# Year-Over-Year Inflation Across Conservative and Liberal States and Metro Areas

December 23, 2025

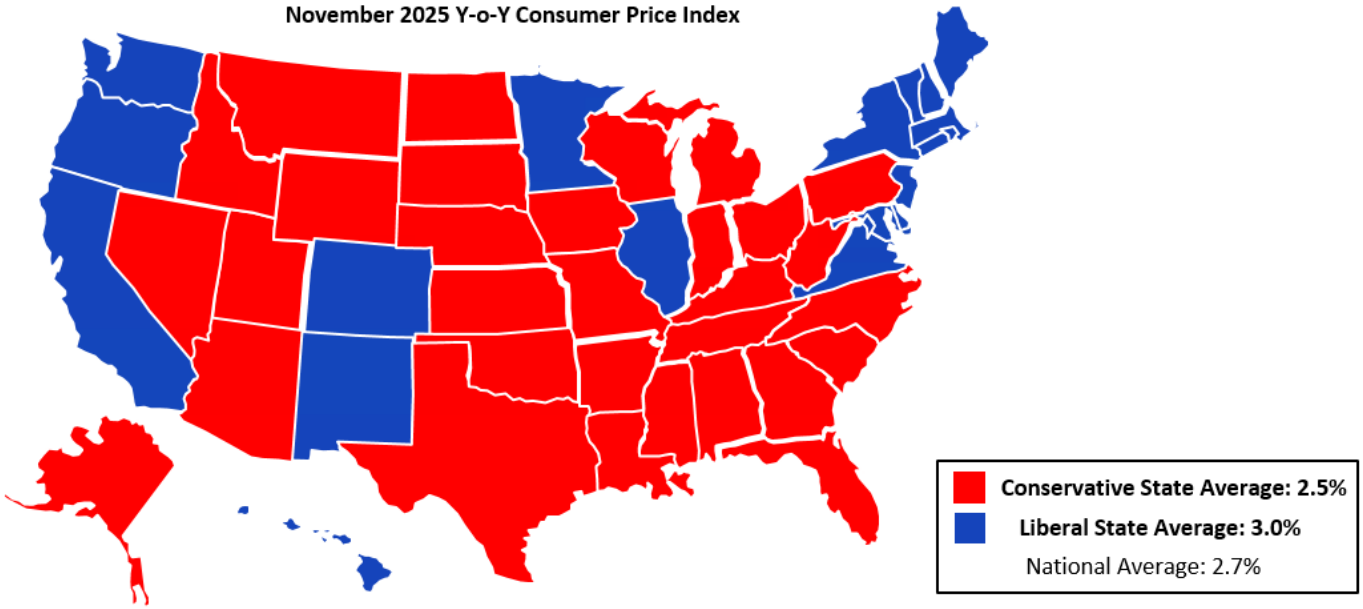
## Summary

State and local economic conditions and policies lead to deviations in inflation from the national average. For example, if local housing supply is relatively inelastic, then monetary or fiscal expansions translate more into local price increases than into quantities increases, generating more inflation in housing rents than in otherwise similar locations with more elastic supply.

This report documents that across various measures of inflation, aggregation, and political categorization, liberal states[1] as well as cities inside liberal states have observed higher inflation rates in the past year than their conservative counterparts.

Figure 1 illustrates the main result across states.

**Figure 1: Population-Weighted Inflation, by Conservative and Liberal States**




Source: Council of Economic Advisers, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau

[1] This analysis defines "conservative states" as those that President Donald J. Trump won in the 2024 Presidential Election and "liberal states" as those won by Vice President Kamala Harris (according to U.S. Federal Election Commission's 2024 "Official Presidential General Election Results"). The results discussed herein are robust to different definitions and classifications of "conservative" and "liberal" states. See Tables A-1 through A-3 for details.

The year-over-year (y-o-y) inflation rate[2] across conservative states as of November 2025 is 2.5%, lower than the average liberal state inflation of 3.0%.

