



# 2026 Annual Economic Forecast

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Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy

Strome College of Business

Old Dominion University

**January 28, 2026**





I will cover current economic conditions in the United States and Virginia. I will focus on labor markets and how policy uncertainty may influence economic growth in 2026 and beyond.

My colleague, Vinod Agarwal, will examine economic conditions in Hampton Roads with a particular focus on labor markets and housing.

We will conclude with questions from the audience about how the nation, Virginia, and Hampton Roads may fare in 2026.

All our public presentation materials can be found at our website:  
**[www.ceapodu.com](http://www.ceapodu.com)**

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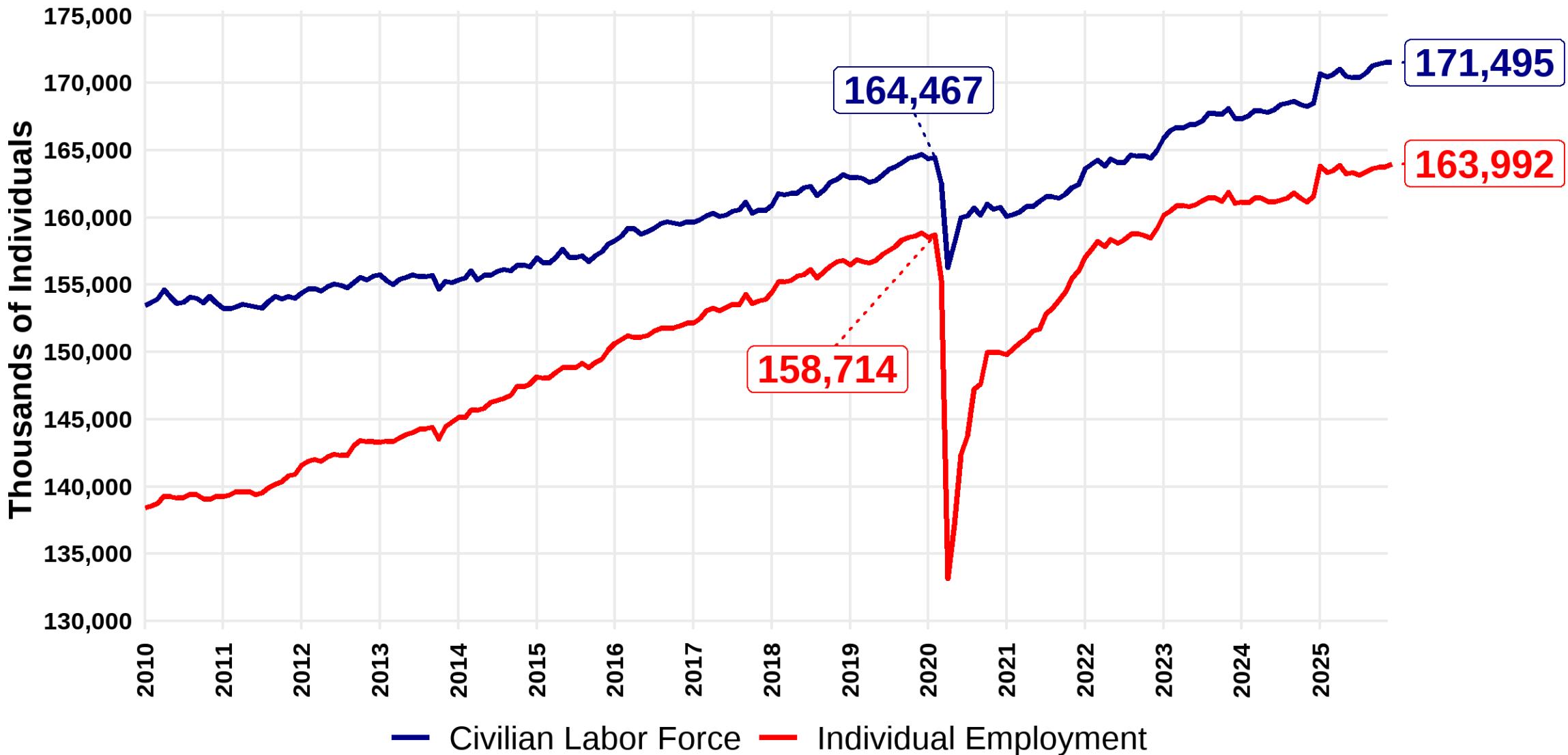
Our commentary and projections do not constitute official viewpoints of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Old Dominion University, its President, Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., the Board of Visitors, the Strome College of Business, or the generous donors who support the activities of the Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy.

# Employment Situation



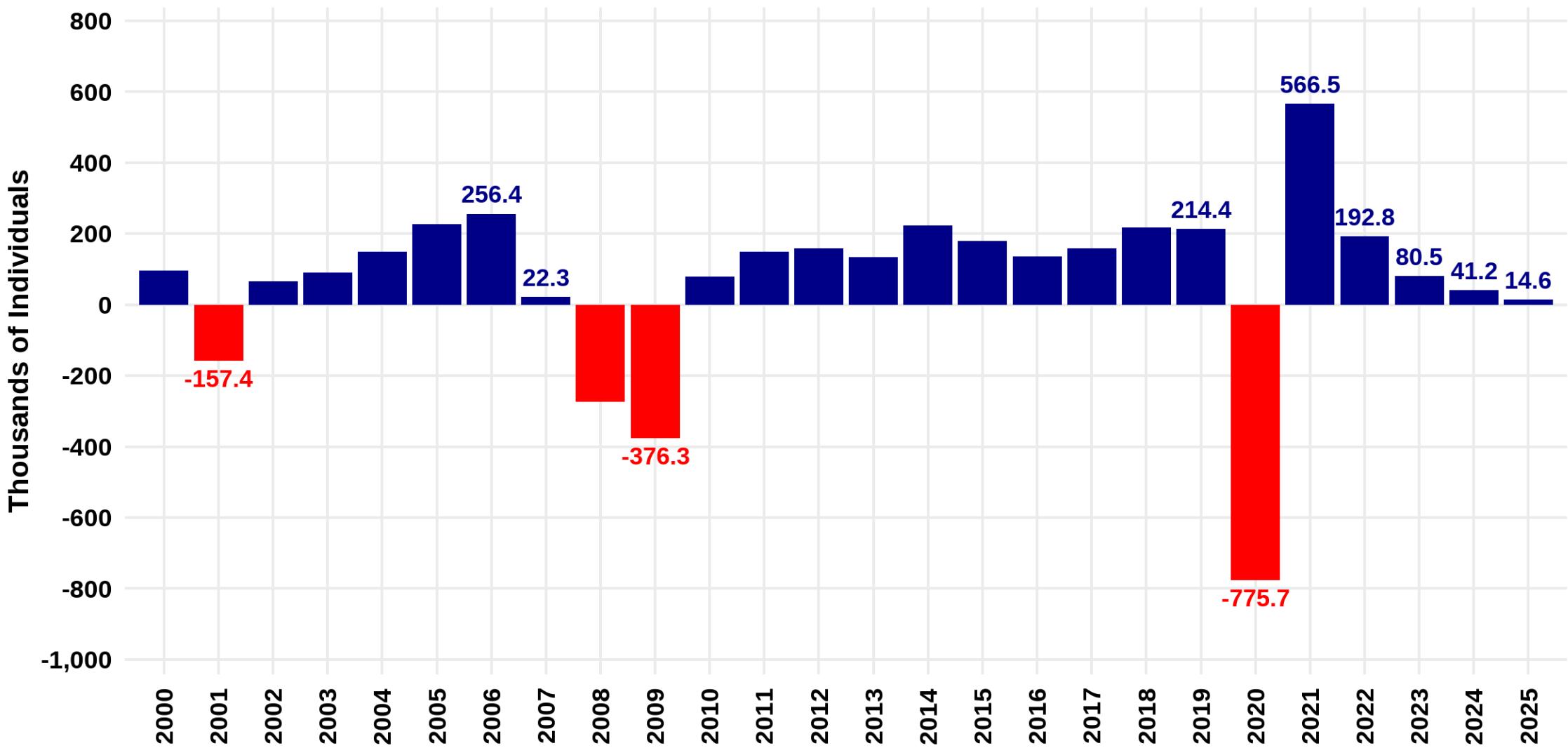
# Civilian Labor Force and Individual Employment

## United States, January 2010 - December 2025



# Average Monthly Change in Individual Employment

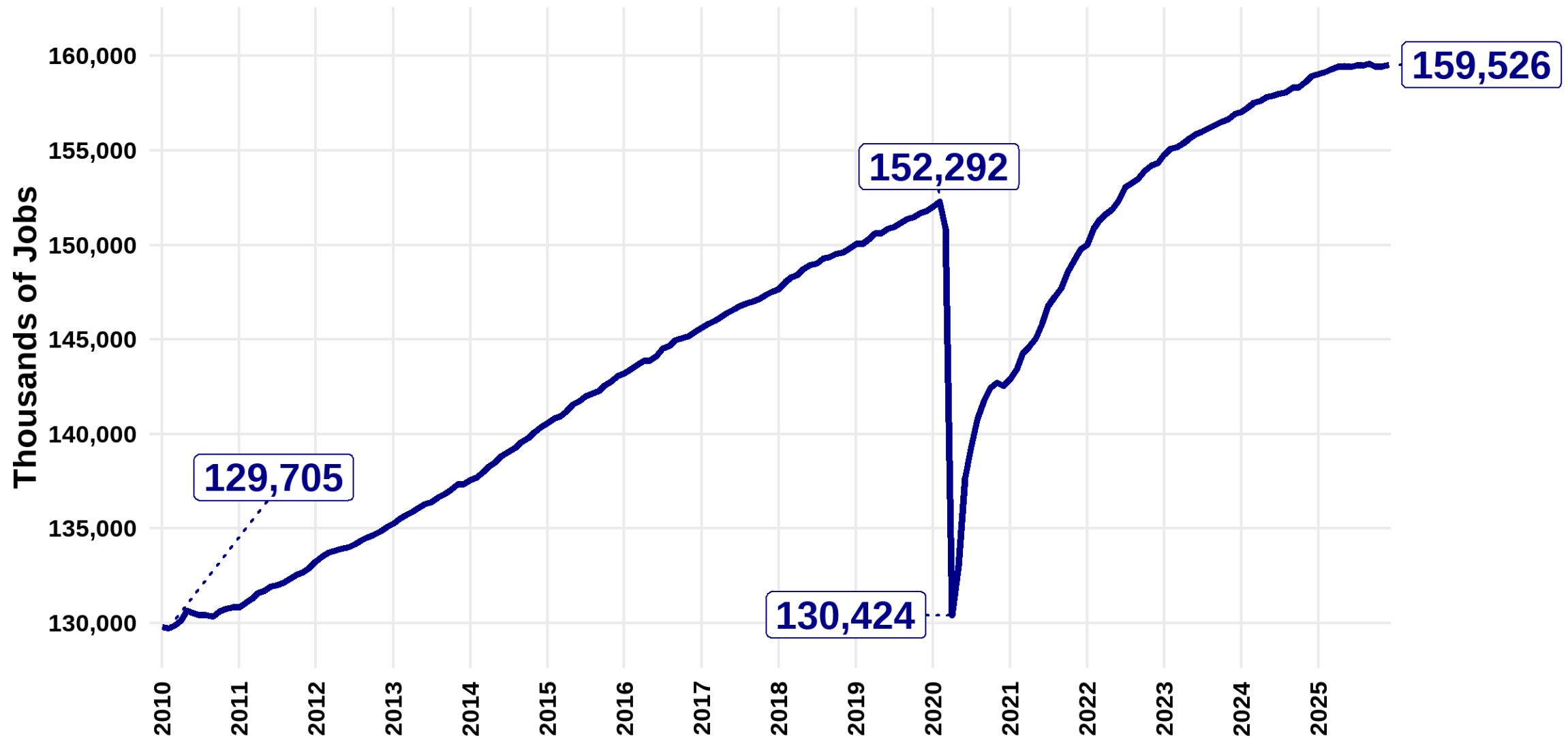
## United States, 2000 - 2025



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, seasonally adjusted data. January is excluded as the BLS adjusts labor force and employment estimates in January. In January 2025, the employment adjustment was 2.0 million. Missing data for October 2025 are linearly extrapolated.

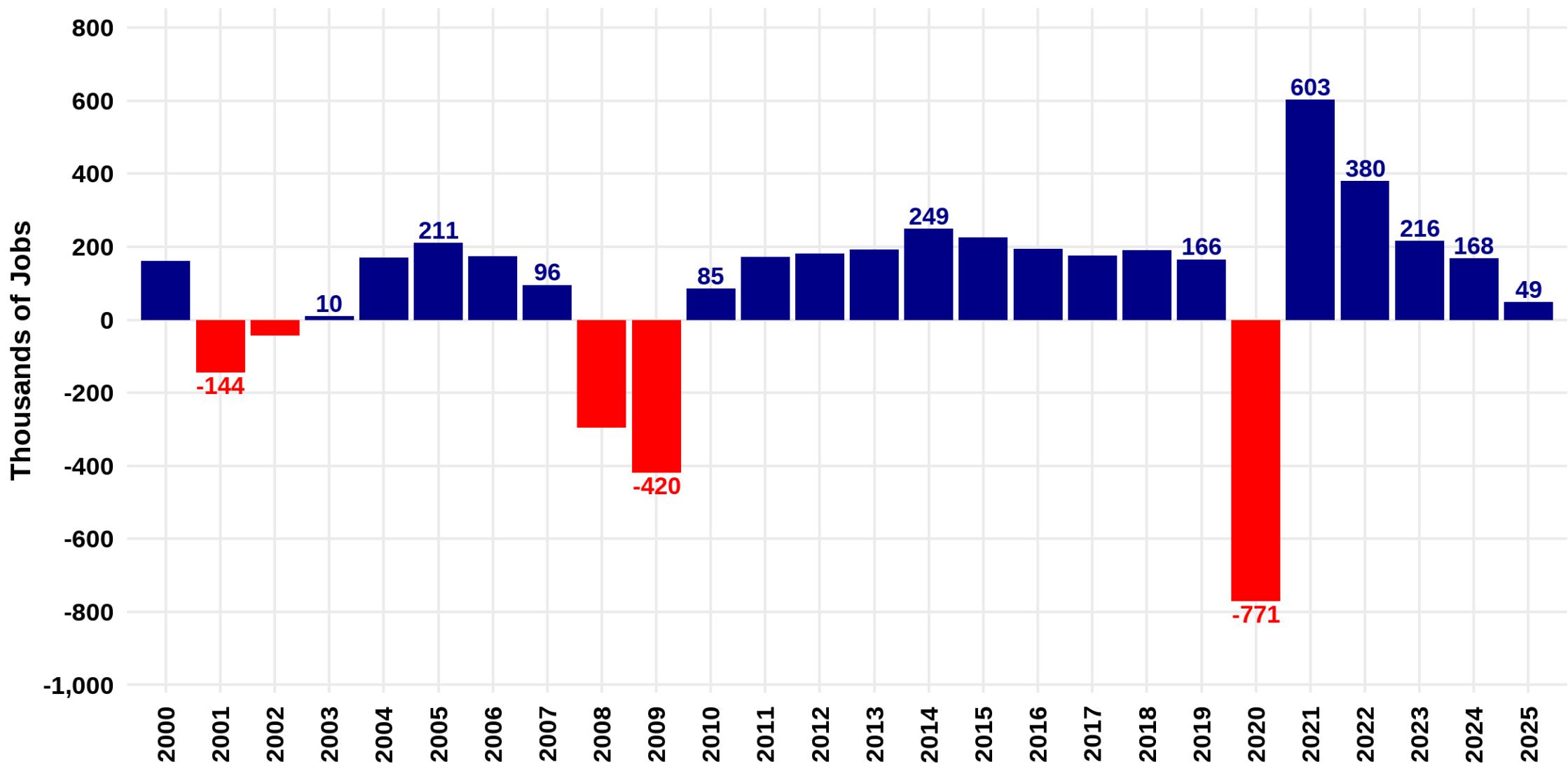
# Nonfarm Payrolls

## United States, January 2010 - December 2025



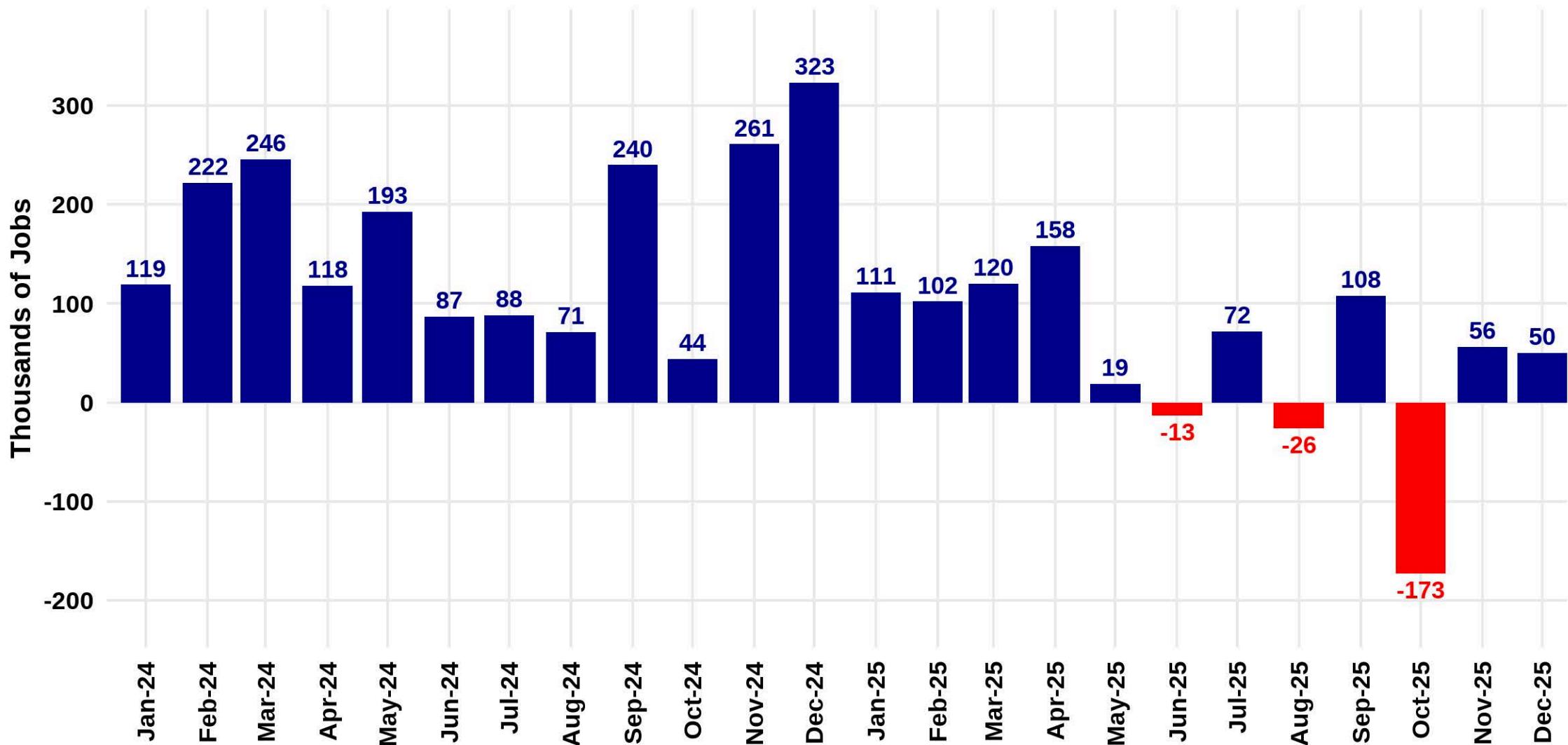
# Average Monthly Change in Nonfarm Payrolls

## United States, 2000 - 2025



# Change in Nonfarm Payrolls

## United States, January 2024 - December 2025

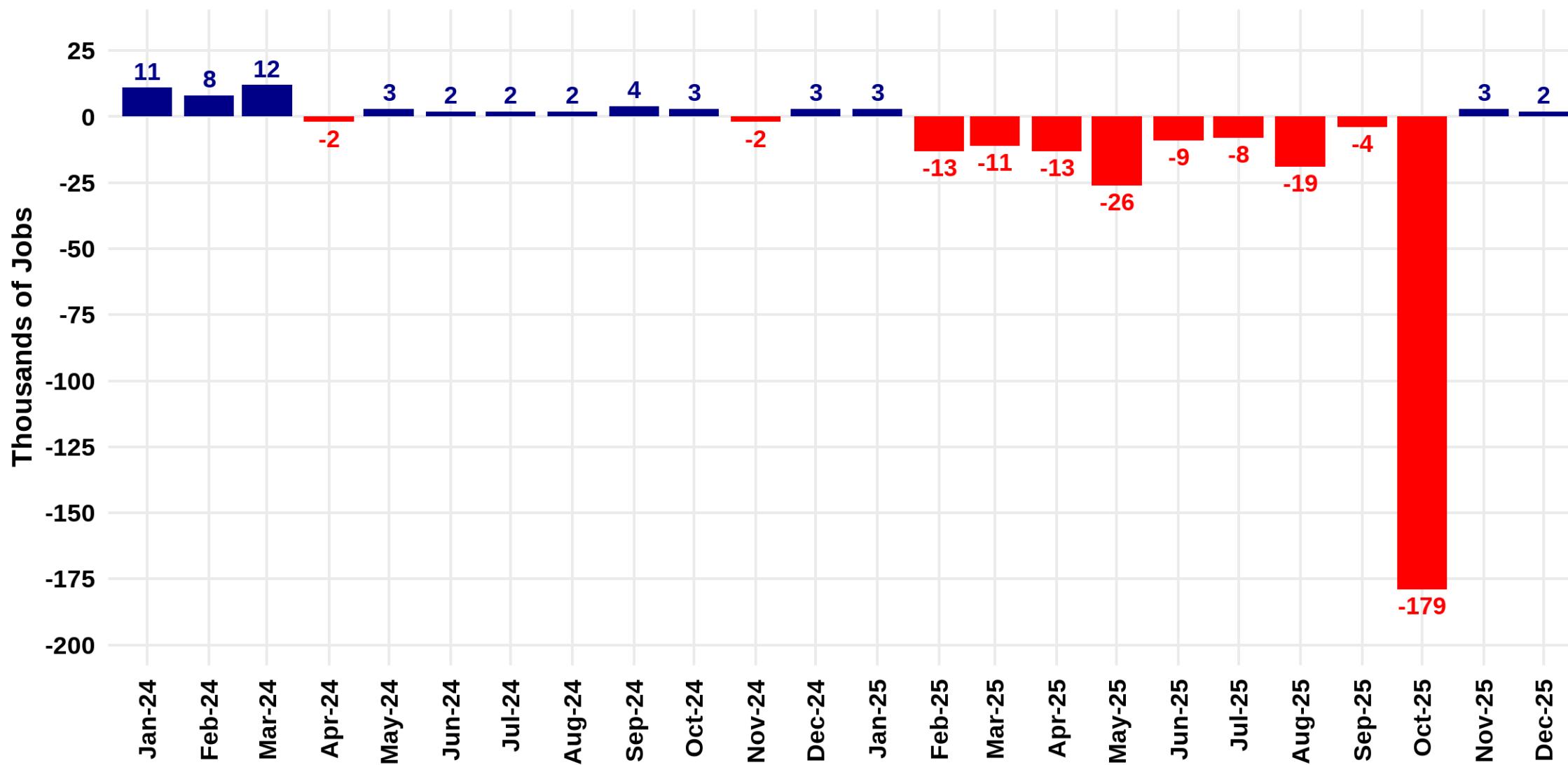


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, seasonally adjusted data.

Executive Order 14257 imposed a 10% baseline tariff on imports for nearly all countries effective April 5, 2025. It was paused, and modified by EO 14316 (and other announcements).

