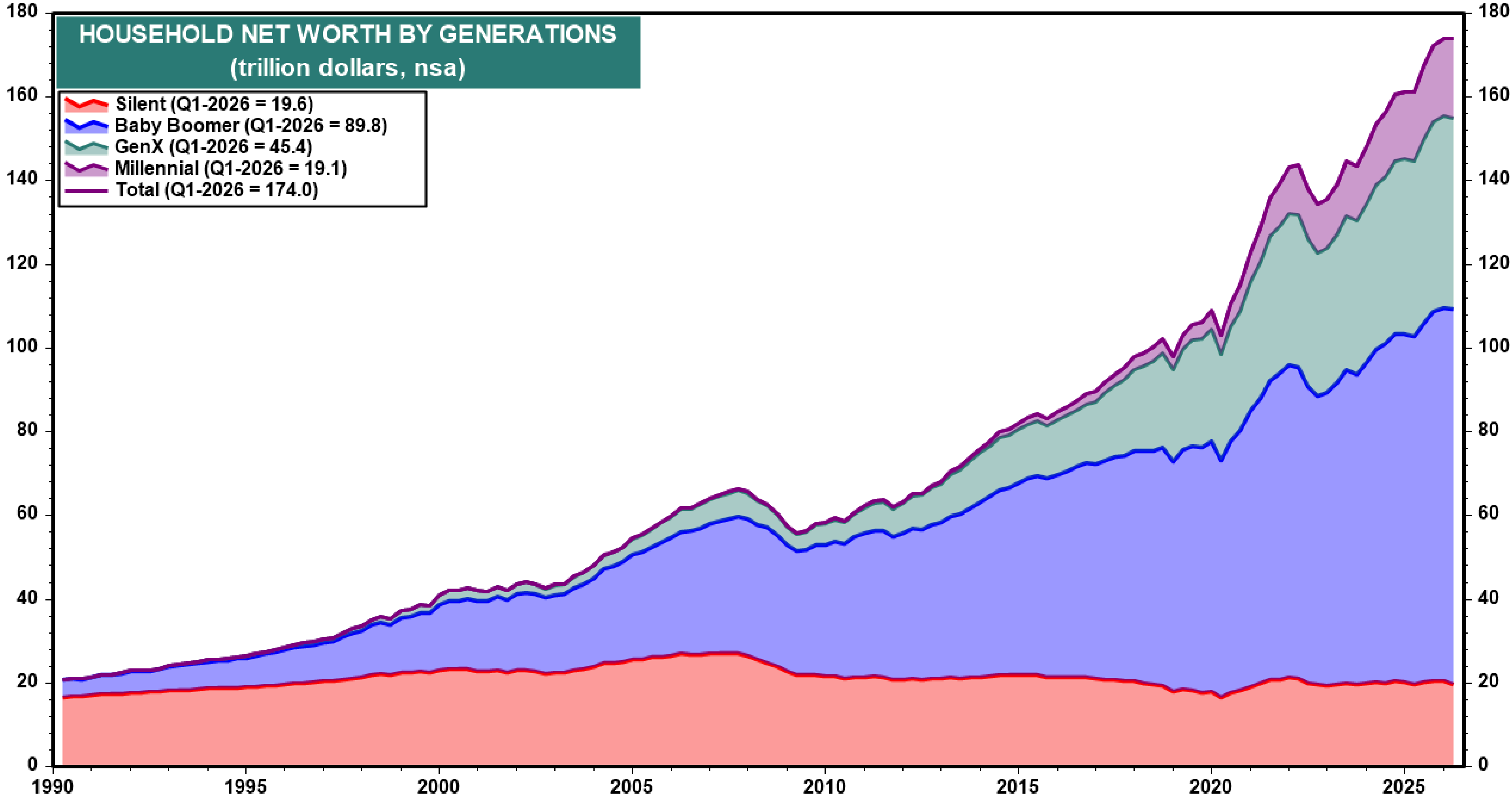


Source: LSEG Datastream and © Yardeni.com.

* Age ranges of generations during 2026.

Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, April 8, 2026.

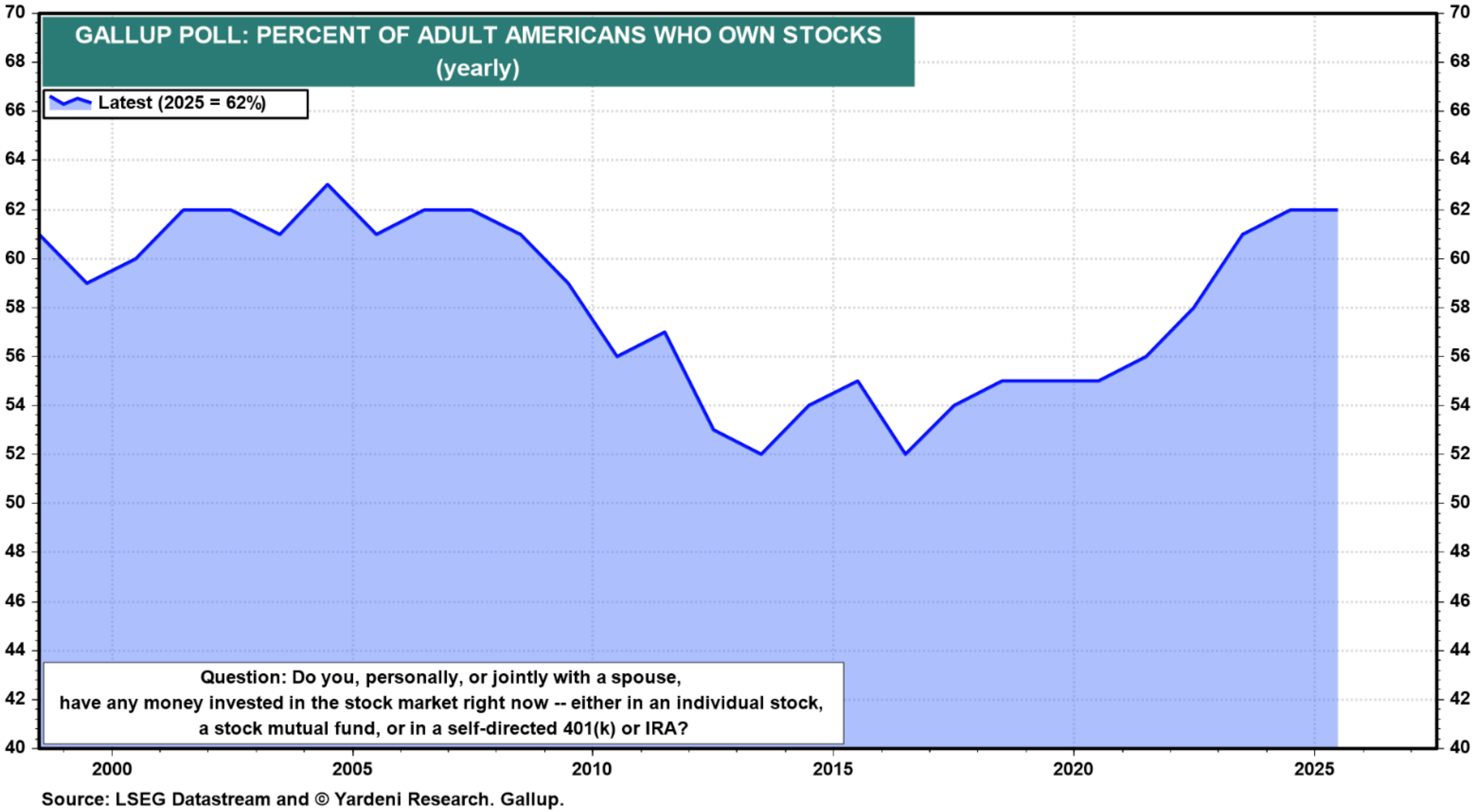
Household net worth



Source: LSEG Datastream and © Yardeni Research. Federal Reserve Board.

Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, July 16, 2026.

Stock ownership



Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, July 16, 2026.

Consumer spending

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The U.S. Economy's Secret Weapon: Seniors With Money to Spend

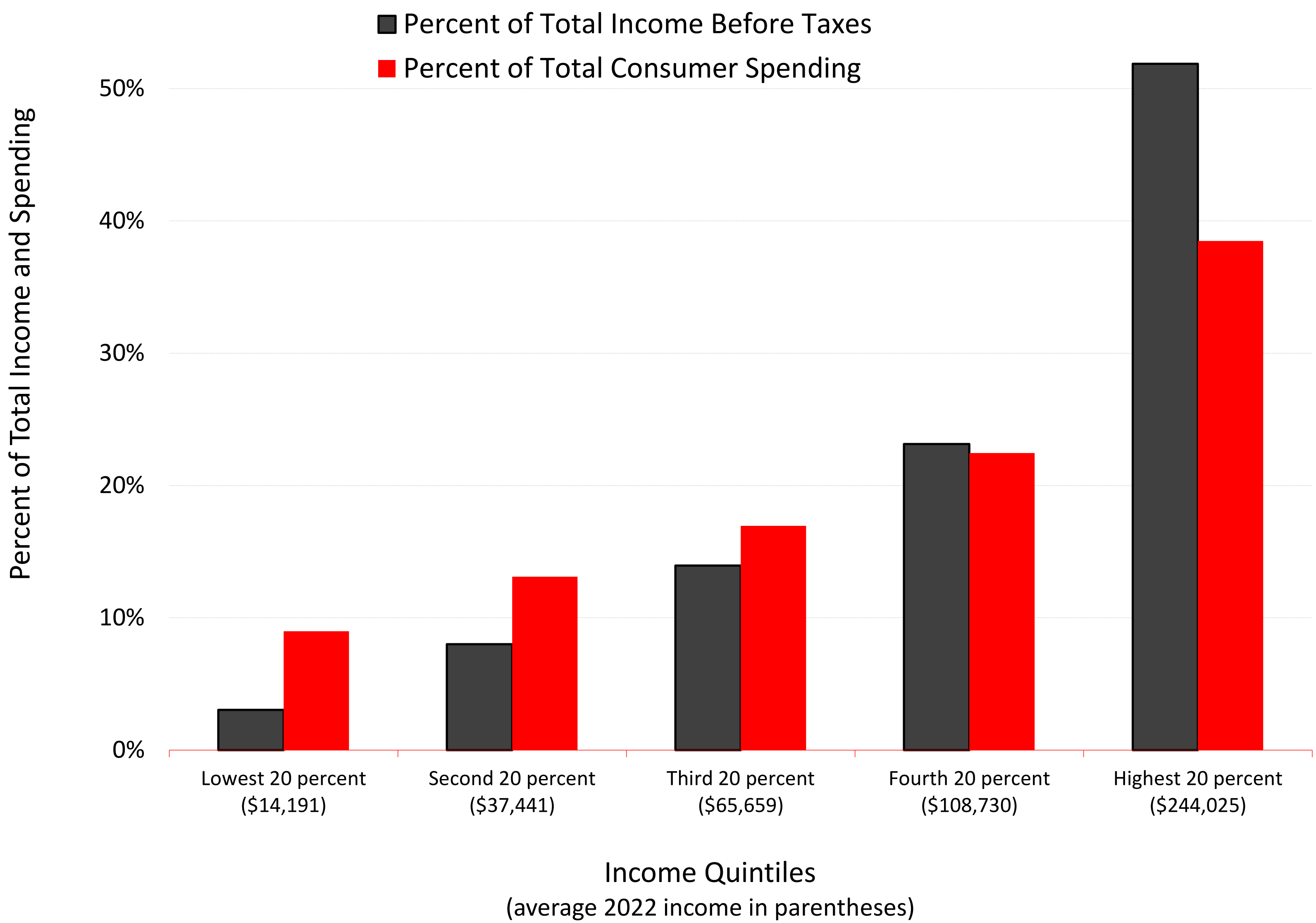
Why has consumer spending proven so resilient as the Federal Reserve has raised interest rates? An important and little-appreciated reason: Consumers are getting older. In August, 17.7% of the population was 65 or older, according to the Census Bureau, the highest on record going back to 1920 and up sharply from 13% in 2010. The elderly aren't just more numerous: Their finances are relatively healthy, and they have less need to borrow, such as to buy a house, and are less at risk of layoffs than other consumers.

This has made the elderly a spending force to be reckoned with. Americans aged 65 and up accounted for 22% of spending last year, the highest share since records began in 1972 and up from 15% in 2010, according to the Labor Department's survey of consumer expenditures released in September.

"These are the consumers that will matter over the coming year," said Susan Sterne, chief economist at Economic Analysis Associates.

Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, "The U.S. Economy's Secret Weapon: Seniors With Money to Spend", by Gwinn Guilford, October 8, 2023.

Distribution of consumer income and spending



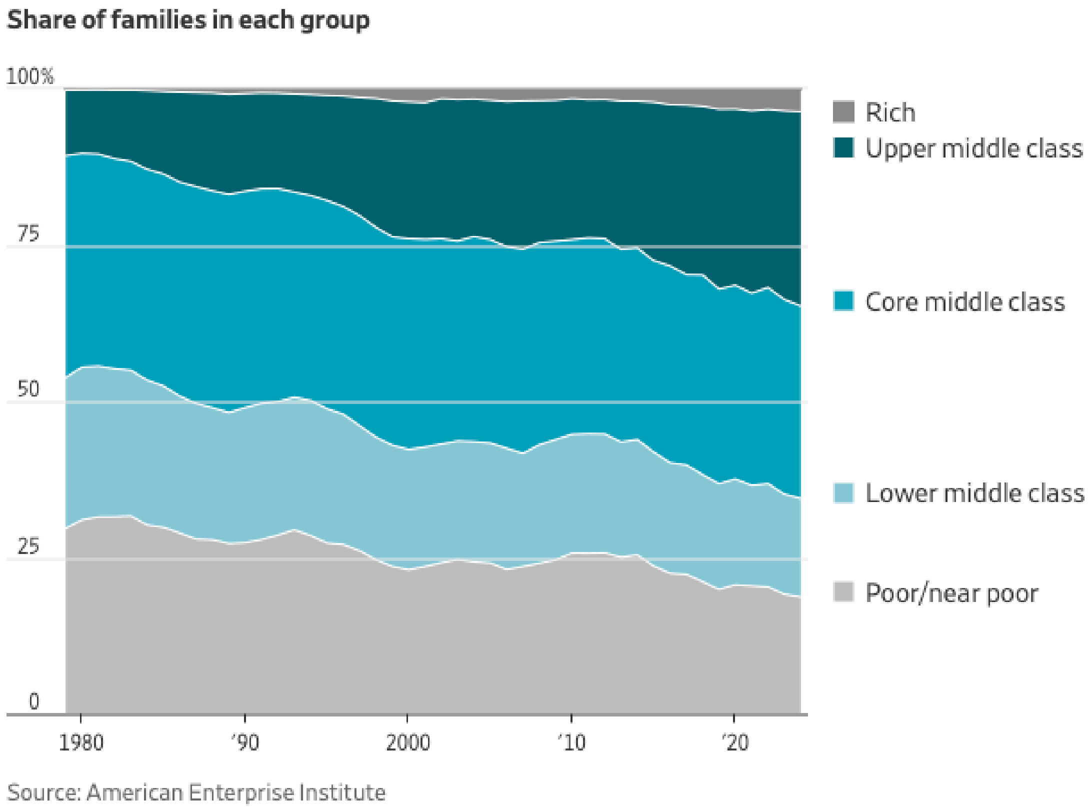
Consumer spending is heavily skewed toward higher income consumers.

Source: BLS, Consumer Expenditure Survey 2022, released September 2023. (Most recent data available as of April 2026).

Middle class is shrinking

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

America's middle class is becoming wealthier as more families scale the economic ladder into higher-earning groups. New research shows that the ranks of the affluent have grown markedly over the last 50 years or so, while the lower rungs of the middle class have shrunk.



Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, "More Americans Are Breaking into the Upper Middle Class", by Rachael Louise Ensign, April 4, 2026.

Credit card debt

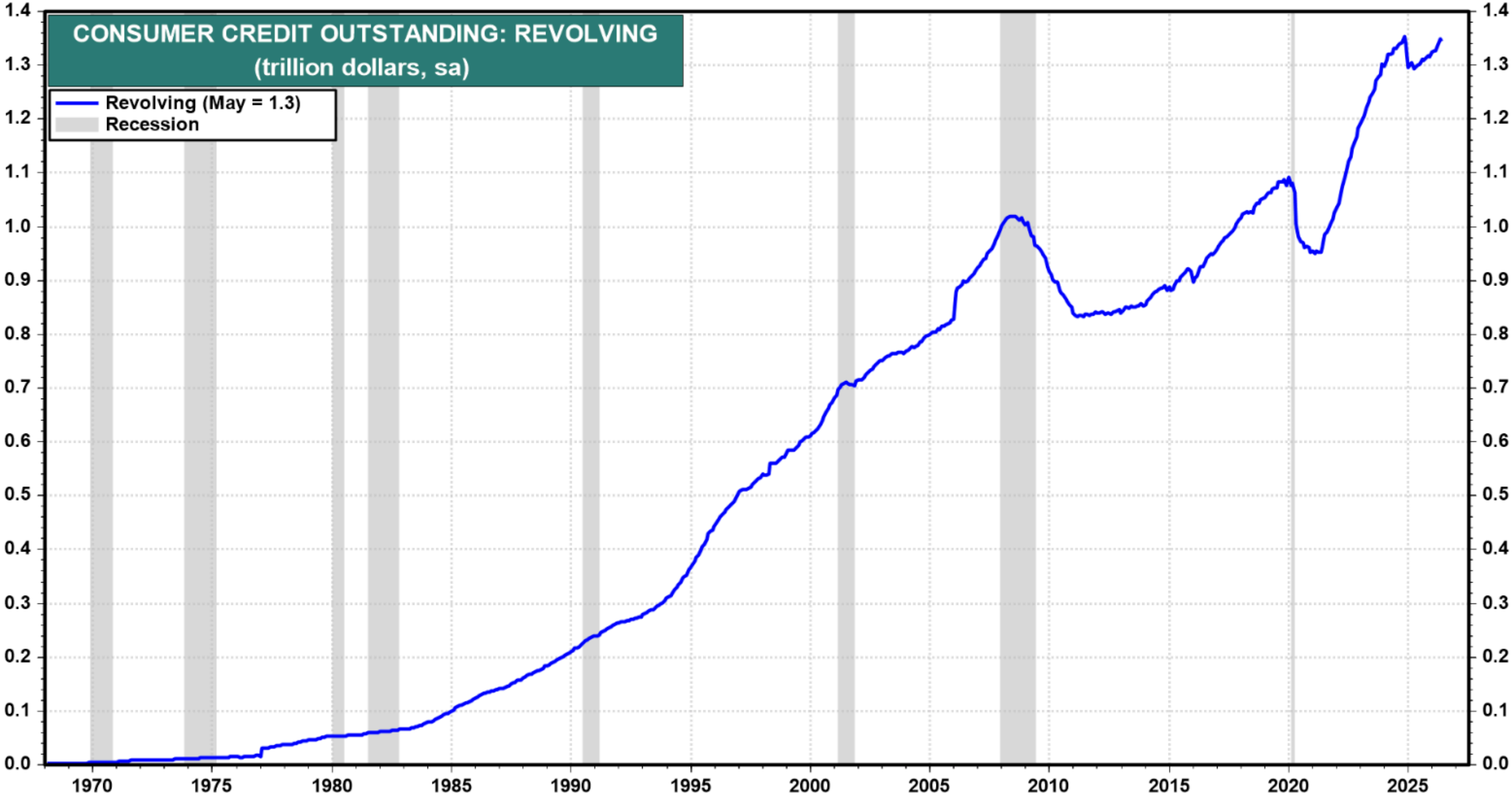
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Americans Strain to Pay Down $1.25 Trillion Credit-Card Bill

In the first quarter of this year, the percentage of credit-card balances that were at least 90 days delinquent rose to 13.12%, according to data released in May by the Federal Reserve bank of New York. That's the highest level in 15 years, and the most since the period following the 2008 financial crisis.

Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, "Americans Strain to Pay Down $1.25 Trillion Credit Card Bill", by Dan Frosch, May 30-31, 2026.

