



**on How Trump's War in Iran Has Exacerbated the Affordability Crisis  
June 10, 2026**

Mr. President, 103 days ago, President Trump started a war—a war with Iran. He started it; it was a unilateral decision he made based on the Venezuela model where he would be in and out, it would be over 'quickly,' as he said. It hasn't worked out that way.

This war is illegal and unconstitutional. In my view, it is a shameful moment in the history of this United States Senate, where even though this war is into its fourth month, this body—which is invested with the authority under Article I to declare war—has not even had a vote on whether this war is authorized. But I also want to point out what the problems are that the American people are experiencing as a result of this war.

First of all, none of the president's goals have been met. He was going to decapitate the regime, and it was going to be regime change—failed. He was going to end the missile program—failed. And he was going to get rid of the nuclear material—failed. What did happen is that the Strait of Hormuz has been closed, and that fact is creating immense economic hardship on people across this country and really around the world.

Americans who are already struggling to make ends meet—and ironically, struggling at a time when our economy, in some ways, has never been stronger—they say the cost of living is getting worse and worse. And, of course, that's number one, due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

It's put immense pressure on our farming and food production system, leading to long-term price increases. What we're hearing is that it's going to be a 4.2% inflation, when a year ago, it was 2.4% inflation. So, folks showing up at the grocery store, they're going to be paying 19% more for ground beef; 50% more for tomatoes, compared to last year.

Rising in diesel and fertilizer costs could spell disaster for many farms. We're seeing more and more farm foreclosures. This is a real pressure in Vermont, but it's a pressure that is already all around our country.

And, as you know, Mr. President, higher oil prices also translate directly into higher energy costs and burdens, and it's especially true for rural households. Rural America uses about 14% more energy and spend a higher share of their income on home energy costs than those in urban areas. So, that really affects all of us who serve rural constituencies, and that definitely is true in Vermont.

Also, plastic products that are made of oil have spiked 40%, and that price change has, or will very soon, be passed onto our consumers. So, this is really costing everyday people a lot more.

Even before the start of the war, rural [households] were already spending nearly \$600 more per year on gas than folks in urban areas. They have to drive to get to wherever it is they're going—to work, their child to school, to a hockey practice, everything. You've got to get on the road.

And let's not forget about what's happening with air travel. It's a real crisis. United Airlines is predicting that airlines could increase ticket prices by as much as 20% in response to the current oil market dynamics. It's putting a real squeeze on jet fuel.

President Trump brushes these concerns off. You know, what he says, inexplicably, is: 'Once you explain that this is all about Iran having a nuclear weapon, people are willing to pay a little bit more.' And he also asserted that gas prices are going to drop at the pump 'very quickly.'

Well, that is simply not true. And, also, this plan about this military engagement that he's involved in, along with Prime Minister Netanyahu, is not having the intended goal of getting rid of the nuclear stockpile material that Iran has.

Last year, the average household in Chittenden County—I want to get back to the cost—home to Burlington, which is our state's largest city, paid around \$1,800 [per year] in gas. As a direct result of this war, in the closure of the Strait, that's going to go up to \$2,300 a year. That's \$500 more.

Many commuters in our state and others have changed their daily routines. They've got to change the way they live their lives because they've got to scrimp and save so that they can afford the gas. And, oftentimes, they're staying home rather than going out. Dennis, a retired doctor in Vermont even said: 'We definitely are driving less now.'

You know, we shouldn't impose these kinds of decisions on Americans for a pointless and destructive war. It is not doing us any good and causing us a lot of pain.

But President Trump has repeatedly shown that he has no qualms about doing this. He says: 'I don't think about Americans' financial situation.' I believe him. He doesn't think about it, because any of us who are thinking about it know that Americans' financial situation has deteriorated as a result of this war.

You know, I think the president and all of us who serve here—our number one priority should be finding ways to make Americans' lives better and more affordable. That's not what the president says is his goal.

