



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on December 13, 2025

Affordability Crisis? Perspective and Propaganda

Some politics wonks may remember 2010's JournoList scandal. It was revealed that hundreds of left-wing journalists, academics, and political activists had been colluding via a private online gathering place and coordinating strategies and talking points. In other words, the "independent" media people certainly weren't independent of each other; they were operating as a hive mind.

Thus could we see revelatory video montages of liberal media figures all uttering the same lines — and thus do we still. And another example may be the now-common mantra about an "affordability crisis."



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Interestingly, too, we didn't hear this when the consumer price index (CPI, aka "inflation") was 9.1 percent under Joe Biden. Yet we do now that [it's 3.0 percent under](#) President Donald Trump.

So what's the truth? Is there really an "affordability crisis" — in particular, relative to the Biden years? Or is there just an ongoing honesty crisis in the once-mainstream media (which helps explain why it's "once-mainstream")? Commentator Bill O'Reilly examined this last week, offering the straight dope on what's up, what's down, and what's, maybe, comin' 'round.

The A's on the Report Card

O'Reilly set up the segment saying that every clear-thinker knows Biden "was not up to the task." And Trump certainly did "inherit a mess. But he did make very specific promises that he would improve the situation," the commentator continued. Moreover, to "blame Biden for all this is not going to get President Trump anywhere or any currency." He then presented some facts. As to what has decreased in price, he stated:

Apparel and clothing are down about one percent. Eggs, butter, [ice cream,] fruit, cereal, fish, seafood, rice, pasta, ham — all down in price. And this is year-to-year — Biden was in office last year at this time; Trump is now — year-to-year. That's a big list, you'll never hear it in the media....

Gas prices are down about three percent except in California, where they're up. And what am I going to tell you guys out there? You're trading nice weather for chaotic governance.

... Mortgage rates are down, and they're going to fall even further when the Fed cuts rates tomorrow, which I believe it will by a quarter percent. So if you're looking to buy a home, it's going to fall below six percent. You should look around — that's a good rate. That's a decrease of nine percent for mortgage rates and falling.



What's Up

Then there's what has risen. Again, per O'Reilly:

Essentials of life: Beef prices are up fifteen percent, bacon up six percent, coffee up 19 percent. Stuff you need around the house: supplies up three [percent], rent up three percent.

... Insurance — that's the big one. Health insurance up six percent.... Home insurance up four [percent], auto insurance up a whopping 12 percent. Why? ... You're paying all these football players millions of dollars to pump your insurance....

Utilities are up five percent. That doesn't make a lot of sense because gas prices at the pump are down and falling, yet utilities are up.

... Rents are high. Rents, you don't get your money back. Look around — if you can put a down payment [together on a home, do it].

Now, the president tends to get the blame or credit for economic realities. Yet much eludes his control. Consider, for example, the precipitous beef-price increase. Little known cause:

Mexican beef imports were suspended May 11 due to [a parasite](#) infecting Mexican cattle. This, of course, reduced supply, causing prices to increase [an estimated 20 percent](#). Trump in response [finalized a deal](#) in October to increase supply by facilitating Argentinian beef's importation.

Many American ranchers are [understandably unhappy](#) about the latter, by the way. This once again goes to show, too, that you can't please all the people all the time.

(By the way, a similar problem caused the huge egg price increase under Biden. Tens of millions of laying hens were destroyed due to a severe avian flu outbreak.)

More Positives

O'Reilly mentioned a handful more economic bright spots. A summary:

- Stock market is strong: Dow up eight percent this year, NASDAQ up 19 percent (driven by somewhat risky AI stocks).
- Retirement accounts are gaining: 60 percent of American adults have a 401(k), 403(b), or IRA, and their wealth is growing.
- Unemployment steady at 4.1-4.4 percent; jobs are plentiful, especially in service industries desperate for workers.
- Tips are now tax-free.
- Wages rising: four percent for civilian workers, 3.5 percent in private industry.

So, O'Reilly concluded, this just "isn't a dire economic circumstance. It's not." In reality, "this affordability stuff is very murky" (as the beef realities evidence), he also stated.

What's not murky, however, is that "every day, every way, the American media is pounding 'affordability crisis, affordability crisis, affordability crisis,'" O'Reilly complained. "It's all a bunch of nonsense and propaganda. They don't care about the stats that I just read you.... They don't care because they don't like Trump. They want Trump to lose." (Video below; relevant portion begins at 0:24.)



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And they don't care if America loses in the process.

Economic Common Sense

So insofar as the still-high prices go, what's the remedy? O'Reilly discussed this later on his show with Dr. Betsey Stevenson. Despite being an ex-chief Department of Labor economist under President Barack Obama, she prescribed some well-presented free-market wisdom. There's only one way, she emphasized, to reduce prices:

So if we want [less expensive] housing, you know what we do? You build more housing. If you want health care to be cheaper, you know what you do? You train more doctors. If you want food to be cheaper, you know what you do? You bring in more food or you grow more food. So it's all about this: if we bring more to the problem, prices come down.

Yeah, tell that to [Zohran Mamdani and his socialist comrades](#). Stevenson's interview follows.

This is all common sense, of course, which, tragically, is painfully uncommon. Part of the problem, too, is expectations. Some today believe their birthright is to graduate college and walk right into a \$160k-a-year job. Yet if you don't realize that man's historical norm has been grinding poverty and that life is supposed to be tough, your own actions will make it tougher. If you don't see a glass three-quarters filled as at least half full, yours just may end up empty. This is because you'll be seduced by socialist-like promises and throw the baby out with the bathwater.

None of this is to say things can't be better; they always can in our imperfect world. It is to say, "The Reformer is always right about what's wrong," to quote G.K. Chesterton. "However, he's often wrong about what is right."

If we don't acknowledge facts and seek Truth, we'll be damned to live a dark fiction written with lies — and ending with destitution and disaster.



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