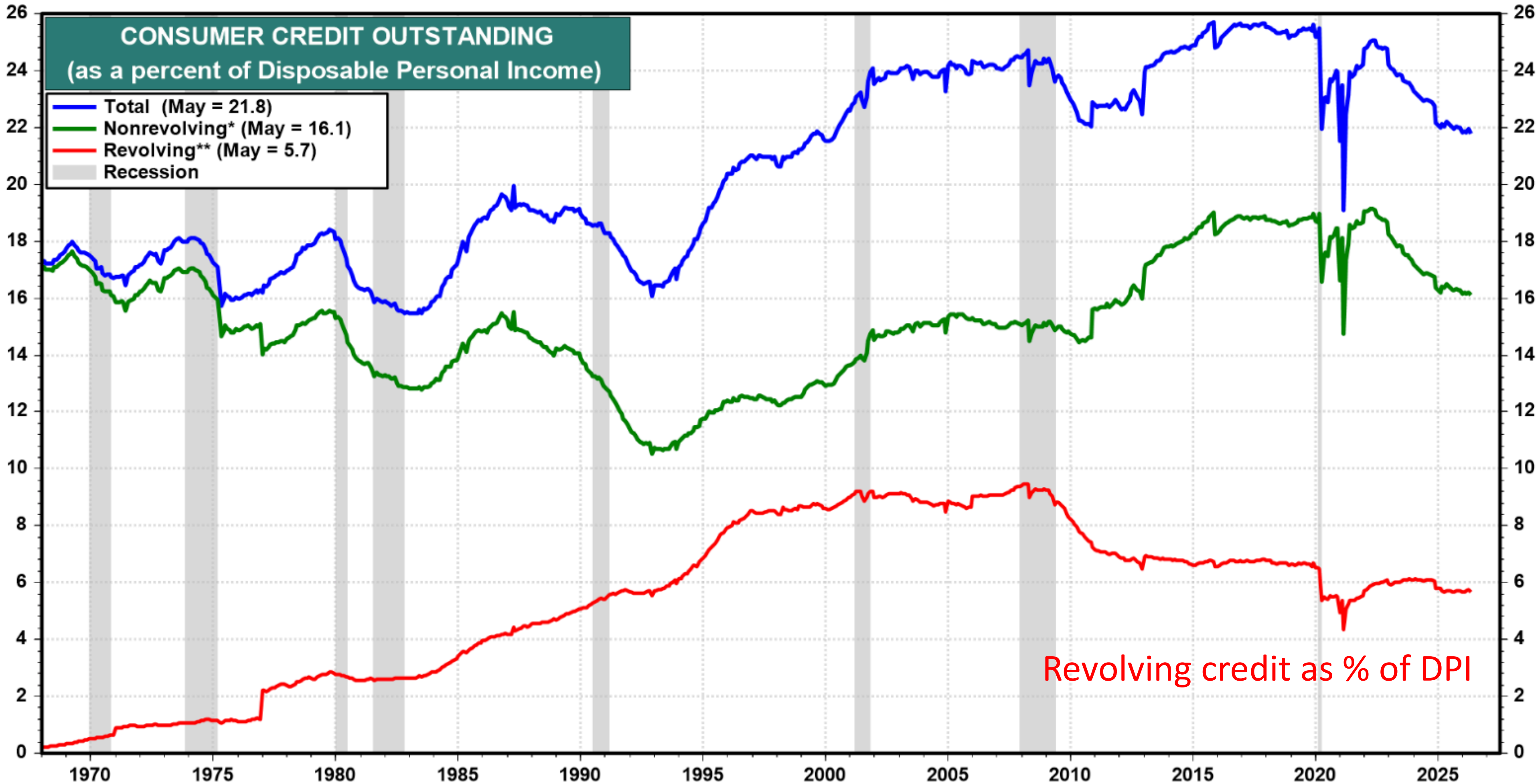
Credit card debt



Source: LSEG Datastream and © Yardeni Research, and Federal Reserve.

Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, July 16, 2026.

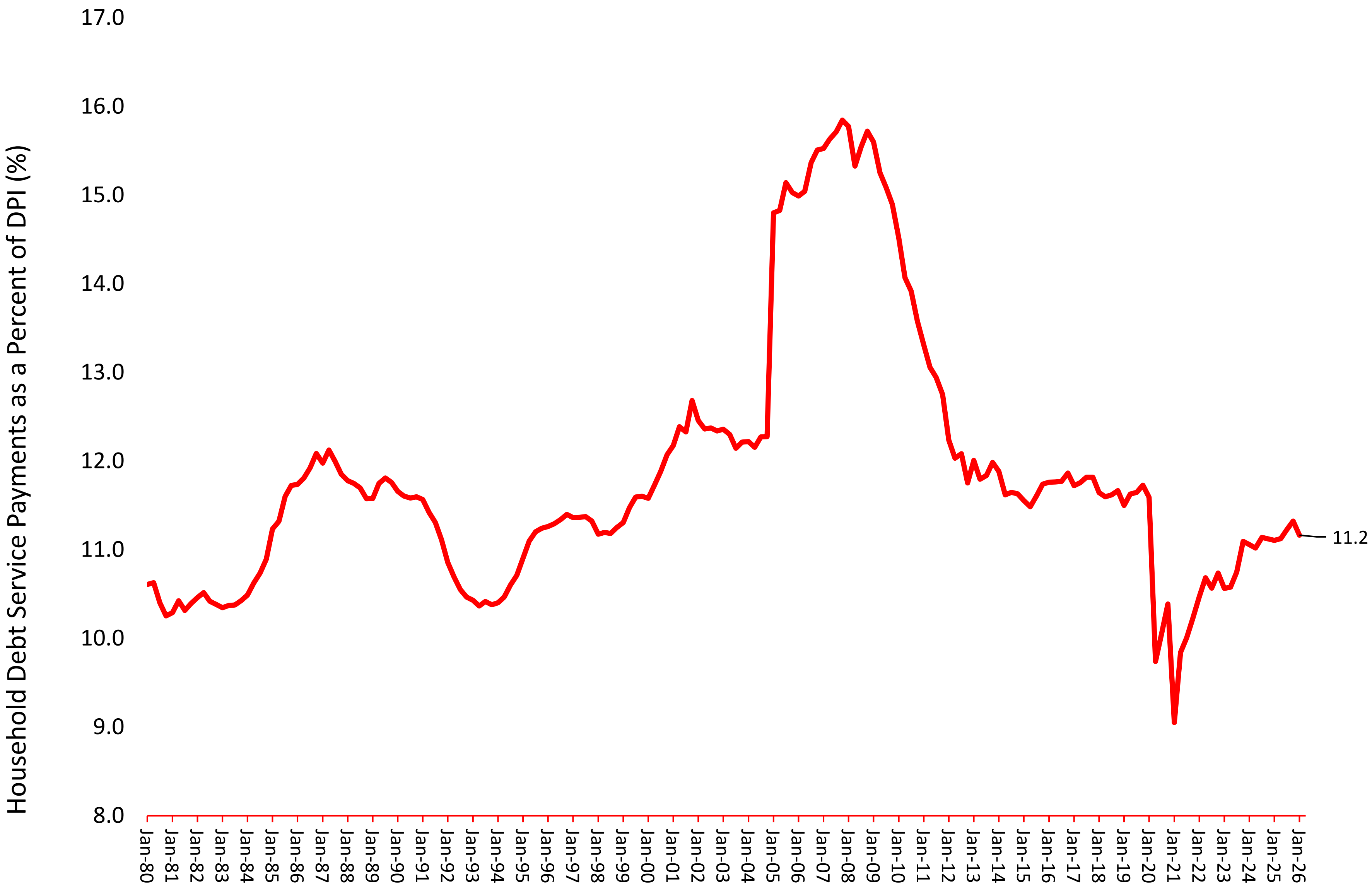
Consumer credit % of DPI



Source: LSEG Datastream and © Yardeni Research, and Federal Reserve.
* Nonrevolving credit includes auto and student loans. ** Credit cards.

Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, July 16, 2026.

Household debt service payments as a % of DPI



Source: Federal Reserve. Quarterly data through March 2026, released June 2026.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

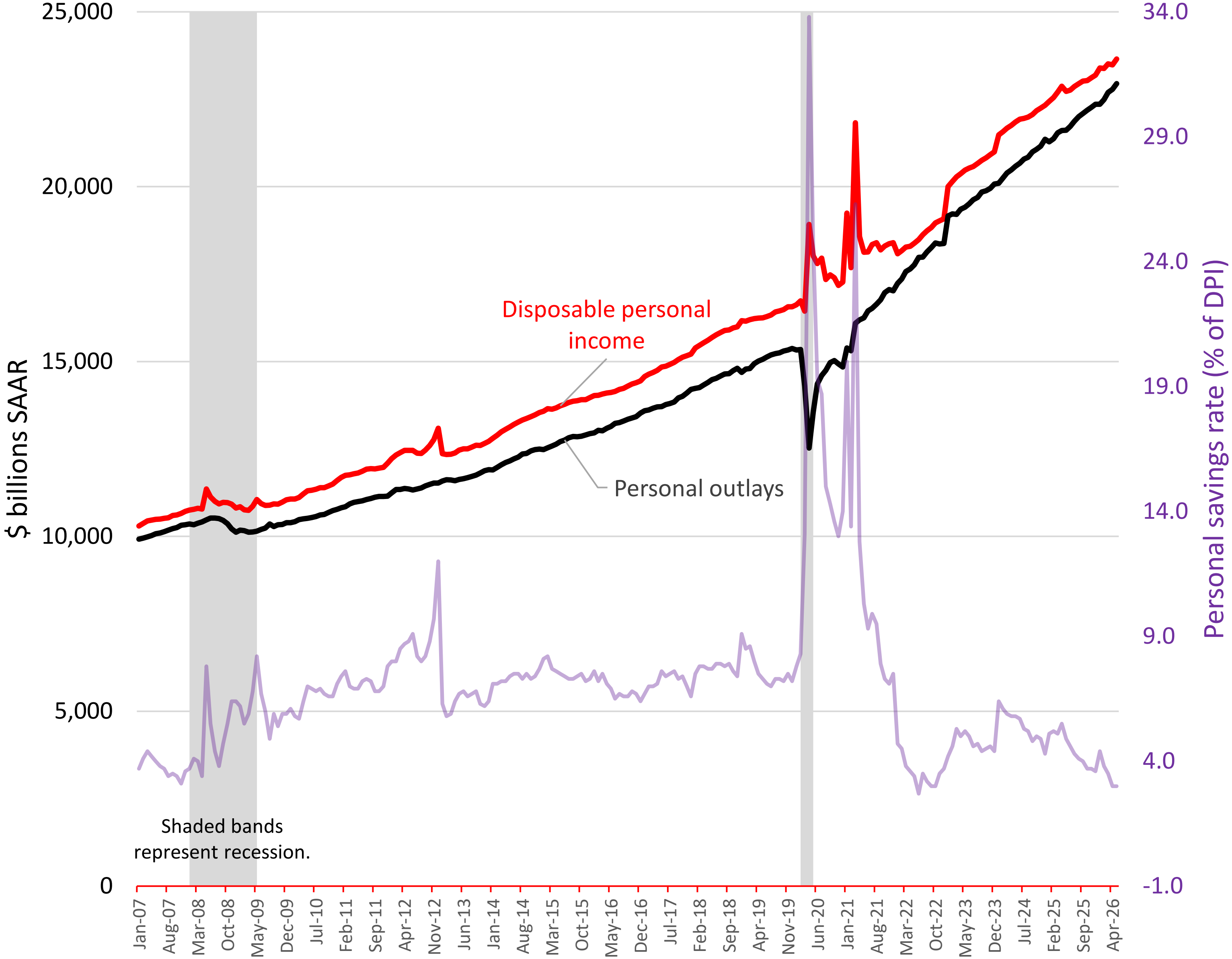
Banks' Profits Reflect Resilient Consumer Area

"All of the metrics that we can see tell us the consumer remains resilient and in great shape," Bank of America Chief Financial Officer Alastair Borthwick said on a call with reporters.

Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, "Banks' Profits Reflect Resilient Consumer Area" by Gina Heeb and Alexander Saeedy, January 15, 2026.

Consumer income

Disposable personal income, spending and saving



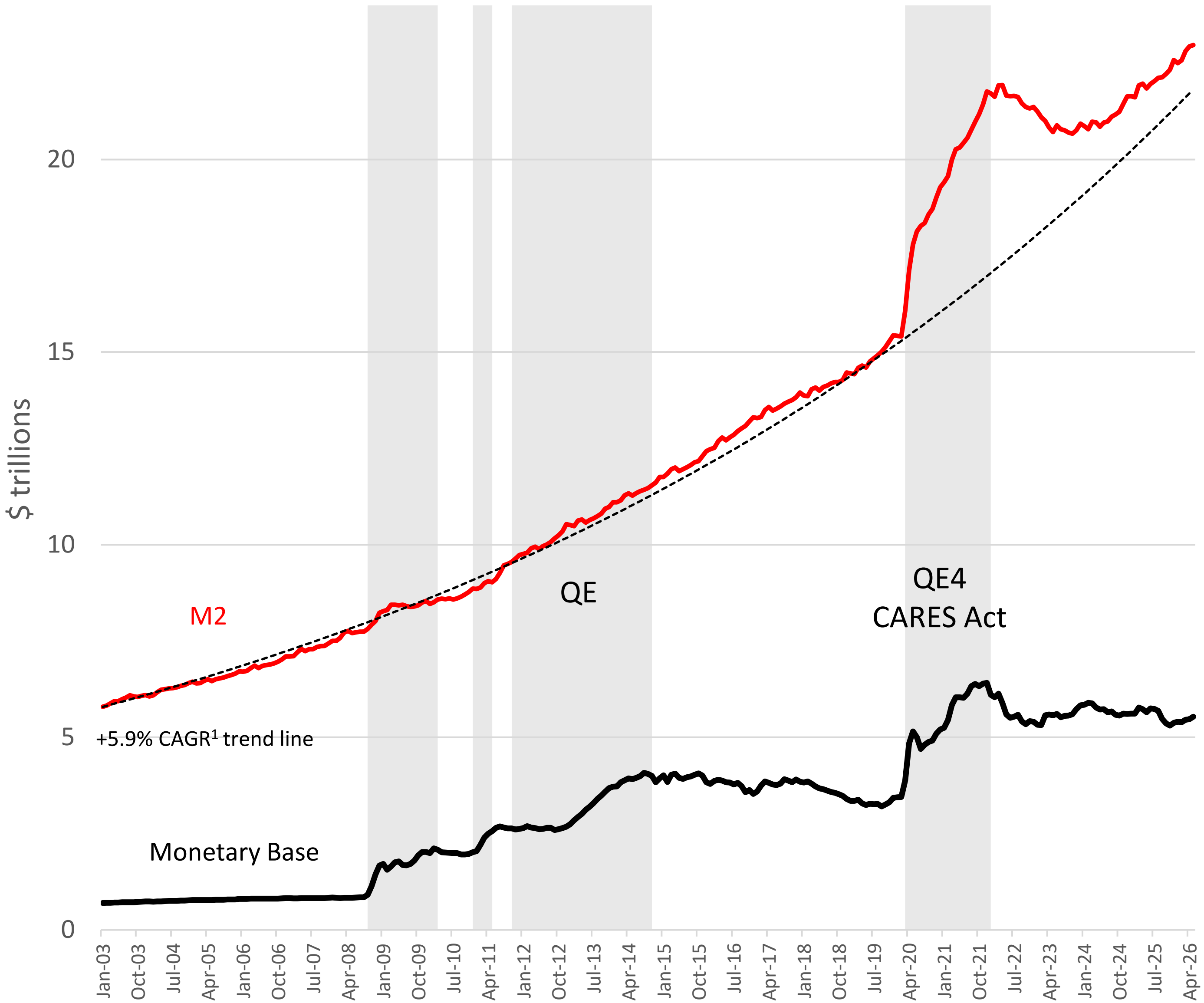
DPI up +4.1% y/y.

Personal outlays up +6.2% y/y.

The savings rate, at 3.0%, is below pre-Covid levels.

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, monthly data through May 2026.

The monetary base and the money supply



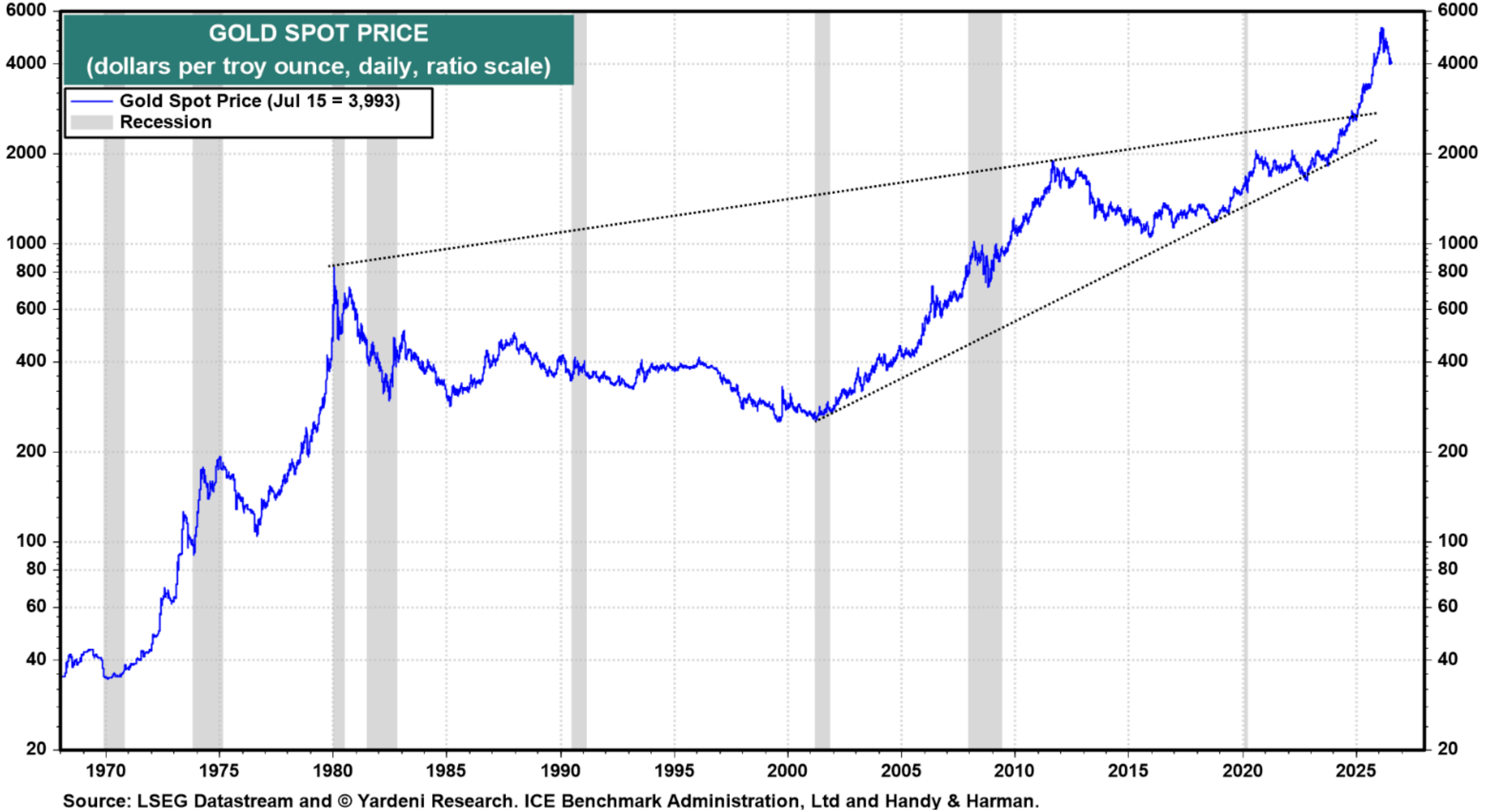
M2: currency held by the public plus checking, savings and money market accounts.

A quadrupling of the monetary base with QE did not affect M2 growth. <u>The CARES Act and subsequent stimulus did</u> … by putting money directly into consumers' and businesses' accounts.

Monetary base: currency in circulation plus reserve balances (deposits held by banks in their accounts at the Federal reserve).

Source: Federal Reserve, statistical release H.6. Data through May 2026.
[1]CAGR = compound annual growth rate.

Gold



Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, July 16, 2026.

Dollar

Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, July 16, 2026.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Europe’s Firms Fall Far Behind In the Race to Create Big Tech

Investors and entrepreneurs say obstacles to tech growth are deeply entrenched: a timid and risk-averse business culture, strict labor laws, suffocating regulations, a smaller pool of venture capital and lackluster economic and demographic growth.

Existential dilemma

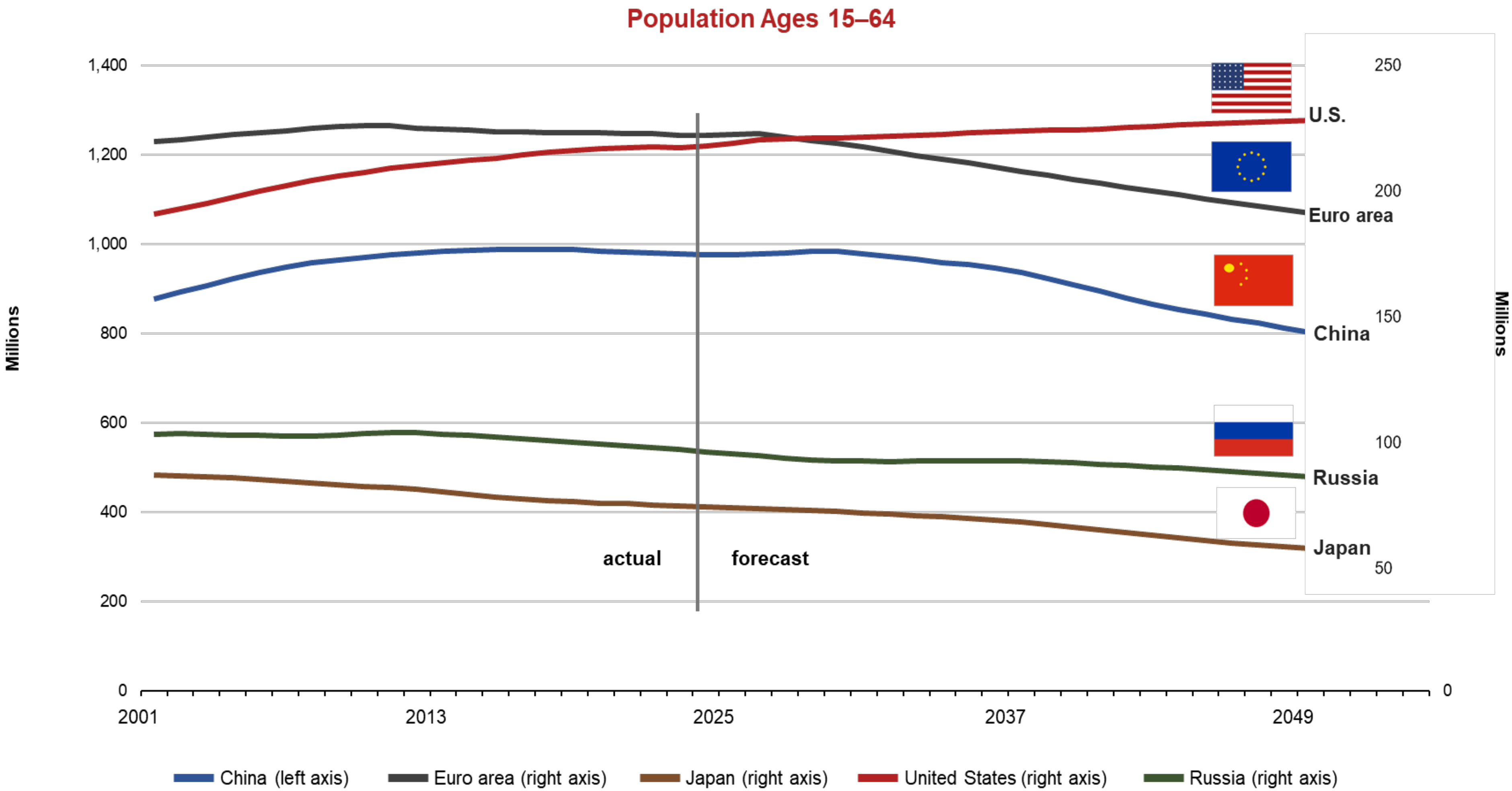
Having largely missed out on the first digital revolution, Europe seems poised to miss out on the next wave, too. The U.S. and China, flush with venture capital and government funding, are spending heavily on AI and other technologies that hold the promise of boosting productivity and living standards. In Europe, venture capital tech investment is a fifth of U.S. levels.

Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, “Europe’s Firms Fall Far Behind In the Race to Create Big Tech”, by Tom Fairless and David Luhnow, May 21, 2025.

Economic data

Demographics

Working Age Population Forecasts



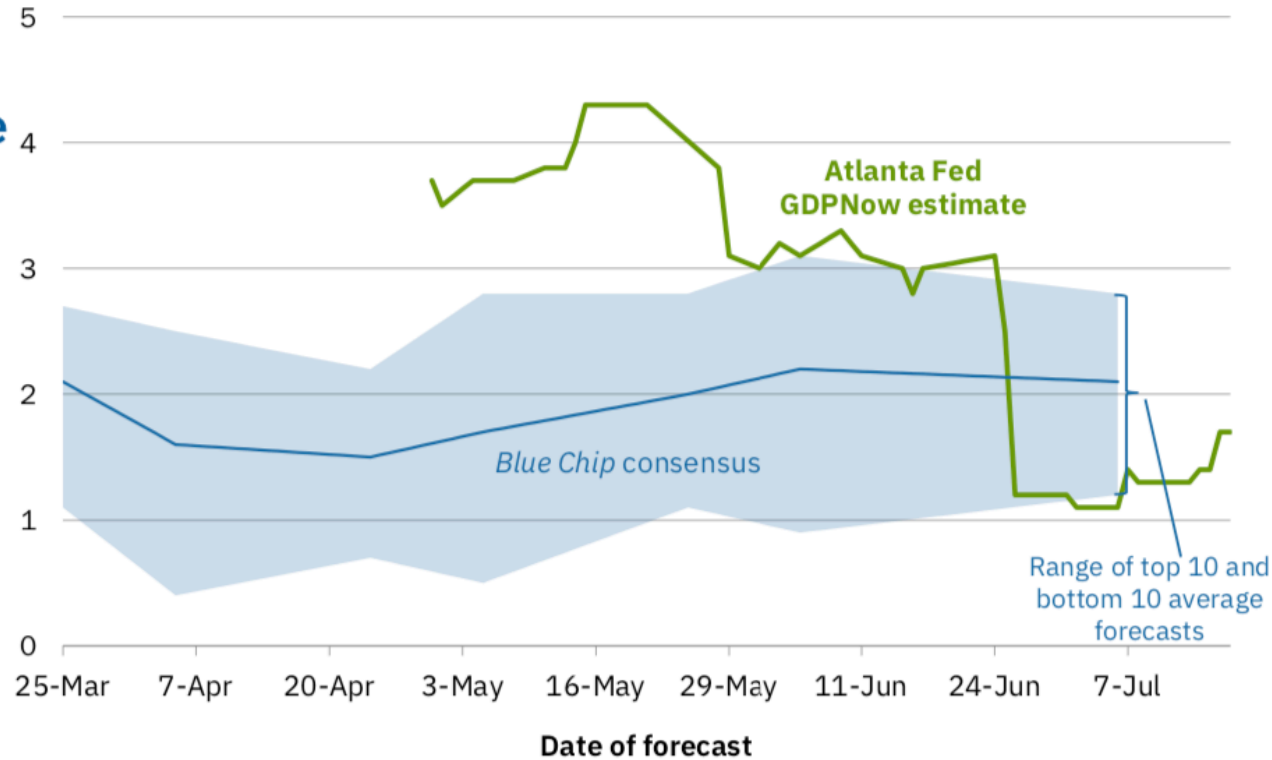
Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators, indicator SP.POP.1564.TO, 2001–2024 actuals; UN DESA Population Division, World Population Prospects 2024, medium-variant projections, 2025–2049. Forecast path rebased to 2024 WDI benchmarks. Euro area: World Bank 20-country aggregate.

Atlanta Fed's GDPNow forecast – 2nd quarter +1.7%

Evolution of Atlanta Fed GDPNow real GDP estimate for 2026: Q2

Quarterly percent change (SAAR)

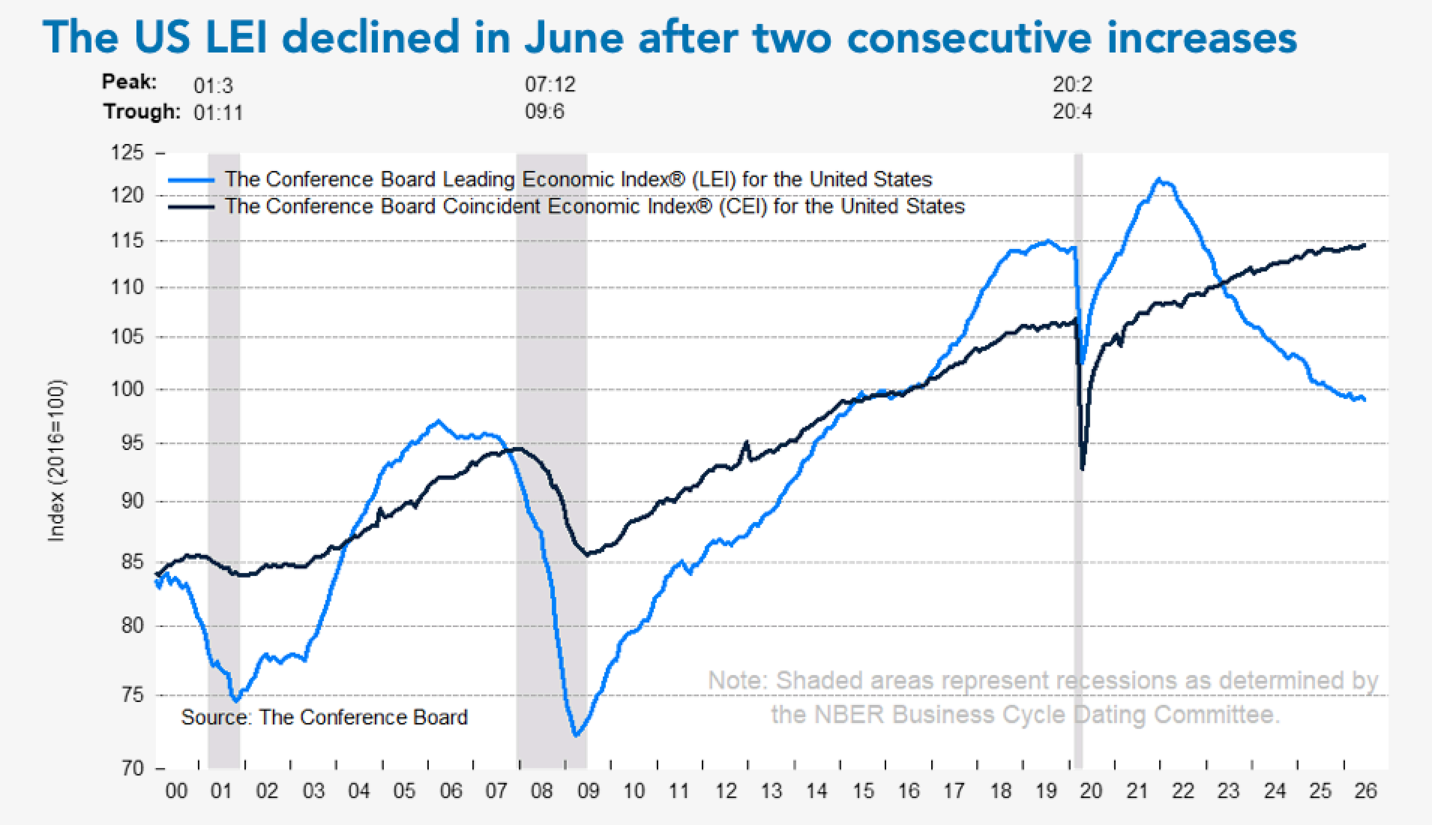
GDPNow is not an official forecast of the Atlanta Fed. Rather, it is best viewed as a running estimate of real GDP growth based on available economic data for the current measured quarter. There are no subjective adjustments made to GDPNow—the estimate is based solely on the mathematical results of the model.



Sources: *Blue Chip Economic Indicators* and *Blue Chip Financial Forecasts*
Note: The top (bottom) 10 average forecast is an average of the highest (lowest) 10 forecasts in the *Blue Chip* survey.

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta July 20, 2026.

U.S. index of leading economic indicators

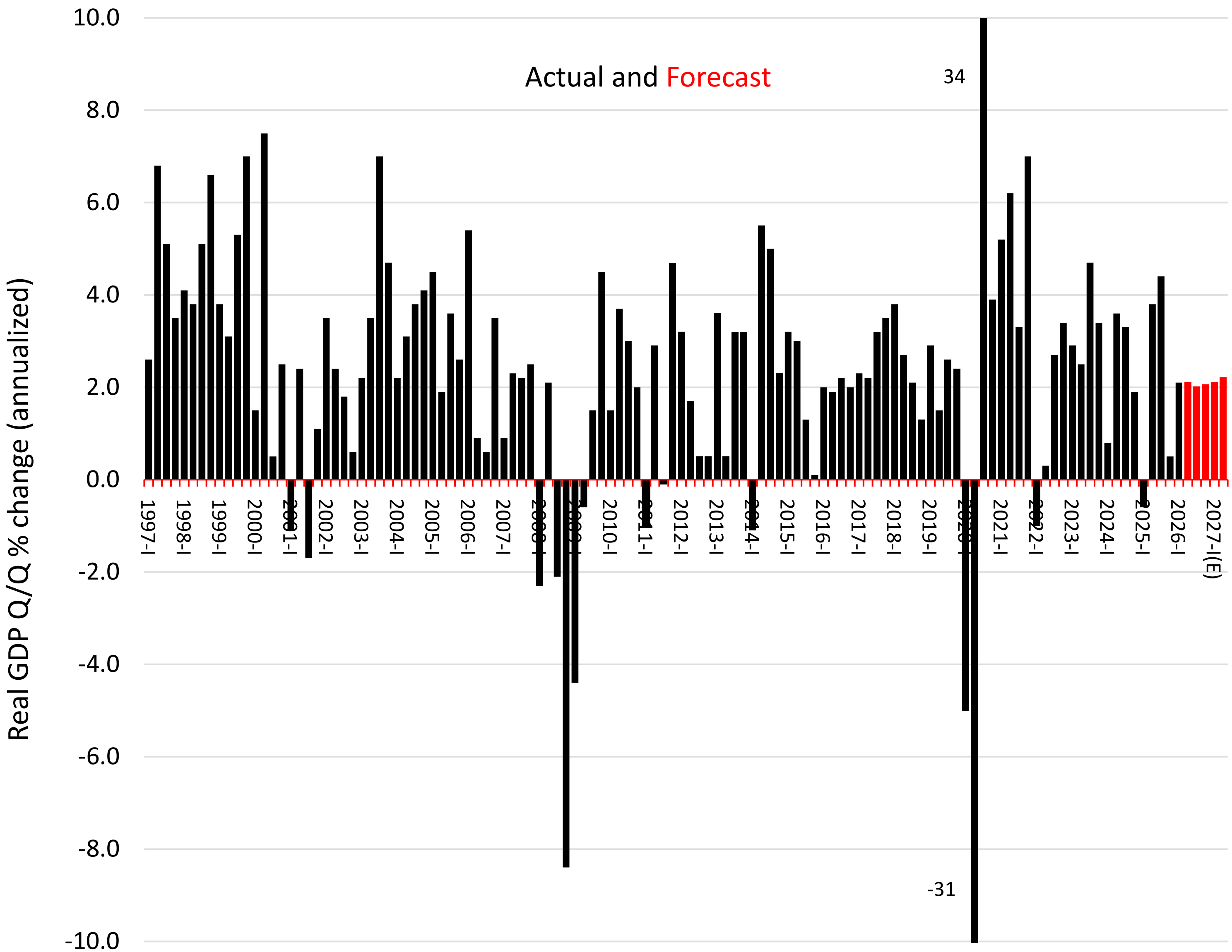


"The Conference Board raised its forecast from 1.8% to 1.9% y/y GDP growth for 2026."

The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) components: 1) average weekly hours worked, manufacturing; 2) average weekly initial unemployment claims; 3) manufacturers' new orders – consumer goods and materials; 4) ISM index of new orders; 5) manufacturers' new orders, nondefense capital goods; 6) building permits – new private housing units; 7) stock prices, S&P 500; 8) Leading Credit Index™; 9) interest rate spread; 10-year Treasury minus fed funds; 10) index of consumer expectations.
Source: ©The Conference Board. Data through June, released July 20, 2026.

Consensus GDP forecast

GDP

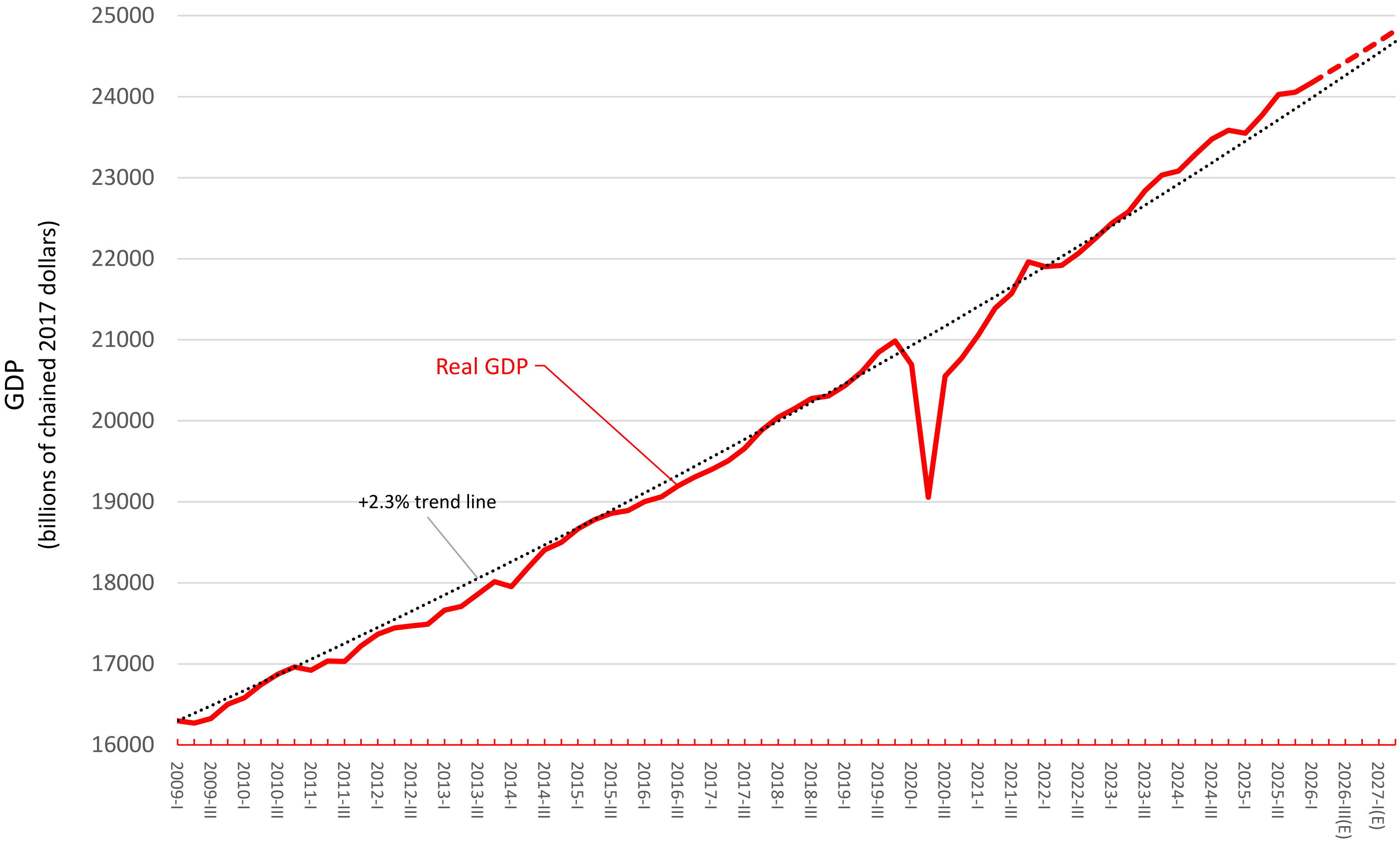


The 72 economists surveyed in July raised their forecasts from the April survey and see continued growth ahead.

Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis, actual quarterly data through March 2026. *The Wall Street Journal* survey released July 2026.

GDP forecast

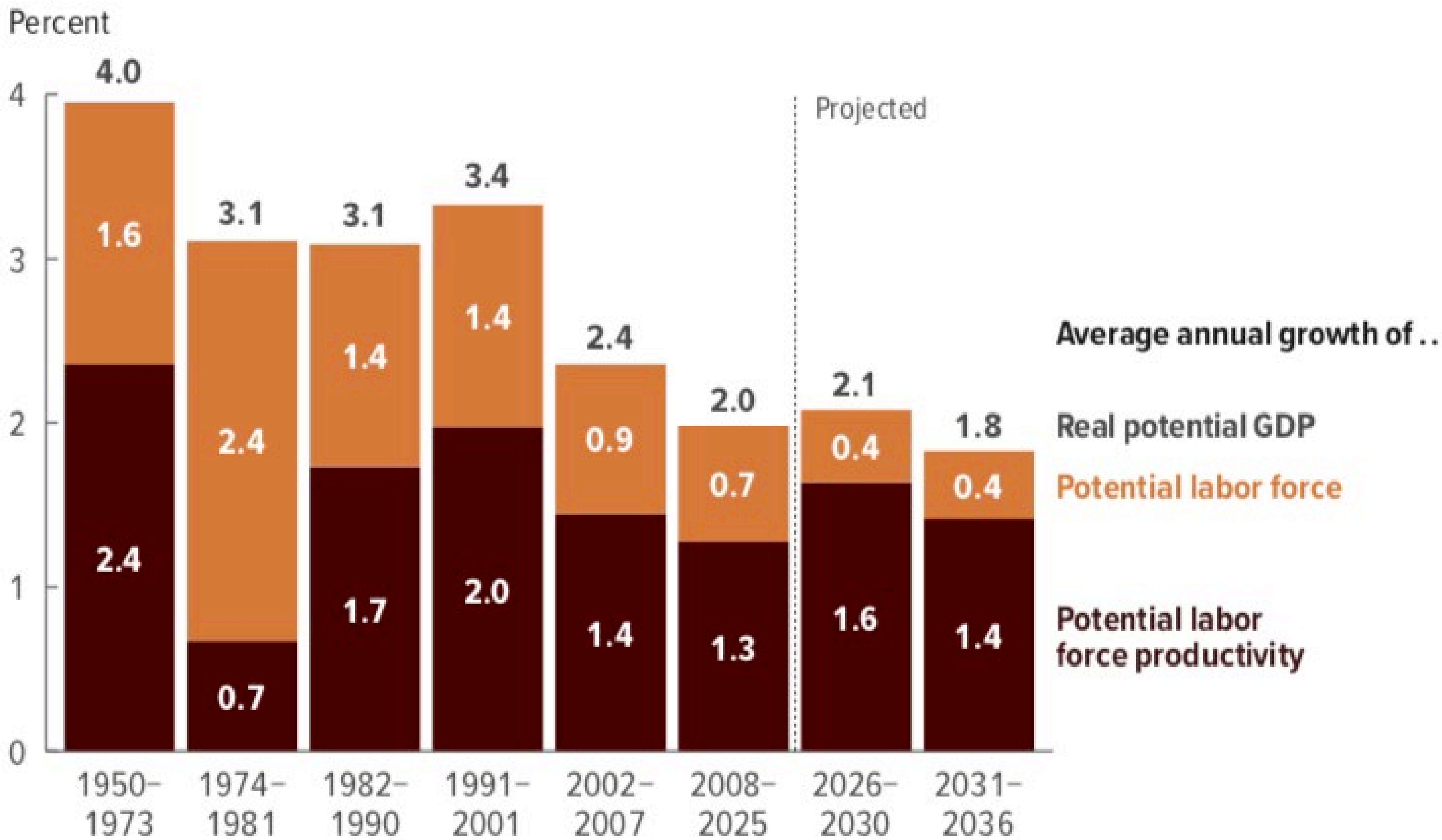
2.3% trend rate of growth



Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis, actual quarterly data through March 2026. Dotted line represents the forecast from *The Wall Street Journal* survey released July 2026.