So, while the president isn't thinking about this affordability challenge, let me tell you who is: and it's Vermonters. And it's people in your state, Mr. President.

Herbie in South Burlington said: 'Honestly, gas prices are ridiculous. It's just way too much to fill up. We barely are saving anything, maybe \$50 bucks a month. With prices of gas and food and everything else going up, we've eaten through our savings.' [It's] creating enormous economic insecurity.

David, a Vermonter who works in the construction industry, said: 'It's painful to the pocketbook.' Sarah, a substitute teacher in Burlington, said about the increase in gas prices: 'It's definitely going to be a new budget item, in a different category.'

Ryan Bellavance, the President of Bellavance Trucking—a revered small business in our state; operates a fleet of nearly 100 trucks based out of Barre—said: 'It's gonna be fine until the people stop buying, you know? And then everything comes to a halt.' That's down the road and not that far down the road.

You know, this war—this march to war in the Middle East—it's also pushed affordable air travel out of reach. The closure of the Strait means that airlines are facing up to \$24 billion in additional fuel expenses this year. A cost which will be directly passed on to consumers.

For airlines to break even, an increase of a dollar a gallon on jet fuel is equivalent of a \$50 per roundtrip ticket increase for flying passengers. And we're not talking about the future. In April, every single major U.S. airline raised checked baggage fees. Spirit Airlines, which many Americans relied on for more affordable travel, met its demise. But we need more than predictions.

The American people deserve transparency about how the skyrocketing jet fuel prices will impact their wallets in the coming weeks and months. I partnered with my colleagues from Illinois, Senator Duckworth, and Connecticut, Senator Blumenthal, in writing a letter to Airlines for America—whose members include major carriers like Alaska Airlines, American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, FedEx, JetBlue, Southwest, United, and UPS—seeking information about the measures that airlines plan to take in response to these higher jet fuel costs and how rising prices will hurt our broader air travel industry.

And, by the way, one of the threats to our air travel industry is service that goes to rural airports. The essential service that is so vital to the well-being of the economies of rural parts of Vermont and rural parts of America.

But what is really close to my heart is what's happened to the Americans [in] farm country. Vermont's farmers and producers—who are already contending with incredible economic challenges as a result of the trade war and the tariffs—are now struggling to figure out how they're going to pay literally the highest diesel prices since 2022.

To make matters worse, we are now in planting season. That means that farmers now have to spend at least \$350 more per day just for a full run of one of their tractors. They use a lot of fuel, and it's diesel fuel, and diesel is expensive. And, by the way, diesel prices already make up more than 60% of the fuel costs for farm operations.

Lindsey Brand of the Northeastern Organic Farming Association of Vermont: 'Diesel fuel powers farm equipment and [the] trucks [used] to transport food. We've heard from some farms that distribute regionally that trucking costs have doubled since the Strait closed.' The war has also surged the price of fertilizer, including urea, which is what most farmers use for their crops: 27% higher than it was before the war.

Mr. President, no matter which way you look at it, the war in Iran has been a disaster on all fronts. It has nowhere near come close to achieving its goals, and there's no negotiations going on. Essentially there's a dance—it's about trying to do face-saving for President Trump.

But also economically, it's had an immediate and wicked impact on families that are already struggling to afford essentials as a result of the affordability crisis. You add this to the trade war, to the tariffs, to the loss of markets, and it's a grim situation.

We can change it. We've got to end the war, and we've got a dilemma here. The president actually does want a negotiated outcome. But his partner in this war, [Prime Minister] Netanyahu, wants to intensify the war.

We should end this war through diplomacy. The goals we seek will not be accomplished through military means. They must be achieved through diplomacy.

Mr. President, we have to come to grips with the reality that this war continues to escalate the incredible pressure that our families, our farmers, our industries, our small businesses are facing. We've got to bring it to an end. We've got to get inflation down. We've got to make America more affordable.

Mr. President, I yield back.

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