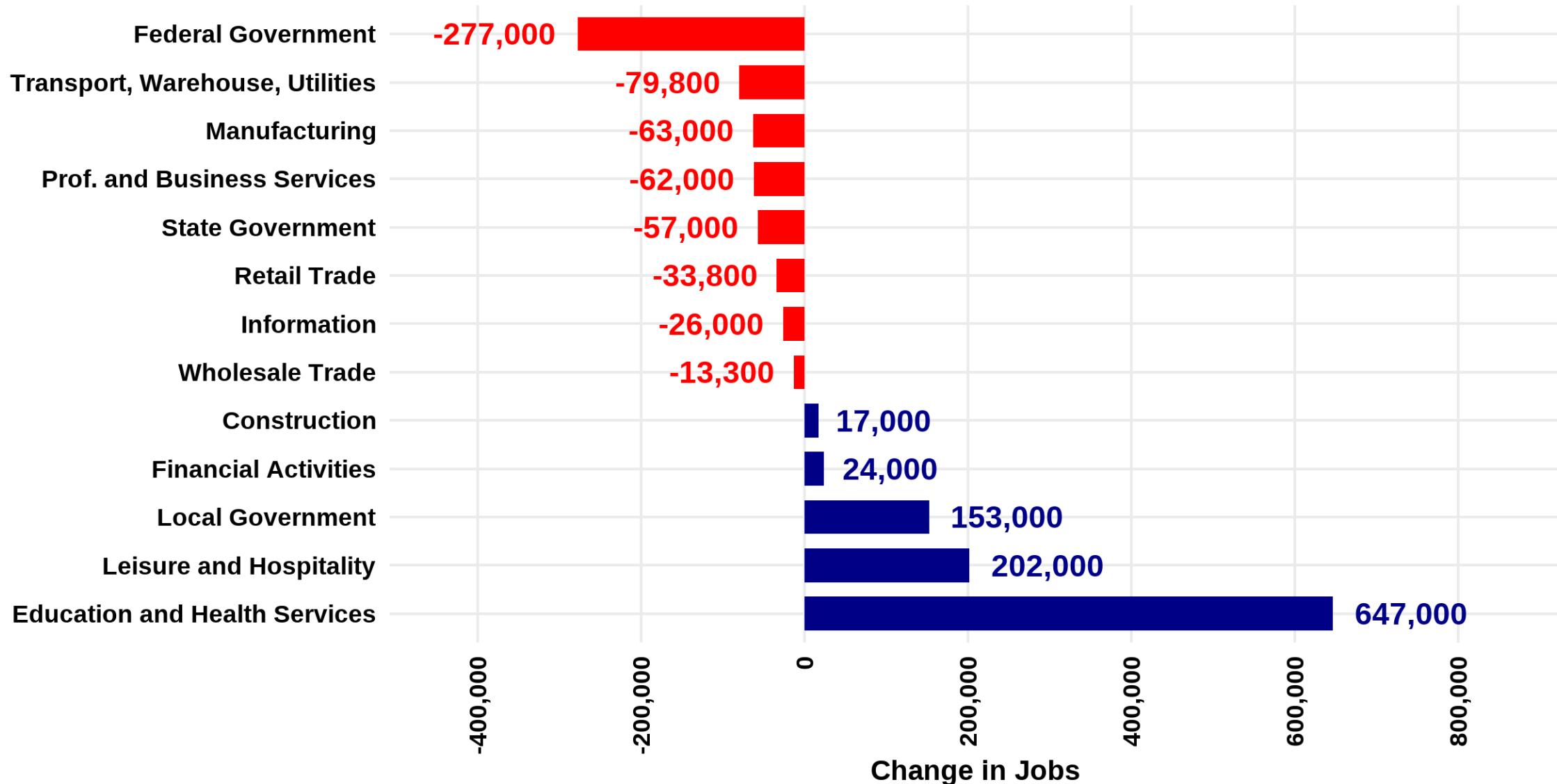
# Change in Federal Civilian Payrolls

## United States, January 2024 - December 2025

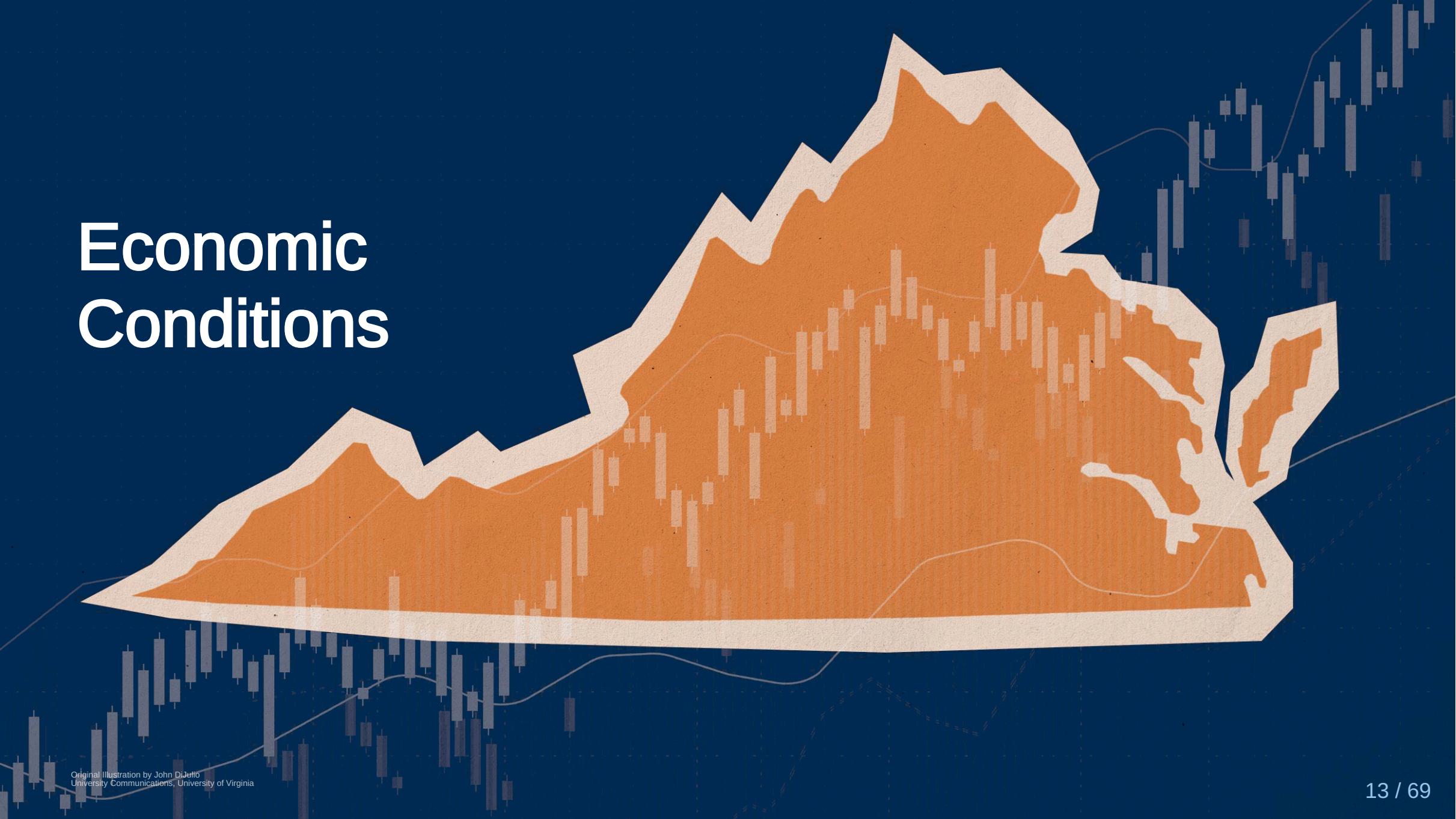


# Change in Nonfarm Payrolls

## United States, January 2025 - December 2025

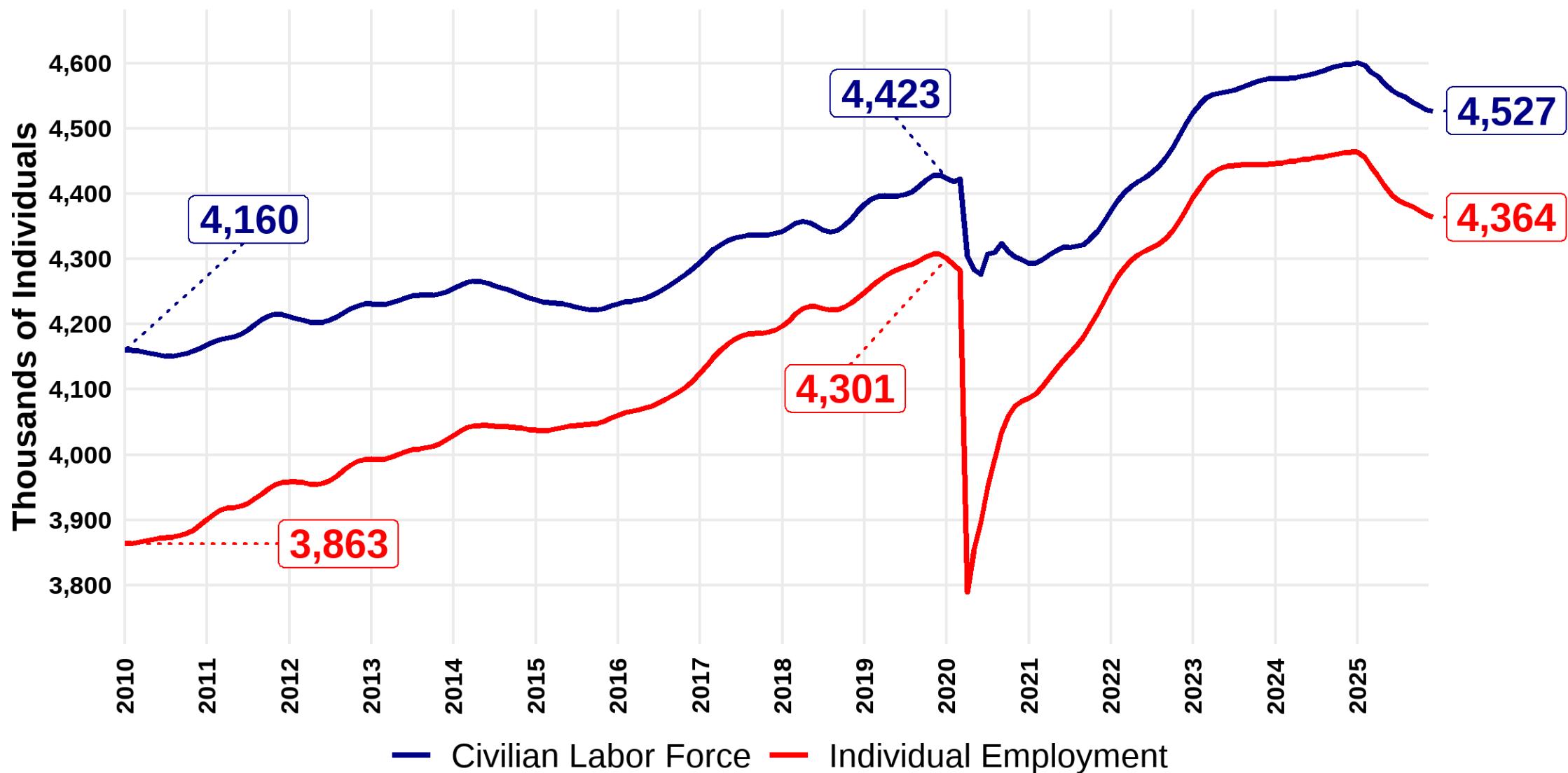


# Economic Conditions



# Civilian Labor Force and Individual Employment

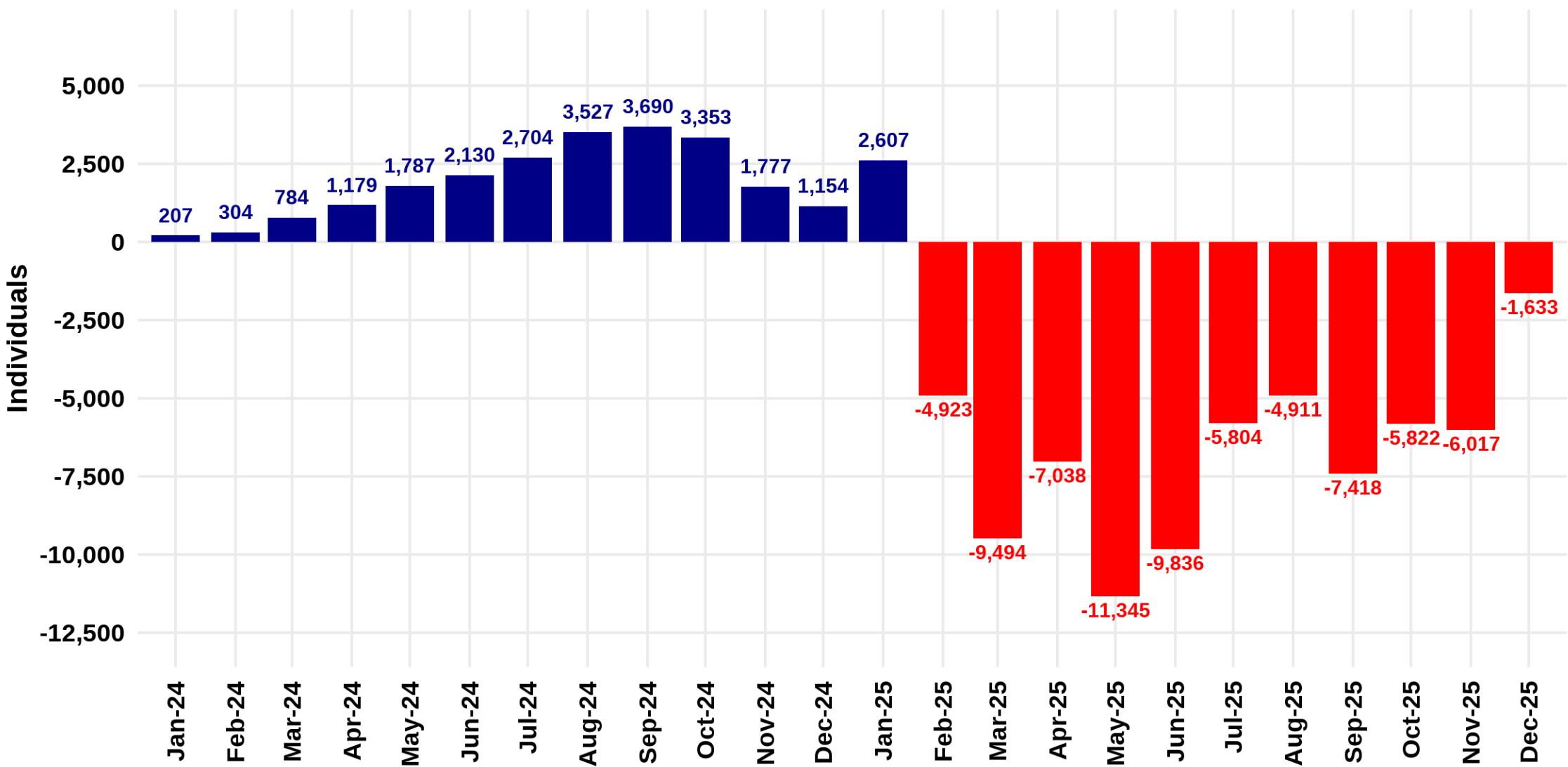
Virginia, January 2010 - December 2025



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, seasonally adjusted data. Missing data for October 2025 are linearly extrapolated.

# Change in Civilian Labor Force

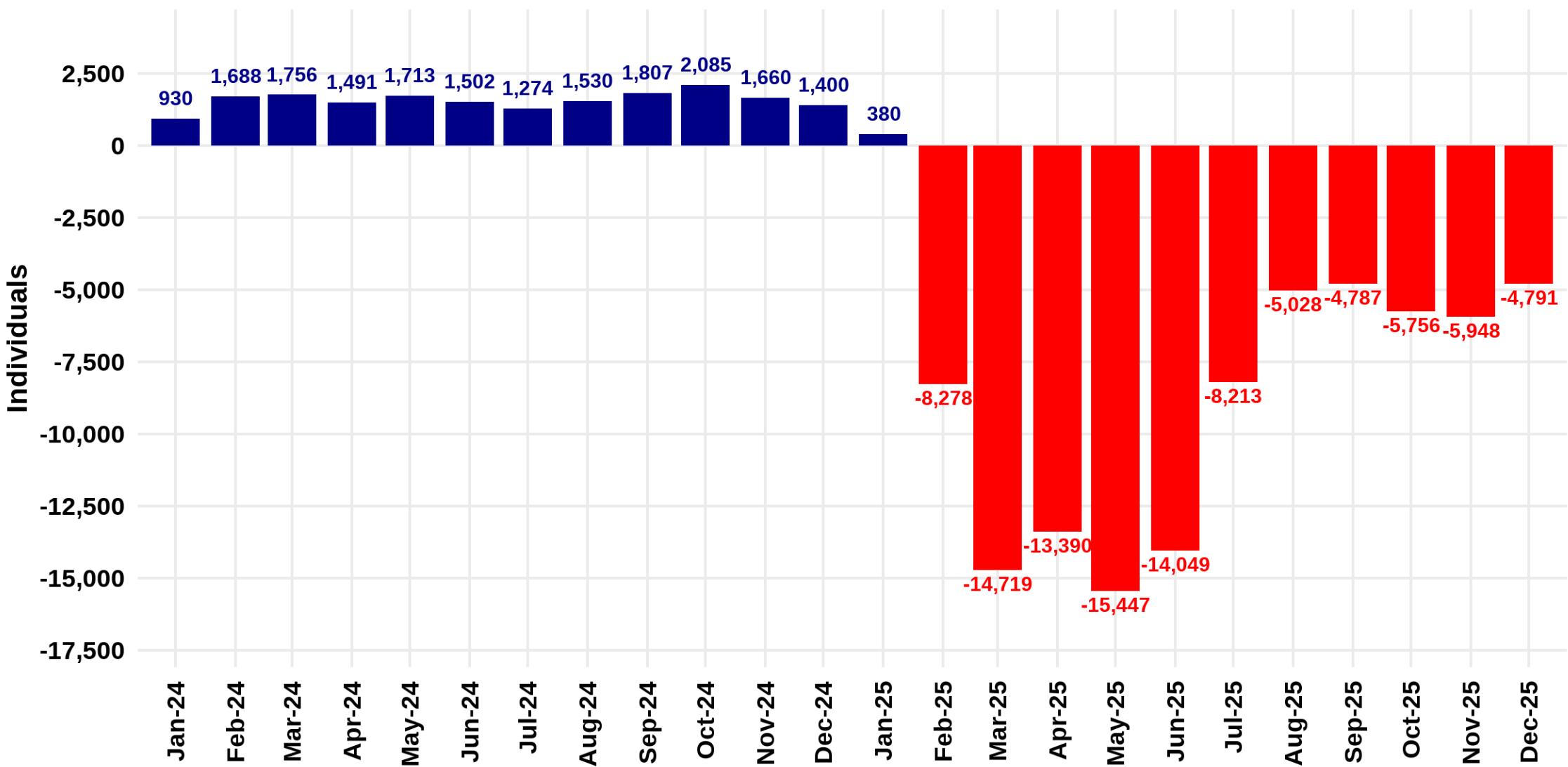
## Virginia, January 2024 - December 2025



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, seasonally adjusted data. Missing data for October 2025 are linearly extrapolated.

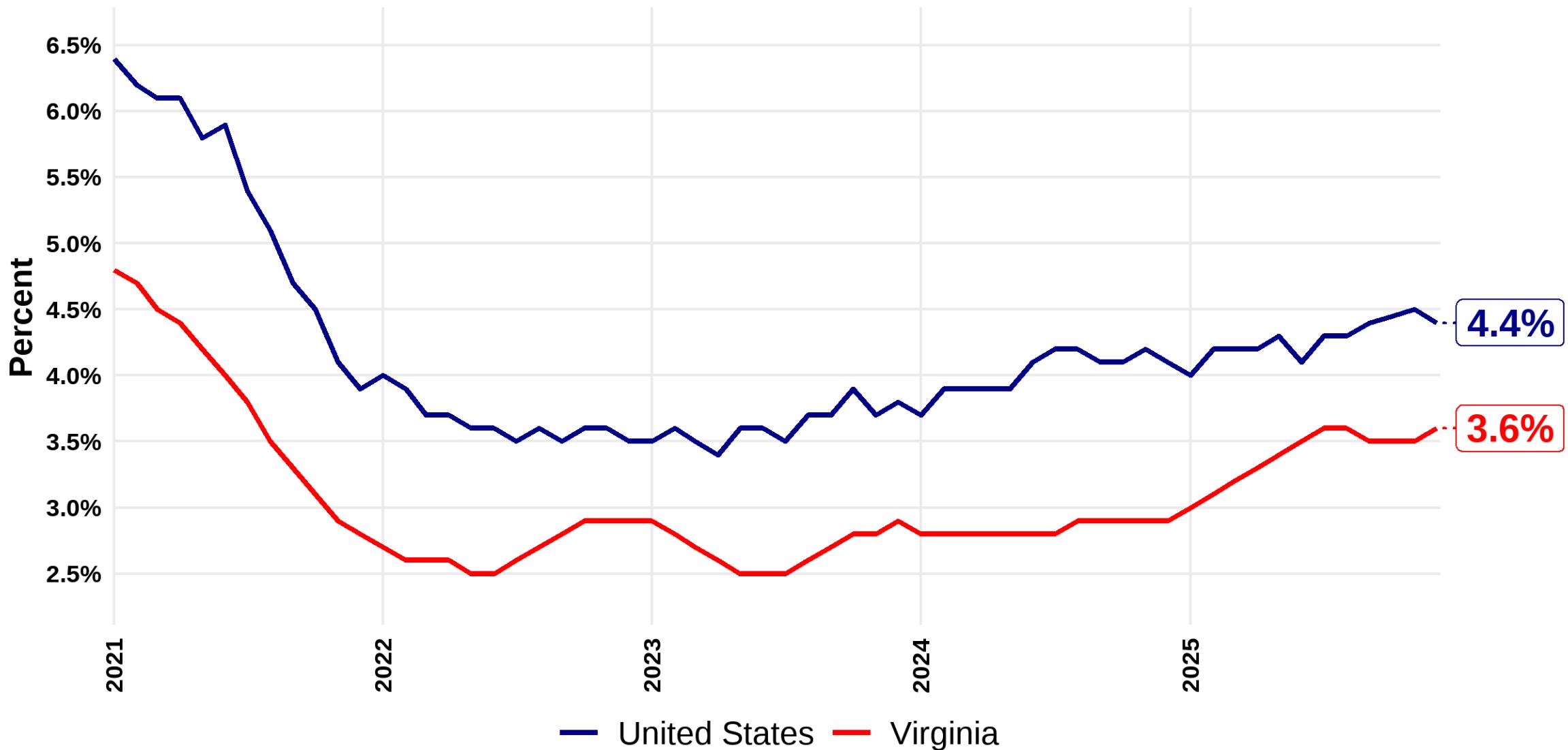
# Change in Individual Employment

## Virginia, January 2024 - December 2025



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, seasonally adjusted data. Missing data for October 2025 are linearly extrapolated.

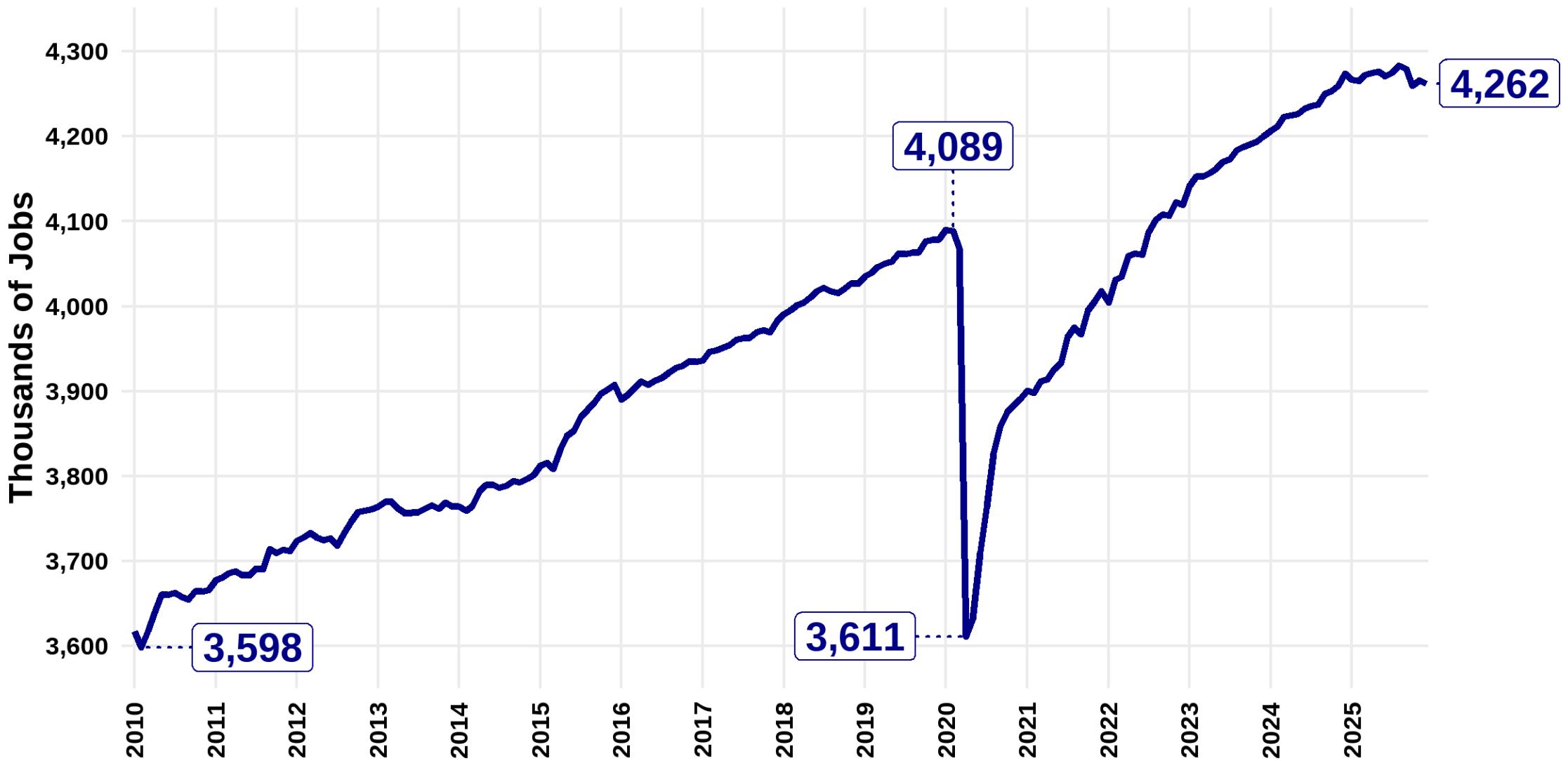
# Unemployment Rate (U3) United States and Virginia, January 2021 - December 2025



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, seasonally adjusted data. Missing data for October 2025 are linearly extrapolated. December data for Virginia are preliminary.