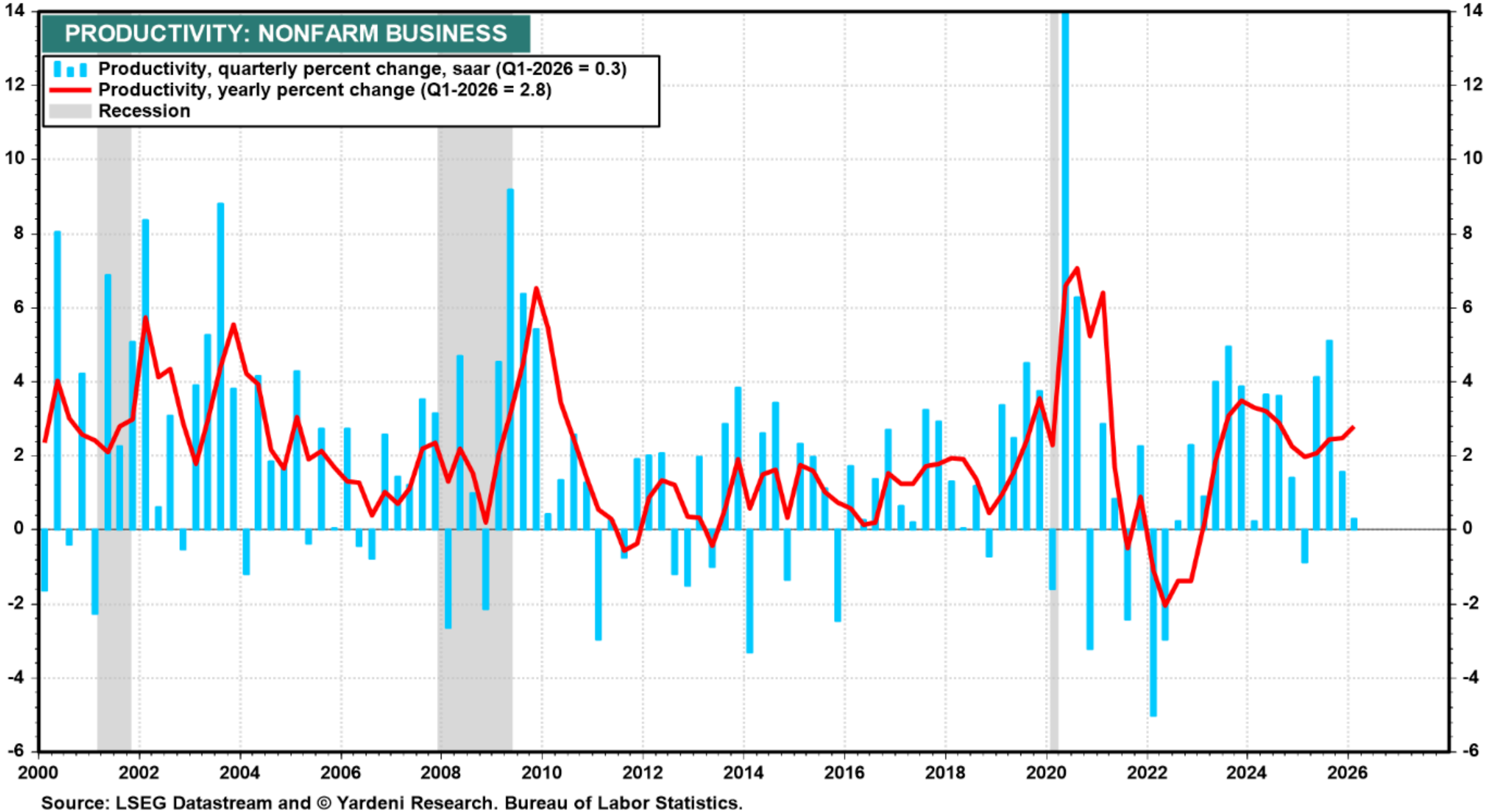
GDP growth potential = Δ productivity + Δ labor force

CBO's potential growth calculations



Source: Congressional Budget Office, *The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2026 to 2036,* released February 2026.

Productivity



Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, June 9, 2026.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Companies Bet They Can Grow Without Hiring

It’s the corporate gamble of the moment: Can you run a company, increasing sales and juicing profits, without adding people?

American employers are increasingly making the calculation that they can keep the size of their teams flat—or shrink through layoffs—without harming their businesses. Part of that thinking is the belief that artificial intelligence will be used to pick up some of the slack and automate more processes.

Walmart, the nation’s largest private employer, also said it plans to keep its head count roughly flat over the next three years, even as its sales grow.

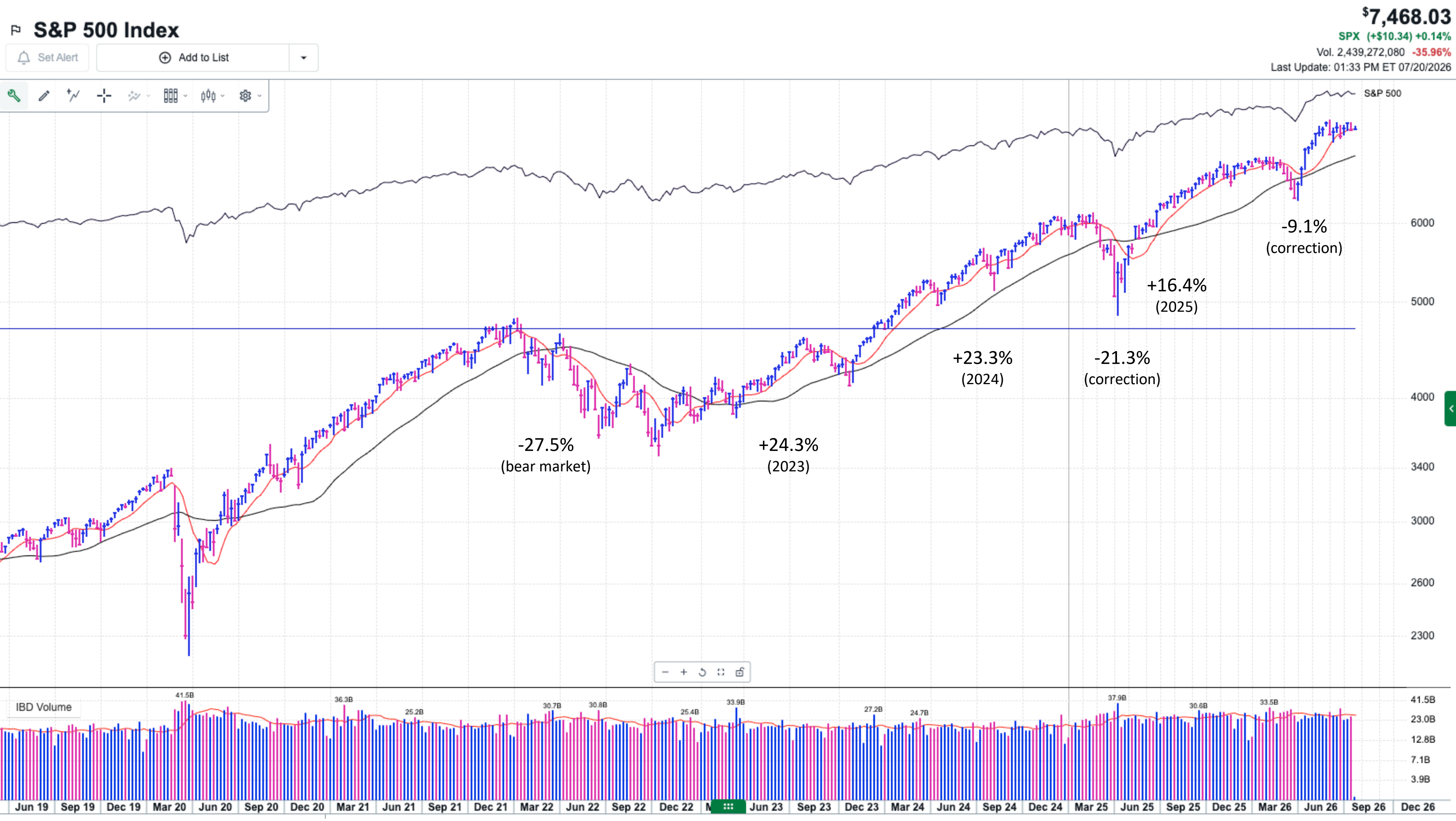
Source: *The Wall Street Journal.* “Companies Bet They Can Grow Without Hiring”, by Chip Cutter, October 27, 2025.

Stock Market

- ➢ Record highs following Iran sell-off
- ➢ Stocks vs. recessions
- ➢ “Parabolic” is normal
- ➢ 2026/2027 earnings estimates surge
- ➢ P/E multiple

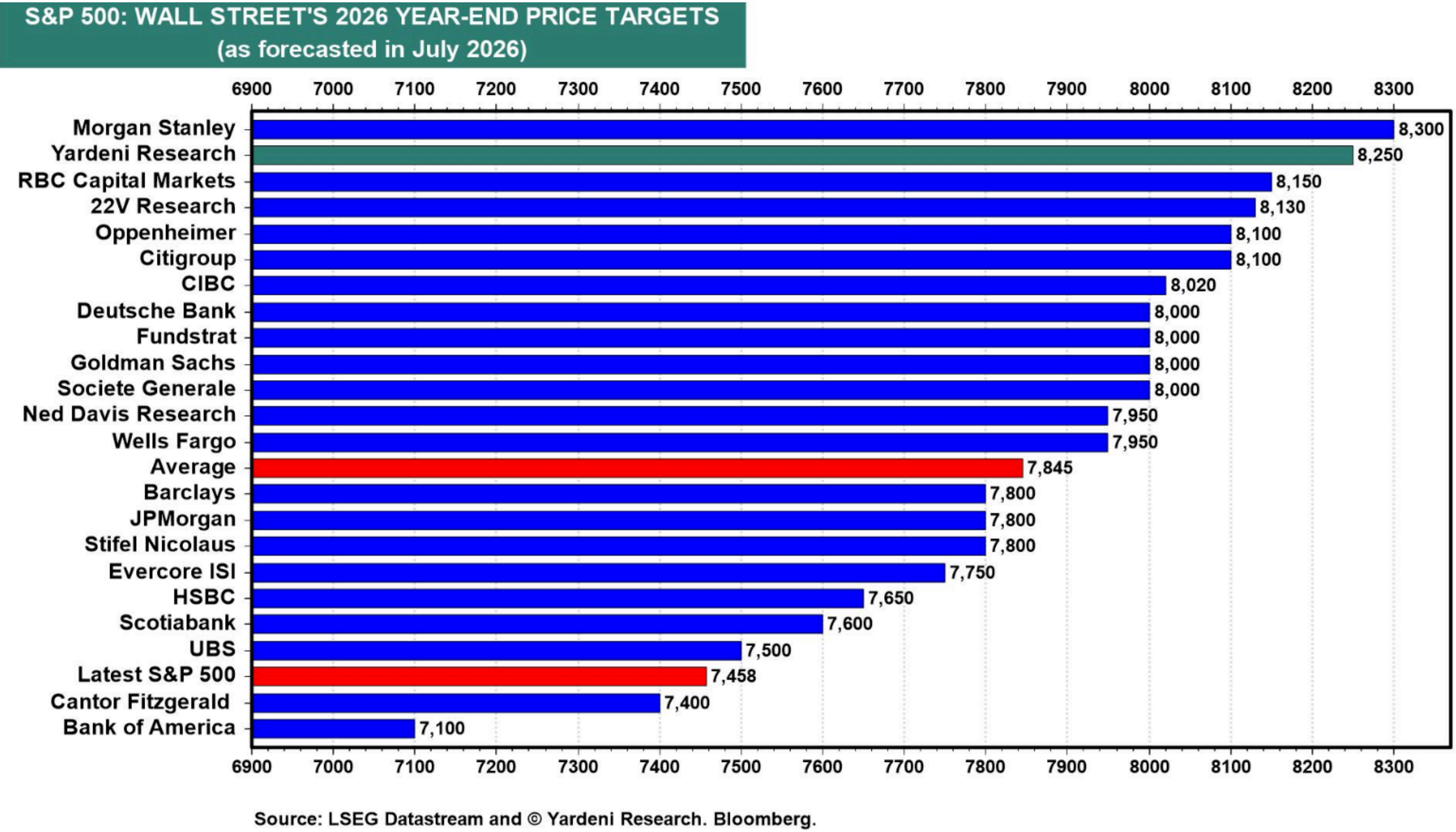
Stock market

S&P 500



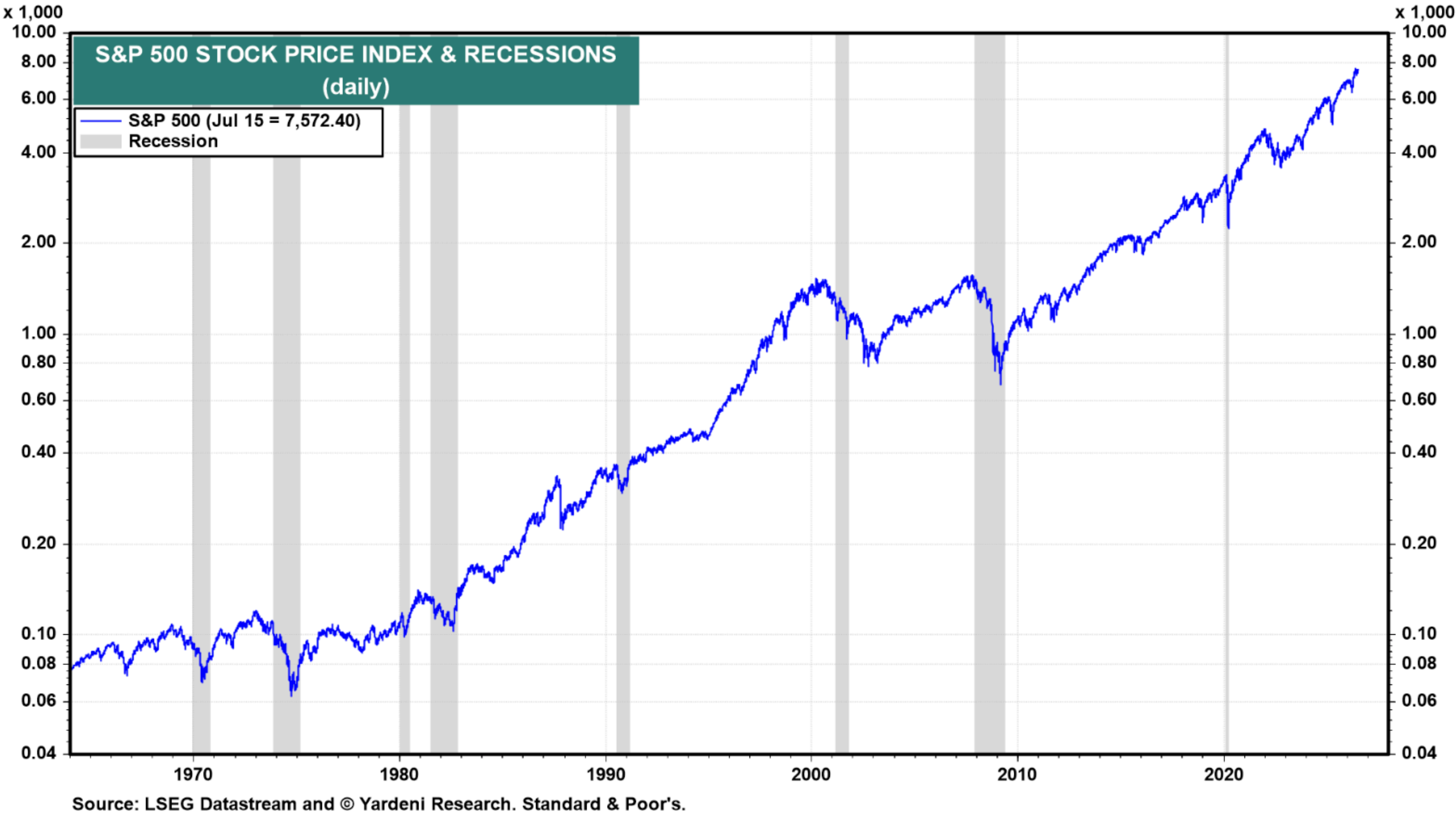
Source: Standard & Poor's and Investor's Business Daily. Data through July 20, 2026.

S&P 500 – strategists 2026 targets



Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, July 20, 2026.

S&P 500 vs. recessions

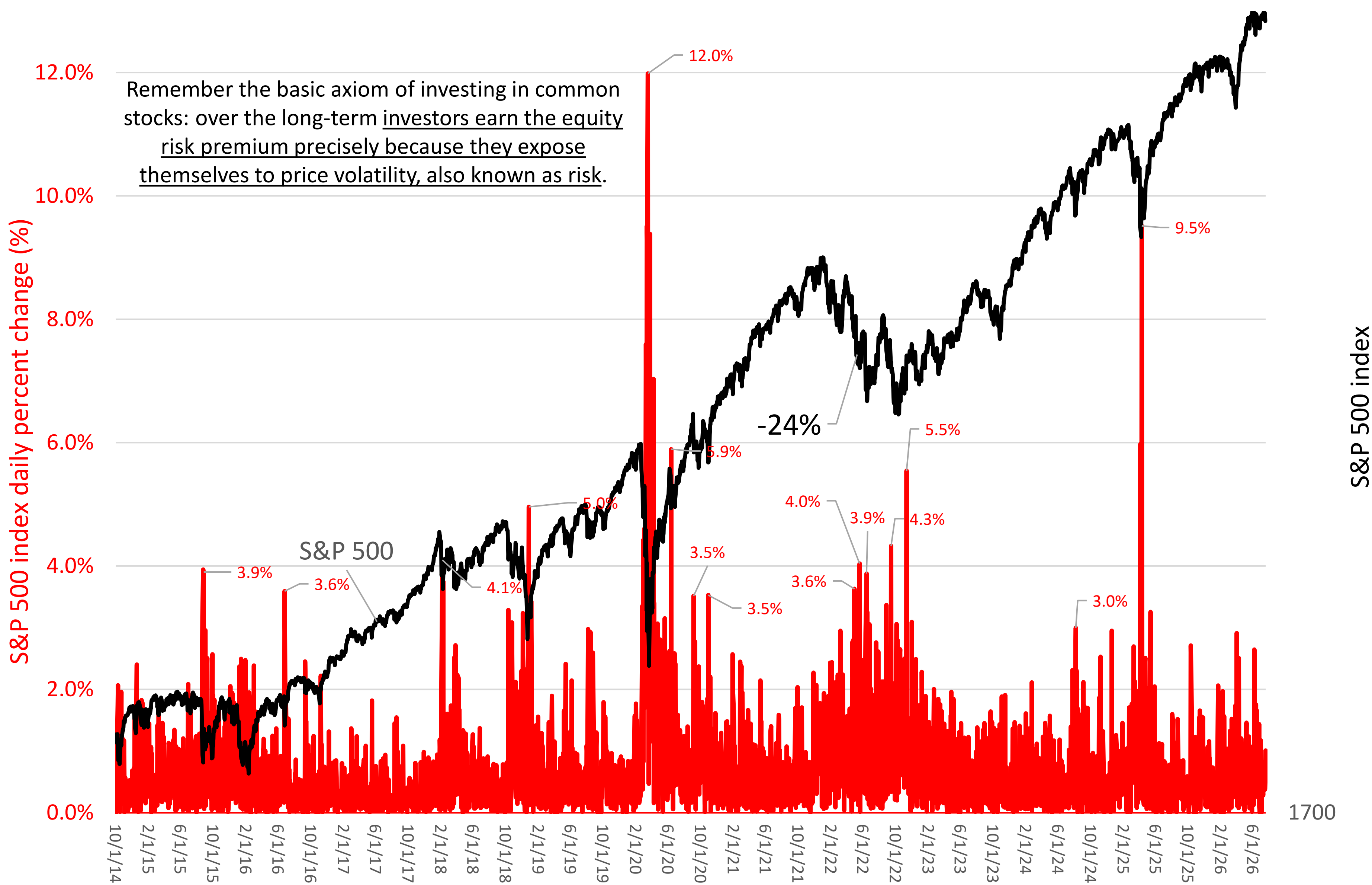


Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, July 16, 2026.

S&P 500 and crises

Source: Standard and Poor's. Data through June 2026. [1] Compound annual growth rate.

S&P 500 volatility



Source: Standard & Poor's, data through July 20, 2026.

