# Argument 1 is SPENDING.

## The deficit is declining.

**Carney 4/2** "Trump tells Senate deficit hawks he has their backs on the budget" Jordain Carney and Katherine Tully-McManus, 04/02/2025, https://www.politico.com/live-updates/2025/04/02/congress/trump-tells-senate-deficit-hawks-he-has-their-backs-on-the-budget-00266734 //STRONG

President Donald Trump committed during a closed-door meeting Wednesday to publicly support Senate Republicans in their efforts to **massively** reduce the deficit — and directly engage with them in a legislative process for clawing back federal funds.

Such public assurances from the president are a boon for Senate GOP leaders, who view Trump as a critical ally for winning over the chamber's staunchest deficit hawks who might otherwise balk over the specifics of the emerging budget blueprint.

According to Senate Budget Committee Republicans who attended the White House meeting with the president and Senate Majority Leader John Thune, Trump will publicly release a statement as soon as Wednesday afternoon supporting the Senate's efforts to reduce the deficit far beyond the few-billion-dollar minimum expected to be required by the Senate's forthcoming budget resolution.

Republicans want to release the text of that resolution sometime Wednesday and begin voting on it before the end of the week — the next step in being able to begin drafting the massive bill to enact Trump's domestic agenda through the party-line reconciliation process.

Senate Republicans have an "aspirational" goal of reducing the deficit by $1.5 trillion to $2 trillion as part of their reconciliation bill, but some Senate conservatives, including those in the meeting with Trump, want to go as high as $6.5 trillion. Those hard-liners pressed Trump Wednesday to "publicly" defend their efforts to undertake significant deficit reduction efforts that would go beyond the roughly $3 billion minimums being written into their budget resolution. They now believe that statement of support could come as soon as his scheduled 4 p.m. press conference on tariffs.

**"I asked him point blank; he said he would,"** said Sen. John Kennedy (R-La.).

## Nuclear building costs are sky high – and will only increase further

**Plumer '16** (Brad Plumer, 2/29/2026, Brad Plumer was a former senior editor for Vox news, "Why America abandoned nuclear power (and what we can learn from South Korea)", https://www.vox.com/2016/2/29/11132930/nuclear-power-costs-us-france-korea) //VV

**So what's the catch? Cost is a big one. More than safety or waste issues, cost is nuclear's Achilles' heel. Modern-day reactors have become jarringly expensive to build, going for $5 billion to $10 billion a pop. Worse, the price tag seems to be rising in many places. Back in the 1960s, new reactors in the US were one of the cheaper energy sources around. Two decades later, after a series of missteps, those costs had increased sixfold** — a big reason we stopped building plants.

Ever since, experts have been debating whether or not nuclear's cost problems are an intrinsic flaw that will doom the technology. Nuclear skeptics, such as Joe Romm, **argue that soaring costs are an inevitable side effect of building massive concrete-and-steel structures that need layers of radiation safeguards.**

But there's also an optimistic story for nuclear — and one that I think is worth hearing out. A recent paper in the journal *Energy Policy* by Jessica Lovering, Arthur Yip, and Ted Nordhaus of the Breakthrough Institute looked at construction costs for hundreds of reactors built in the US, France, Canada, Japan, German, India, and South Korea between 1960 and 2010. Their data tells a more nuanced story.

Nuclear construction costs in the US did spiral out of control, especially after the Three Mile Island meltdown in 1979

## Don't believe affirmative defense---projects are rampant with cost overruns

**Bowyer '24** (Johanna Bowyer, 12/13/2024, Johanna Bowyer is the Lead Analyst for Australian Electricity at IEEFA. Her research is focused on trends in the National Electricity Market, energy policy and decarbonisation. "Opposition's nuclear costings are unrealistic", https://ieefa.org/articles/oppositions-nuclear-costings-are-unrealistic#:~:text=%E2%80%9CWe%20have%20found%20that%20nuclear,large%2Dscale%20nuclear%20reactor%20construction.) //VV

**"Recent experience with reactor construction overseas shows far higher costs than what is assumed in the modelling.**

**"The nuclear industry is famous for cost blowouts – low costs are promised, and the cost typically blows out significantly.**

**"We have found that nuclear reactor projects constructed in Europe and North America in the past 20 years have seen cost blowouts of 1.7 to 3.4 times original amounts, excluding financing costs.**

**"The modelling uses a $10 billion per gigawatt (GW) cost for large-scale nuclear reactor construction. However recent international experience shows actual construction costs of $15 billion to $28 billion per GW excluding financing costs**. This is 1.5 to almost three times the Coalition Opposition figure.