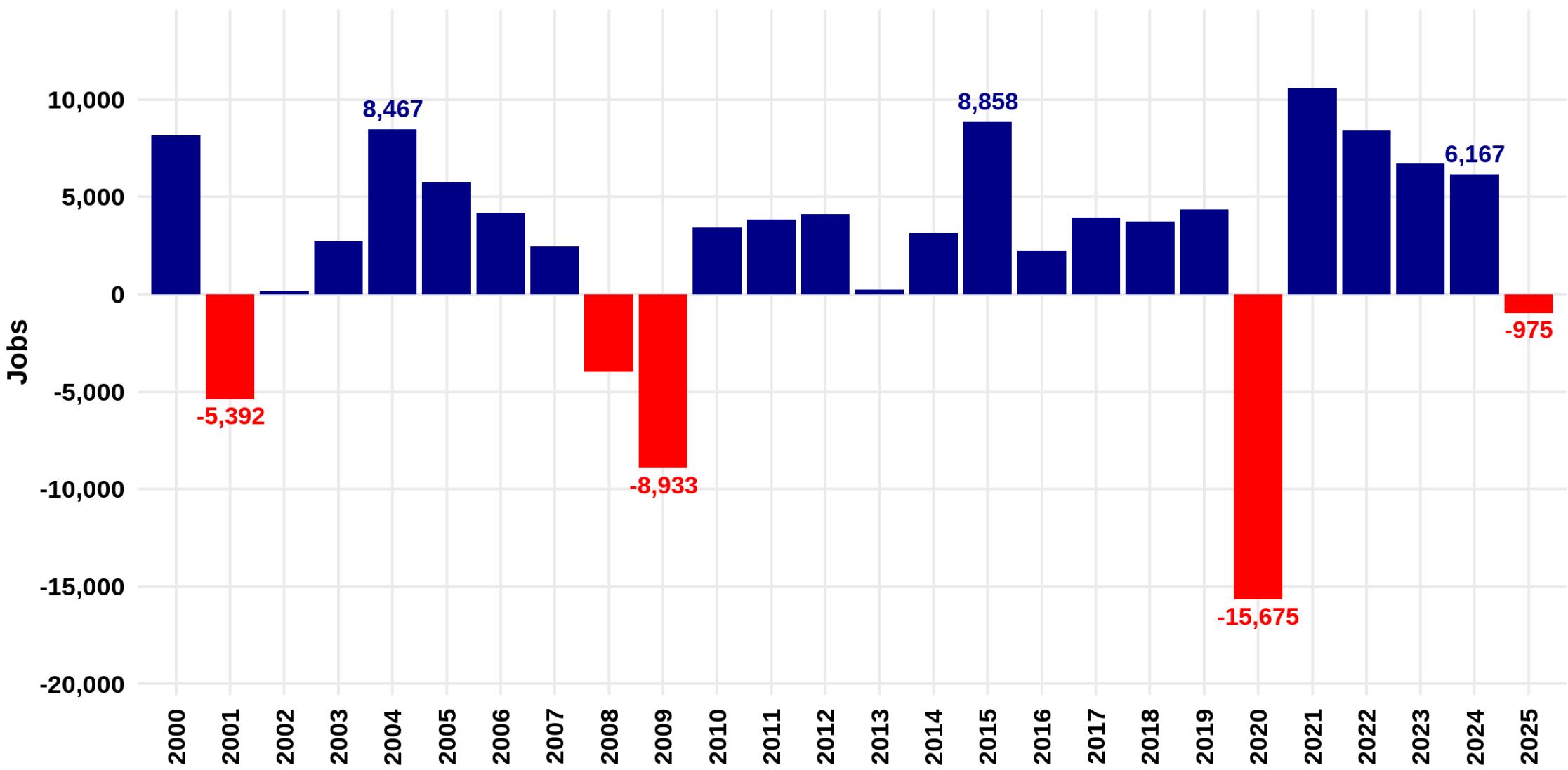
# Nonfarm Payrolls

Virginia, January 2010 - December 2025



# Average Monthly Change in Nonfarm Payrolls

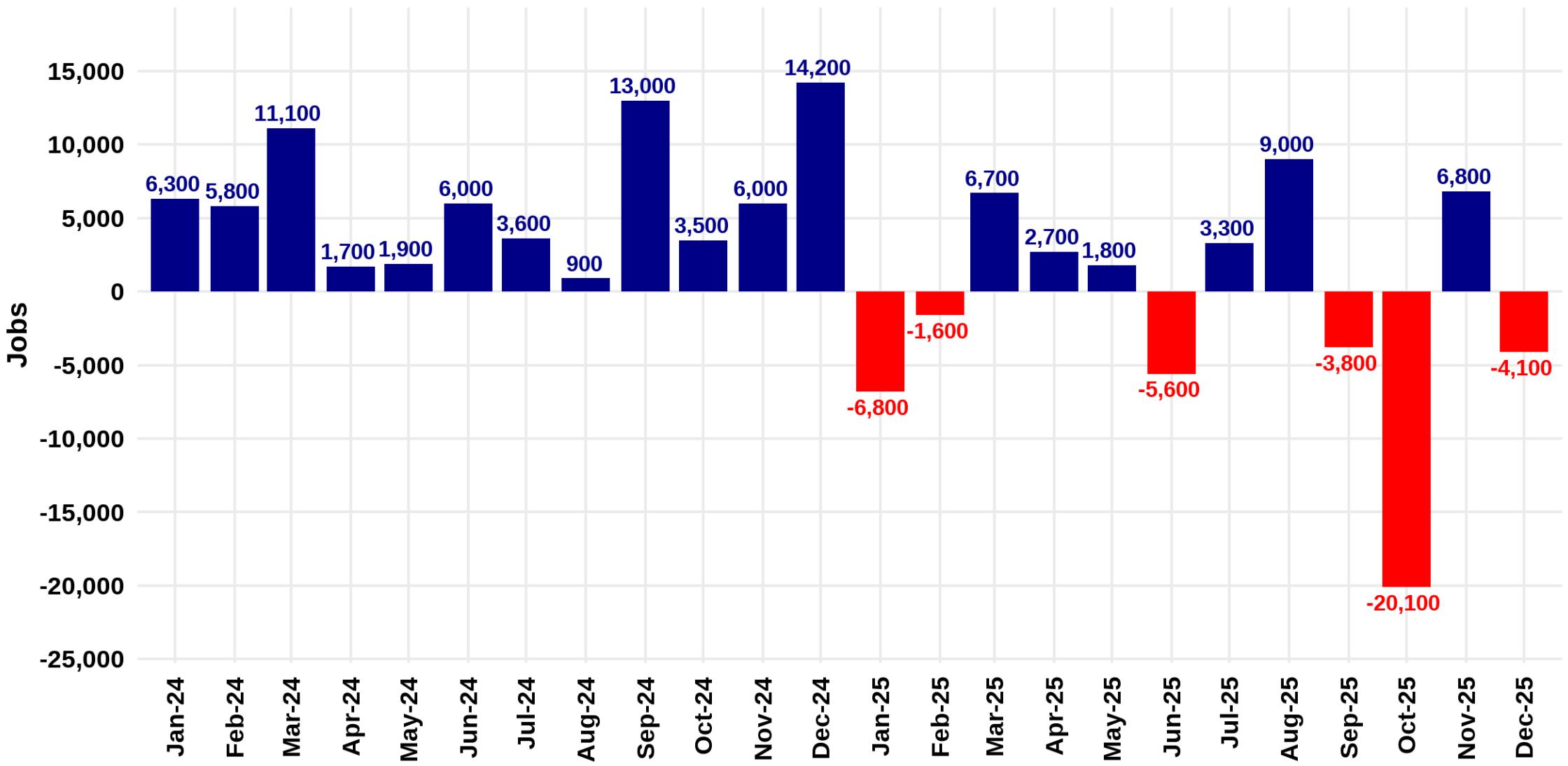
## Virginia, 2000 - 2025



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, seasonally adjusted data. Data for December are preliminary.

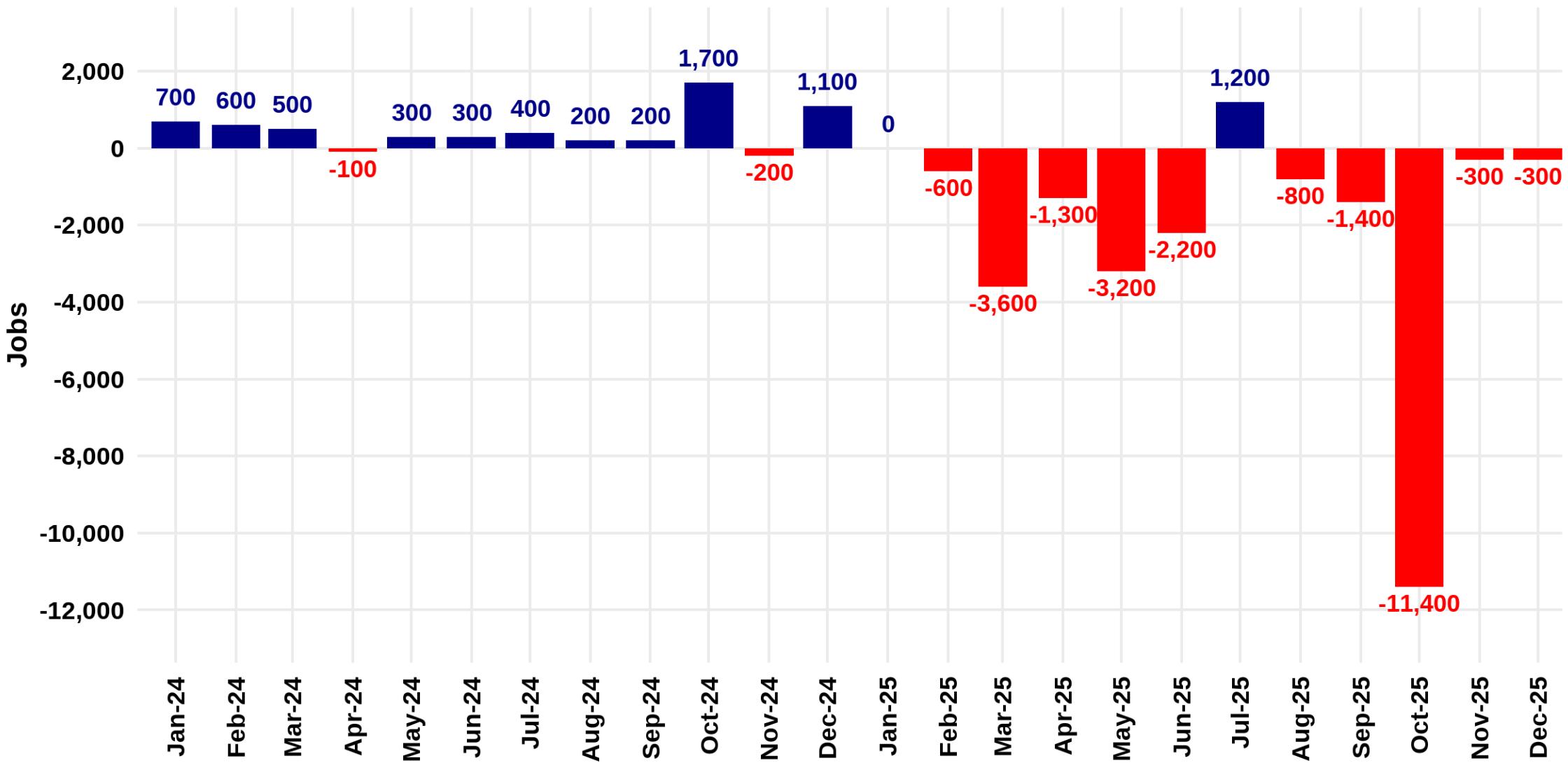
# Change in Nonfarm Payrolls

## Virginia, January 2024 - December 2025



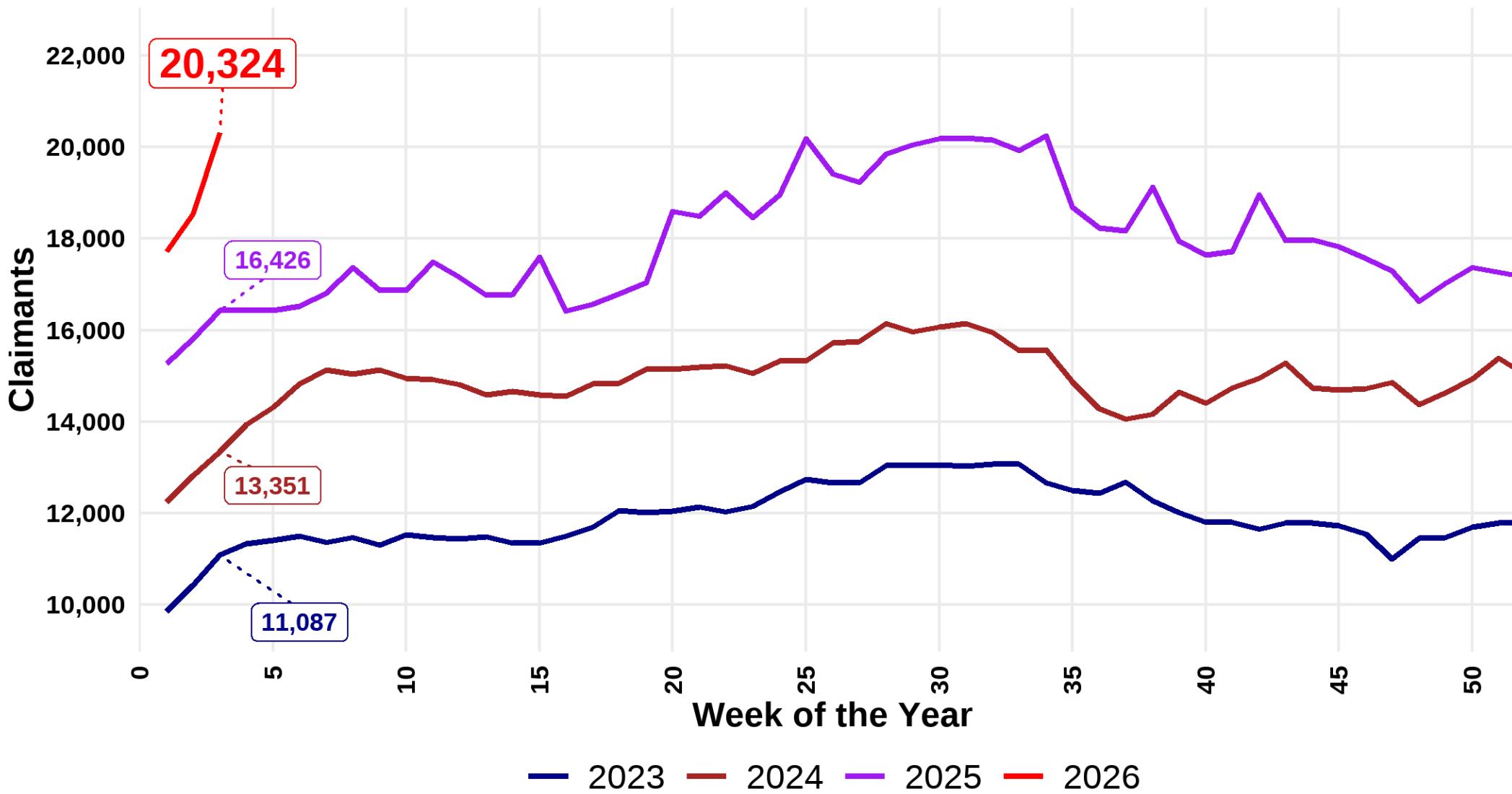
# Change in Federal Civilian Payrolls

## Virginia, January 2024 - December 2025

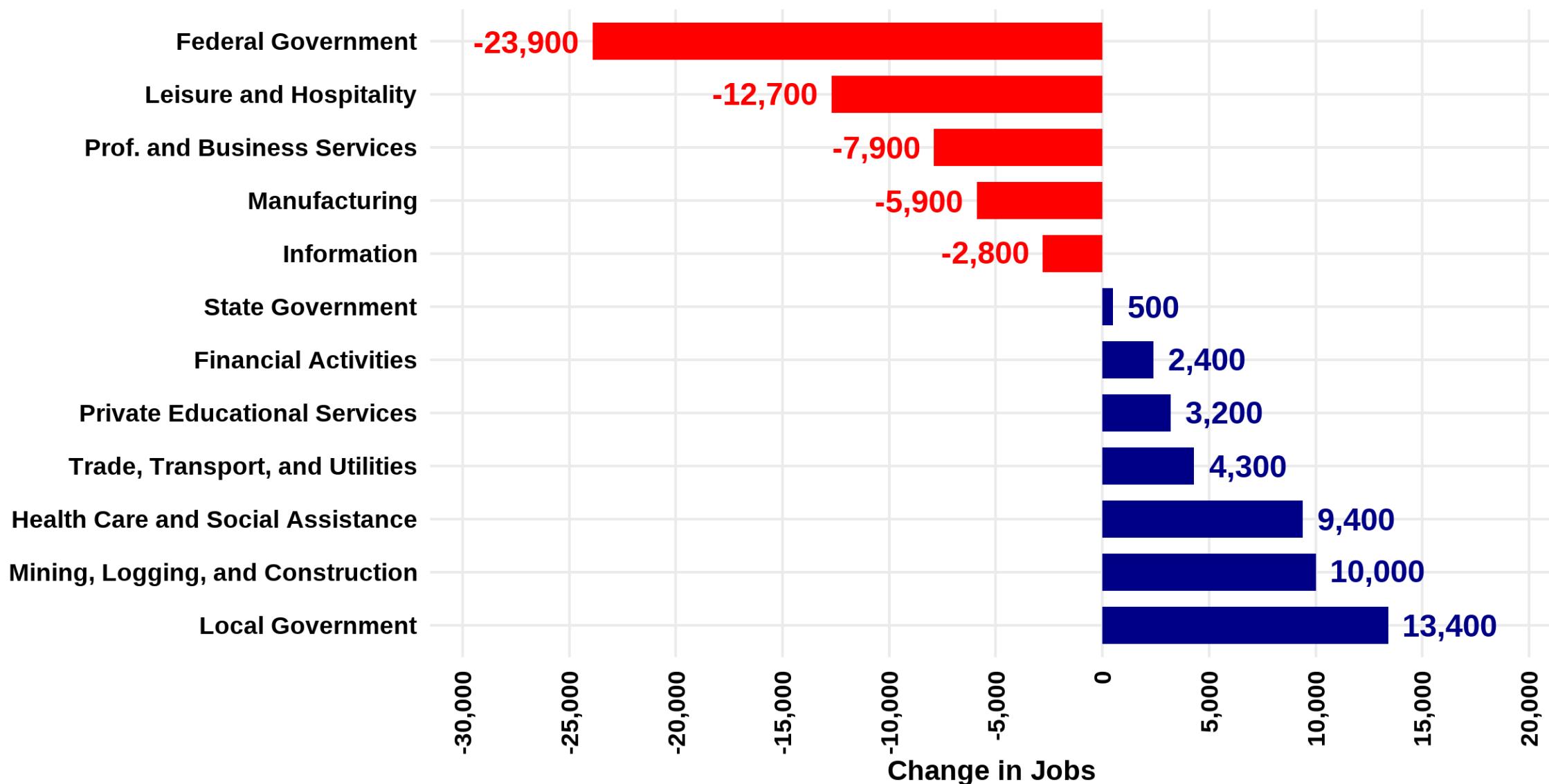


# Weekly Unemployment Continued Claims

## Virginia, January 7, 2023 - January 17, 2026



## Nonfarm Jobs Gained/Lost Selected Sectors in Virginia, January 2025 - December 2025



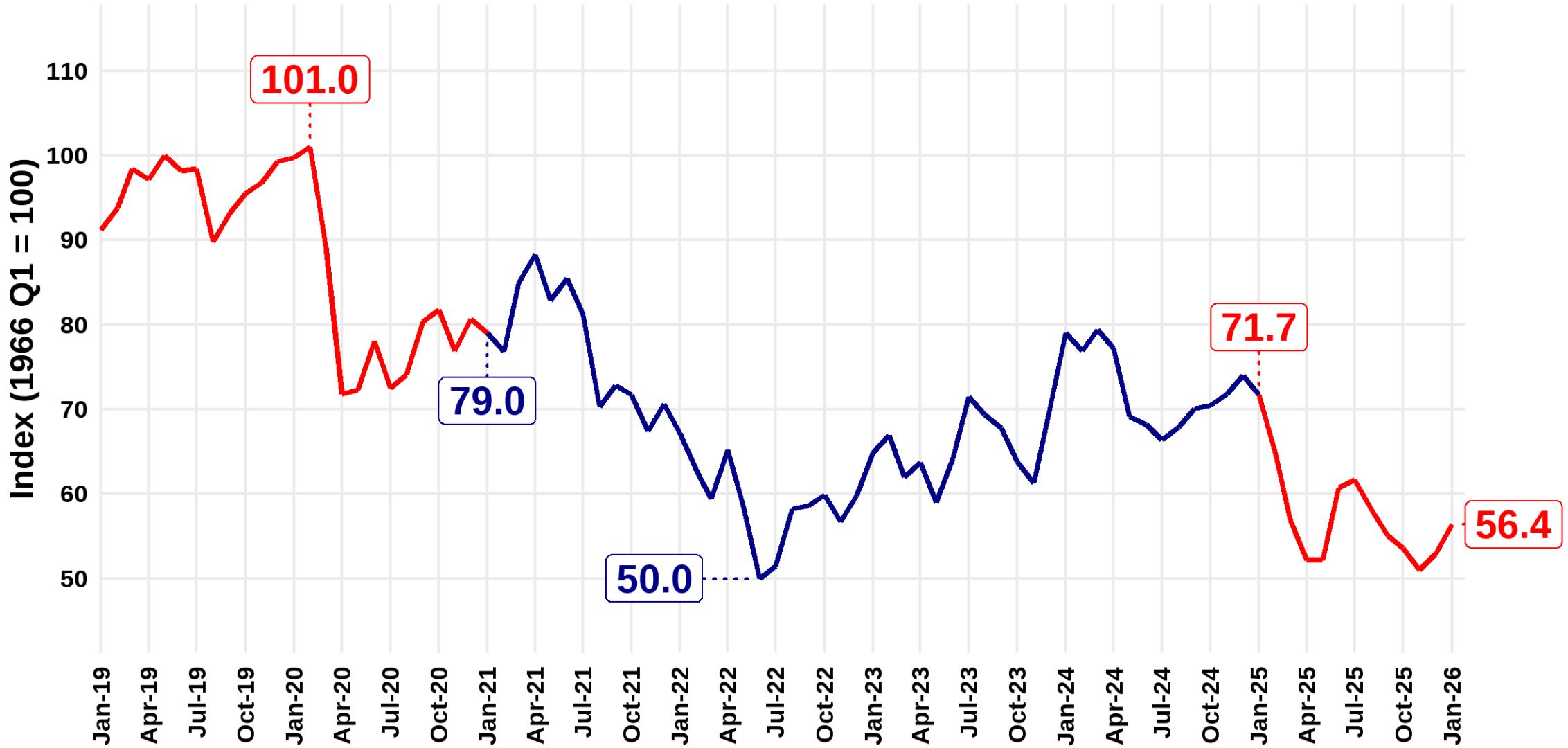
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, seasonally adjusted data. Data for December are preliminary.

A photograph of a person in a dark hoodie pushing an empty shopping cart in a supermarket aisle. The aisle is filled with shelves of various products, though they are slightly out of focus. The person's hand is visible on the handle of the cart.