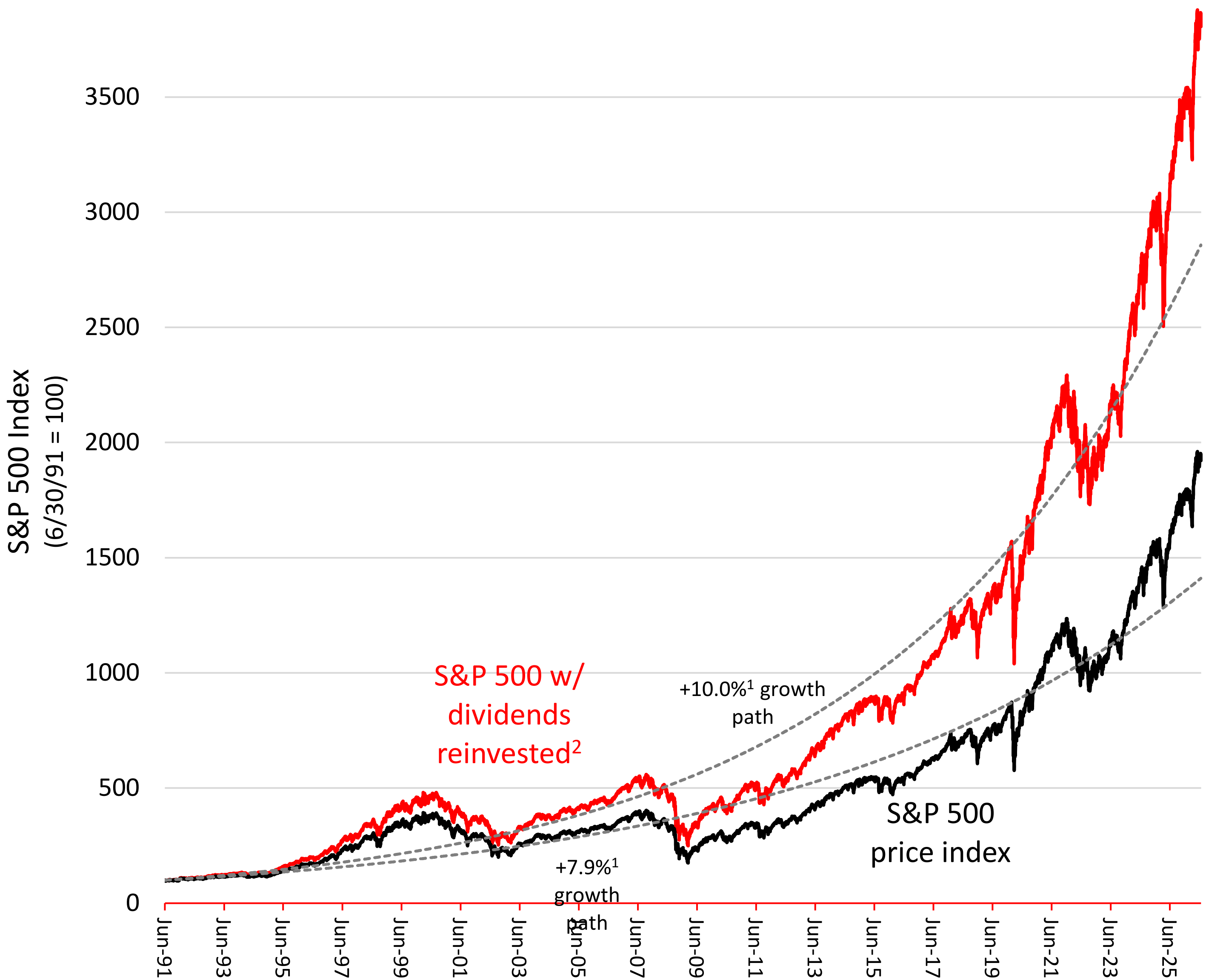
S&P 500 – parabolic

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

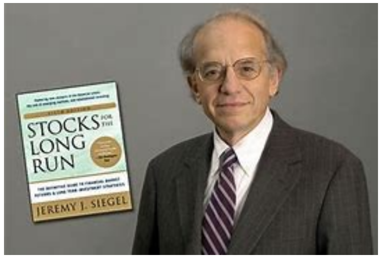
Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, "New Buy-the-Dip Investors Prop Up Market", by Gunjan Banerji, August 12, 2025.

Stock market arithmetic

Total return = 7.9% earnings-driven price + 2.1% dividends reinvested



+10% per year S&P 500 total return over the last 30 years is in line with the stock market's long-term returns going back to 1926, or back even further to 1871.[3]

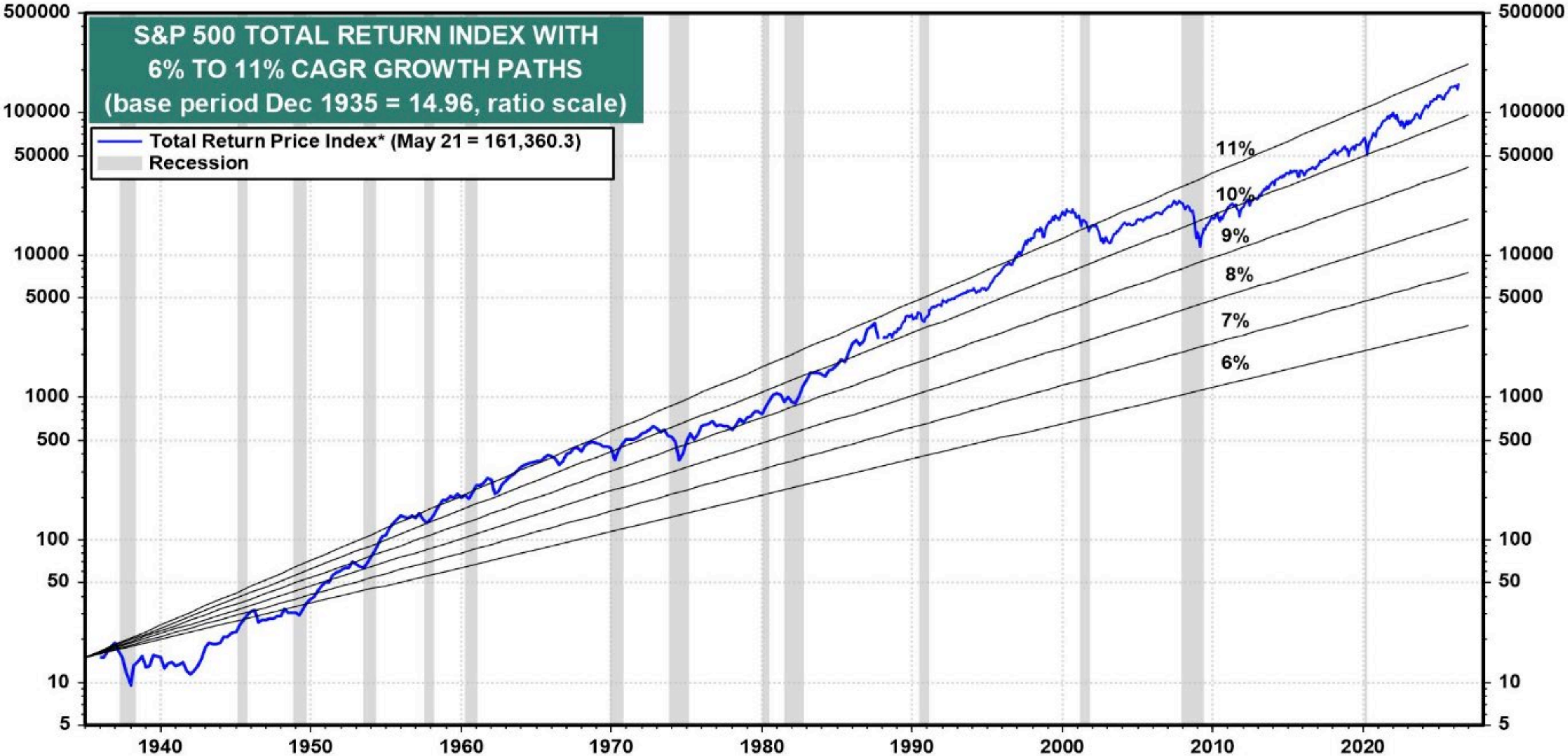


Source: Standard and Poor's. Data through July 17, 2026.[1] Compound annual growth rate. [2] S&P 500 total return index.
[3] per Professor Jeremy Siegel's seminal *Stocks for the Long Run*, first published in 1994.

Total return = 7.9% earnings-driven price + 2.1% dividends reinvested

Source: Standard and Poor's. Data through July 17, 2026. [1] Compound annual growth rate. [2] S&P 500 total return index.

S&P 500 total return

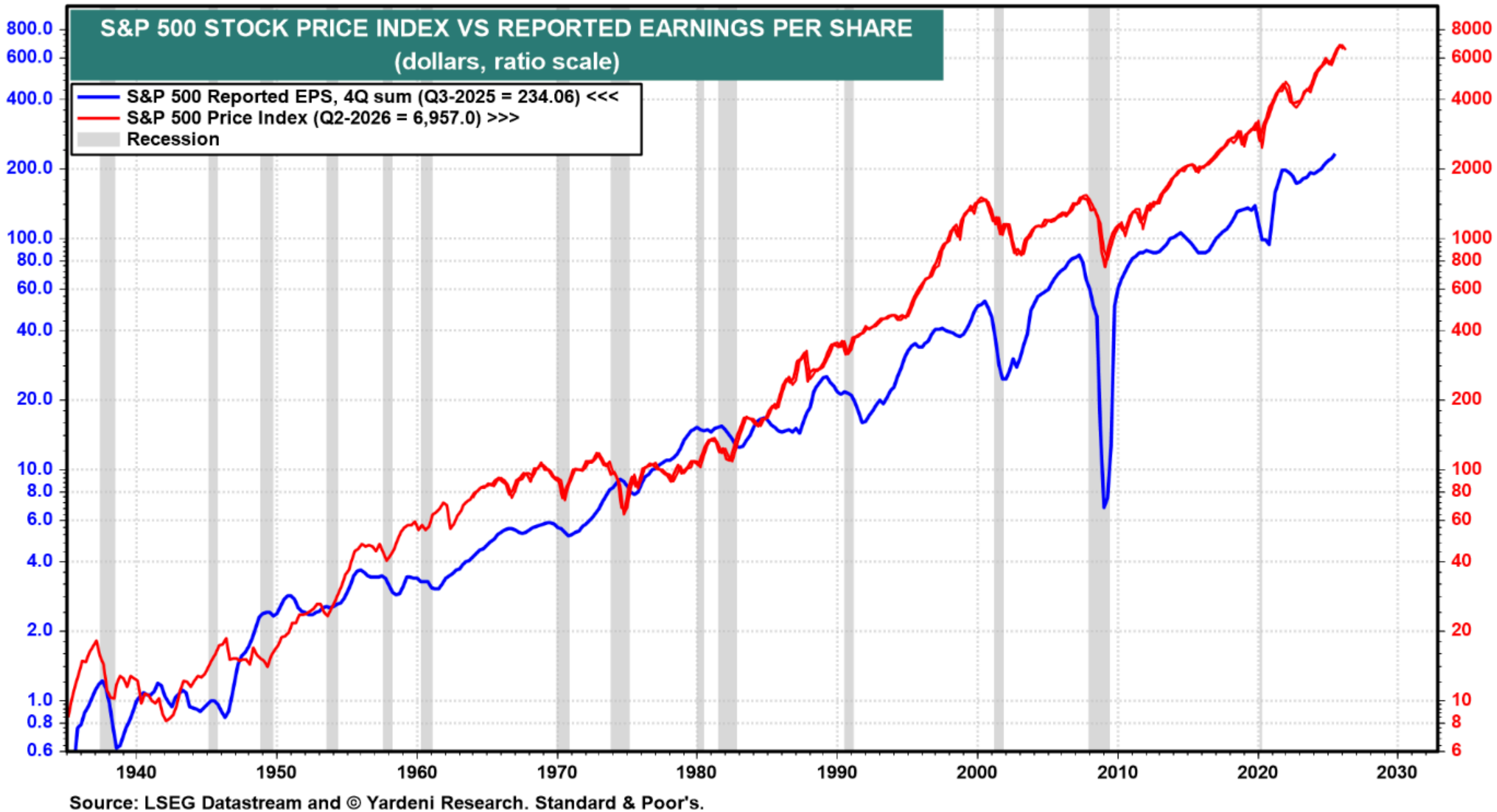


Source: LSEG Datastream and © Yardeni Research. Standard & Poor's.
* Includes reinvested dividends.
** Using last month of quarter CPI. Compounded monthly using base value.

Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission.

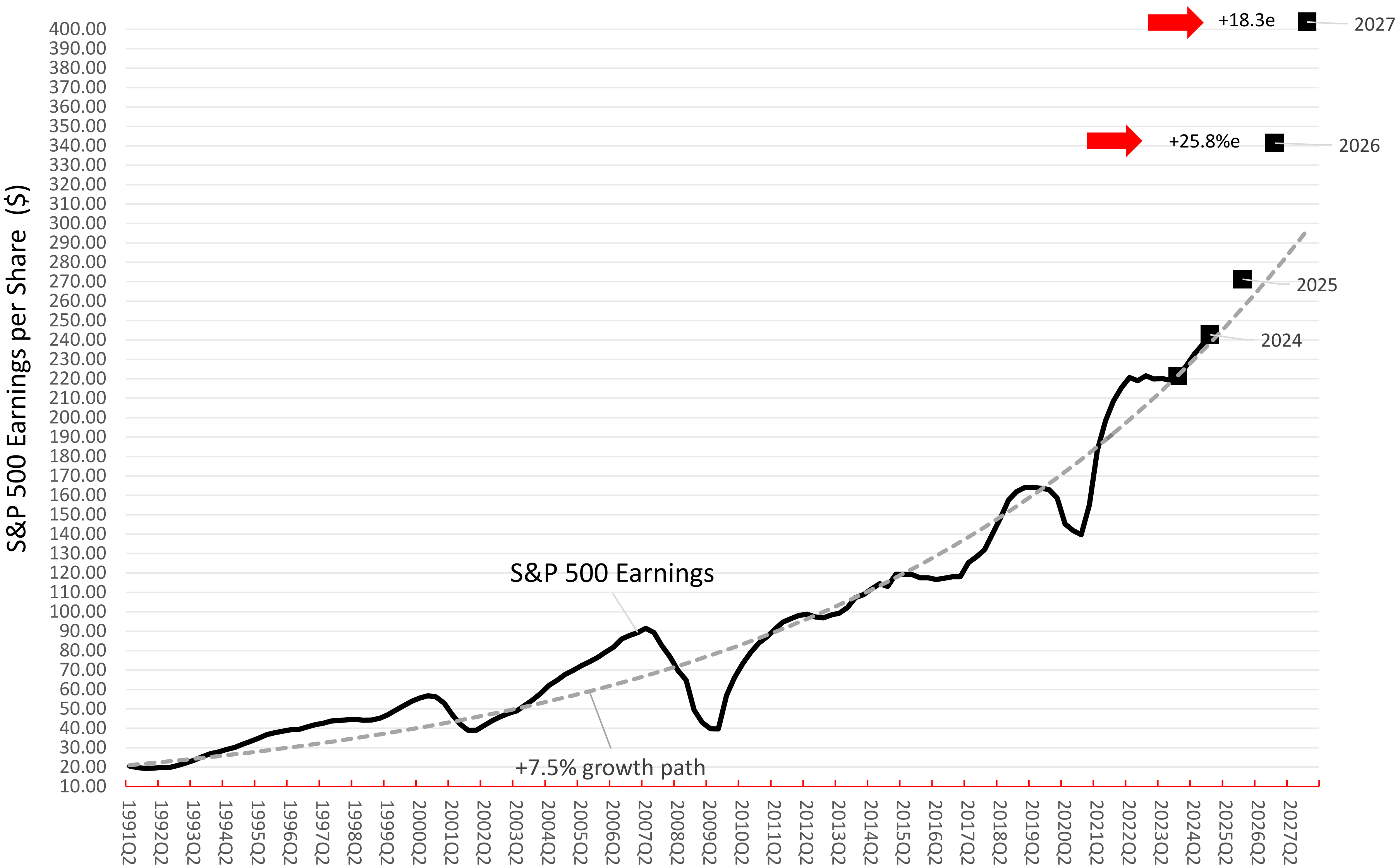
Stock market arithmetic

90 years of S&P 500 earnings growth



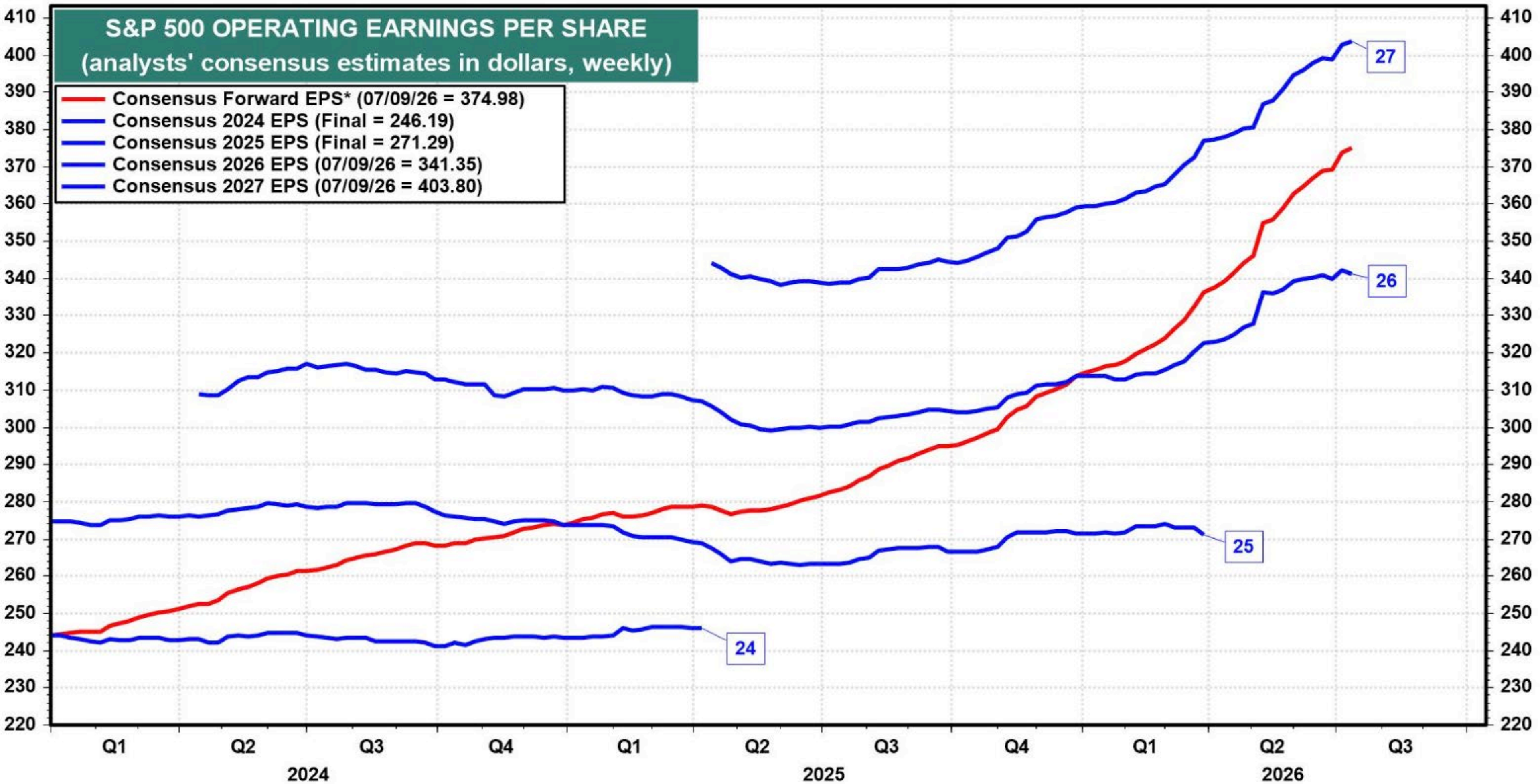
Source: Yardeni Research, Inc. with permission.

S&P 500 earnings – actual and I/B/E/S estimates



2024 (actual), 2025 (actual), 2026 (estimated) and 2027 (estimated) bottom-up S&P 500 operating earnings per share as of July 16, 2026: for 2024(a), $246.19; for 2025(a), $271.29; for 2026(e), $341.35; for 2027(e), $403.80. Sources: Yardeni Research, Inc. and Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S for actual and estimated operating earnings from 2015. Standard and Poor's for actual operating earnings data through 2014.

S&P 500 earnings – trend in analysts' estimates

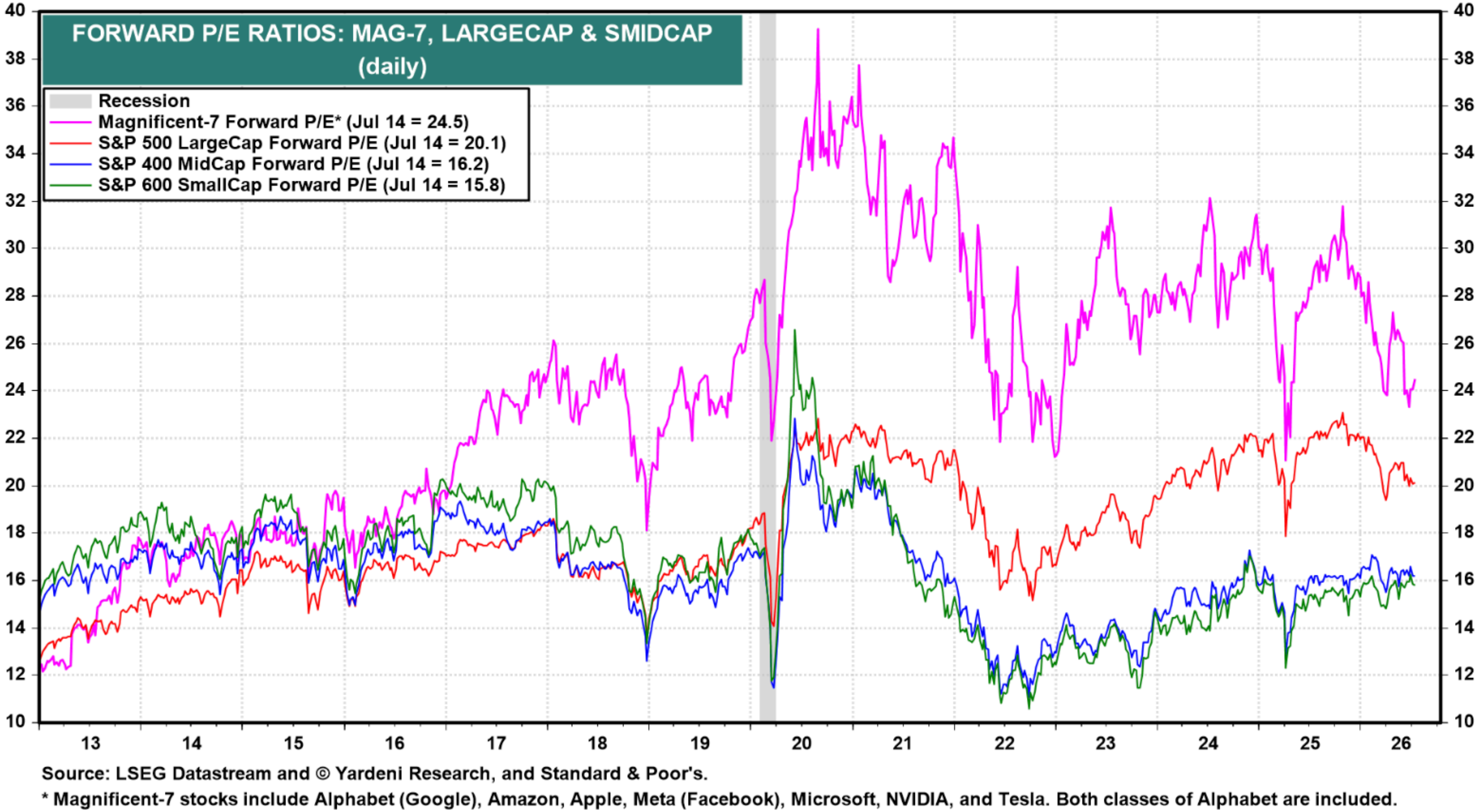


Source: LSEG Datastream and © Yardeni Research.