Conservative states also had lower y-o-y inflation rates than liberal states for select expenditure categories and special aggregate indices.

**Table 1: Y-o-Y Inflation for Conservative and Liberal States (as of November 2025)**

| | All Items | Housing | Food & Beverage | Energy | Transportation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Conservative States** | 2.5% | 3.4% | 2.5% | 3.5% | 0.7% |
| **Liberal States** | 3.0% | 3.6% | 2.7% | 5.2% | 2.5% |

Metro areas in conservative states also had lower y-o-y inflation than those in liberal states.

**Table 2: Y-o-Y Inflation for Metro Areas in Liberal and Conservative States (as of August/November 2025)**

| | All Items | Housing | Food & Beverage | Energy | Transportation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Conservative States** | 1.9% | 2.3% | 2.8% | 5.2% | 0.0% |
| **Liberal States** | 3.0% | 3.9% | 2.8% | 5.9% | 2.7% |

*Note: Some metro areas have CPI data up to August 2025; other have it until November 2025; one that has data through November 2025 only has the energy index until September 2025. The most recent one is used in all cases. See Table A-5, for details.*

[2] The y-o-y inflation rate is the 12-month percent change in inflation. The inflation rate discussed herein is a population-weighted y-o-y inflation average across states by political alignment.

## Methodology

There are no state-level consumer price index (CPI) estimates. The lowest level of aggregation for CPI data inclusive of whole states is measured at the 9 census divisions, each consisting of several states.[3]

**Table 3: States Included in Each Census Division**

| U.S. Census Division | States Included |
|---|---|
| New England | Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont |
| Middle Atlantic | New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania |
| East North Central | Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin |
| West North Central | Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota |
| South Atlantic | Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia |
| East South Central | Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee |
| West South Central | Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas |
| Mountain | Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming |
| Pacific | Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington |

- To calculate the population-weighted y-o-y inflation average across states by political alignment:[4]
  - First, using CPI values[5] for census divisions, derive: (1) y-o-y inflation rates attributable to all items;[6] (2) inflation expenditure categories of housing, food and beverage, and transportation;[7] and (3) the inflation special aggregate index of energy.[8]
  - Second, assign census-division y-o-y inflation to states in their respective divisions (Table A-4).
  - Third, calculate each state's population[9] share of the total population in whichever political group the state is a part of (collection of conservative or liberal states).
  - Fourth, multiply each state's population share, calculated in Step 3, by its assigned inflation rate, from Step 2.

[3] U.S. Census Bureau's "Regions and Divisions of the United States"
[4] As was previously noted, "conservative states" as those that President Donald J. Trump carried in the 2024 Presidential Election and "liberal states" as those won by Vice President Kamala Harris (according to U.S. Federal Election Commission's 2024 "Official Presidential General Election Results"). The results discussed herein are robust to different definitions and classifications of "conservative" and "liberal" states. See Tables A-1 through A-3 for details.
[5] Not seasonally adjusted.
[6] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' "Consumer Price Index Regional Resources,"
[7] Bureau of Labor Statistics, aggregated on Haver Analytics.
[8] The CPI special aggregate index of energy is not an expenditure category; its effects are also directly captured in the housing and transportation categories.
[9] U.S. Census Bureau's 2024 "State Population Totals and Components of Change"

- Last, sum these weighted contributions for the conservative and liberal states separately to get an average for each group.

- To calculate the population-weighted y-o-y inflation average across metro areas in conservative and liberal states:[10][11]
  - First, using CPI values,[12] derive: (1) y-o-y inflation rates attributable to all items;[13] (2) inflation expenditure categories of housing, food and beverage, and transportation;[14] and (2) the inflation special aggregate index of energy[15] (Table A-5).
  - Second, using each metro area's population,[16] sum up the populations of the metro areas belonging to conservative and liberal states, respectively.[17][18]
  - Third, divide each metro area's population by the sum calculated in Step 2, depending on whether the metro area is part of a conservative or liberal state.
  - Fourth, multiply each metro area's population share, calculated in Step 3, by its assigned inflation rate, from Step 1.
  - Last, sum these weighted contributions for the metro areas in conservative and liberal states separately to get an average for each group.