# Sentiment and Inflation

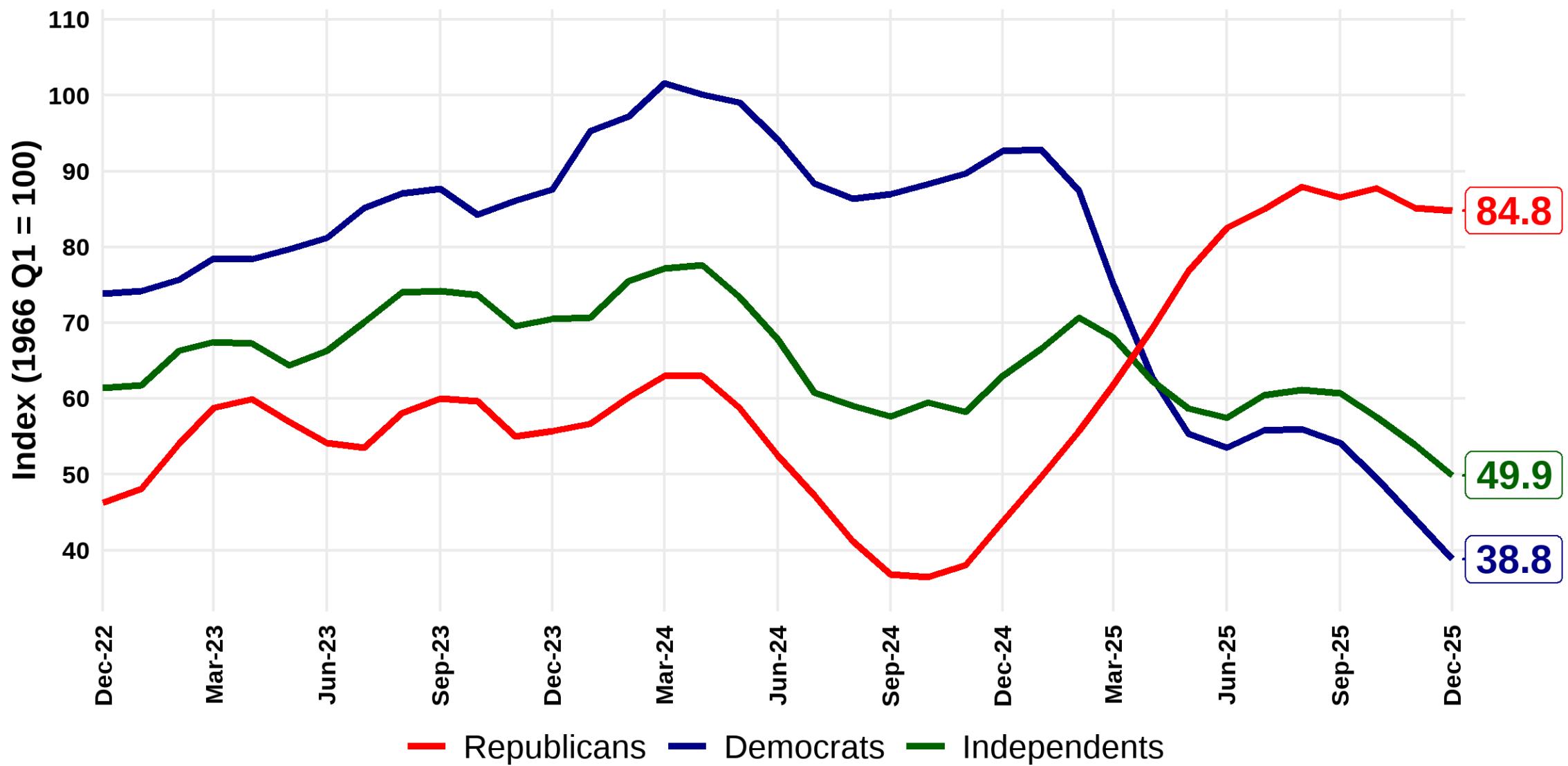
# University of Michigan: Consumer Sentiment

## United States, January 2019 - January 2026



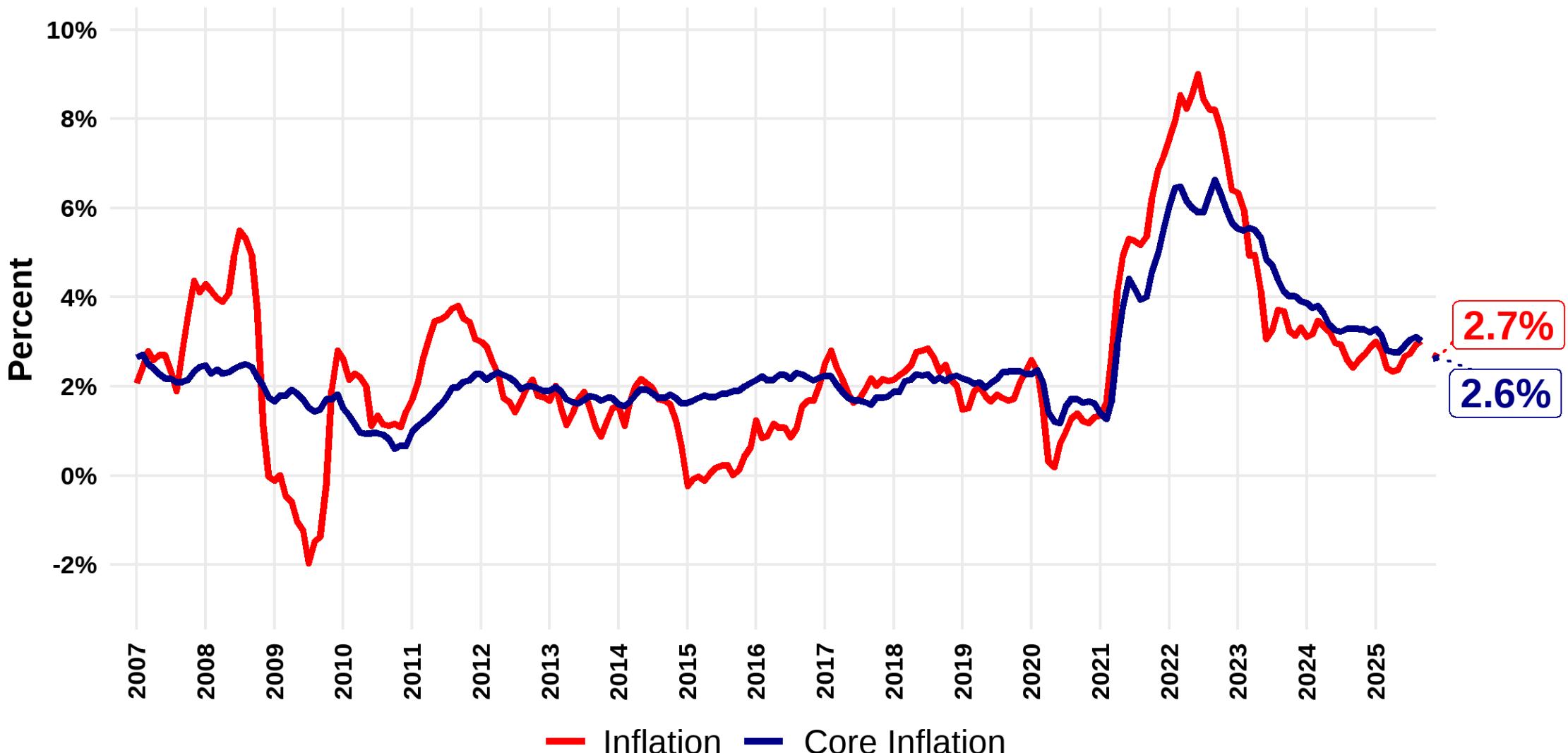
# Political Party Affiliation: Current Economic Conditions

## United States, December 2022 - December 2025



# Monthly Inflation

United States, January 2007 - December 2025

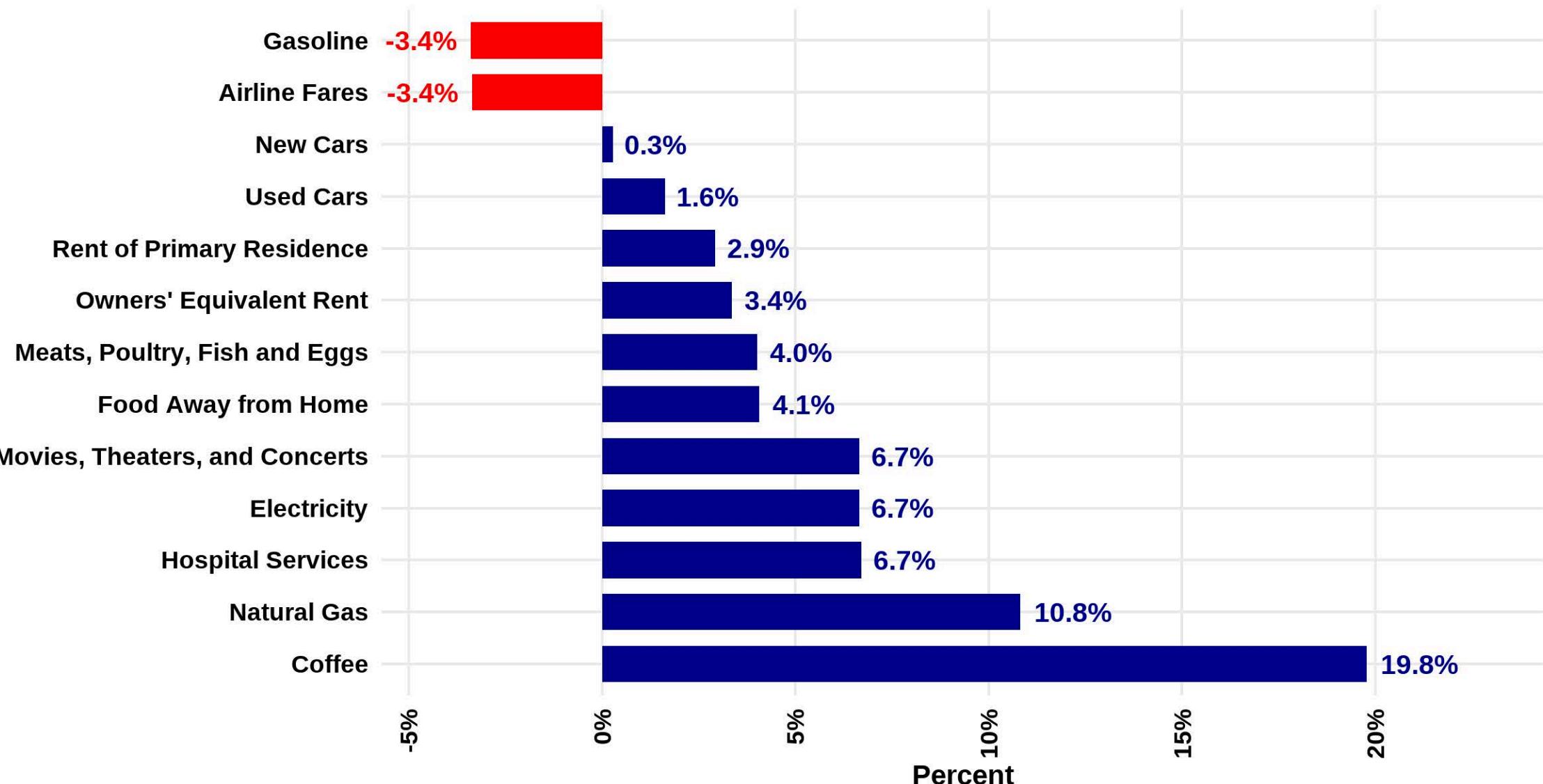


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, seasonally adjusted data. Monthly inflation is equal to the monthly year-over-year change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Core inflation does not include the food and energy sectors. Due to the lapse in appropriations, the BLS assumed that no price increases occurred for many categories in October 2025.

# Monthly Inflation for Selected Categories

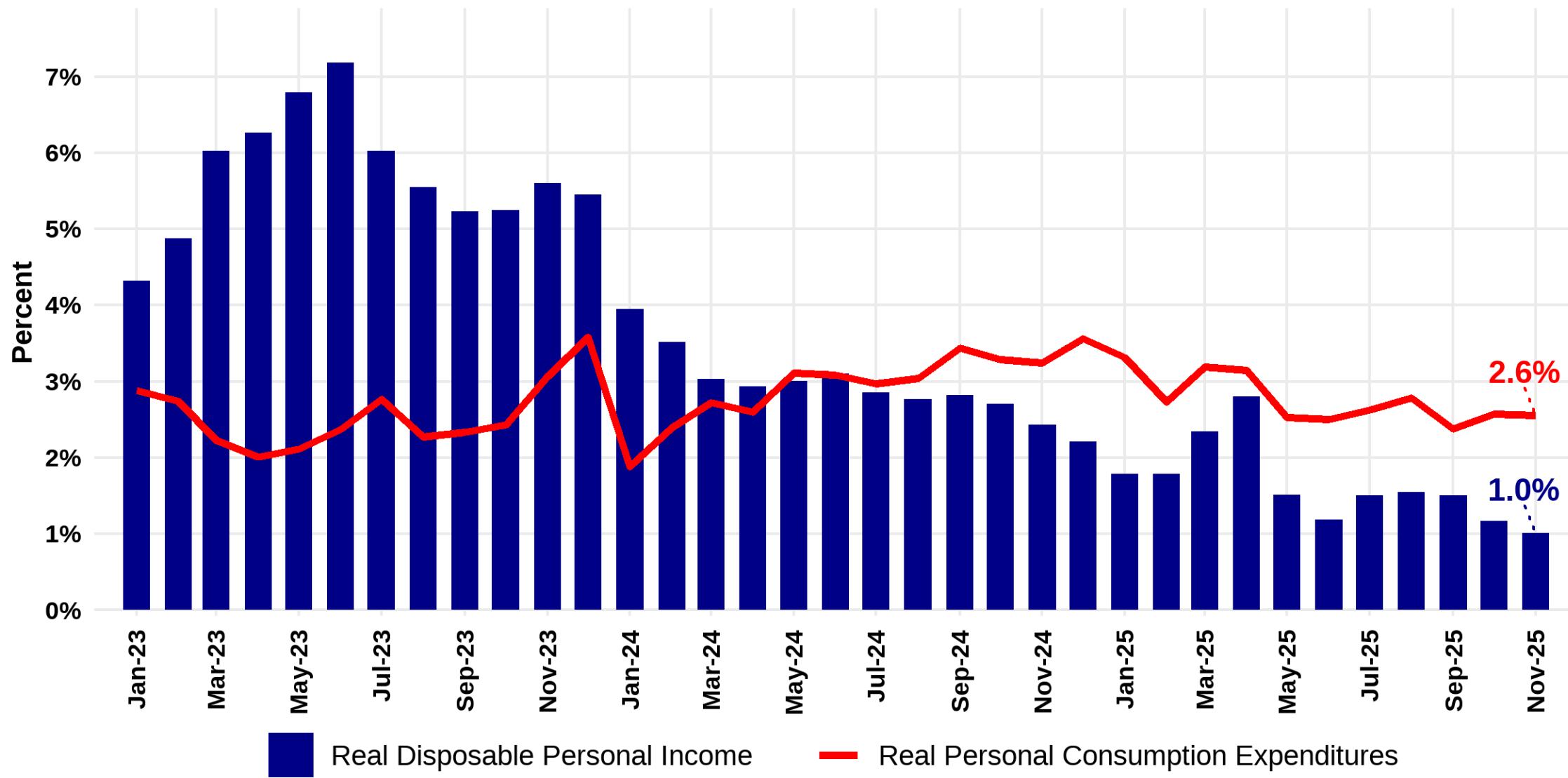
## United States, December 2024 - December 2025



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, seasonally adjusted data. Monthly inflation is the monthly year-over-year change in the Consumer Price Index.

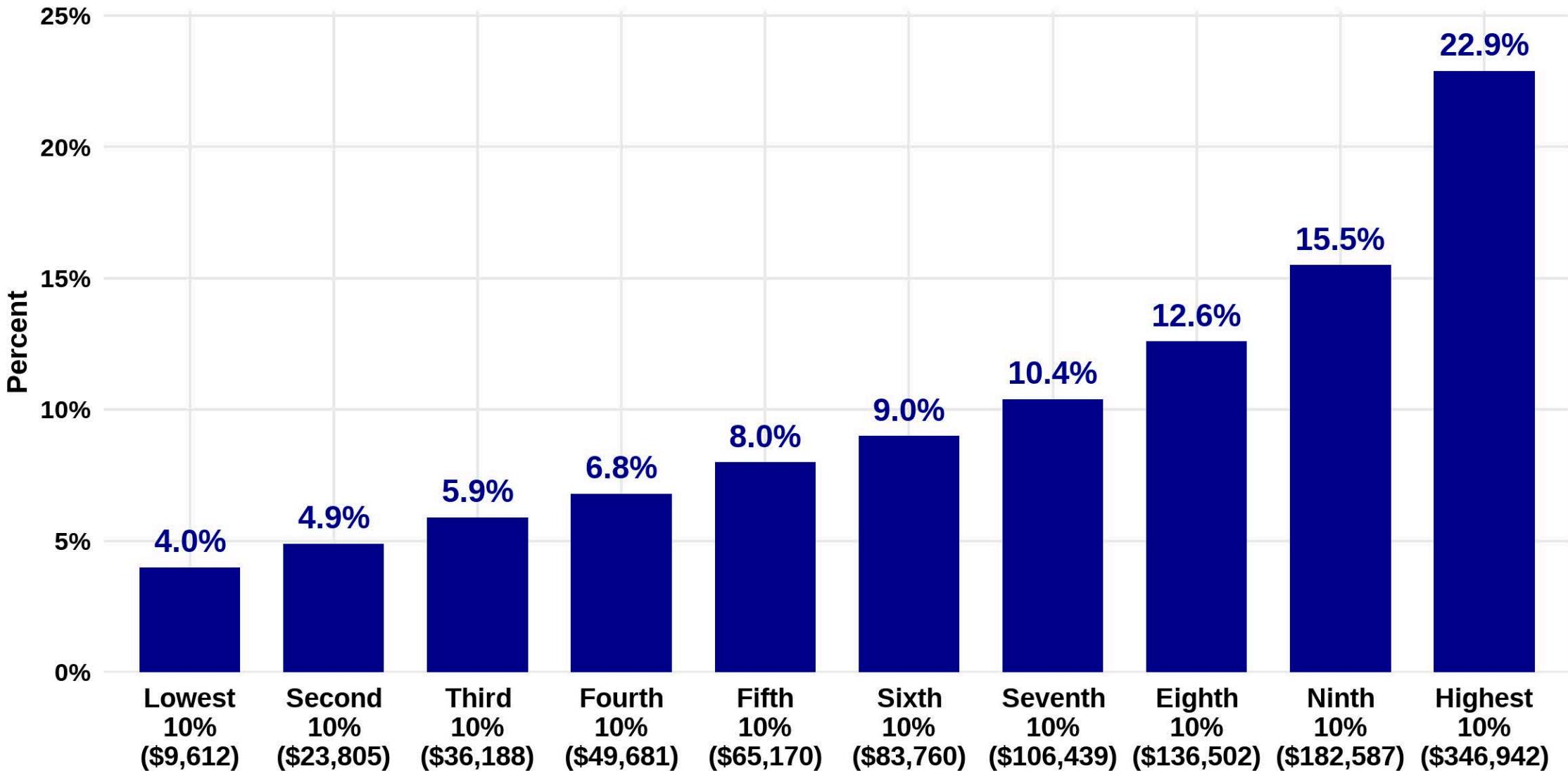
# Growth in Real Personal Consumption Expenditures and Real Disposable Personal Income

## United States, January 2022 - November 2025



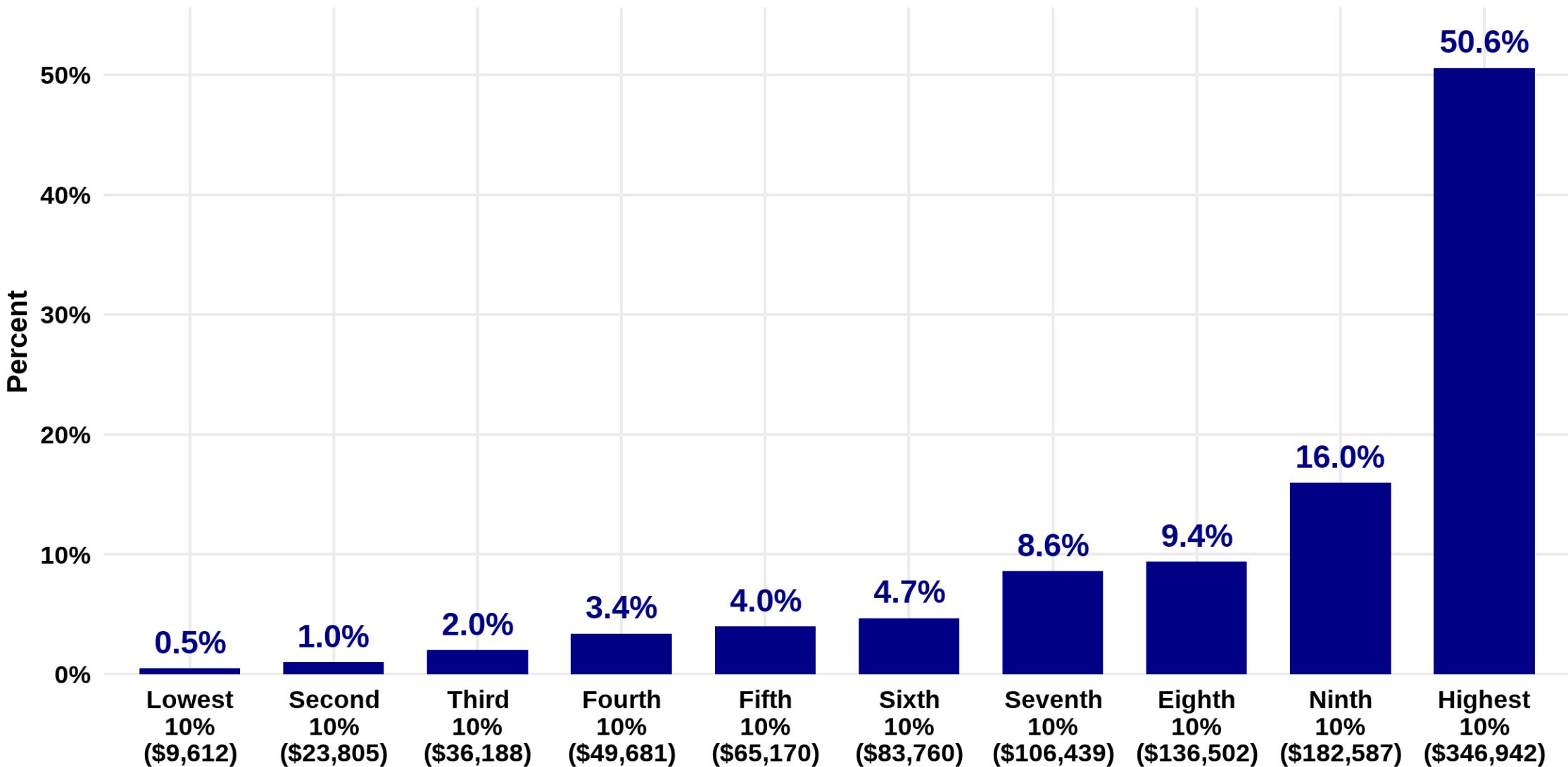
# Consumption Share by Income Decile

United States, 2024



# Share of Interest, Investment, and Rental Income by Income Decile

## United States, 2024



# Is Virginia in a Recession?

- Virginia's real GDP growth slowed in 2025 and will remain anemic in 2026 due to declines in federal civilian employment, higher tariffs, changes in immigration policy, and policy uncertainty.
- Higher U.S. tariffs lowered employment in manufacturing, increased tariffs on U.S. exports, and reduced real GDP growth. The Kiel Institute estimated that 96% of U.S. tariffs were passed through to American consumers and businesses.
- The federal government must float \$2 trillion in new Treasuries and refinance another \$8 to \$9 trillion in existing Treasuries in 2026. Without global debt markets, the federal government would face an unprecedented fiscal crisis.
- Higher-income households will drive growth in 2026, barring a significant correction in equity or housing markets. Policy uncertainty continues to create downside risks that are not fully captured by markets or forecasts.