* Time-weighted average of analysts' consensus estimates for current and coming year.

 Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, July 16, 2026.

S&P 500 index forward P/E ratio



Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, July 16, 2026.

S&P 500 index forward P/E ratio

Source: LSEG Datastream and © Yardeni Research and Standard & Poor's.
* Price divided by 52-week forward consensus expected operating earnings per share.

Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission, July 16, 2026.

Bond Yields

- Normal yields by historic comparison

U.S. Treasury bond yields

Back to normal from the lowest long-term interest rates in U.S. history.

Source: Online Data Robert Shiller, data through 2016; 10-year U.S. Treasury bond yield data from 2017; data through June 18, 2026.

Federal Reserve

- Held rates steady in March, April and June
- Raised its inflation forecast
- Cut its GDP growth forecast
- Dot plot points to 3-1/4% terminal rate
- Dis-inverting yield curve

Central tendency forecasts

For release at 2:00 p.m., EDT, June 17, 2026

Table 1. Economic projections of Federal Reserve Board members and Federal Reserve Bank presidents, under their individual assumptions of projected appropriate monetary policy, June 2026

Percent

Variable	Median[1]				Central Tendency[2]				Range[3]			
	2026	2027	2028	Longer run	2026	2027	2028	Longer run	2026	2027	2028	Longer run
Change in real GDP	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.0	2.0–2.3	2.0–2.4	2.0–2.3	1.8–2.0	1.8–2.6	1.9–2.9	1.8–2.6	1.7–2.5
March projection	2.4	2.3	2.1	2.0	2.2–2.5	2.0–2.4	2.0–2.3	1.8–2.0	2.1–2.7	2.0–2.7	1.8–2.7	1.7–2.5
Unemployment rate	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.3–4.4	4.2–4.5	4.1–4.3	4.0–4.3	4.3–4.6	4.0–4.6	4.0–4.4	3.8–4.5
March projection	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.3–4.5	4.2–4.4	4.0–4.4	4.0–4.3	4.3–4.6	4.0–4.5	4.0–4.5	3.8–4.5
PCE inflation	3.6	2.3	2.0	2.0	3.5–3.7	2.2–2.5	2.0–2.1	2.0	2.7–4.1	1.9–2.8	2.0–2.3	2.0
March projection	2.7	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.6–3.1	2.0–2.3	2.0	2.0	2.3–3.3	1.8–2.4	1.9–2.2	2.0
Core PCE inflation[4]	3.3	2.5	2.1		3.2–3.5	2.3–2.6	2.0–2.2		2.6–3.5	2.0–3.0	2.0–2.4	
March projection	2.7	2.2	2.0		2.5–2.8	2.0–2.4	2.0		2.2–3.0	2.0–2.5	2.0–2.2	
Memo: Projected appropriate policy path												
Federal funds rate	3.8	3.6	3.4	3.1	3.6–4.1	3.1–3.9	3.1–3.6	3.0–3.5	3.4–4.4	2.9–4.4	2.9–3.9	2.9–3.9
March projection	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1–3.6	2.9–3.6	2.9–3.6	2.9–3.5	2.6–3.6	2.4–3.9	2.6–3.9	2.6–3.9

cut GDP growth forecast

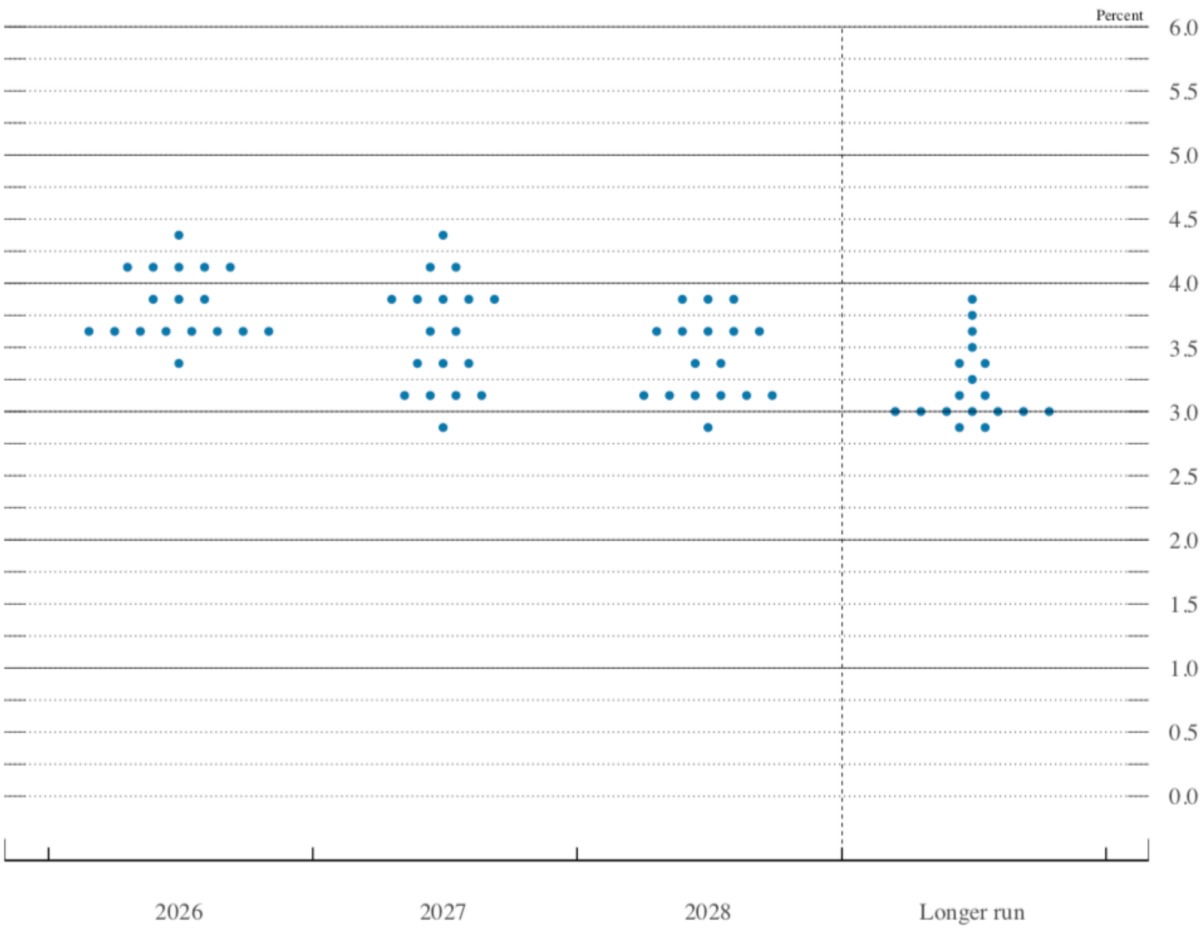
boosted inflation forecast

Source: Federal Reserve, June 17, 2026.

Dot plot

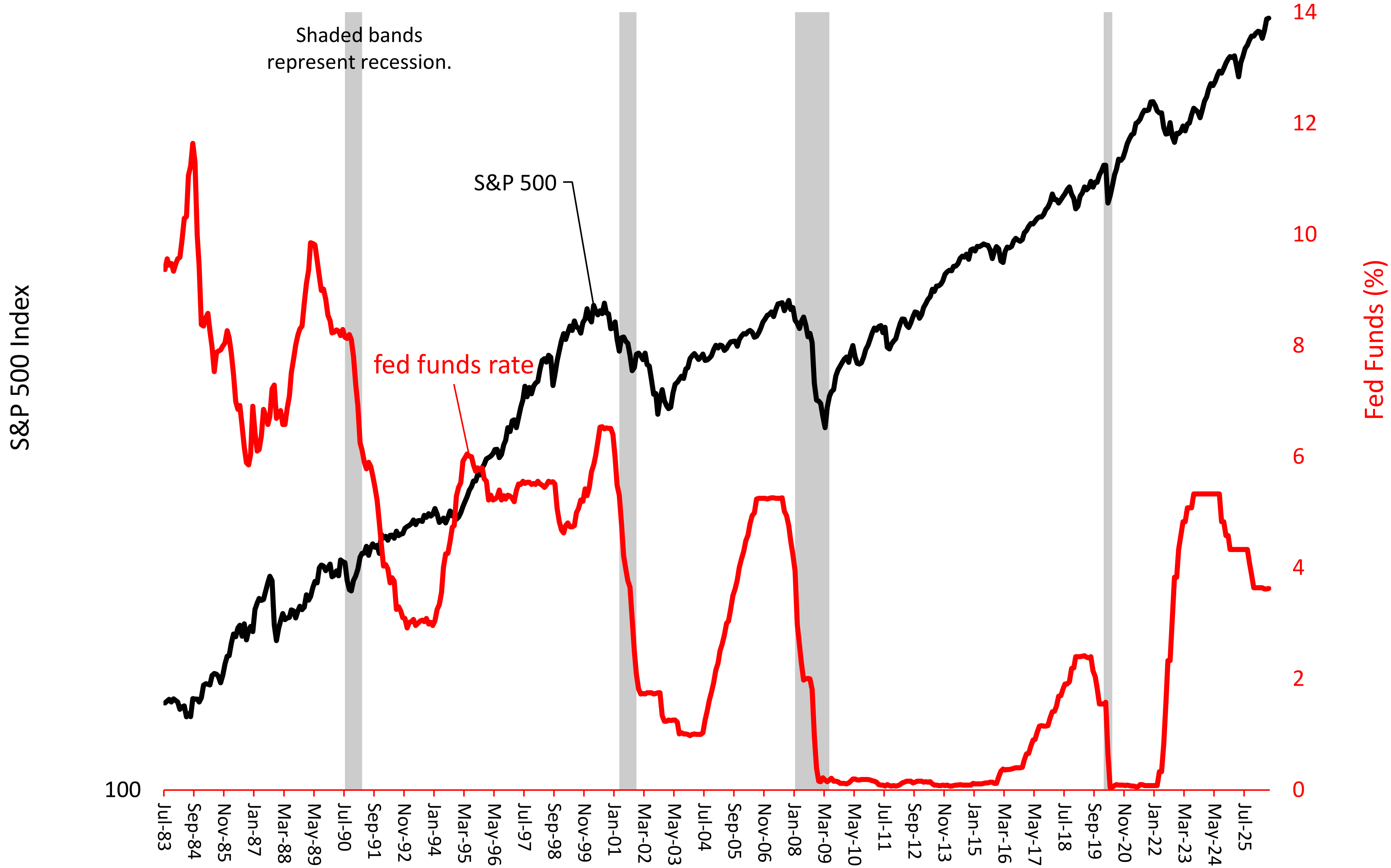
For release at 2:00 p.m., EDT, June 17, 2026

Figure 2. FOMC participants' assessments of appropriate monetary policy: Midpoint of target range or target level for the federal funds rate



Source: Federal Reserve, June 17, 2026.

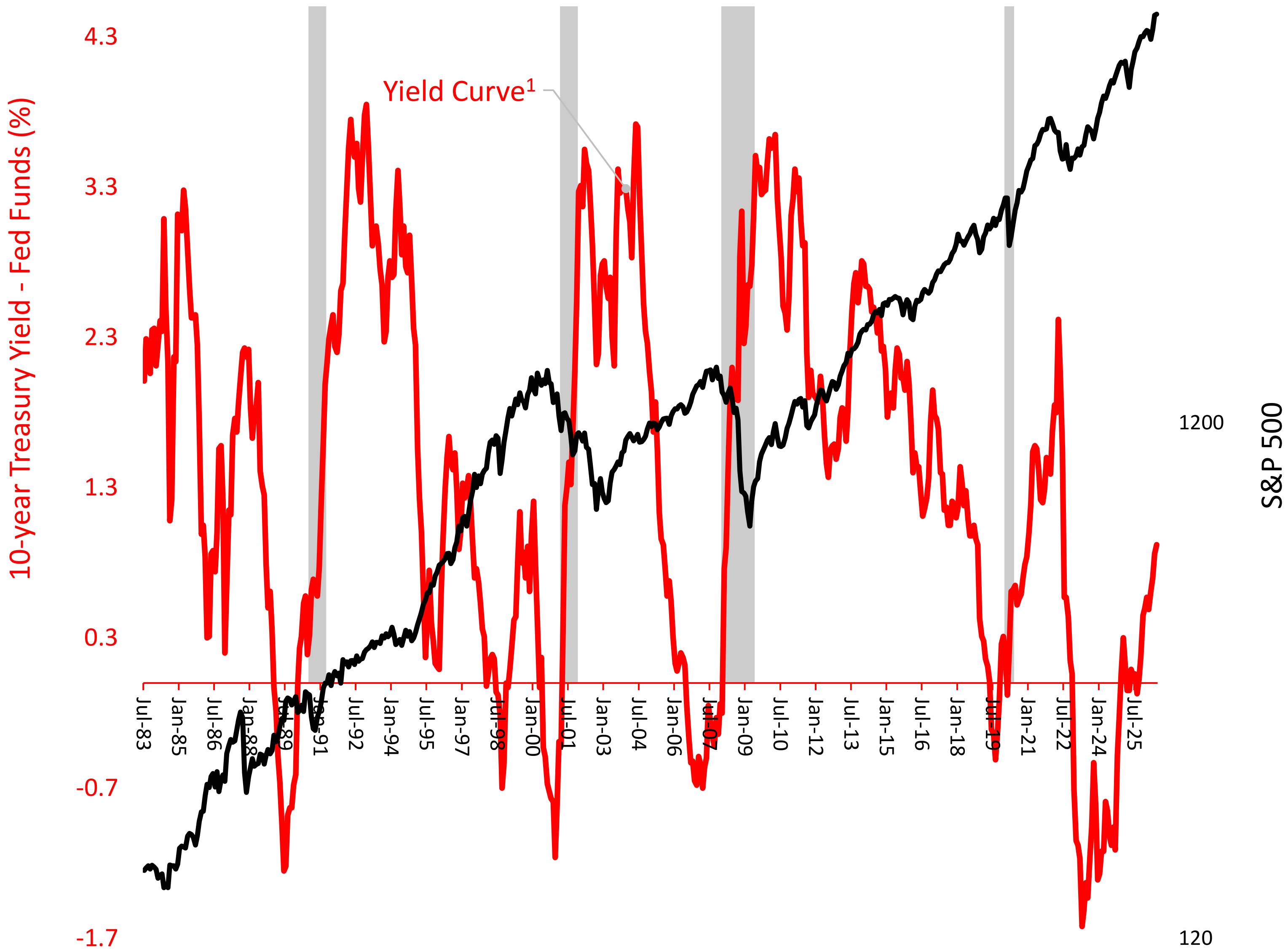
S&P 500 vs. fed funds rate



Sources: Federal Reserve, Standard & Poor's. Data through June 2026.

Federal Reserve policy

Yield curve vs. the S&P 500



When the yield curve has inverted the economy has usually turned down into recession with a lag of a year or more.

<u>Today, the yield curve is dis-inverting</u>.

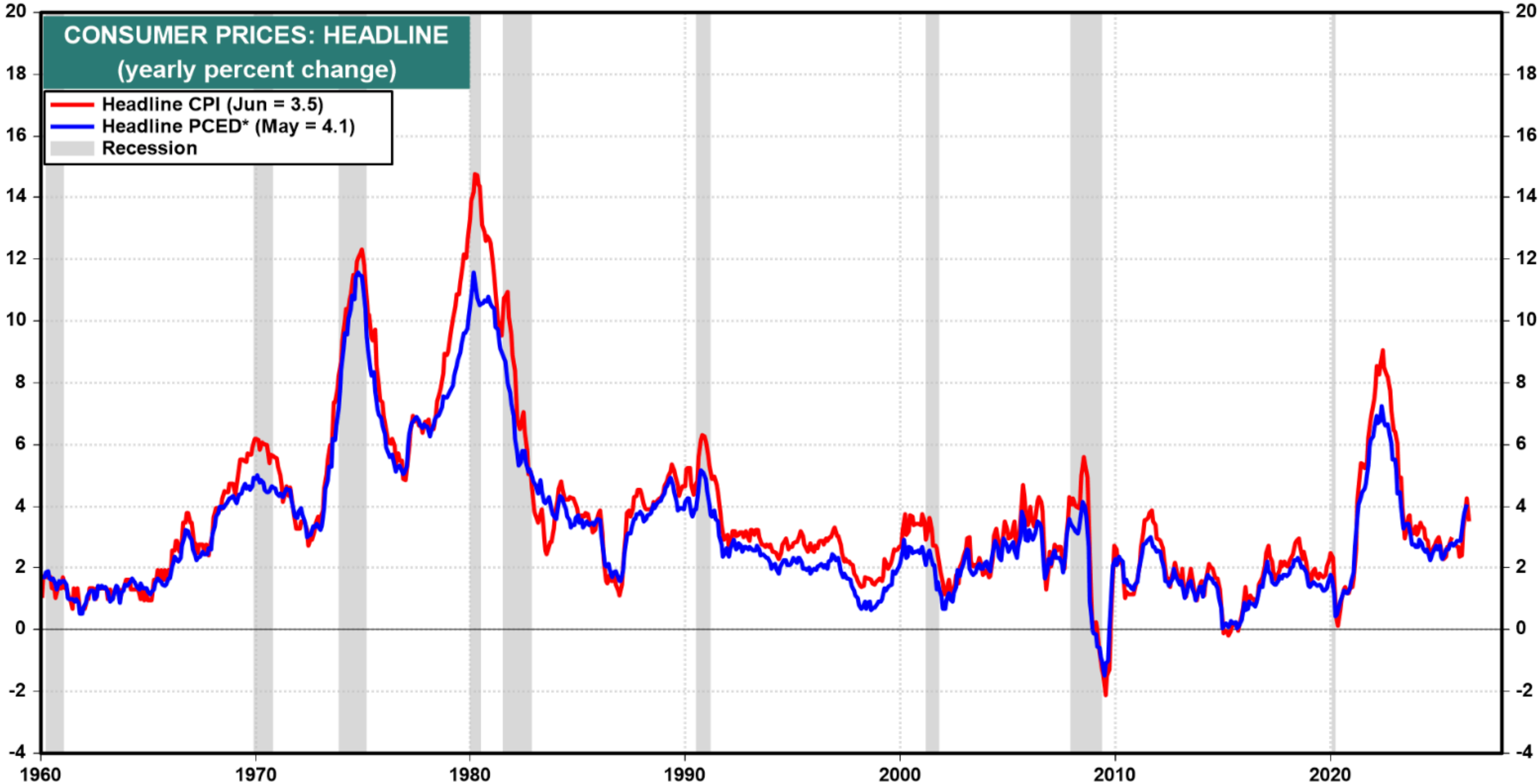
Sources: NBER, Federal Reserve and Standard & Poor's. Data through June 2026.

[1]The interest rate on the 10-year Treasury bond (long term) minus the fed funds rate (short term).