[10] The CPI's regional data includes estimates for selected metro areas: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Riverside, St. Louis, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Tampa, Urban Alaska, Urban Hawaii, and Washington. It is these y-o-y inflation rates derived from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' "Consumer Price Index Regional Resources" that are used in calculating the y-o-y inflation rate in the aforementioned metro areas, as well as in ranking the top 5 metro areas, by highest inflation.

[11] As was previously noted, "conservative states" as those that President Donald J. Trump carried in the 2024 Presidential Election and "liberal states" as those won by Vice President Kamala Harris (according to U.S. Federal Election Commission's 2024 "Official Presidential General Election Results"). The results discussed herein are robust to different definitions and classifications of "conservative" and "liberal" states. See Tables A-1 through A-3 for details.

[12] Not seasonally adjusted.

[13] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' "Consumer Price Index Regional Resources,"

[14] The CPI special aggregate index of energy is not an expenditure category; its effects are also directly captured in the housing and transportation categories.

[15] Bureau of Labor Statistics, aggregated on Haver Analytics.

[16] U.S. Census Bureau's 2024 "Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas Population Totals"

[17] U.S. Census Bureau's 2024 "State Population Totals and Components of Change"

[18] Some metro area populations provided by the U.S. Census Bureau were not an exact match for the metro area names provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For example, the Census Bureau provides data for a metro area it calls "Houston-Pasadena-The Woodlands, TX Metro Area," whereas the Bureau of Labor Statistics provides data for the metro area titled "Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX." This analysis treats two similarly-named metro areas (like the example listed) as the same. Separately, this analysis assumes that "Urban Hawaii" and "Urban Alaska" include all urban areas in each respective state; therefore, the analysis adds the two urban metro areas in each state to calculate the total population in both Urban Hawaii and Urban Alaska. Last, the metro areas which span across different states are classified according to the metro area's title on the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Regional Resources website. For example, because the "Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV" metro area inflation is titled "Washington" on the website, the metro area's inflation rate is attributed to Washington, D.C.

## Appendix

| Table A-1: Y-o-Y Inflation, by Governor Political Affiliation (as of November 2025)[19] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All Items | Housing | Food & Beverage | Energy | Transportation |
| **Conservative** | 2.3% | 3.2% | 2.4% | 2.9% | 0.6% |
| **Liberal** | 3.0% | 3.7% | 2.7% | 5.3% | 2.1% |

| Table A-2: Y-o-Y Inflation, by Legislature Political Affiliation (as of November 2025)[20] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All Items | Housing | Food & Beverage | Energy | Transportation |
| **Conservative** | 2.4% | 3.3% | 2.4% | 2.9% | 0.6% |
| **Liberal** | 3.0% | 3.6% | 2.7% | 5.1% | 2.5% |
| **Neither** | 3.1% | 4.5% | 2.7% | 7.7% | 0.9% |

| Table A-3: Y-o-Y Inflation, by State Control (as of November 2025)[21] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All Items | Housing | Food & Beverage | Energy | Transportation |
| Conservative | 2.3% | 3.3% | 2.4% | 2.9% | 0.6% |
| Liberal | 3.0% | 3.6% | 2.7% | 5.4% | 2.7% |
| Neither | 2.8% | 3.8% | 2.7% | 4.7% | 0.7% |