## National and Virginia Forecast

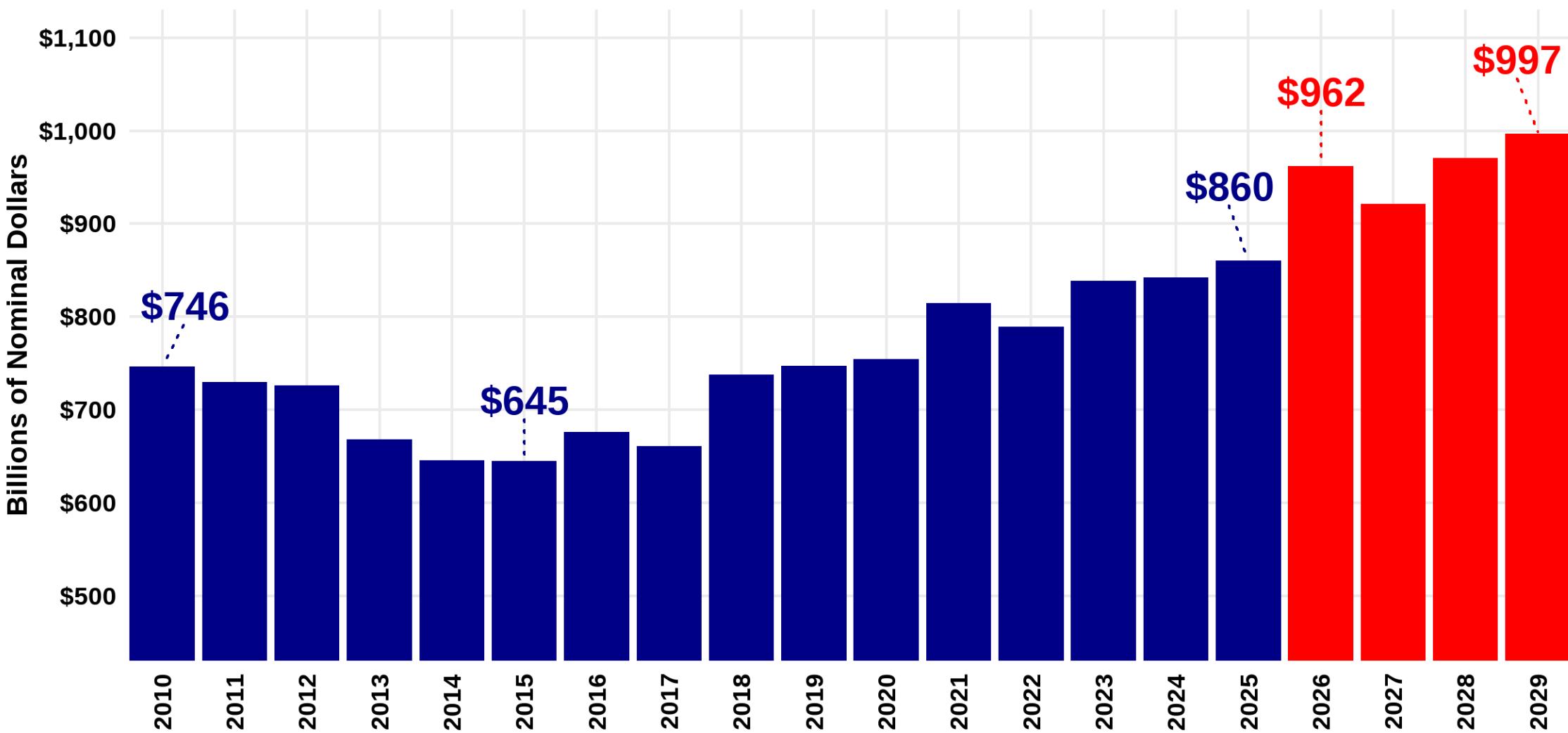
	2023	2024	2025	2026
U.S. Real GDP Growth	2.9%	2.8%	2.1%	2.0%
Civilian Job Growth	2.2%	1.3%	0.9%	1.0%
Unemployment Rate	3.6%	4.0%	4.0%	4.2%
Inflation Rate	3.2%	2.7%	2.9%	2.8%
Core Inflation Rate	4.0%	3.3%	3.0%	2.7%
Effective Federal Funds Rate	5.0%	5.1%	4.2%	4.0%
10-year Treasury Bill	4.0%	4.2%	4.3%	4.0%
30-year Conventional Mortgage	6.8%	6.7%	6.6%	6.0%
<b>Federal Deficit (Fiscal Year, Billions)</b>	<b>-\$1,695</b>	<b>-\$1,817</b>	<b>-\$1,775</b>	<b>-\$1,800</b>
Virginia Real GDP Growth	3.4%	2.4%	1.2%	1.0%
Virginia Civilian Job Growth	2.4%	1.5%	0.5%	0.5%

# Economic Conditions in Hampton Roads



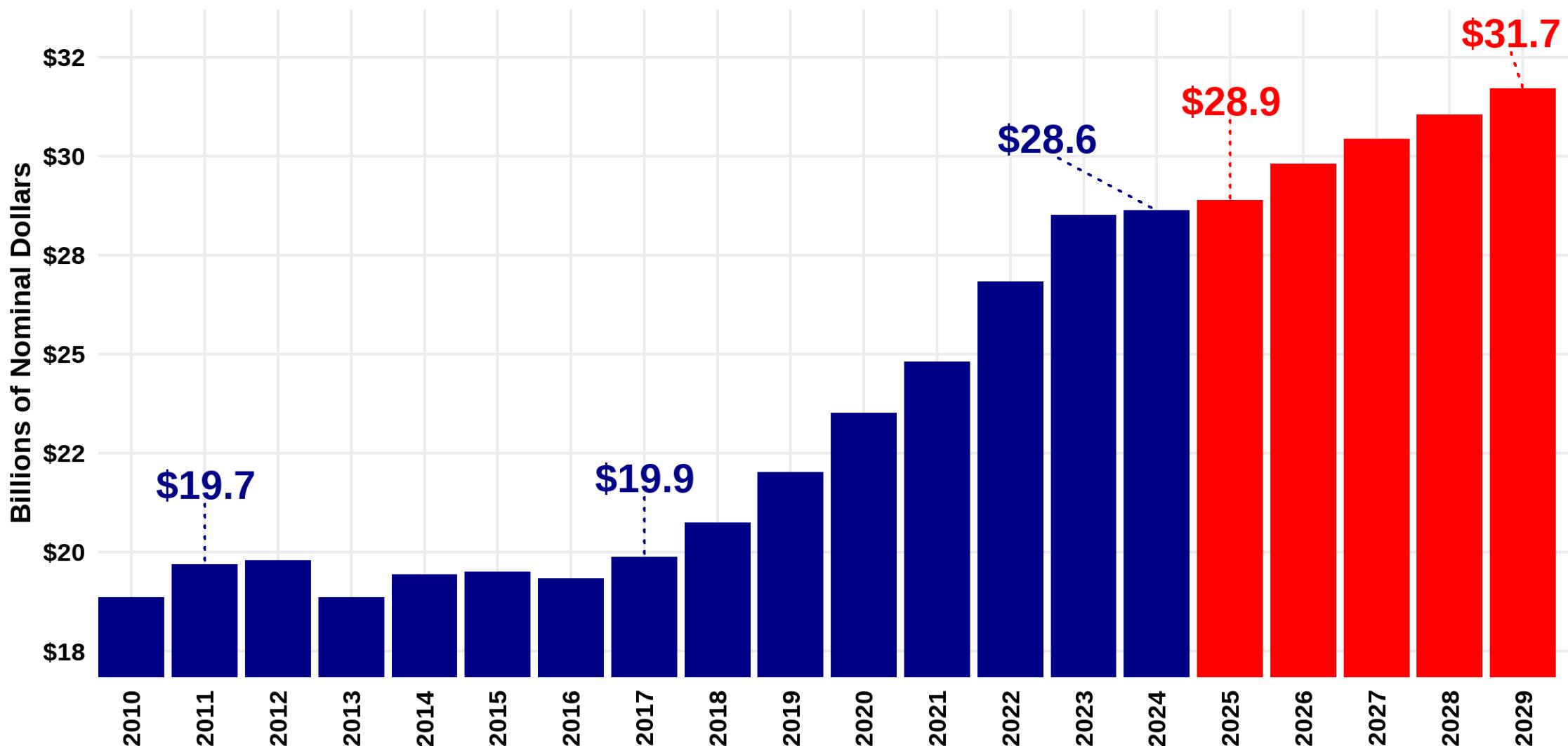
# Department of Defense (DoD) Total Budget

## United States, Fiscal Year 2010 - 2029\*



Sources: Office of Management and Budget, Congressional Budget Office, and Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy. Total budget includes base-budget funding and supplemental funding. Current budget dollars. \*Data for 2025 are estimates while data for 2026 to 2029 are projections based on national DoD spending estimates. Projections do not contain possible supplemental appropriations.

# Estimated Department of Defense Direct Spending Hampton Roads, Fiscal Year 2010 - 2029\*



Sources: Department of Defense and Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy. Includes federal civilian and military personnel and procurement.  
\*FY 2010 - 2023 are actual expenditures, 2024 is our estimate, and 2025 - 2029 are our forecasts.

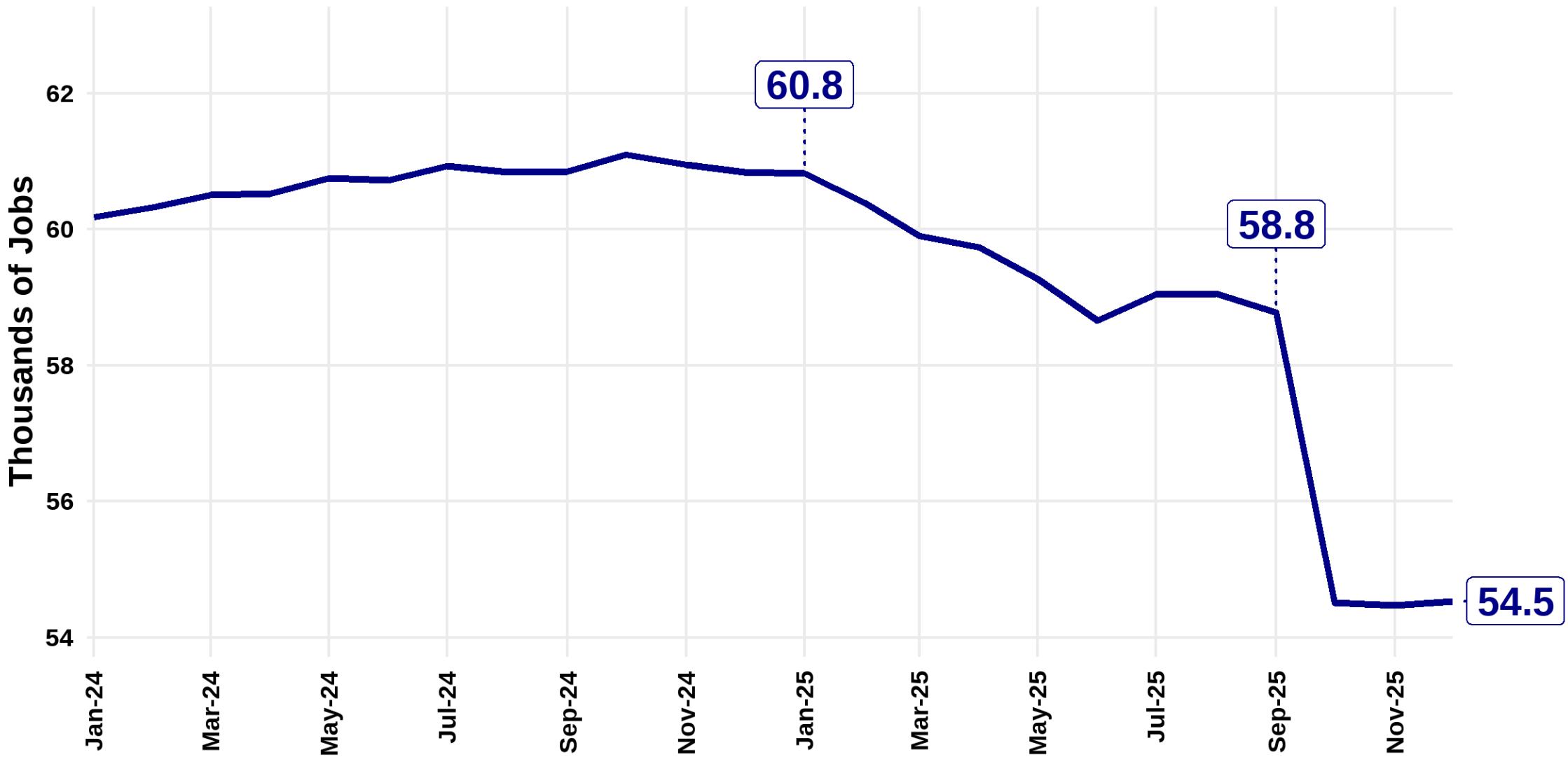
**Total Nonfarm and Federal Civilian Jobs  
United States, Virginia, and Hampton Roads in 2024**

<u>Area</u>	<u>Total Nonfarm Jobs</u>	<u>Federal Civilian Jobs</u>	<u>Percentage of Federal Civilian Jobs</u>
United States	157,959,000	3,000,000	1.9%
Virginia	4,236,300	193,900	4.6%
Hampton Roads	822,400	60,700	7.4%

<sup>a</sup> Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Annual averages of non-seasonally adjusted data.

# Federal Civilian Payrolls

## Hampton Roads, January 2024 - December 2025

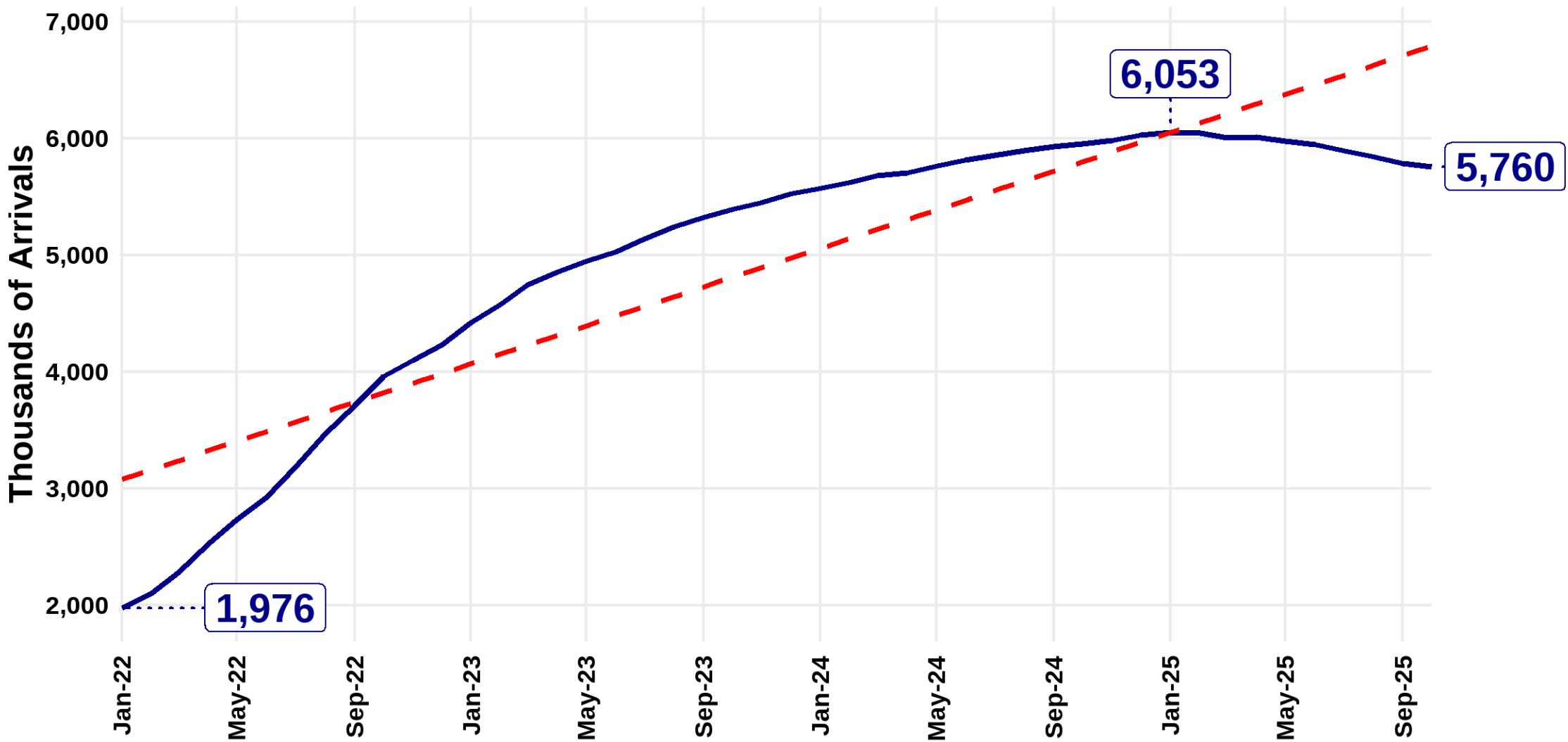


A photograph of several large commercial airplanes, including Boeing 777s and 747s, parked on a tarmac at an airport. The planes are white with various airline livery. In the background, there are mountains under a cloudy sky. The foreground is a paved tarmac with yellow and white markings.

# International Migration

# Numbers of Total International Arrivals, 12-Month Moving Average

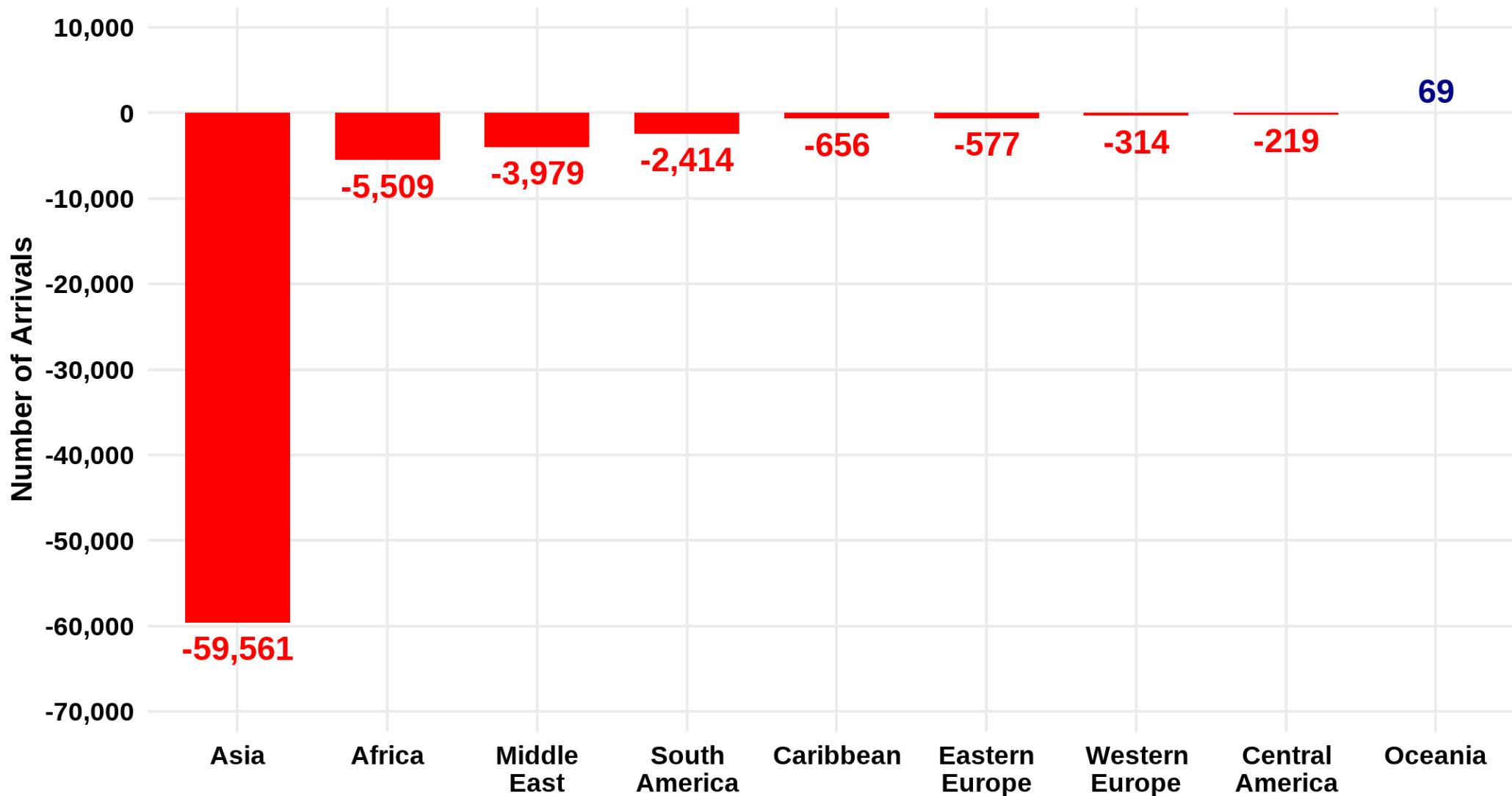
## United States, January 2022 - October 2025



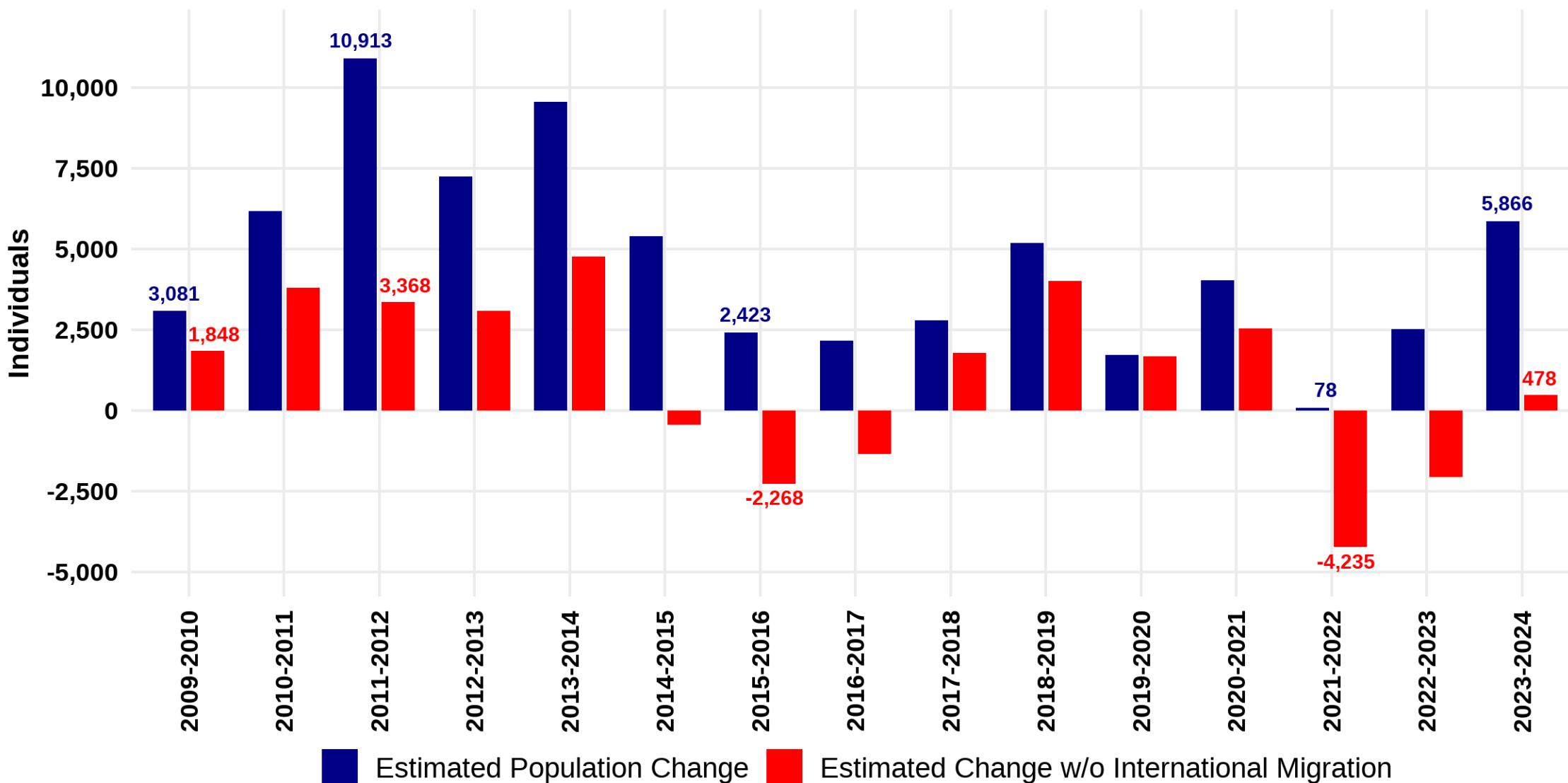
Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, NTTO, International Trade Administration, and Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy.  
The dashed line shows the trend for international arrivals over time assuming the data are linear.