Inflation

- Year-over-year headline CPI +3.5%
- Year-over-year headline PCED +4.1%
- Inflation expectations (TIPS spread)

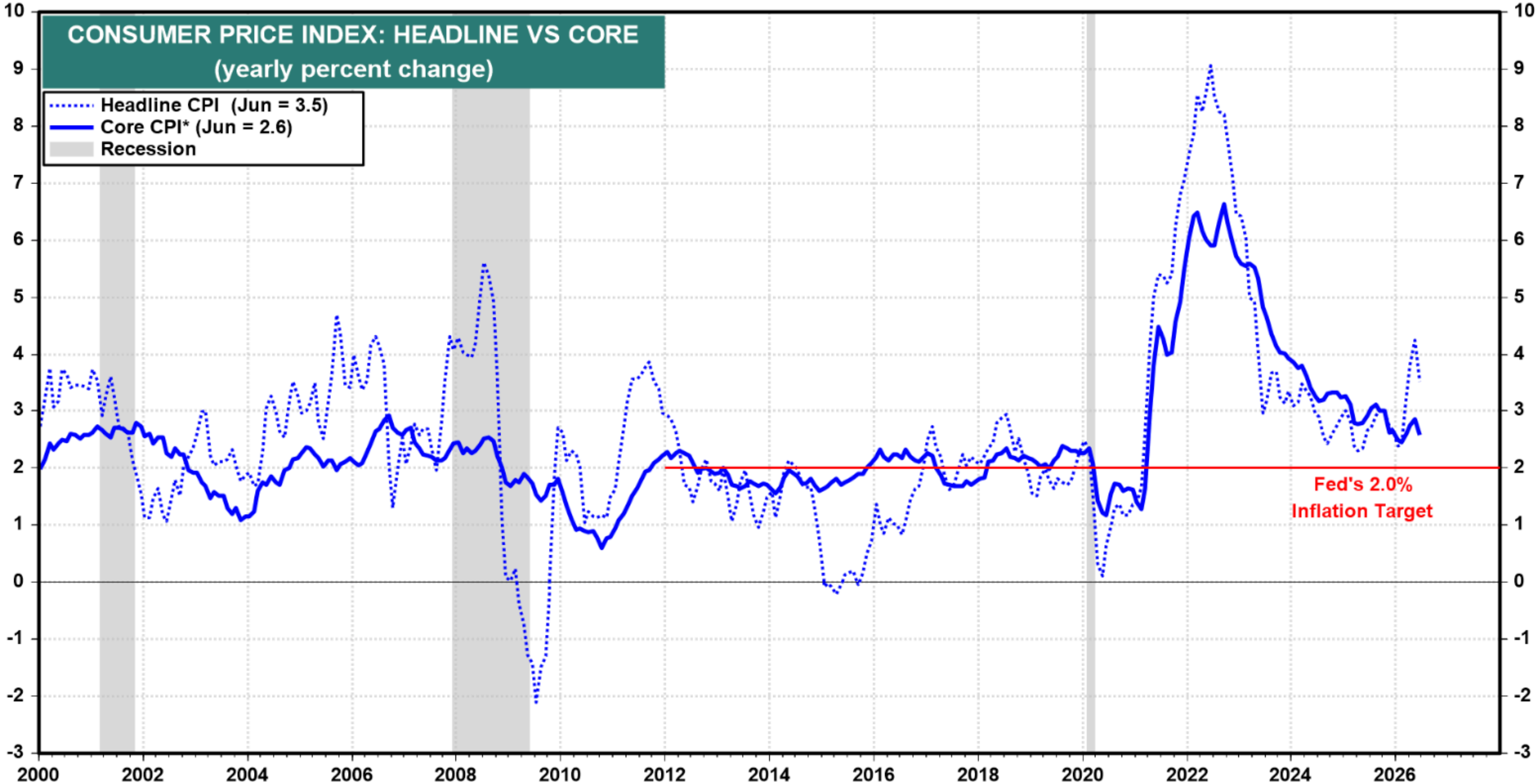
CPI and PCED



Source: LSEG Datastream and © Yardeni Research. Bureau of Economic Analysis and Bureau of Labor Statistics.
* Personal consumption expenditures deflator.

Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission. July 16, 2026.

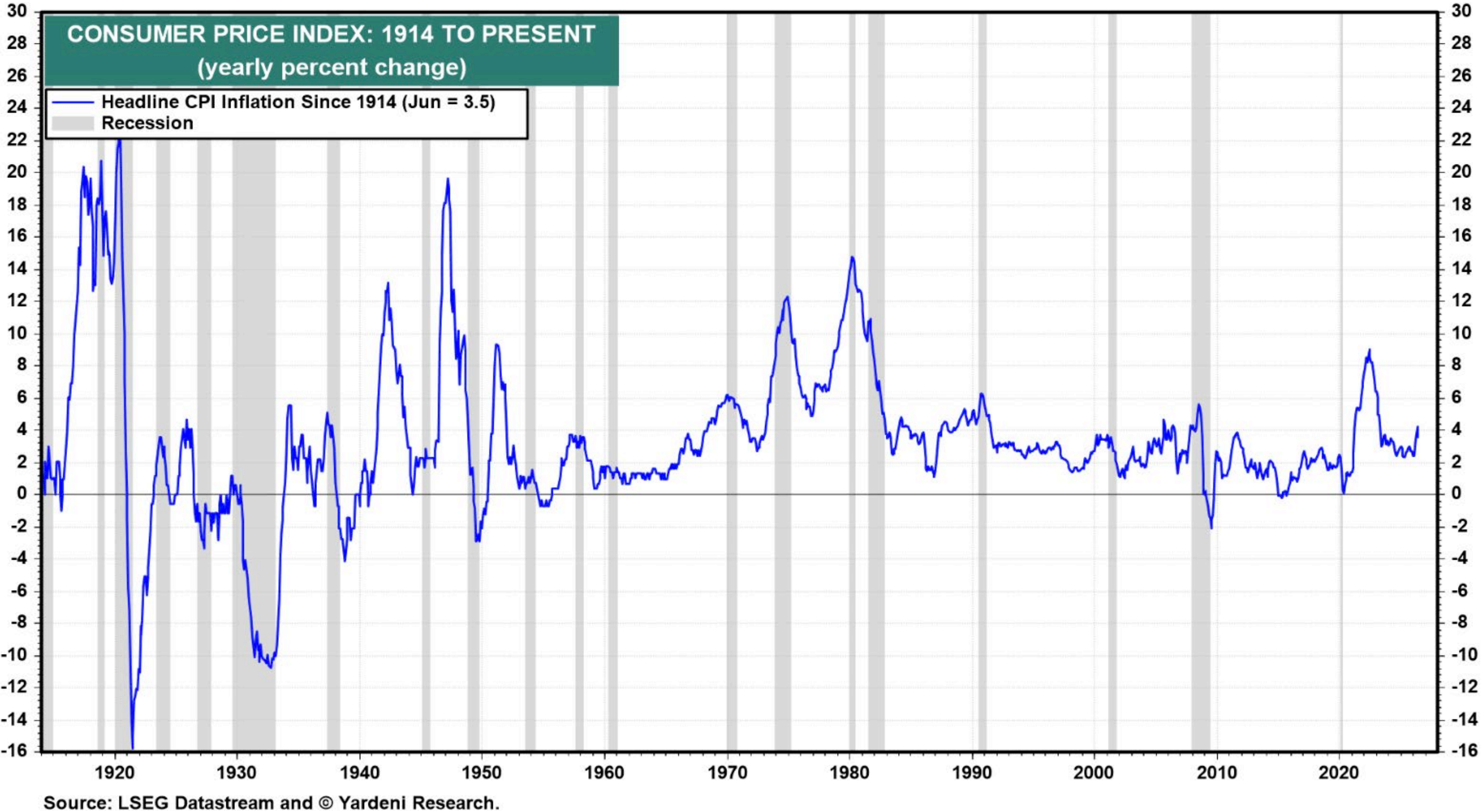
CPI



Source: LSEG Datastream and © Yardeni Research. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
* Less energy & food.

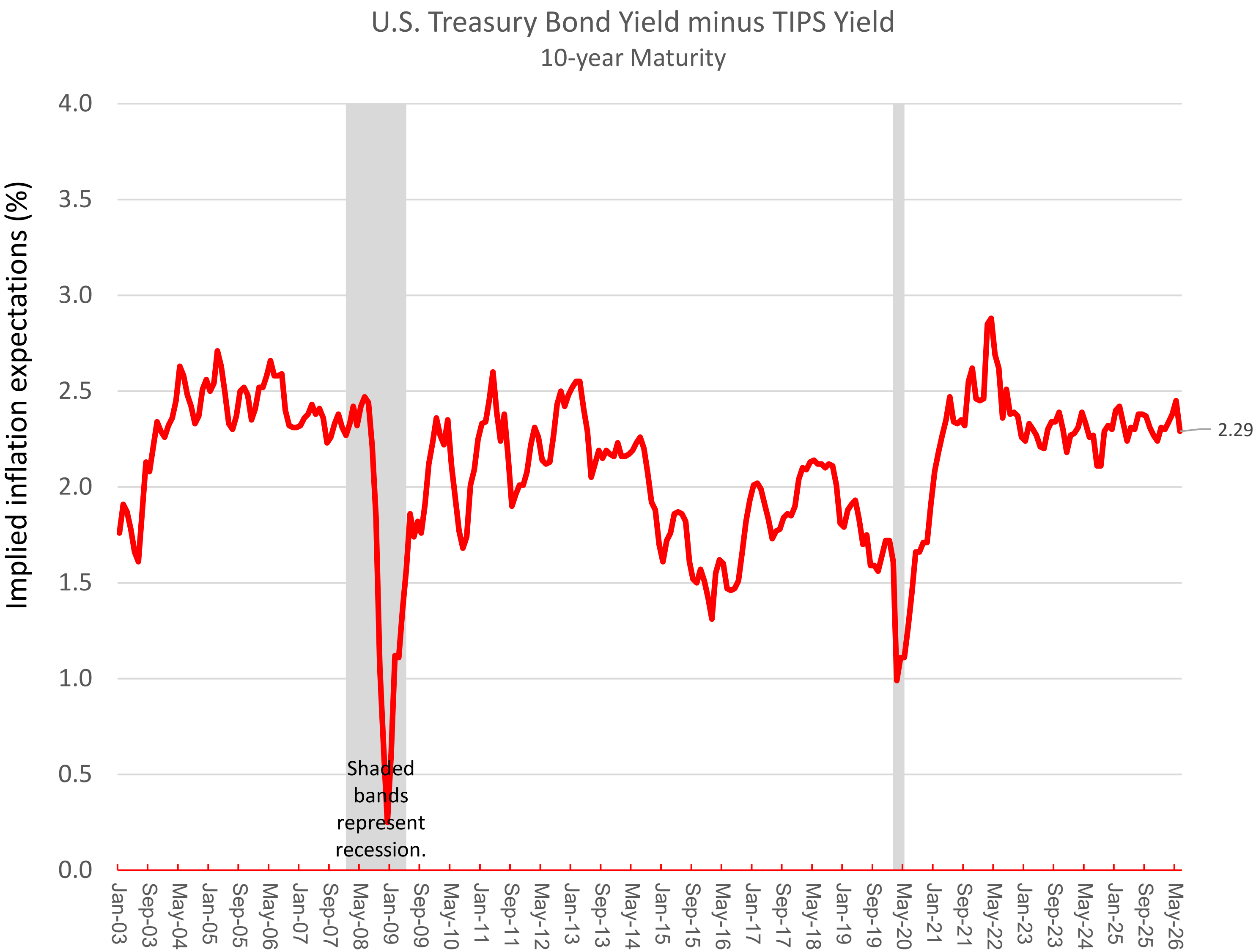
Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission. July 16, 2026.

CPI



Source: Yardeni Research, Inc., with permission. July 16, 2026.

Inflation expectations



The difference between the nominal 10-year Treasury bond yield and the TIPS yield gives the market's opinion for a 10-year inflation forecast.

Source: Federal Reserve. Data through June 2026.

U.S. Debt

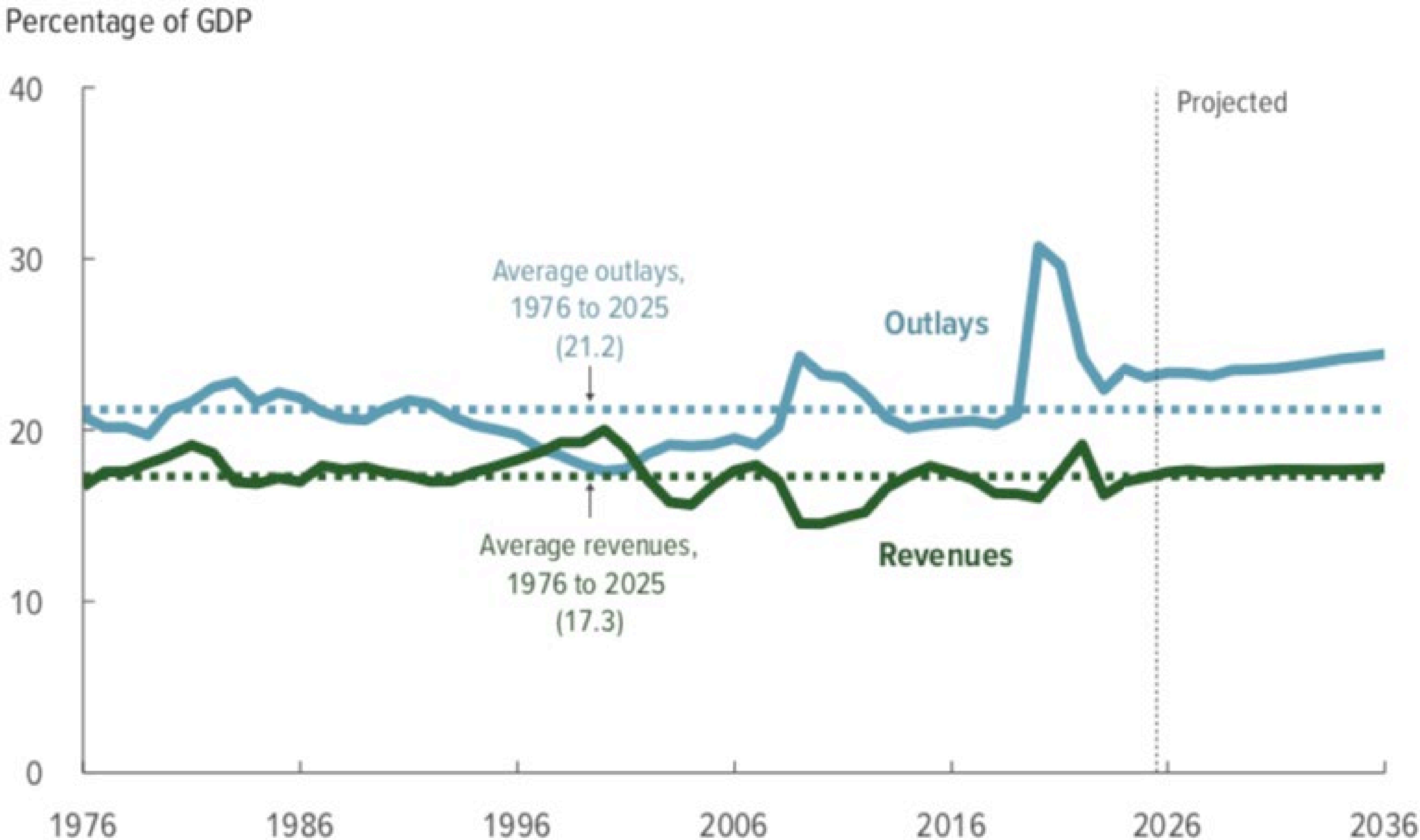
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Will Debt Sink the American Empire?

After growing for decades, this year the U. S. debt will roughly match its GDP. Throughout history, nations that blithely piled up their obligations have eventually met unhappy ends.

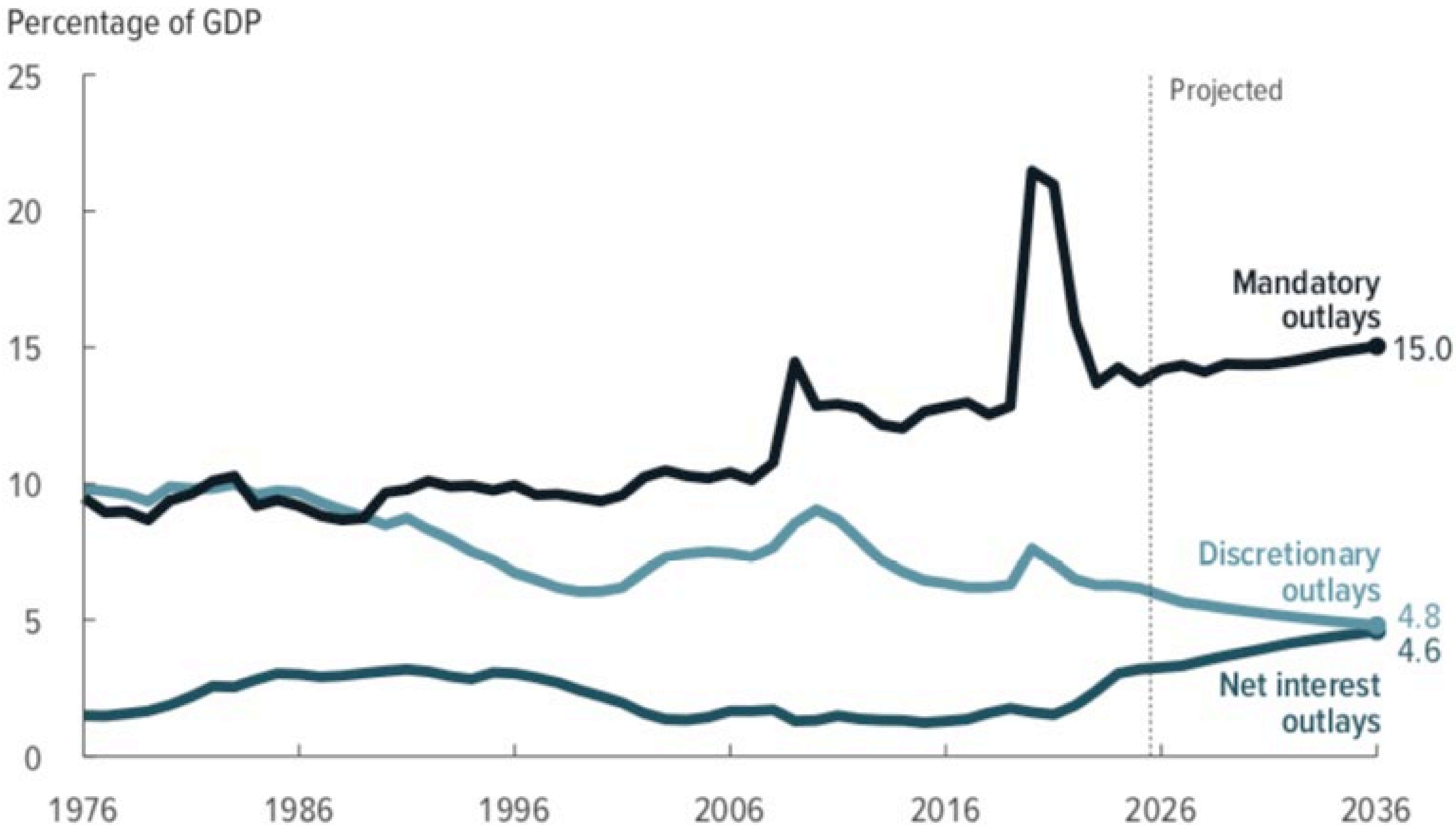
Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, “Will Debt Sink the American Empire?” by Gerald F. Seib, June 12-23, 2024.

Federal revenues and outlays through 2036



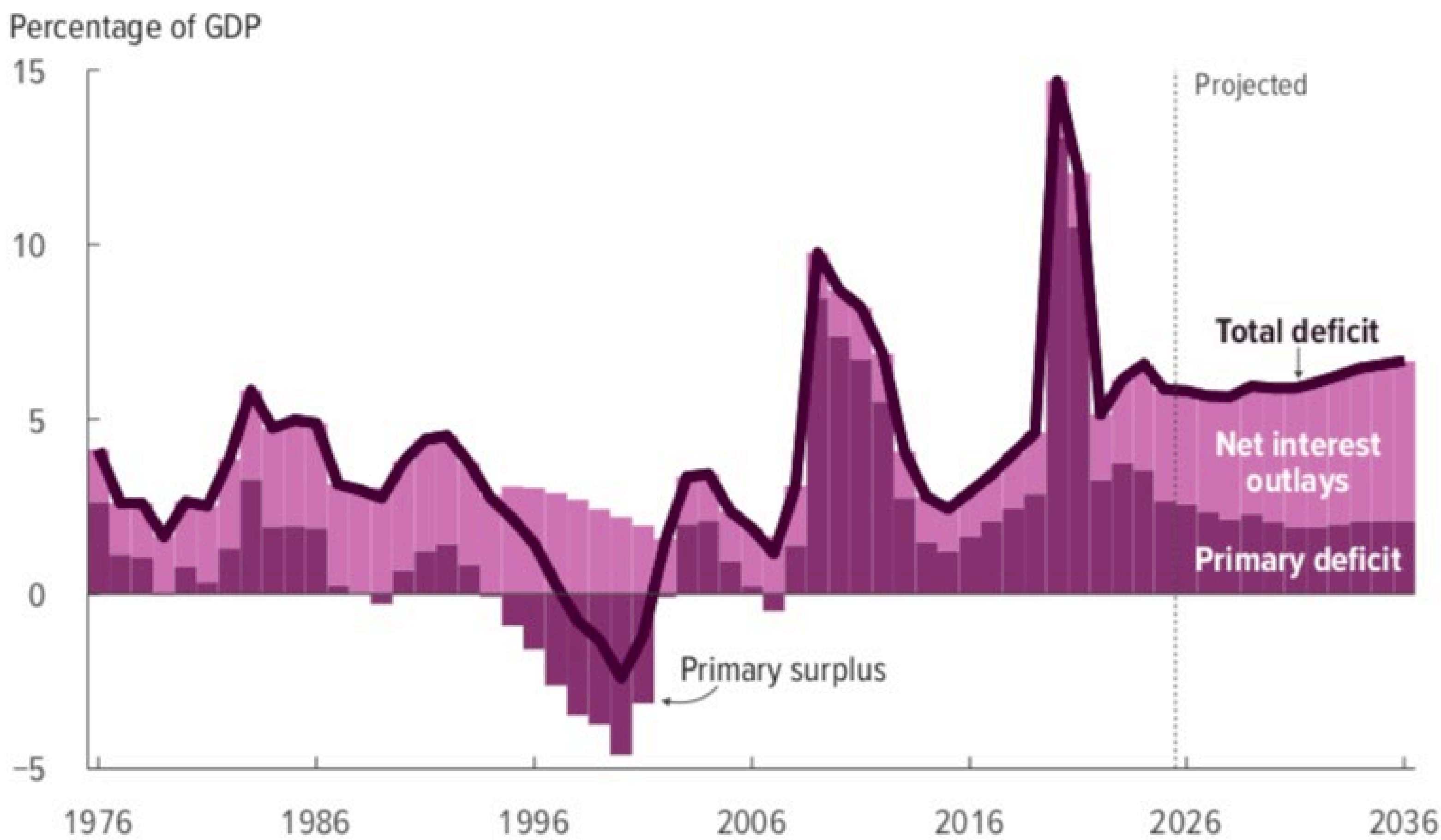
Source: Congressional Budget Office, *The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2026 to 2036,* released February 2026.