[19] Table A-1 treats Republican governors as conservative and Democrat governors as liberal. Governor political affiliation data is drawn from the National Conference of State Legislatures' State Partisan Composition.
[20] Table A-2 treats states where Republicans control all legislature chambers as having a "conservative" political affiliation; states where Democrats control all legislature chambers are classified as having a "liberal" political orientation. States whose legislative chambers are split between Democrat and Republican control are classified as "neither." Table A-2 also omits Nebraska, as its Unicameral is nonpartisan. Legislature political affiliation data is drawn from the National Conference of State Legislatures' State Partisan Composition.
[21] Table A-3 classifies "state control" as "conservative" if the Republicans control both the legislature and the governorship; those states where Democrats control both parts of government are classified as "liberal." States where one party controls the governorship and another controls the legislature are classified as "neither." Table A-3 also omits Nebraska, as its Unicameral is nonpartisan. State control data is drawn from the National Conference of State Legislatures' State Partisan Composition.

| Table A-4: Y-o-Y Inflation, by State (as of November 2025) | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **State Name[22]** | **State Affiliation[23]** | **Population** | **All Items** | **Housing** | **Food & Beverage** | **Energy** | **Transportation** |
| Alabama | Conservative | 5,157,699 | 2.4% | 3.1% | 2.0% | -1.5% | 0.1% |
| Alaska | Conservative | 740,133 | 3.2% | 3.2% | 2.5% | 5.2% | 4.5% |
| Arizona | Conservative | 7,582,384 | 2.6% | 1.8% | 2.6% | 2.3% | 1.4% |
| Arkansas | Conservative | 3,088,354 | 1.7% | 2.4% | 1.9% | 2.4% | 1.1% |
| California | Liberal | 39,431,263 | 3.2% | 3.2% | 2.5% | 5.2% | 4.5% |
| Colorado | Liberal | 5,957,493 | 2.6% | 1.8% | 2.6% | 2.3% | 1.4% |
| Connecticut | Liberal | 3,675,069 | 2.7% | 3.0% | 2.4% | -0.1% | 2.9% |
| Delaware | Liberal | 1,051,917 | 2.4% | 3.6% | 3.2% | 2.7% | 0.3% |
| District of Columbia | Liberal | 702,250 | 2.4% | 3.6% | 3.2% | 2.7% | 0.3% |
| Florida | Conservative | 23,372,215 | 2.4% | 3.6% | 3.2% | 2.7% | 0.3% |
| Georgia | Conservative | 11,180,878 | 2.4% | 3.6% | 3.2% | 2.7% | 0.3% |
| Hawaii | Liberal | 1,446,146 | 3.2% | 3.2% | 2.5% | 5.2% | 4.5% |
| Idaho | Conservative | 2,001,619 | 2.6% | 1.8% | 2.6% | 2.3% | 1.4% |
| Illinois | Liberal | 12,710,158 | 3.1% | 5.1% | 2.4% | 6.5% | 0.7% |
| Indiana | Conservative | 6,924,275 | 3.1% | 5.1% | 2.4% | 6.5% | 0.7% |
| Iowa | Conservative | 3,241,488 | 2.7% | 3.4% | 1.8% | 6.1% | 0.1% |
| Kansas | Conservative | 2,970,606 | 2.7% | 3.4% | 1.8% | 6.1% | 0.1% |
| Kentucky | Conservative | 4,588,372 | 2.4% | 3.1% | 2.0% | -1.5% | 0.1% |
| Louisiana | Conservative | 4,597,740 | 1.7% | 2.4% | 1.9% | 2.4% | 1.1% |
| Maine | Liberal | 1,405,012 | 2.7% | 3.0% | 2.4% | -0.1% | 2.9% |
| Maryland | Liberal | 6,263,220 | 2.4% | 3.6% | 3.2% | 2.7% | 0.3% |
| Massachusetts | Liberal | 7,136,171 | 2.7% | 3.0% | 2.4% | -0.1% | 2.9% |
| Michigan | Conservative | 10,140,459 | 3.1% | 5.1% | 2.4% | 6.5% | 0.7% |
| Minnesota | Liberal | 5,793,151 | 2.7% | 3.4% | 1.8% | 6.1% | 0.1% |
| Mississippi | Conservative | 2,943,045 | 2.4% | 3.1% | 2.0% | -1.5% | 0.1% |
| Missouri | Conservative | 6,245,466 | 2.7% | 3.4% | 1.8% | 6.1% | 0.1% |
| Montana | Conservative | 1,137,233 | 2.6% | 1.8% | 2.6% | 2.3% | 1.4% |
| Nebraska | Conservative | 2,005,465 | 2.7% | 3.4% | 1.8% | 6.1% | 0.1% |
| Nevada | Conservative | 3,267,467 | 2.6% | 1.8% | 2.6% | 2.3% | 1.4% |
| New Hampshire | Liberal | 1,409,032 | 2.7% | 3.0% | 2.4% | -0.1% | 2.9% |