## Government support doesn't prevent that cost overrun

**Amy '23** (5/25/2023, Jeff Amy, Amy covers Georgia politics and state government for The Associated Press. He began work with the AP in 2011 and covered Mississippi for eight years before transferring to the Atlanta bureau in 2019, "Timeline: How Georgia and South Carolina nuclear reactors ran so far off course"
https://apnews.com/article/nuclear-power-georgia-vogtle-reactors-8fbf41a3e04c656002a6ee8203988fad) //VV

WAYNESBORO, Ga. (AP) — **The first of two nuclear reactors in Georgia is generating electricity and could be days away from achieving full-power operation. But the new units at Georgia Power Co.'s Plant Vogtle are $17 billion over budget and running seven years late.**

Customers of multiple Georgia utilities are already paying billions, although state regulators haven't yet decided how much Georgia Power ratepayers will owe.

Meanwhile, two of the same model reactors that were planned for different owners in South Carolina were abandoned partway through construction. There, federal prosecutors have pursued criminal charges against utility and construction executives, saying they illegally concealed delays and cost overruns.

**The projects were supposed to mark a rebirth for the U.S. nuclear industry, but construction proved difficult despite consistent federal support.**

## That's way over the budget.

**WNN '24** (World Nuclear News, 3/14/2024, News, features and analysis covering the global nuclear energy sector, supported by World Nuclear Association., "US proposed budget supports nuclear projects" ,https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/us-proposed-budget-supports-nuclear-projects) //VV

**The US Administration's 2025 budget request includes nearly USD1.6 billion for the Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy**, with support for securing supplies of high-assay low-enriched uranium, developing new reactor technologies, supporting R&D, advancing the use of additive manufacturing and AI, and deploying US reactors overseas.

## An increase in Debt will hurt the economy---jobs will be lost, interest rates will skyrocket, and investments will halt

**Kelly '24** (Jack Kelly, 2/24/2024, Jack Kelly has been a senior contributor for Forbes since 2018, covering topics in career development, job market trends and workplace dynamics. His articles often focus on practical advice for job seekers and employees, as well as covering the latest news impacting workers so they can make informed decisions about their careers. Kelly is the founder and CEO of the Compliance Search Group, one of the largest and most respected executive search firms specializing in the recruitment of compliance, legal, risk, audit and related professionals. He also founded WeCruitr.io, a platform aimed at making the job search process more humane and effective by connecting job seekers with top recruiters and offering career coaching services. Kelly serves on the board of directors for Blind, a professional network where verified employees discuss workplace issues anonymously. "How The $34 Trillion U.S. National Debt Could Hurt The Job Market" https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly/2024/02/24/how-the-34-trillion-us-national-debt-could-hurt-the-job-market/) //VV

The estimated national debt is about $34.27 trillion, according to the United States Department of Treasury. **Paying off the U.S. federal debt will prove to be a long-term challenge that could have a significant impact on the job market. For example, a default on the U.S. debt could lead to substantial job losses, potentially affecting millions of workers. In 2023, White House economists warned that a protracted default scenario could eradicate 8 million jobs from the U.S. economy**.

"Without the ability to spend on counter-cyclical measures such as extended unemployment insurance, Federal and state governments would be hamstrung in responding to this turmoil and unable to buffer households from the impacts," the Council of Economic Advisers reported in a White House blog post.