Federal outlays through 2036



Source: Congressional Budget Office, *The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2026 to 2036,* released February 2026.

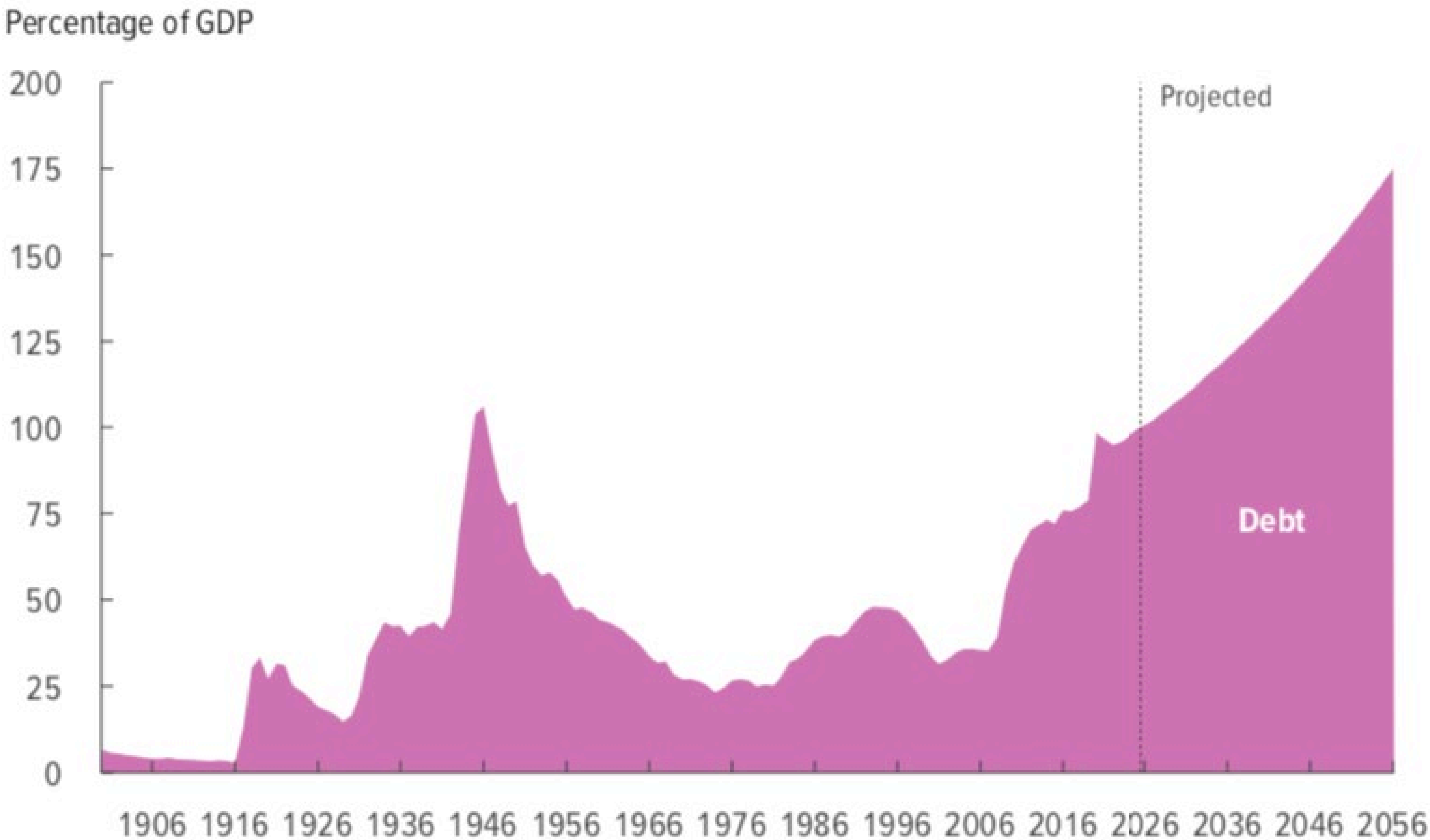
Federal deficits % of GDP though 2036



Net interest becomes the major part of deficits.

Source: Congressional Budget Office, *The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2026 to 2036,* released February 2026.

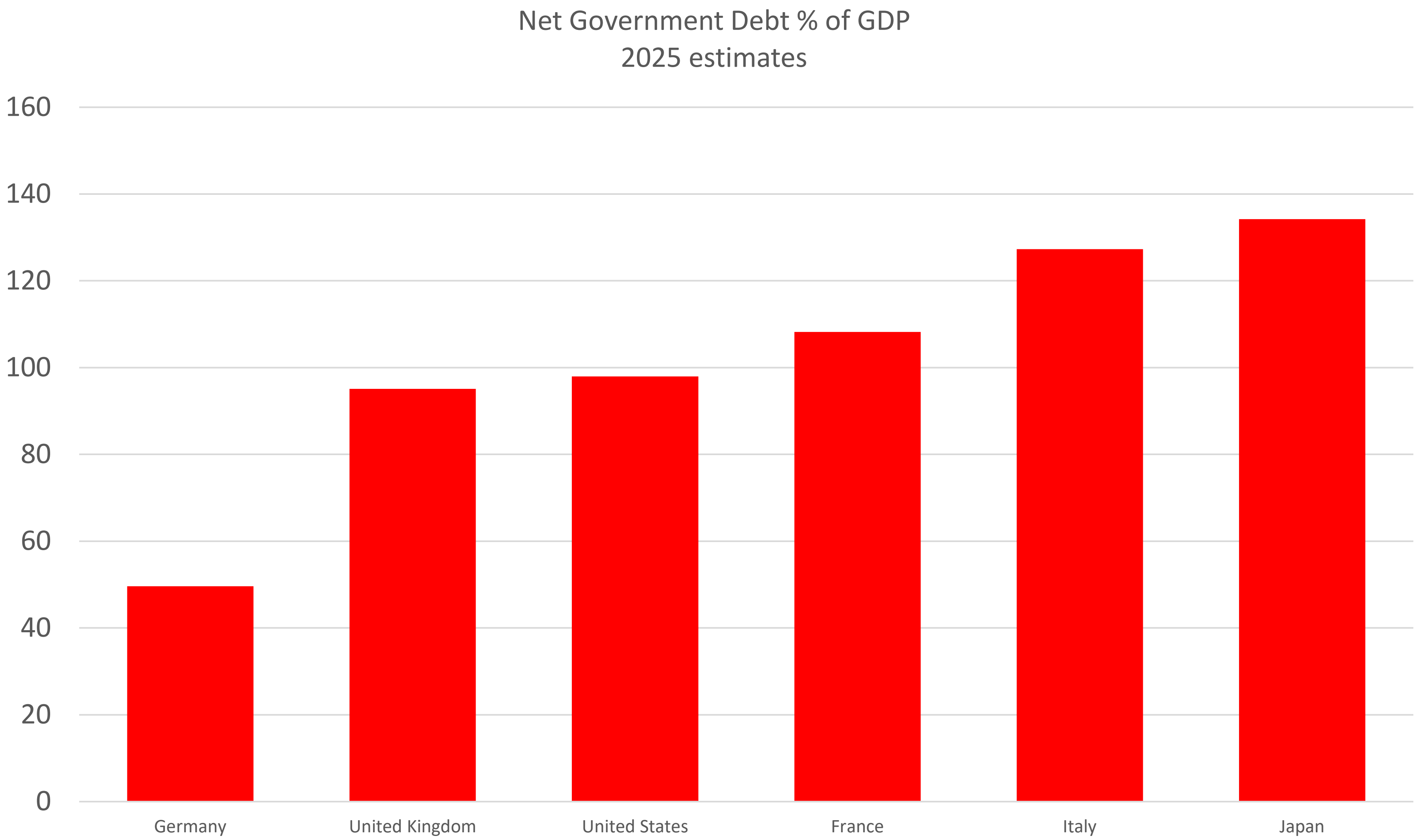
Federal debt % of GDP though 2056



Debt/GDP grows significantly.

Source: Congressional Budget Office, *The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2026 to 2036,* released February 2026.

Net debt % of GDP selected countries



Source: IMF, *World Economic Outlook database: April 2025*.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The Social Security Crisis is Coming

… the Social Security system's trustees in late June sent a signal so alarming that America can't ignore it: Unless lawmakers do something, the system's trust fund will be exhausted in the first quarter of 2033—sooner than earlier reports predicted. The crisis will trigger large cuts in benefits to current and new beneficiaries.

If lawmakers acted tomorrow, restoring Social Security's long-term solvency would require a 22% benefit cut for future beneficiaries, a payroll tax increase to 16%, up from the current 12%, or a combination of benefit cuts and tax hikes.

If we waited until the trust fund was depleted, we would have to cut benefits by nearly 26%, or the payroll tax would have to rise to nearly 17%.

Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, "The Social Security Crisis is Coming" by William A. Galston, July 2, 2025.

Tax hikes coming

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

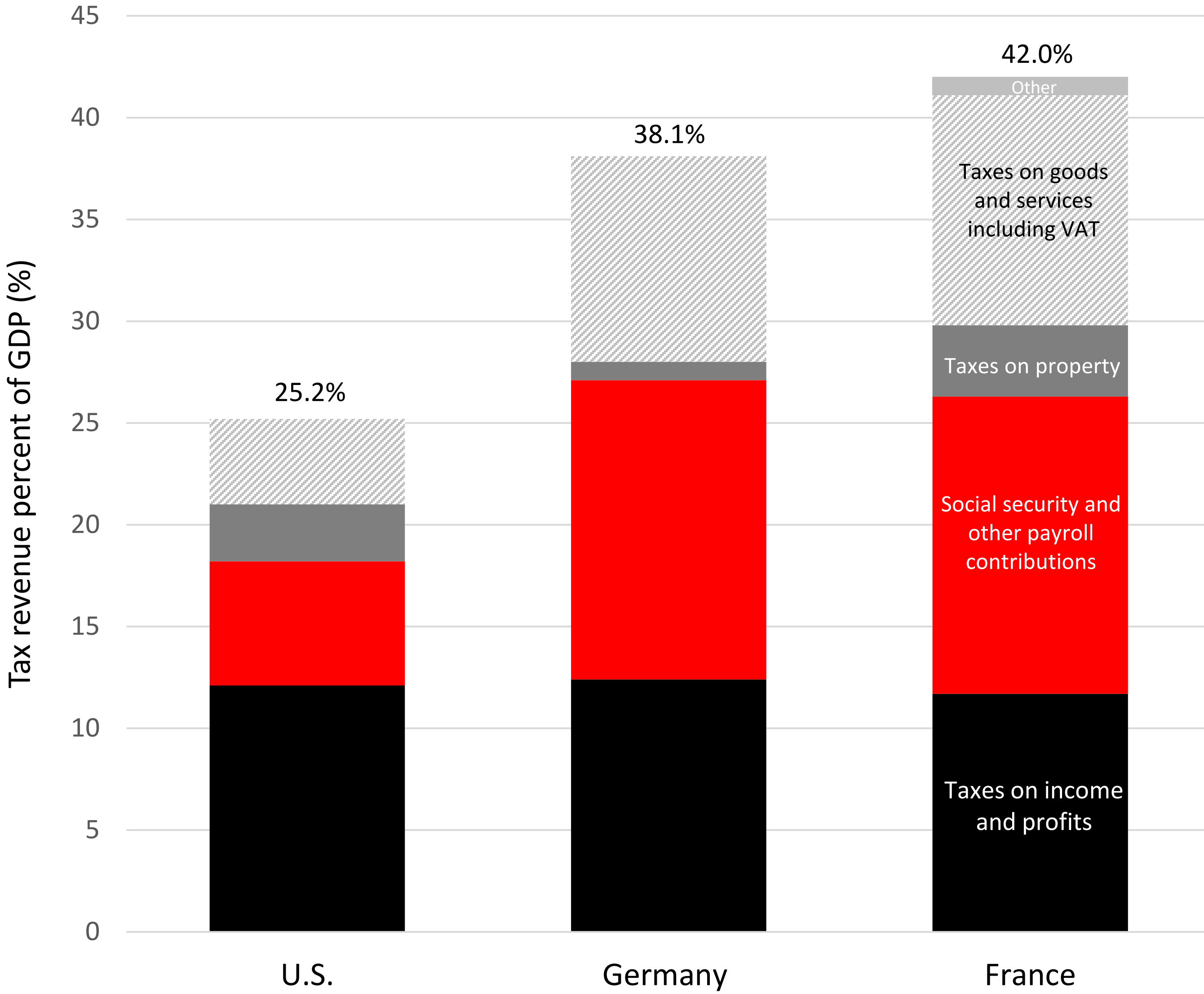
Big Tax Hikes Are Coming

… These demographic and political realities point to the same conclusion: that increased revenue will be needed to secure these programs for the long term. Americans may be reluctant to see their taxes go up, but they will be even less willing to see their Social Security and Medicare benefits go down.

… Unless the actuaries are too pessimistic, the next president will be forced to address this issue, and so will a Congress that by and large has forgotten how to legislate across party lines.

Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, "Big Tax Hikes Are Coming" by William A. Galston, May 21, 2025.

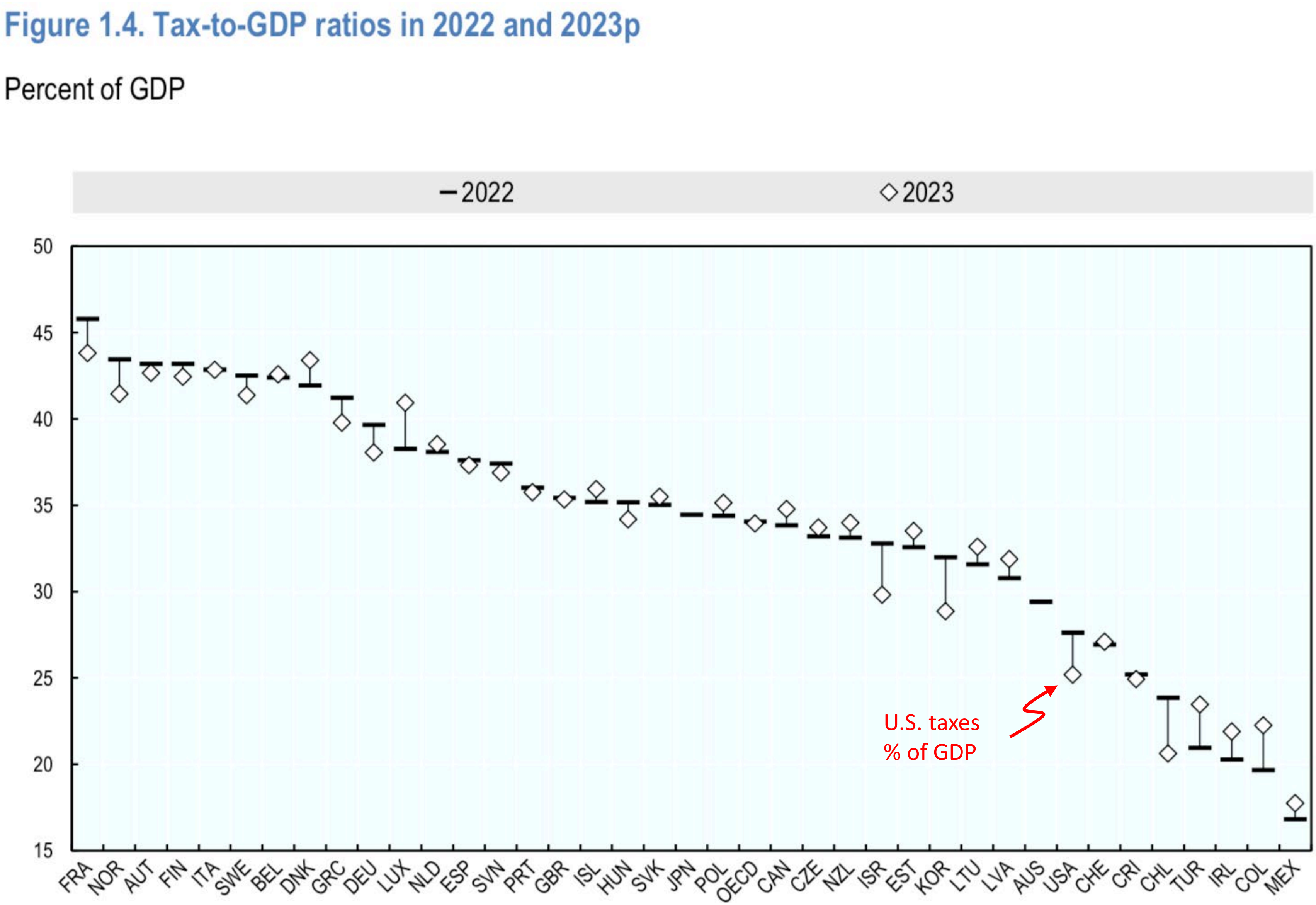
Tax structure U.S. vs. France and Germany



The U.S. has a much lower total tax burden and takes a very different approach to raising tax revenues compared to most other developed economies.

Source: OECD Revenue Statistics 2024. Data for 2023.

Taxes % of GDP – 38 OECD countries



Source: OECD Revenue Statistics 2024.

Active vs. passive

SPIVA U.S. Scorecard Year-End 2025

Reports

Report 1a: Percentage of U.S. Equity Funds Underperforming Their Benchmarks (Based on Absolute Return)

Fund Category	Comparison Index	1-Year (%)	3-Year (%)	5-Year (%)	10-Year (%)	15-Year (%)	20-Year (%)
All Domestic Funds	S&P Composite 1500®	79.83	80.40	91.47	90.43	93.15	95.01
All Large-Cap Funds	S&P 500	78.78	66.84	88.96	85.59	89.93	92.89
All Mid-Cap Funds	S&P MidCap 400	55.41	62.93	72.32	81.14	84.49	89.74
All Small-Cap Funds	S&P SmallCap 600	40.65	42.18	62.67	75.95	89.90	90.28
All Multi-Cap Funds	S&P Composite 1500	68.03	80.20	90.03	89.13	92.25	93.64
Large-Cap Growth Funds	S&P 500 Growth	95.51	56.33	95.26	91.67	97.82	99.55
Large-Cap Core Funds	S&P 500	82.51	83.12	85.33	93.40	96.52	94.81
Large-Cap Value Funds	S&P 500 Value	41.30	80.51	83.03	88.45	93.29	87.01
Mid-Cap Growth Funds	S&P MidCap 400 Growth	65.12	58.14	86.23	65.79	75.66	86.76
Mid-Cap Core Funds	S&P MidCap 400	46.02	72.48	59.79	92.74	90.00	94.35
Mid-Cap Value Funds	S&P MidCap 400 Value	50.00	67.86	64.81	84.48	92.86	90.11
Small-Cap Growth Funds	S&P SmallCap 600 Growth	34.08	38.46	79.70	65.84	87.91	90.09
Small-Cap Core Funds	S&P SmallCap 600	42.57	49.03	50.00	80.47	91.58	93.07
Small-Cap Value Funds	S&P SmallCap 600 Value	44.90	38.98	47.30	80.00	95.28	93.14
Multi-Cap Growth Funds	S&P Composite 1500 Growth	85.04	70.13	93.55	93.64	93.75	94.61
Multi-Cap Core Funds	S&P Composite 1500	72.46	84.00	89.77	95.88	96.05	94.92
Multi-Cap Value Funds	S&P Composite 1500 Value	30.18	72.35	74.59	88.33	94.07	91.76
Real Estate Funds	S&P United States REIT	83.58	88.61	97.44	84.04	90.10	91.14

Source: S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, CRSP. Data as of Dec. 31, 2025. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Table is provided for illustrative purposes.

“SPIVA” stands for S&P Indices vs. Active

Important Information

All material presented is compiled from sources believed to be reliable and current, but accuracy cannot be guaranteed. This is not to be construed as an offer to buy or sell any financial instruments and should not be relied upon as the sole factor in an investment making decision. As with all investments there are associated inherent risks. Please obtain and review all financial material carefully before investing.

The opinions expressed are those of the author, are based on current market conditions and are subject to change without notice.

These materials may contain statements that are not purely historical in nature but are "forward-looking statements." These include, among other things, projections, forecasts, estimates of income, yield or return or future performance targets. These forward-looking statements are based upon certain assumptions, some of which are described herein. Actual events are difficult to predict and may substantially differ from those assumed. All forward-looking statements included herein are based on information available on the date hereof and Fritz Meyer assumes no duty to update any forward-looking statement. Accordingly, there can be no assurance that estimated returns or projections can be realized, that forward-looking statements will materialize or that actual returns or results will not be materially lower than those presented.

Note: Not all products, materials or services available at all firms. Advisers, please contact your home office.