[22] As was previously noted, there are no state-level consumer price index (CPI) estimates. The lowest level of aggregation for CPI data inclusive of whole states is measured at the 9 census divisions, each consisting of several states. Thus, state-level inflation rates in Table A-4 were assigned to states by census divisions. For example, the East South Central Census Division had an inflation rate of 2.4%, for all items. Because Alabama is in that census division, it is assigned the same inflation rate.

[23] As was previously noted, "conservative states" as those that President Donald J. Trump carried in the 2024 Presidential Election and "liberal states" as those won by Vice President Kamala Harris (according to U.S. Federal Election Commission's 2024 "Official Presidential General Election Results"). The results discussed herein are robust to different definitions and classifications of "conservative" and "liberal" states. See Tables A-1 through A-3 for details.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| New Jersey | Liberal | 9,500,851 | 3.2% | 4.6% | 3.3% | 9.3% | 1.3% |
| New Mexico | Liberal | 2,130,256 | 2.6% | 1.8% | 2.6% | 2.3% | 1.4% |
| New York | Liberal | 19,867,248 | 3.2% | 4.6% | 3.3% | 9.3% | 1.3% |
| North Carolina | Conservative | 11,046,024 | 2.4% | 3.6% | 3.2% | 2.7% | 0.3% |
| North Dakota | Conservative | 796,568 | 2.7% | 3.4% | 1.8% | 6.1% | 0.1% |
| Ohio | Conservative | 11,883,304 | 3.1% | 5.1% | 2.4% | 6.5% | 0.7% |
| Oklahoma | Conservative | 4,095,393 | 1.7% | 2.4% | 1.9% | 2.4% | 1.1% |
| Oregon | Liberal | 4,272,371 | 3.2% | 3.2% | 2.5% | 5.2% | 4.5% |
| Pennsylvania | Conservative | 13,078,751 | 3.2% | 4.6% | 3.3% | 9.3% | 1.3% |
| Rhode Island | Liberal | 1,112,308 | 2.7% | 3.0% | 2.4% | -0.1% | 2.9% |
| South Carolina | Conservative | 5,478,831 | 2.4% | 3.6% | 3.2% | 2.7% | 0.3% |
| South Dakota | Conservative | 924,669 | 2.7% | 3.4% | 1.8% | 6.1% | 0.1% |
| Tennessee | Conservative | 7,227,750 | 2.4% | 3.1% | 2.0% | -1.5% | 0.1% |
| Texas | Conservative | 31,290,831 | 1.7% | 2.4% | 1.9% | 2.4% | 1.1% |
| Utah | Conservative | 3,503,613 | 2.6% | 1.8% | 2.6% | 2.3% | 1.4% |
| Vermont | Liberal | 648,493 | 2.7% | 3.0% | 2.4% | -0.1% | 2.9% |
| Virginia | Liberal | 8,811,195 | 2.4% | 3.6% | 3.2% | 2.7% | 0.3% |
| Washington | Liberal | 7,958,180 | 3.2% | 3.2% | 2.5% | 5.2% | 4.5% |
| West Virginia | Conservative | 1,769,979 | 2.4% | 3.6% | 3.2% | 2.7% | 0.3% |
| Wisconsin | Conservative | 5,960,975 | 3.1% | 5.1% | 2.4% | 6.5% | 0.7% |
| Wyoming | Conservative | 587,618 | 2.6% | 1.8% | 2.6% | 2.3% | 1.4% |