# Change in International Student Arrivals

## United States, August 2025 Compared to August 2024



# Annual Change in Resident Population Hampton Roads, 2010 - 2024



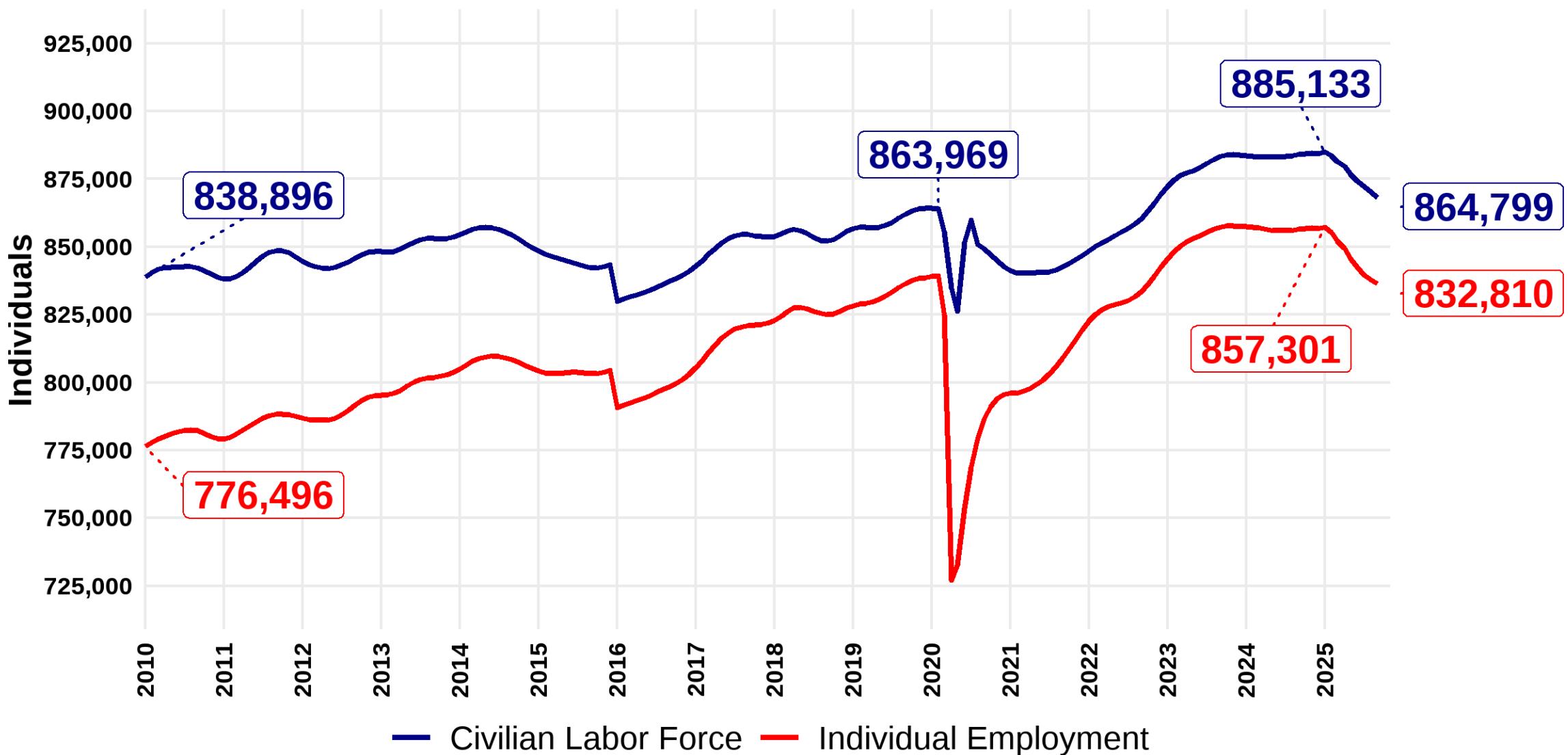
Source: United States Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates. Components of population change from July 1st to June 30th of the subsequent year.

# Jobs and Employment



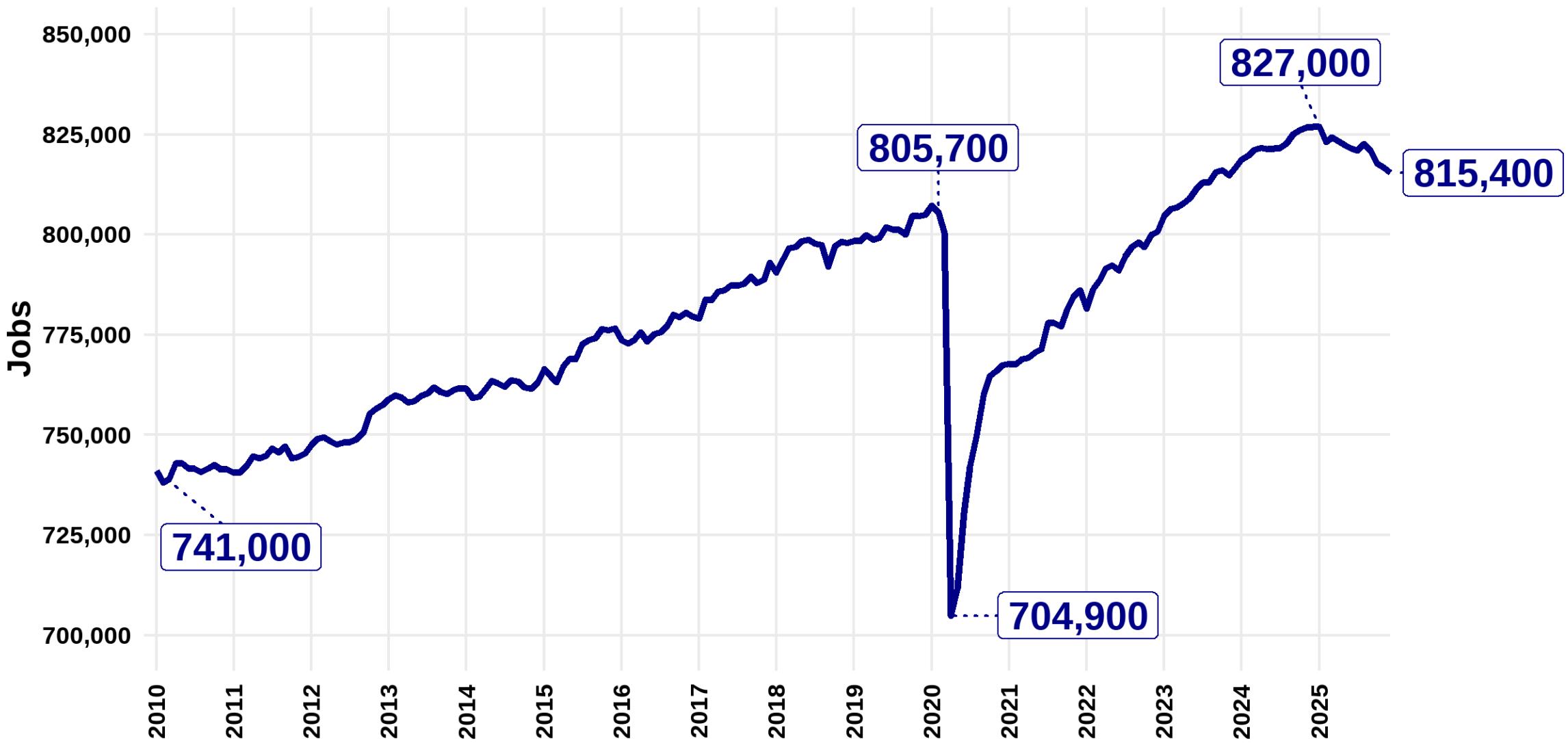
# Civilian Labor Force and Individual Employment

## Hampton Roads, January 2010 - November 2025

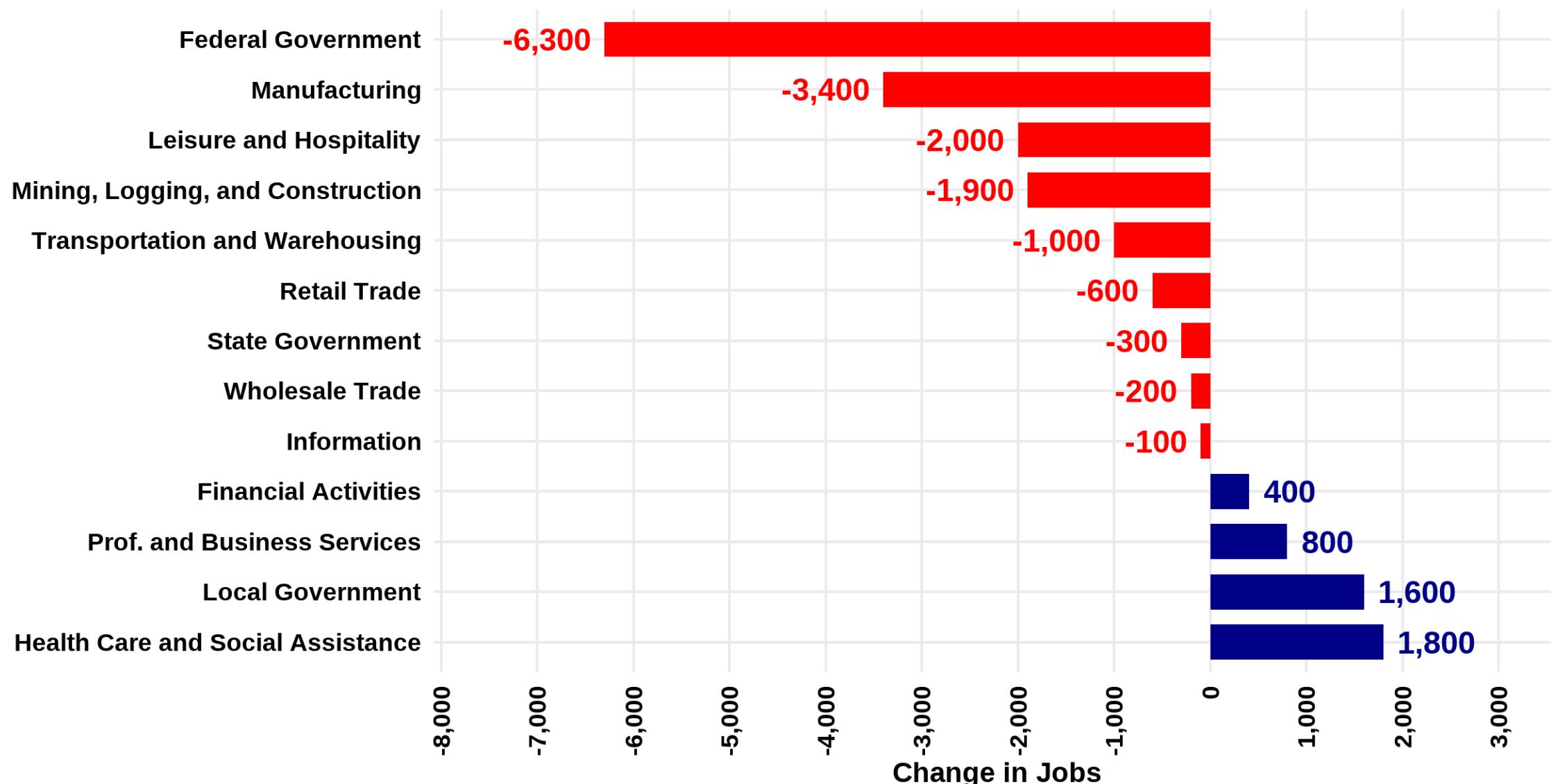


# Nonfarm Payrolls

## Hampton Roads, January 2010 - December 2025

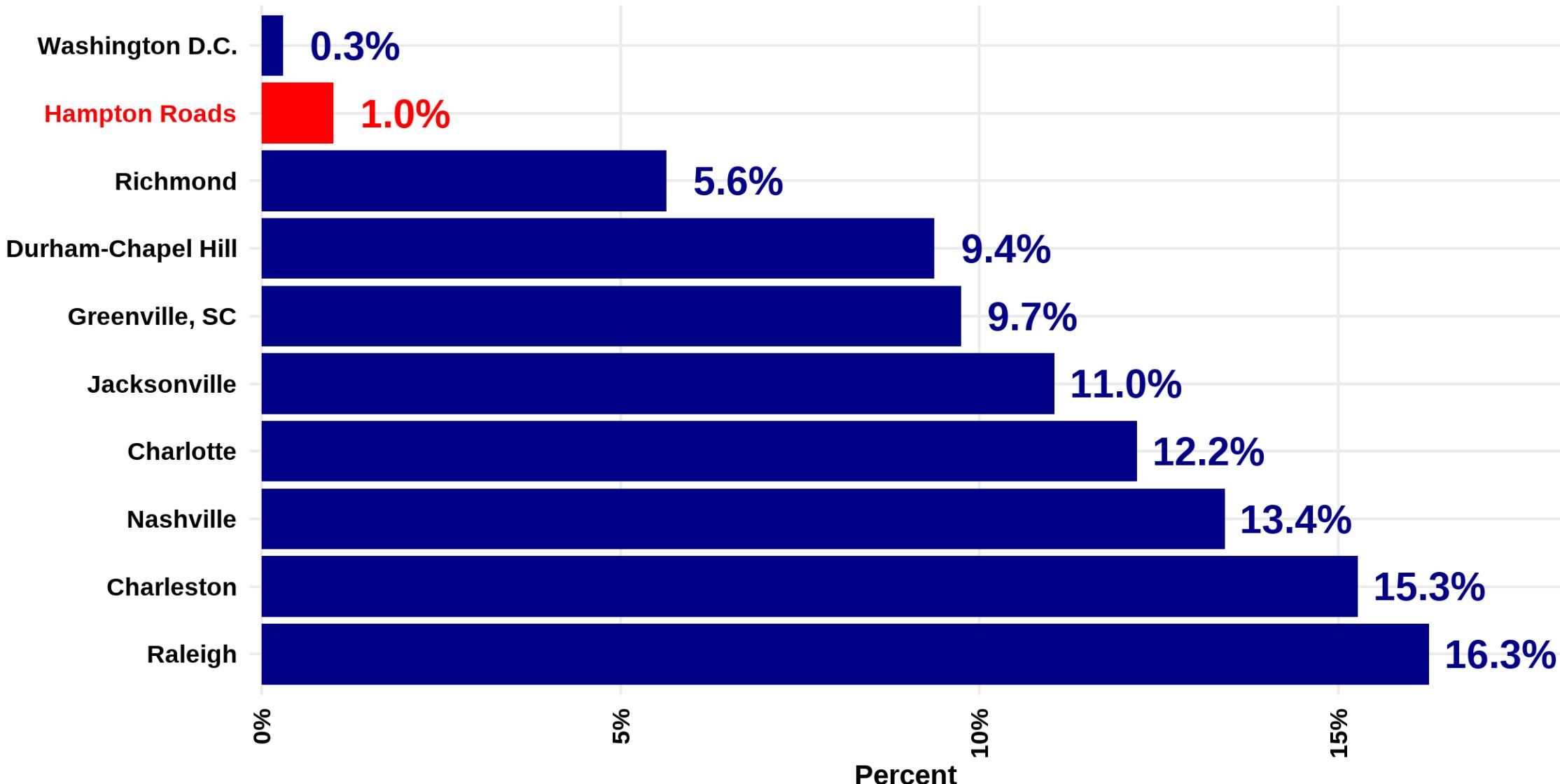


## Nonfarm Jobs Gained/Lost Selected Sectors in Hampton Roads, December 2024 - December 2025



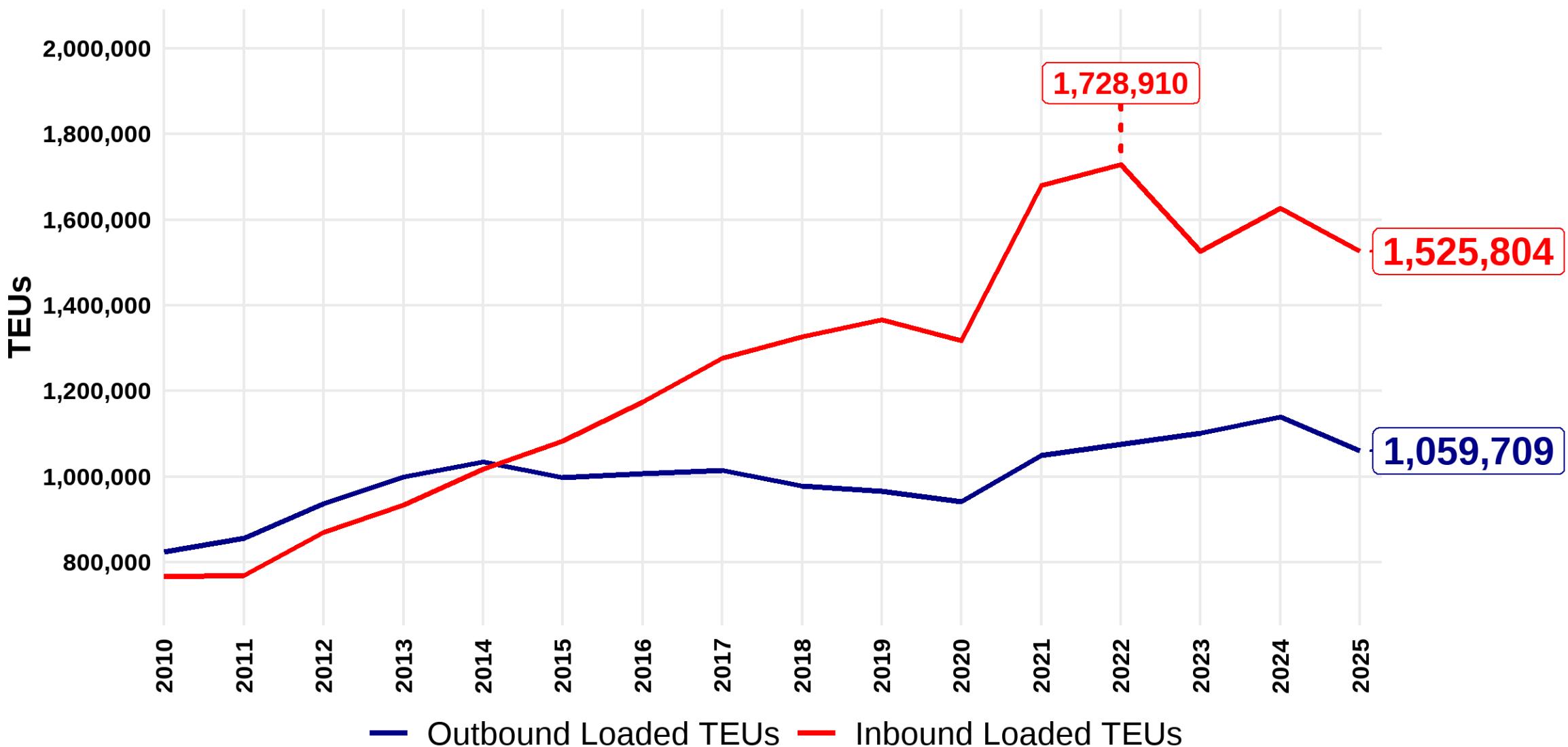
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, non-seasonally adjusted data. Data for December are preliminary.