"Neither would households be able to borrow through the private sector as the **interest rates on the financial instruments that households and businesses use**—Treasury bonds, mortgages, and credit card interest rates—would skyrocket due to risks of an uncertain future," the CEA added.

The relationship between the U.S. national debt and the job market is influenced by a number of factors. **High debt levels lead to higher interest rates, making it more expensive for businesses to borrow money for expansion and investment, which can potentially slow down job creation.**

To reduce the debt, the federal government will need to implement spending cuts or tax increases. These actions impact government programs and consumer spending, leading to job losses in certain sectors. **Additionally, a high debt burden can create uncertainty and undermine investor confidence, adversely impacting economic growth and hiring.**

## The inflation spirals will destroy the economy

**Heil 19** "The US Debt—Causes and Consequences" Daniel Heil - policy fellow at the Hoover Institution, master's of public policy degree with a specialization in economics and American politics from Pepperdine University., co-Author(s): John B. Taylor Michael J. Boskin John F. Cogan John H. Cochrane, May 22, 2019

https://www.hoover.org/research/us-debt-causes-and-consequences-0 //STRONG

Rising interest rates and increasing deficits threaten to build upon each other to send public debt spiraling upward even faster. When treasury debt holders start to doubt our government's ability to repay, or to attract future lenders, they will demand higher interest rates to compensate for the risk. If current spending and tax policy continue unaltered, higher interest costs will have to be financed by even more debt. More borrowing puts more upward pressure on interest rates, and the spiral continues.

**This debt spiral threatens the economy** in many ways. In the worst-case scenario, the government has so much trouble borrowing money that interest rates rise dramatically. Lenders might begin to worry about the government's ability to pay back the debt or they might be concerned that the government will devalue the dollar to lower its real obligations.

## Market crashes and recessions cause higher death rates – from financial instability, not having enough money for healthcare, and poor support of children

**Doerr and Boris 20** [Doerr, Sebastian, and Boris Hofmann. BIS Working Papers No 910 Recessions and Mortality: A Global Perspective. 2020, www.bis.org/publ/work910.pdf.]

The data suggest stark differences in the link between recessions, defined as years of negative GDP growth, and mortality across countries. Panel (a) in Figure 2 shows average death rates during non-recession and recession years in (rich) advanced economies and (poorer) emerging market and developing economies. While average mortality rates are not statistically different during recessions in AEs, they are significantly higher in EMDEs. These differences are even starker 1A regression of excess deaths over total population on the predicted decline in GDP yields a coefficient β EMDE = −0.17 for EMDEs and β AE = −0.01 for AEs. When we control for the number of infections per capita and the number of hospital beds per capita in the regressions, the respective coefficients are β EMDE = −0.14 and β AE = −0.00. In other words, a more severe course of the pandemic, characterised by higher infection rates, and a less well-equipped health sector, characterised by fewer hospital beds, explain only part of the observed correlation. 2 for child mortality rates, which increase dramatically in EMDEs in years when the economy contracts, but barely change in AEs (panel b). Investigating the link systematically in regressions, we find that recessions are associated with a sizeable and highly significant increase in mortality. During years of falling GDP, death rates rise by 0.4 deaths per 1,000 people (4% of the mean). Child mortality rates surge by 4 deaths per 1,000 births (6% of the mean). Importantly, we find that recessions cast a long shadow: they lead to significantly higher death rates for up to ten years and higher child mortality rates for up to twelve years. A key finding of our analysis is that recessions increase mortality rates primarily in EMDEs, and there in particular child mortality rates. Specifically, in a recession the mortality rate increases by 0.5 deaths per 1,000 people (4.5% of the mean) and the child mortality rate by almost 5 deaths per 1,000 births (7% of the mean). These effects are statistically highly significant. By contrast, recessions have a small and often insignificant effect on death rates in AEs. We further find that the deeper the recession, the larger the increase in mortality rates among EMDEs. For example, years of just below-zero GDP growth see a smaller increase in death rates than years in which GDP declines by at least 2.5%. Our results hold in a large number of robustness tests. In the analysis we control for trend GDP per capita to account for the general negative relation between the level of development and death rates. We also account for armed conflicts, epidemics or famines that could simultaneously trigger recessions and rising death rates. Further, our estimates are unaffected when we focus on the period after 1990 to account for the increase in living standards in many EMDEs over time; are similar when we use alternative definitions of what constitutes a recession; are robust to controlling for unobservable regional development through time-varying fixed effects at the regional level; and are insensitive to controlling for demographic trends.