| Table A-5: Y-o-Y Inflation, by Metro Area (as of August/November 2025) | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Metro Area** | **State Affiliation** | **Population** | **All Items** | **Housing** | **Food & Beverage** | **Energy** | **Transportation** |
| Atlanta* | Conservative | 6,411,149 | 1.7% | 3.0% | 3.4% | 1.9% | 0.1% |
| Baltimore* | Liberal | 2,859,024 | 2.8% | 5.1% | 3.0% | 11.5% | -1.0% |
| Boston | Liberal | 5,025,517 | 2.8% | 3.7% | 2.2% | 0.7% | 2.8% |
| Chicago | Liberal | 9,408,576 | 2.5% | 4.8% | 1.8% | 6.7% | -0.2% |
| Dallas | Conservative | 8,344,032 | 1.1% | 0.8% | 1.4% | 2.0% | 0.8% |
| Denver | Liberal | 3,052,498 | 2.2% | 3.6% | 1.7% | -4.9% | -2.7% |
| Detroit* | Conservative | 4,400,578 | 0.7% | 0.0% | 2.6% | 0.8% | -1.6% |
| Houston* | Conservative | 7,796,182 | 1.1% | 2.0% | 2.5% | 5.5% | -1.5% |
| Los Angeles | Liberal | 12,927,614 | 3.6% | 3.2% | 3.3% | 7.0% | 6.6% |
| Miami* | Conservative | 6,457,988 | 2.5% | 3.3% | 5.6% | 3.7% | -1.1% |
| Minneapolis | Liberal | 3,757,952 | 2.5% | 2.2% | 2.1% | 2.6% | 1.6% |
| New York | Liberal | 19,940,274 | 3.0% | 4.2% | 3.6% | 8.4% | 0.8% |
| Philadelphia* | Conservative | 6,330,422 | 3.3% | 4.5% | 2.6% | 9.8% | 2.2% |
| Phoenix* | Conservative | 5,186,958 | 1.4% | -0.1% | 1.1% | 6.7% | 0.8% |
| Riverside | Liberal | 4,744,214 | 4.5% | 5.0% | 2.8% | 7.9% | 7.4% |
| San Diego | Liberal | 3,298,799 | 4.0% | 5.6% | 1.1% | 8.7% | 6.7% |
| San Francisco* | Liberal | 4,648,486 | 2.5% | 2.3% | 3.6% | -0.4% | 4.0% |
| Seattle* | Liberal | 4,145,494 | 2.8% | 2.5% | 3.3% | 9.1% | 5.1% |
| St. Louis* | Conservative | 2,811,927 | 2.6% | 4.0% | 1.4% | 17.6% | 0.3% |
| Tampa | Conservative | 3,424,560 | 3.0% | 3.8% | 4.3% | 5.2% | 0.0% |
| Urban Alaska* | Conservative | 502,164 | 2.4% | 3.8% | 3.9% | 5.3% | -1.2% |
| Urban Hawaii | Liberal | 1,162,516 | 2.4% | 1.9% | 4.3% | -1.0% | 0.6% |
| Washington (D.C.) | Liberal | 6,436,489 | 2.4% | 3.9% | 2.2% | 4.6% | 1.7% |

**All Items, Housing, Food & Beverage, and Transportation Inflation are for August 2025; all others for November 2025.*

*Note: This data represents the most recent available CPI data as of November 2025. Some data is published every month; others are published every other month. There are also inconsistencies in the frequency of data reported given the lapse in appropriations during October and part of November. Energy CPI for Atlanta, Baltimore, Detroit, Houston, Miami, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Francisco, Seattle, St. Louis, and Urban Alaska are for November 2025; Energy CPI for Denver is for September 2025; all other Energy CPI tracks All Items Inflation dates.*