## Growth in Nonfarm Payrolls Selected Metropolitan Areas, January 2020 - December 2025



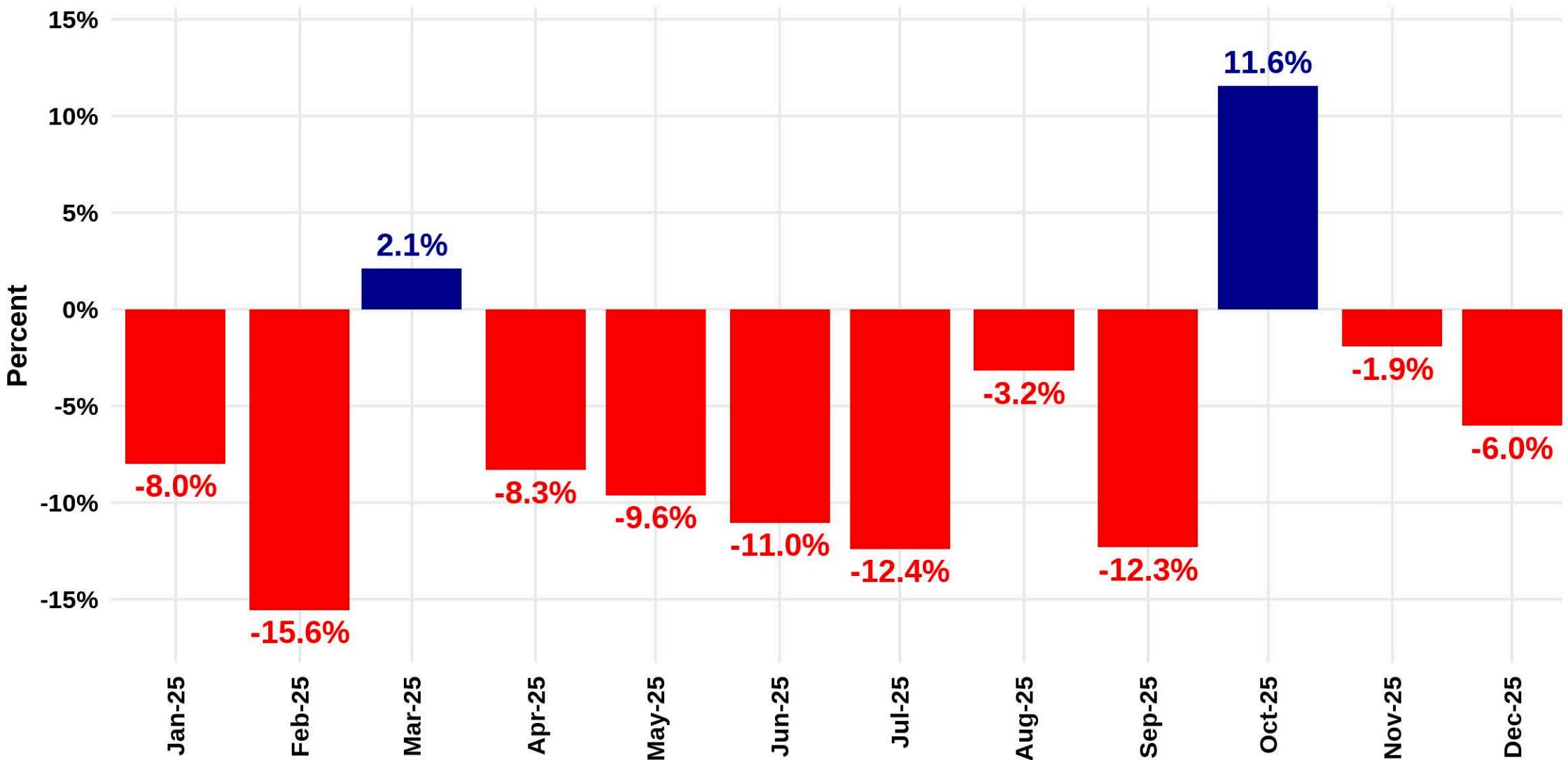


## Loaded Inbound and Outbound TEUs Port of Virginia, 2010 - 2025



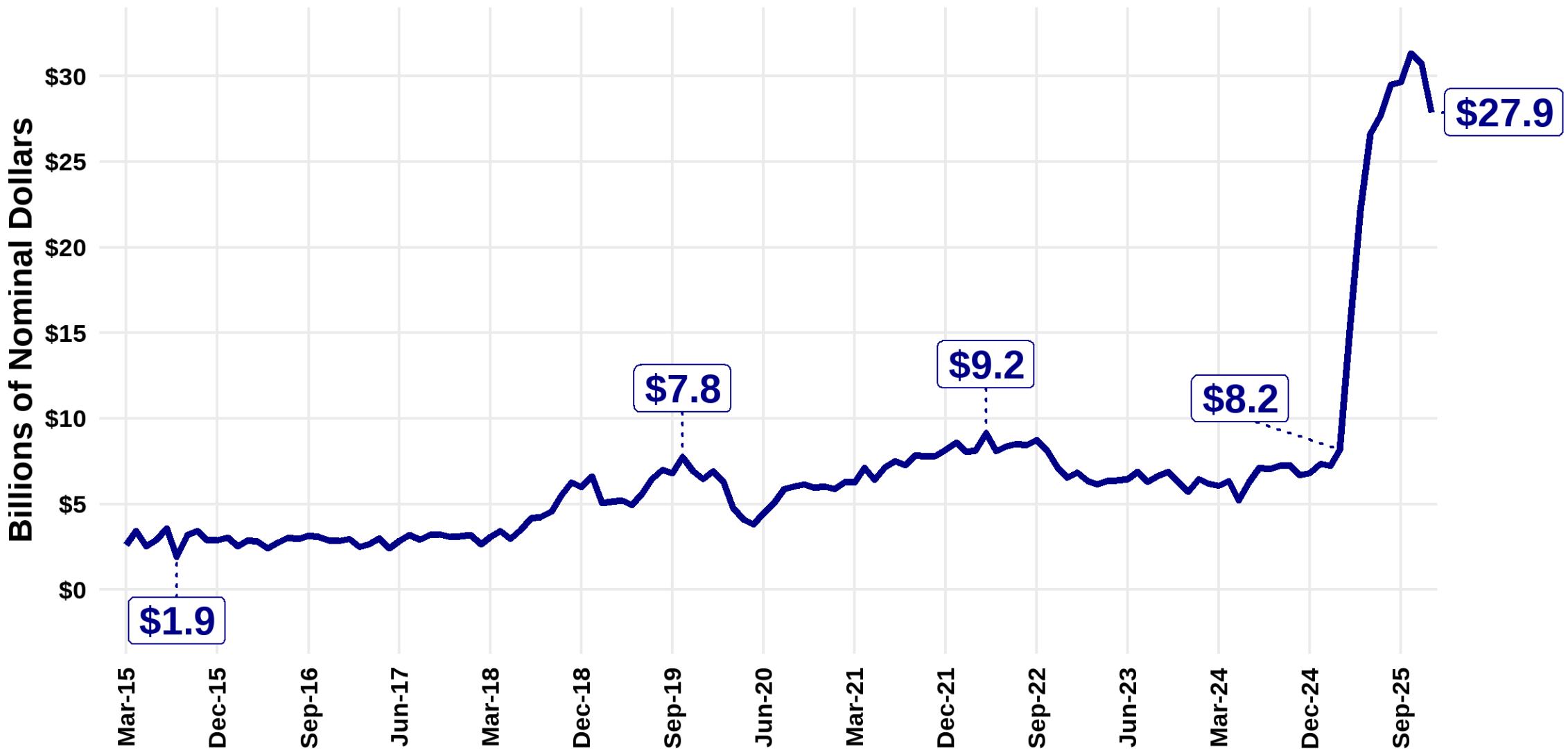
# Percent Change in Total Loaded TEUs

## Port of Virginia, January 2025 - December 2025



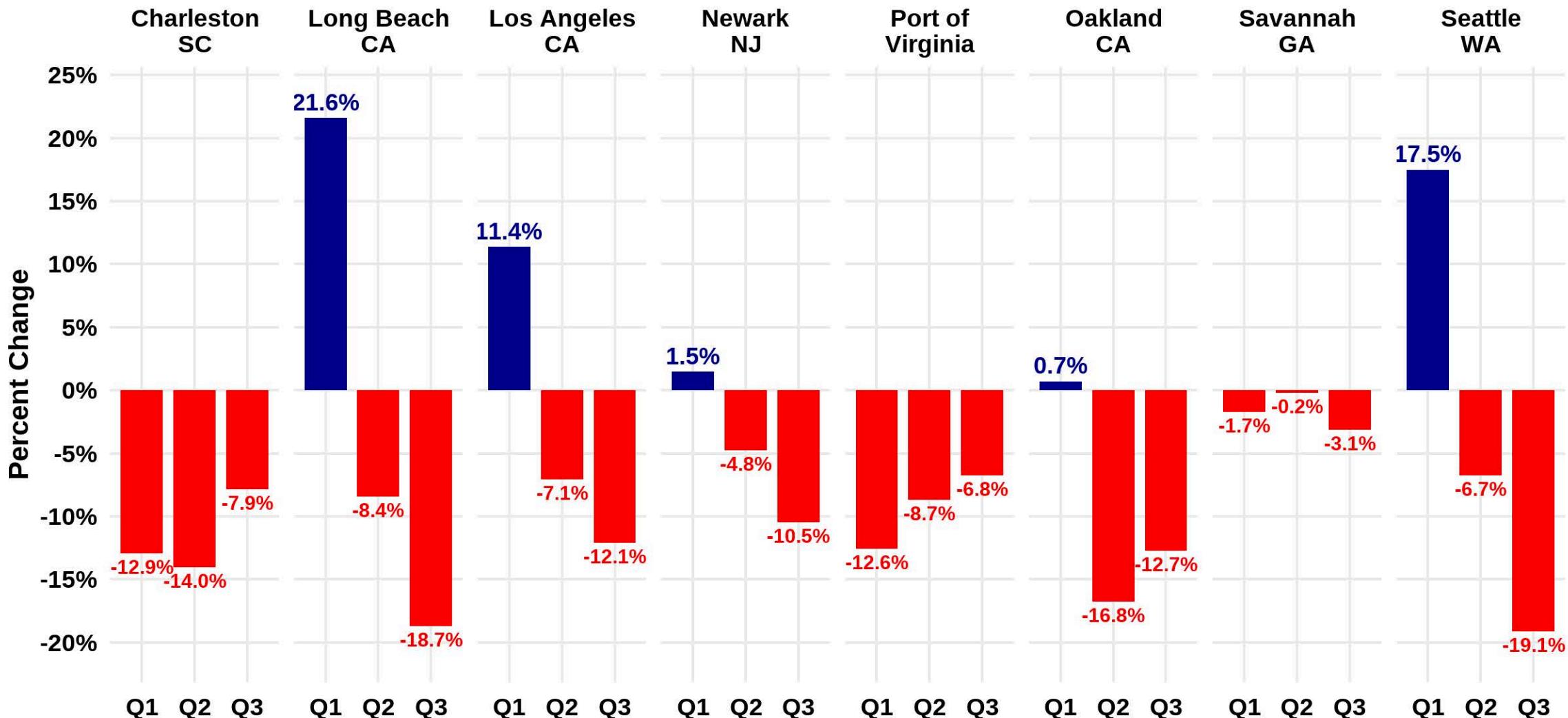
# Monthly Net Customs Duties

## United States, March 2015 - December 2025



# Percent Change in Dollar Value of Imports by Quarter

## Selected Major Ports in the United States, Q1 - Q3 2025



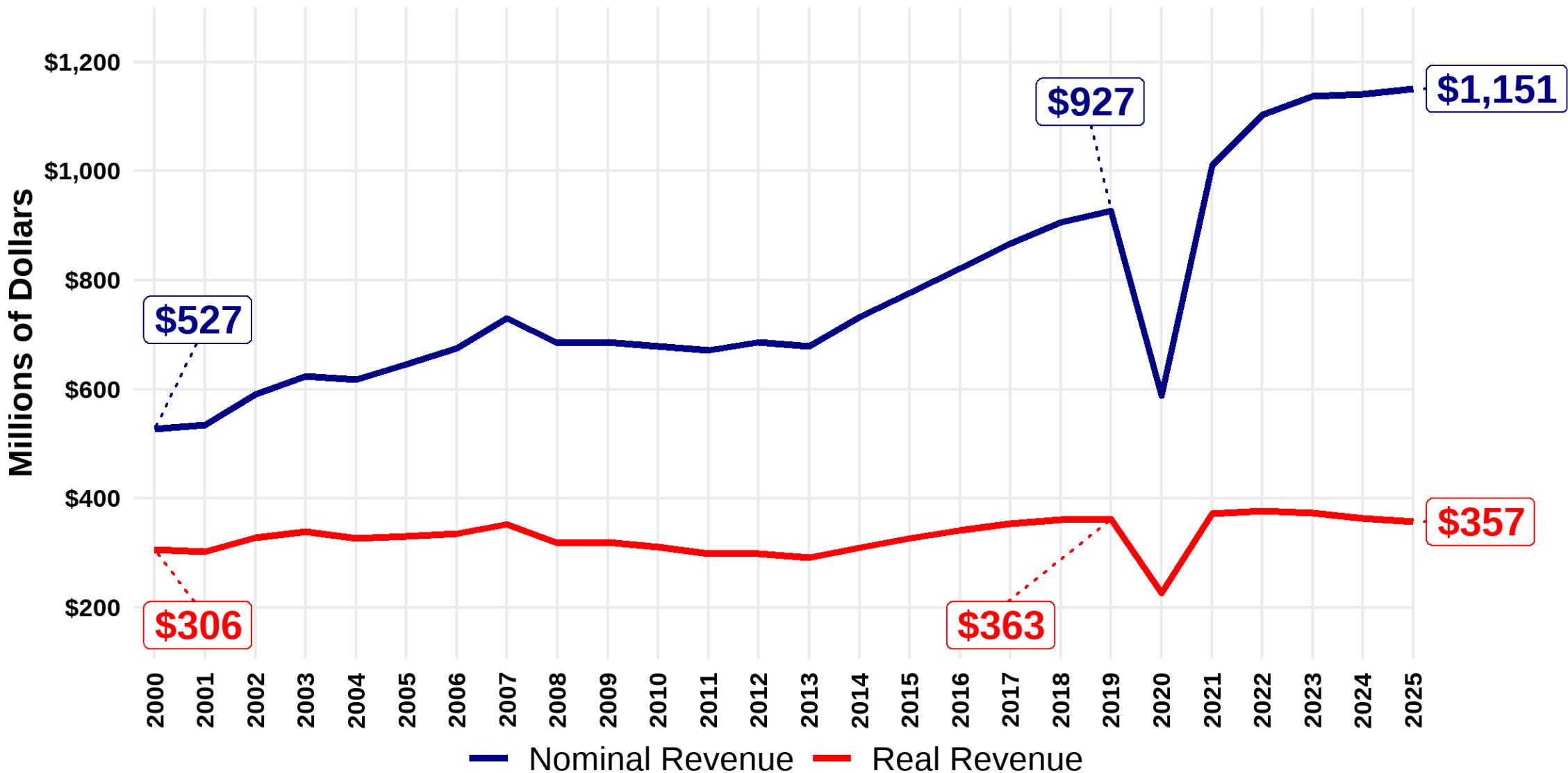
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy. Non-seasonally adjusted data.  
Percent change is the quarterly year-over-year change in dollar value of imports.

# Hotels Amidst Uncertainty and Slow Growth

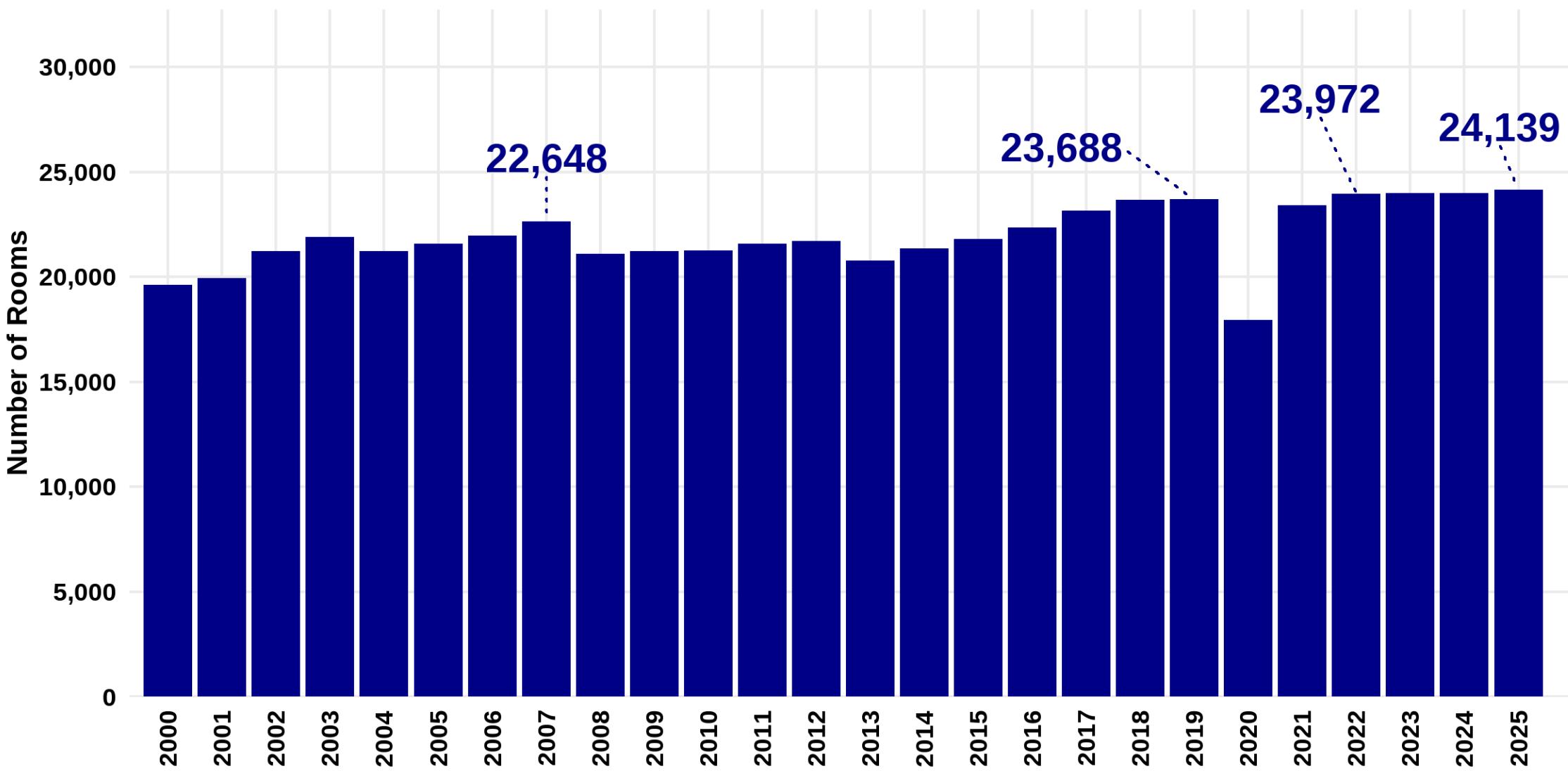


# Nominal and Real (Inflation-Adjusted) Hotel Revenue

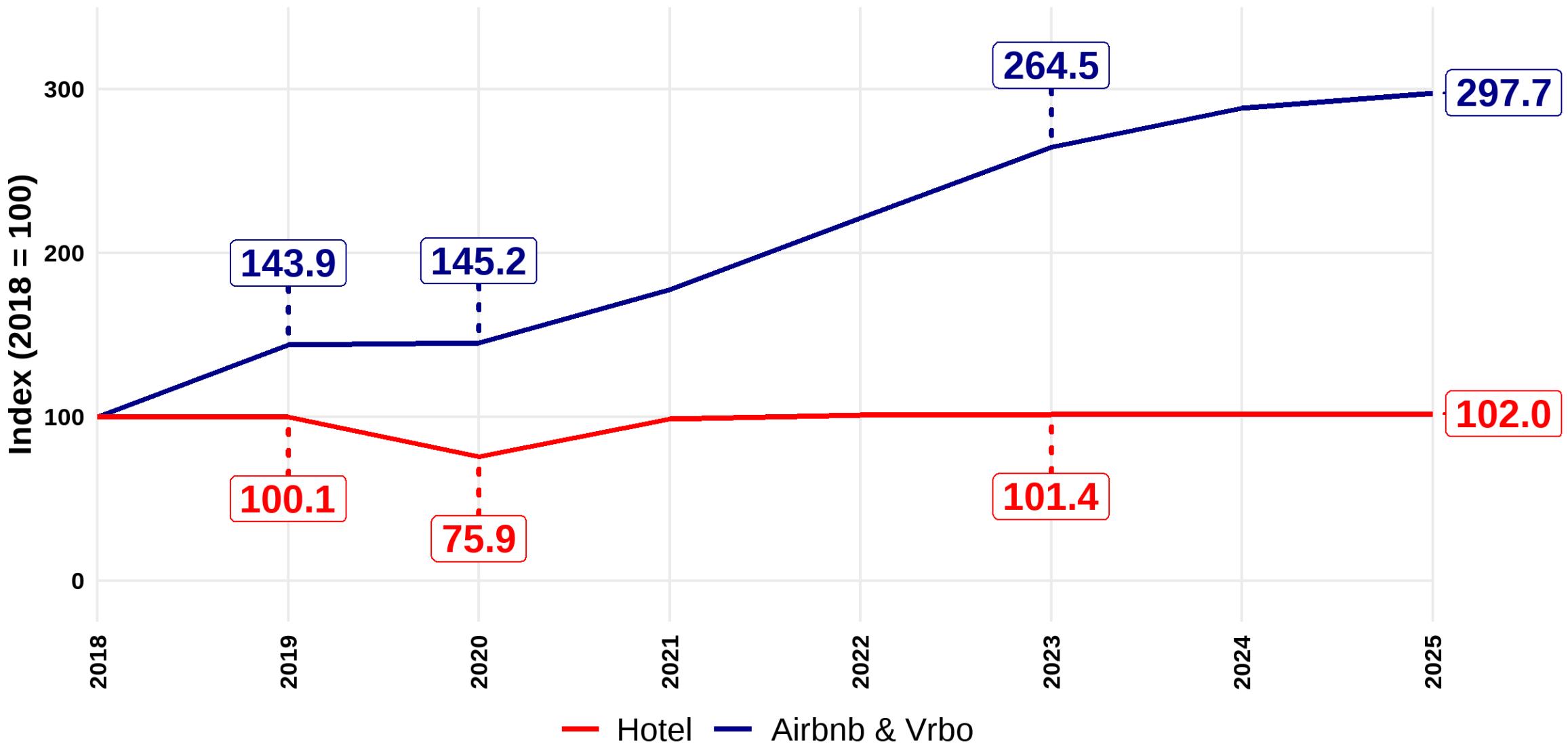
## Hampton Roads, 2000 - 2025



# Rooms Sold by Hotels Hampton Roads, 2000 - 2025



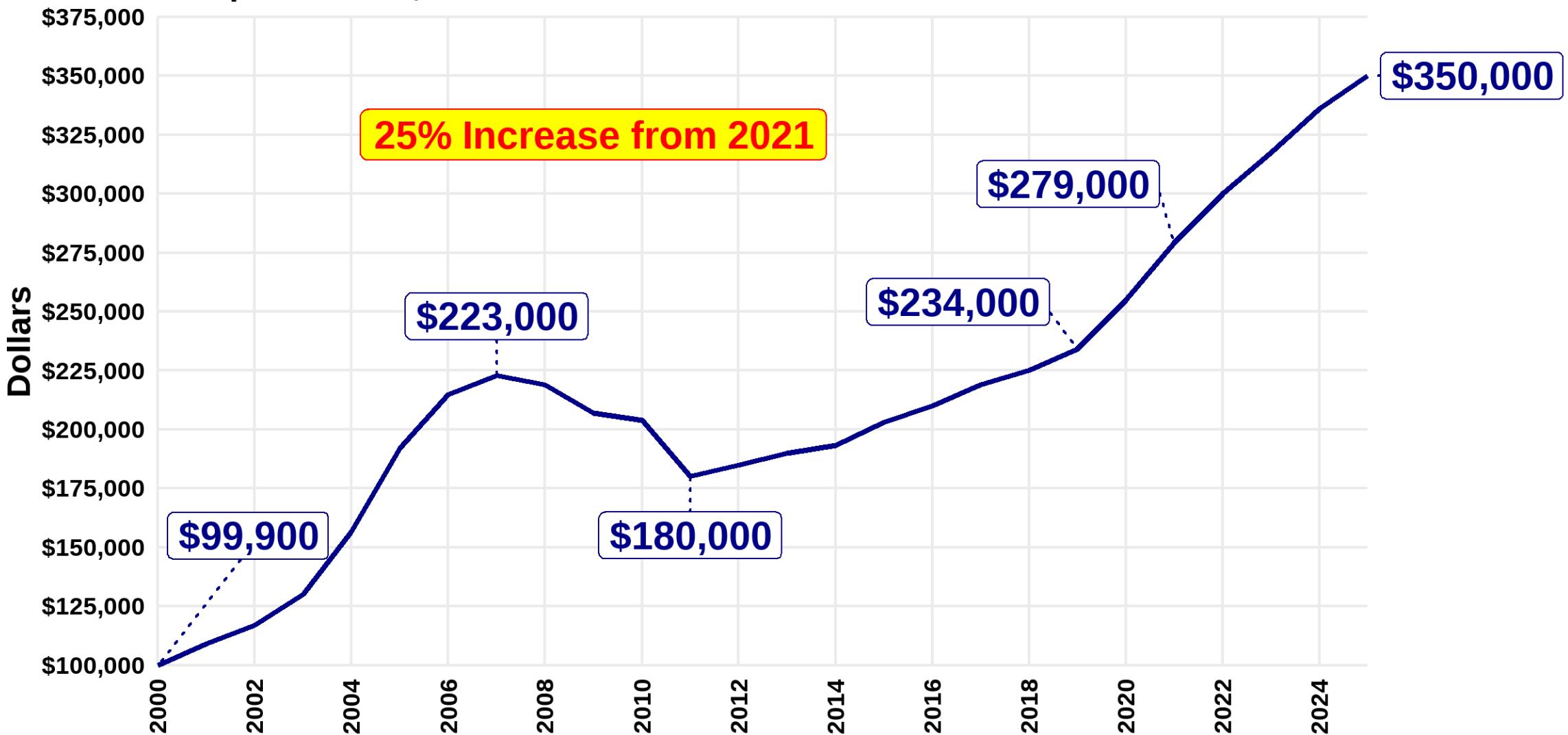
# Indices of Hotel, and Airbnb & Vrbo Rooms Sold Hampton Roads, 2018 - 2025



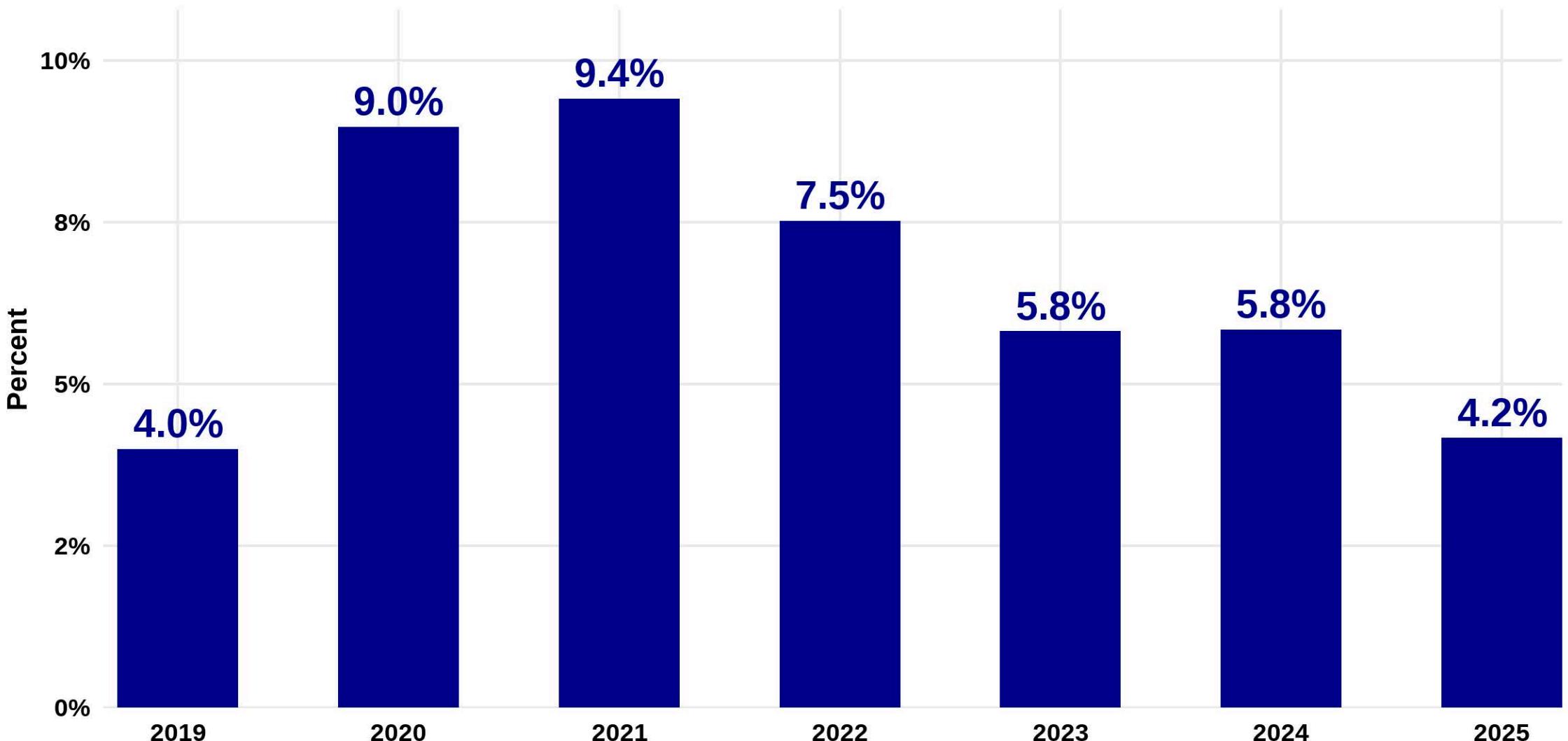
An aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood. In the foreground, there are several completed houses with dark roofs and light-colored siding, some with small yards and driveways. Behind them, a large cluster of houses under construction is visible, their wooden frames and tan roofs contrasting with the completed houses. The neighborhood is surrounded by a dense green forest. The overall scene suggests a mix of existing and new residential development.