# Contention 2 is MELTDOWNS.

## Any nuclear plants structurally risk meltdowns

**Muellner et al. 21** – *PhD, Head of the Institute of Safety and Risk Sciences; **Researcher at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences; ***Senior Scientist at the Centre for Global Change and Sustainability, Professor at the University of Vienna, PhD in Physics and Mathematics from the University of Vienna; ****PhD, Professor at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences; *****PhD, Professor at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences.

*Nikolaus Muellner, Nikolaus Arnold, **Klaus Gufler, ***Wolfgang Kromp, ****Wolfgang Renneberg, *****Wolfgang Liebert, "Nuclear energy - The solution to climate change?" Energy Policy, 08-xx-2021, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301421521002330#sec4

However, current nuclear reactors, no matter how safe they may be, always carry a residual risk for **severe, catastrophic accidents** (Sehgal, 2012) and **large releases** of **radioactive materials** (Seibert et al., 2012). New reactors attempt to reduce the residual risk, but even with the future technologies currently envisaged a nuclear catastrophe **cannot be fully excluded**. The main contribution to current nuclear electricity generation stems from reactors built 1970–1990, which were designed 1960–1980. New reactor technologies promise that the risk for severe accidents is reduced by a factor of ten. However, according to current plans, the major part of future nuclear generating capacity stems from lifetime extensions of existing plants and only a limited part will come from new builds (in 2040 ~30% new builds, ~70% current operating reactors life time extended and/or in long term operation according to ISR-projection).

## Federal nuclear investments get used to sustain dangerous existing plants and reopen even riskier shutdown facilities – causes zombie nuke facilities

**Kamps 24** ---- Kevin Kamps, radioactive waste specialist at Beyond Nuclear, "Nuclear Boosterism Has Gotten Reckless," *Utility Dive*, 3/22/24, https://www.utilitydive.com/news/nuclear-boosterism-has-gotten-reckless/710777/ #THUR

The **lax** regulatory environment is **propelling unwelcome developments** in the sector. Owners demand and get massive subsidies to keep **aging**, **embrittled** nuclear plants running, or, in the case of Palisades in Michigan, to restart an **extremely dangerous reactor** that was already permanently shutdown.

The privately held, unaccountably governed, firm Holtec bought the shuttered Palisades nuclear plant in 2022, supposedly to decommission it, but then a week later secretly applied for several billions of dollars in bailouts to restart it instead, causing the term **"zombie nuke"** to enter the lexicon. The NRC is treating the conversion of Holtec's decommissioning license for Palisades to an operating license as a routine procedure, **even though it's unprecedented** and Holtec has never operated a nuclear plant before.

## Those re-openings advanced a broad agenda to reopen other unsafe, permanently closed nuclear facilities – federal investment invites accidents

**Kamps 24** ---- Kevin Kamps, radioactive waste specialist at Beyond Nuclear, "Nuclear Boosterism Has Gotten Reckless," *Utility Dive*, 3/22/24, https://www.utilitydive.com/news/nuclear-boosterism-has-gotten-reckless/710777/ #THUR

Restarting a shutdown reactor is **reckless** and **sets a dangerous precedent for other closed plants**. In FOIAed documents relating to Holtec's Palisades bailout application, the company avowed that "one of the principal reasons Holtec has been acquiring **aging** nuclear plants is because such sites are near-perfect locations for building the SMR-160 reactors that the company has been developing." Communities around

decommissioning sites Holtec acquired, including **New York's Indian Point** and **Massachusetts' Pilgrim**, should **beware of this agenda** to **renuclearize decommissioned sites** with new SMRs of its own manufacture.

## **Independent** of **structural risks**, accidents from **extreme weather** and **sea-level rise** threaten **a third of the US population**

**CCS ND** ---- Columbia Climate School – National Center for Disaster Preparedness, "Nuclear Power Plants and Earthquake Risk," https://ncdp.columbia.edu/nuclear-power-plants-earthquake-risk/ #THUR

**Over one-third of the US population** lives or works within 50 miles of a nuclear power plant. Currently, there are 105 operating nuclear reactors at 65 sites throughout the United States. As the map illustrates, only a few power plants are found in regions with some earthquake risk. The pattern of nuclear reactor sites across the United States shows that the Central US is relatively empty compared to the Eastern Seaboard, the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi River. It is no coincidence that the placement of these power plants follows the population distribution, which has historically followed major waterways and ports. Additionally, the strategic placement of these power plants close to major water bodies also provides the water required to help cool the plant **however**, the placement near the water's edge, particularly next to the ocean, **increases the risk of damage from environmental impacts** such as **sea-level rise**, **tsunami**, **hurricane**, or other **extreme weather events**.

## **Furthermore – nuclear power is susceptible to earthquakes**

**CCS ND** ---- Columbia Climate School – National Center for Disaster Preparedness, "Nuclear Power Plants and Earthquake Risk," https://ncdp.columbia.edu/nuclear-power-plants-earthquake-risk/ #THUR

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This map shows seismic hazards, nuclear power plant sites, the number of reactors per site, and the population within a 50-mile radius of each nuclear power plant site. The total US average population within this 50-mile radius is approximately 117.7 million, or **38% of the entire US population**. More power plants are seen around the Great Lakes and in the Northeast, with a higher occurrence of populations that overlap within the 50-mile catchment of multiple nuclear plants. Nuclear plants in California are **visibly vulnerable to earthquake risk**, with one Southern California plant potentially impacting a population of over **5 million**. **More frequent overlap** of nuclear power plants and seismic risk is seen in the Southeast as the seismic hazard appears minimal, **though not insignificant**. This map is not an analytical tool but allows the user to visualize population size within a 50-mile radius of a nuclear power plant and proximity to seismic hazards.

## **Nuclear meltdowns** risk **extinction**

**Slocum 15** — Christopher Slocum, Researcher at Arizona Oil & Gas, J.D. from University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law, 2015 ("A Theory for Human Extinction: Mass Coronal Ejection and Hemispherical Nuclear Meltdown," *The Hidden Costs of Alternative Energy Series The Hidden Costs of Alternative Energy Series*, July 21st, Available Online at http://azoilgas.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Theory-for-Human-Extinction-Slocum-20151003.pdf)

With our intelligence we have littered the planet with massive spent nuclear fuel pools, emitting lethal radiation in over-crowded conditions, with circulation requirements of electricity, water-supply, and

neutron absorbent chemicals. The failure of any of these conditions for any calculable or incalculable reason, will release all of a pool's **cesium into the atmosphere**, causing 188 square miles to be contaminated, 28,000 cancer deaths and $59 billion in damage. As of 2003, 49,000 tons of SNF was stored at 131 sites with an additional 2,000-2,400 metric tons produced annually. The NRC has issued permits, and the nuclear industry has amassed unfathomable waste on the premise that a deep geological storage facility would be available to remediate the waste. The current chances for a deep geological storage facility look grim. The NAS has required geologic stability for 1,000,000 years. It is impossible to calculate any certainty 1,000,000 years into the future. Humanity could not even predict the mechanical failures at Three Mile Island or Chernobyl, nor could it predict the size of the tsunami that triggered three criticality events at Fukushima Daiichi. These irremediable crises span just over 70 years of human history.