Home Sales Stabilize,  
Yet Prices Rise

## Median Sales Price of Existing Homes Hampton Roads, 2000 - 2025

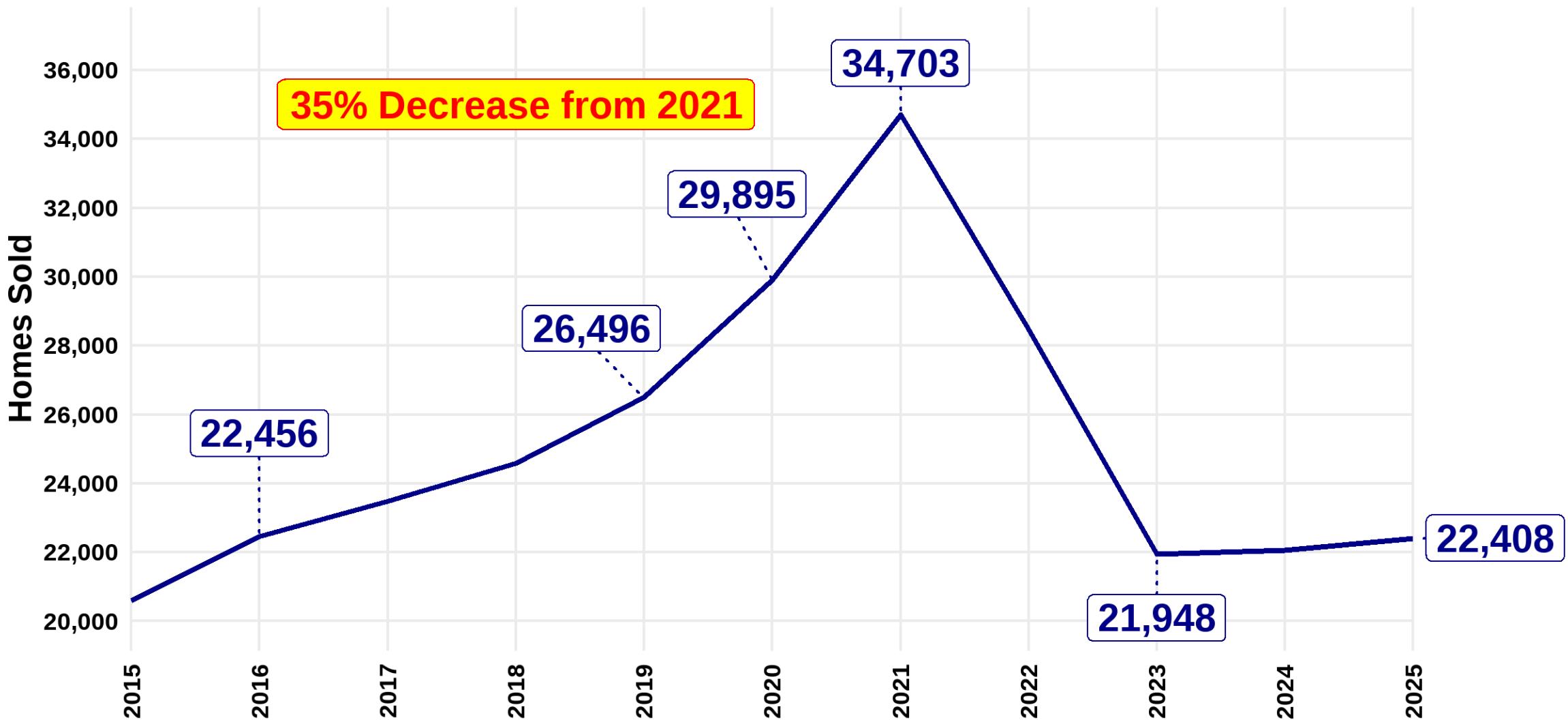


# Percent Change in Median Price of Existing Homes Hampton Roads, 2019 - 2025



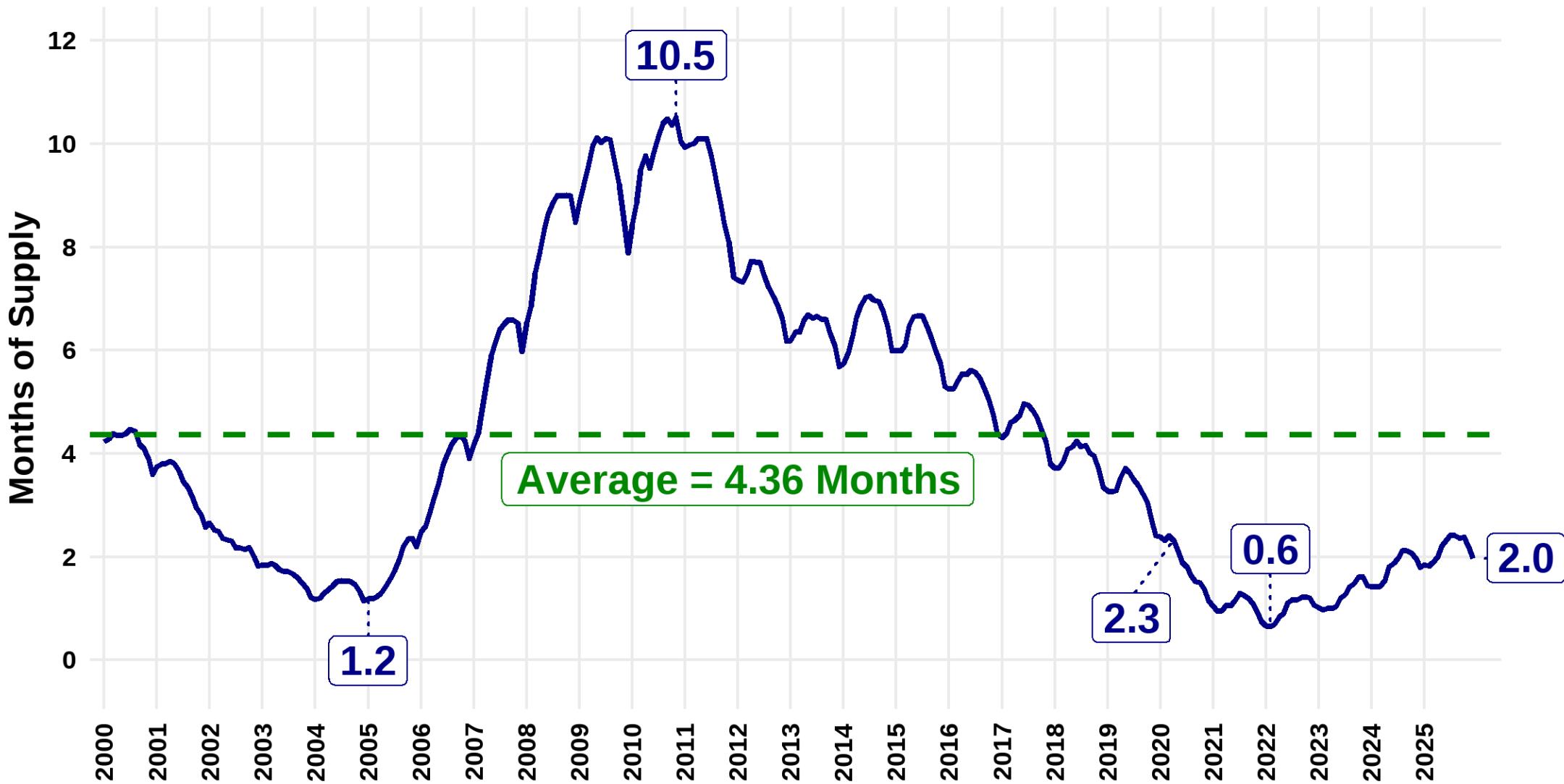
Sources: Real Estate Information Network and Old Dominion University Economic Forecasting Project. Figures reported here represent only those properties that are listed through REIN by its members.

## Existing Home Sales Hampton Roads, 2015 - 2025



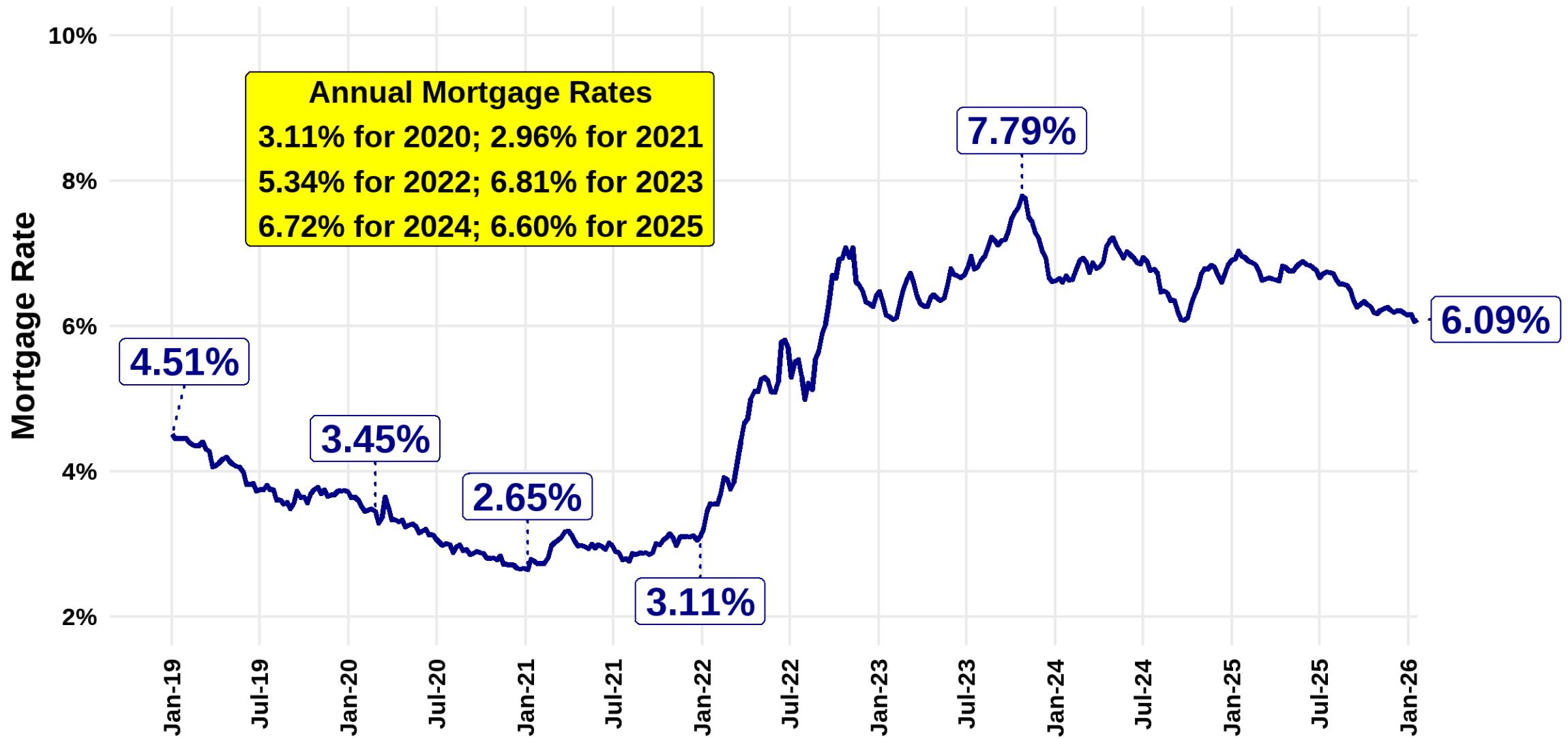
Sources: Real Estate Information Network (REIN) and the Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy. Figures reported here represent only those properties that are listed through REIN by its members and may not represent all new construction activity in our region.

# Estimated Months of Supply for Existing Homes Hampton Roads, January 2000 - December 2025



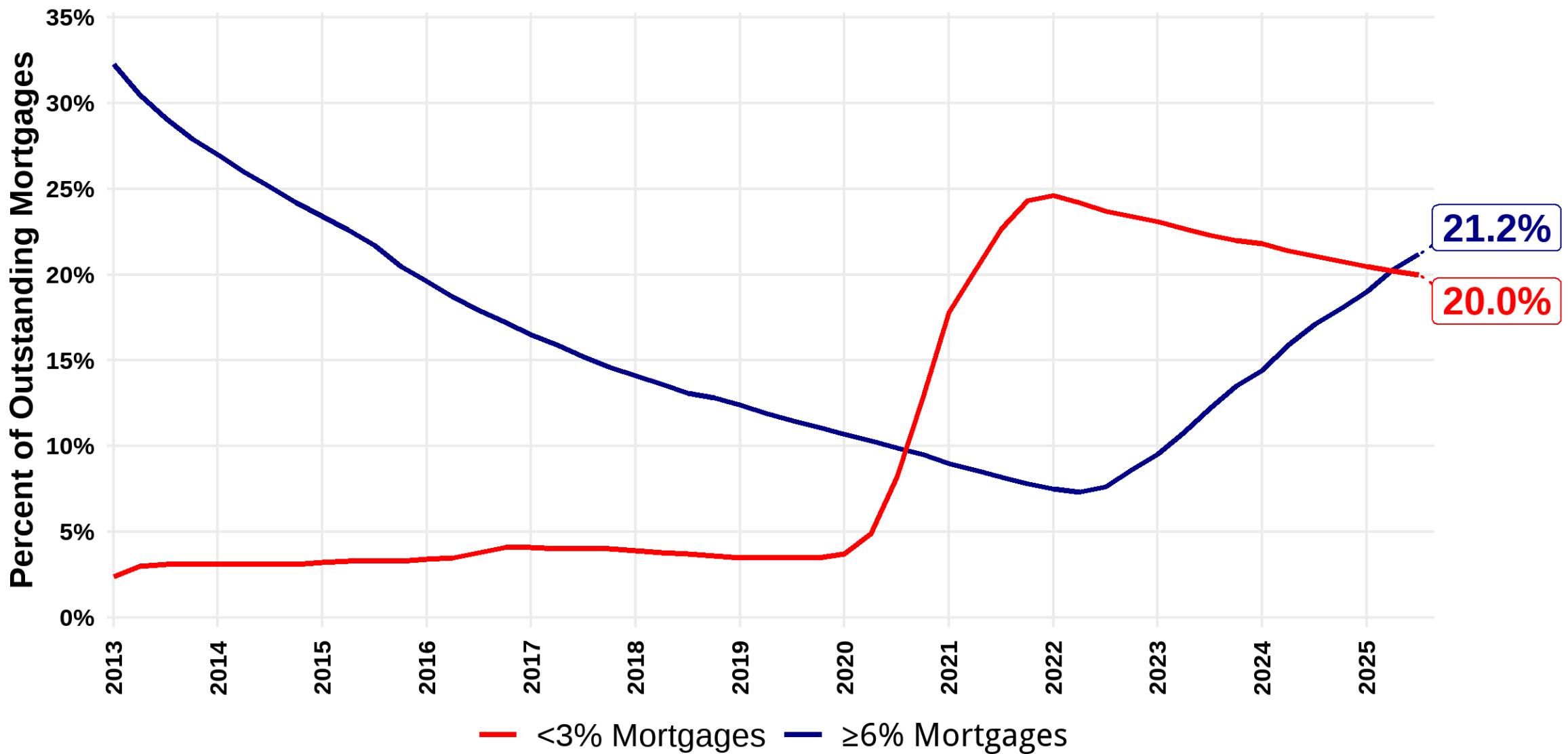
# Weekly 30-Year Fixed Mortgage Rate

## United States, January 3, 2019 - January 22, 2026

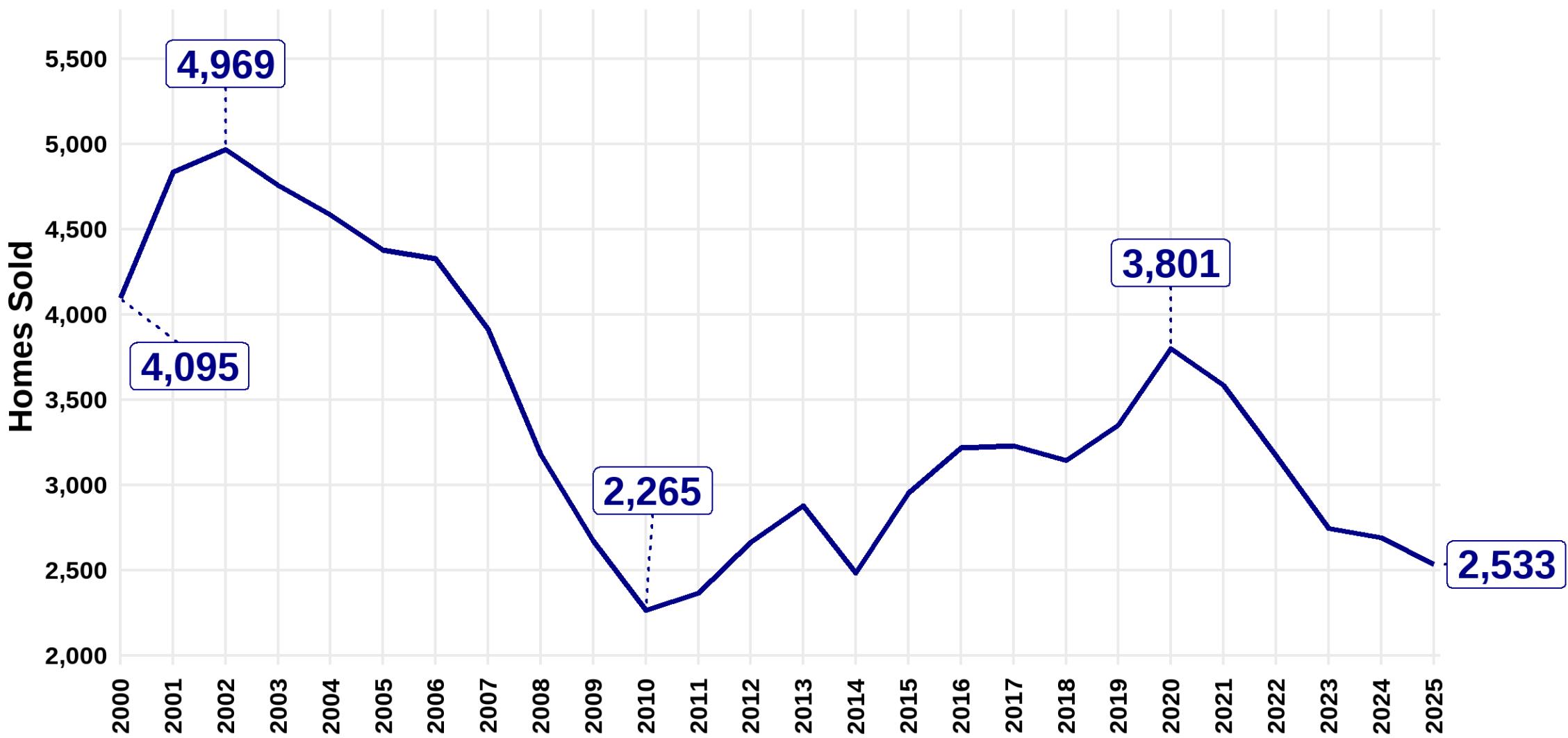


# Existing Mortgages, Select Rates

## United States, Q1 2013 - Q3 2025

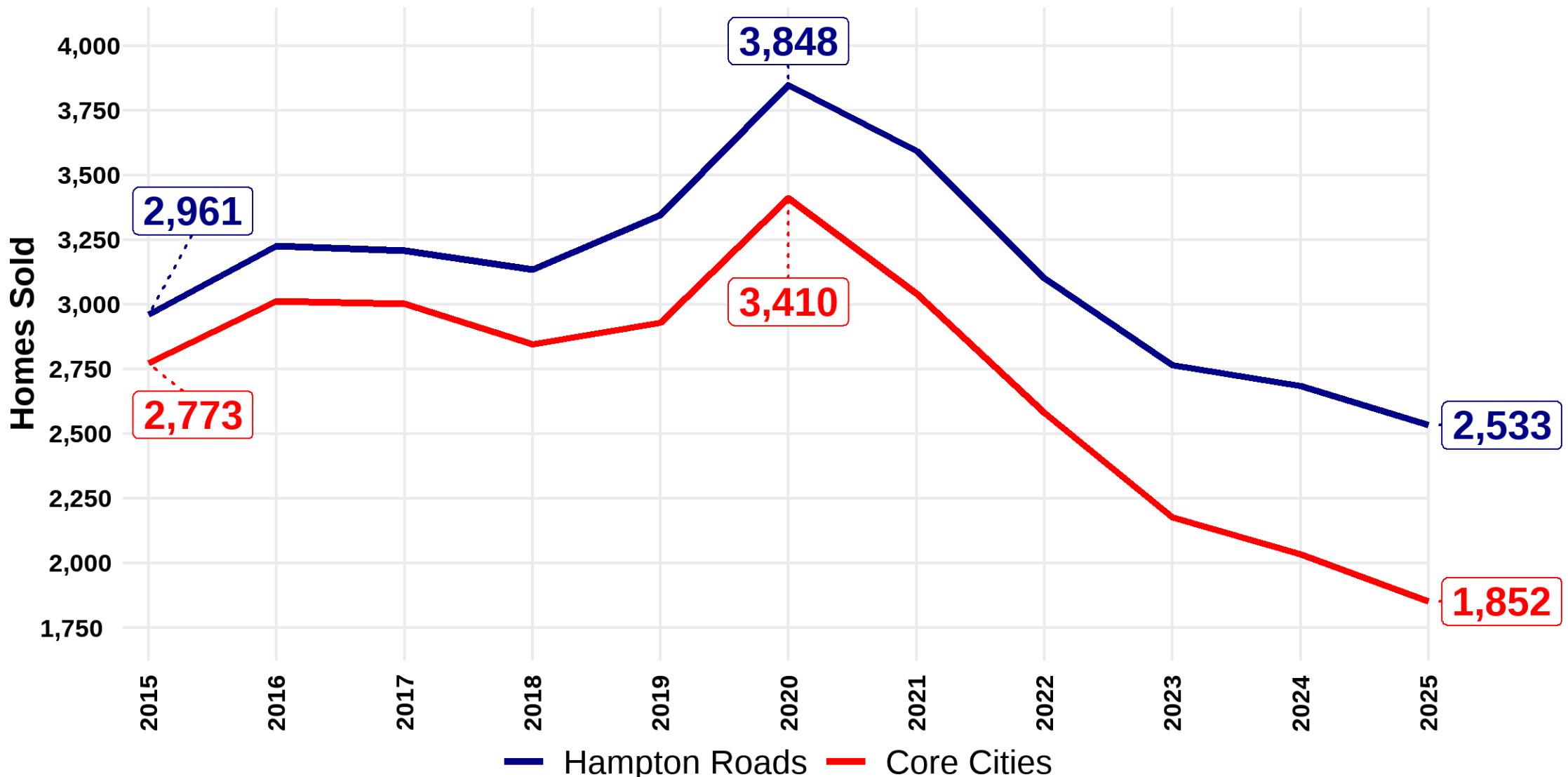


# New Construction Home Sales Hampton Roads, 2000 - 2025



Sources: Real Estate Information Network (REIN) and Old Dominion University Economic Forecasting Project. Figures reported here represent only those properties that are listed through REIN by its members.

# New Construction Home Sales Hampton Roads and Its Core Cities, 2015 - 2025



Sources: Real Estate Information Network and Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy. Core cities are Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, Hampton, Newport News, and Williamsburg. In this context, Williamsburg represents Williamsburg, James City County, Poquoson, York County and Gloucester County.

# Housing Market and Its Challenges

- Housing market has a supply problem; Inventories, months of supply are low relative to historical norms, and new construction home sales continue to decline.
- Hampton Roads needs to develop a regional housing strategy and move towards uniformity in basic zoning regulations across its cities and counties.
- Cities and counties in Hampton Roads need to promote higher density, more mixed-use developments, and reduce regulatory burdens that increase the cost of housing. Authorization of Accessory Dwelling Units in some cities is a step in the right direction.
- Doing so will not only increase housing supply, it will also stabilize housing prices, reduce housing cost-burdens and spur economic growth by having increased supply of homes for its work force.

# Challenges Abound for Growth in 2026

- Economic data continues to lag policy. There is strong evidence that the Hampton Roads economy has slowed and will continue to slow in first half of 2026.
- Going forward, uncertainty in Washington, especially on legal migration to the United States, and changes in policy on tariffs will continue to be a major concern for the health and growth of the regional economy.
- Hampton Roads is relatively more vulnerable to changes in federal policy. While increases in defense spending may lessen some of the economic pain from the reduction in federal civilian employment and tariffs, our dependence on Federal Government spending is both a strength and a weakness.
- Working together regionally is now more important than ever to foster private sector growth and DIVERSIFY the region's economic base. To do otherwise will be to put our collective fate in the hands of policymakers in Richmond and Washington, D.C.

Regional Forecast				
Variable	2023 Actual	2024 Estimated/Actual	2025 Estimated/Actual	2026 Forecast
Hampton Roads Real GDP	3.2%	2.4%	1.0%	0.5%
Civilian Job Growth	2.3%	1.4%	-0.2%	-0.2%
Unemployment Rate	2.9%	3.1%	3.7%	4.1%
Taxable Sales	3.0%	4.4%	2.0%	1.8%
Hotel Revenue	3.1%	0.4%	0.8%	1.0%
Loaded TEUs	-6.3%	5.3%	-6.3%	0.9%
Median Price of Existing Homes	5.8%	5.8%	4.2%	2.5%

# Upcoming Publications and Events

- Mid-year Economic Forecast (June 2026)
- State of the Region Report (October 2026)
- State of the Commonwealth Report (December 2026)
- Annual Economic Forecast (January 2027)
- Text **CEAPODU** to **66866** to join our email list.
- For inquiries, please contact us at **dragascenter@odu.edu**
- Our public presentation materials can be found at our website: **www.ceapodu.com**