How can the continued production and maintenance of SNF in pools be anything but a precedent to an **unprecedented human cataclysm**? The Department of Energy's outreach website explains nuclear fission for power production, providing a timeline of the industry. The timeline ends, as does most of the world's reactor construction projects in the 1990s, with the removal of the FCMs from Three Mile Island. One would think the timeline would press into the current decade, however the timeline terminates with the question, "How can we minimize the risk? What do we do with the waste?" (The History of Nuclear Energy 12). Nearly fifteen years into the future, these questions are no closer to an answer. The reactors at Fukushima Daiichi are still emitting radioisotopes into the atmosphere, and their condition is unstable. TEPCO has estimated it could take forty years to recover all of the fuel material, and there are doubts as to whether the decontamination effort can withstand that much time (Schneider 72). A detailed analysis of Chernobyl has demonstrated that nuclear fall-out, whether from thermonuclear explosions, spent fuel pool fires, or reactor core criticality events are deleterious to the **food-chain**. Cesium and strontium are taken into the roots of **plants** and **food crops**, causing direct human and animal contamination from ingestion, causing cancer, teratogenicity, **mutagenesis** and **death**. Vegetation suffers mutagenesis, reproductive loss, and death. Radioactive fields and forest floors **decimate invertebrate** and **rodent variability** and number necessary to supply nature's food-chain and life cycles. The flesh and bones of freshwater and oceanic biota contribute significantly to the total radiation dose in the food-chain. Fresh water lakes, rivers and streams become radioactive. Potable aquafers directly underlying SNFs and FCMs are penetrated by downward migration of radioisotopes. Humans must eat to live. Humans must have water. **No human can survive** 5 Sv of exposure to ionizing radiation, many cannot survive exposure to 1 Sv.

Realizing the irremediable devastation caused by one thermonuclear warhead, by one Chernobyl, by one Fukushima Daiichi, it remains to be said that the earth can handle as many simultaneous loss of coolant failures as nature can create. **Humanity cannot**. It is not good enough to lead by relegating probable **human wide extinction** phenomena to an appeal to lack of evidence. Policy cannot indefinitely ignore responsibility by requiring further study. Nor can leadership idle into cataclysm by relying on the largest known natural phenomena of the last 200 years. Permitting construction and continued operation of malefic machinery, based on 200 years of cataclysmic experience is a protocol for calamity. Of coronal mass ejections, Hapgood warns, that we need to prepare for a once-in-1000-year event, not just simulate infrastructure safeties by the measure of what we have seen in the past. The same is true for all natural phenomena. The future of humanity is **too precious** to operate with such insouciance. The engineering is not good enough. It never will be. Nature is too unpredictable, and nuclear power is too dangerous.

## The risk of nuclear accidents is uniquely high, given Trump meddling and deregulation

**Huff 3/6** ---- Katy Huff, Paul Wilson, & Michael Corradini, Katy Huff is a former Department of Energy assistant secretary for nuclear energy and is currently an associate professor at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, Paul Wilson is the Grainger Professor of Nuclear Engineering and the chair of the University of Wisconsin–Madison's department of nuclear engineering and engineering physics, Michael Corradini a former member of the U.S. Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards, a former president of the American Nuclear Society, and a professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, "Killing a Nuclear Watchdog's Independence Threatens Disaster," *Scientific American*, 3/6/25,

https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/killing-a-nuclear-watchdogs-independence-threatens-disaster/ #THUR

A Trump administration executive order is setting the U.S. **on the fastest path to a nuclear accident.**

Announced on February 18, the "Ensuring Accountability for All Agencies" executive order aims to bring independent regulatory agencies under the "supervision and control" of the president. Among them, the **N**uclear **R**egulatory **C**ommission is the watchdog that Americans rely on to hold nuclear energy companies accountable for avoiding reactor **accidents** and **releases of radioactive material into the environment**.

By demanding that the NRC cease to issue regulations and guidance without written permission from the president or the attorney general, the order **effectively demands that nuclear safety take a back seat to politics**.

**As nuclear engineers**, as well as former government and industry officials, we foresee that this proposed **regulatory capture** by the Executive Office of the President—where decisions are made for political reasons and not for the benefit of people served—will **severely increase** the risk of expensive, unexpected **nuclear accidents** in the U.S.

This is **neither hypothetical nor hyperbole**.