

CPI Surge, Overseas Investments, and Gone Grants

March 24th, 2025

- **CPI Surge** – The Consumer Price Index increased by 0.2% in February 2025, following a 0.5% increase in January 2025. The food index rose by 0.2% and the shelter index increased by 0.3%, while the airline fare index decreased by 4.0% and the gasoline index dropped by 1.0% (source: [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)).
- **Overseas Investments** – Berkshire Hathaway raised its holdings in five Japanese trading houses on Monday, March 17. Investments include Mitsui & Co, Mitsubishi Corp, Sumitomo Corp, Itochu, and Marubeni, bringing ownership in all five to around 10% (source: [Reuters](#)).
- **Pay Raise Please** – Real average hourly earnings for all employees increased by 0.1% from January to February 2025. Between February 2024 and February 2025, real average hourly earnings increased by 1.4% (source: [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)).
- **Manufacturing Mayhem** – The S&P Global Manufacturing PMI rose to 52.7 in February 2025, up from 51.2 in January 2025. This reading marks the second consecutive month of expansion and the strongest growth since June 2022 (source: [Trading Economics](#)).
- **Gone Grants** – The Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, and the U.S. General Services Administration have canceled nearly \$400 million in federal grants to Columbia University, citing persistent harassment of Jewish students. Columbia University currently holds more than \$5 billion in federal grant commitments (source: [U.S. Department of Education](#)).
- **Closing the Wallet** – In January 2025, personal income increased by \$221.9 billion or 0.9% since December 2024, while personal consumption expenditures decreased by \$30.7 billion or 0.2% since December 2024. Consumer spending on motor vehicles and parts saw the steepest decline at \$41.1 billion (source: [U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis](#)).
- **Payment Please?** – Student loan delinquencies reached four million during 2024, which is double the pre-pandemic delinquency rates. Over the course of four years, the Biden administration forgave \$180 billion of student loans for 4.9 million borrowers (source: [Forbes](#)).

- **Battle on the Border** – In February 2025, the U.S. Border Patrol apprehended 8,347 immigrants attempting to cross the southwest border illegally. This is a 94% decrease from February 2024's 140,641 detentions (source: [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#)).
- **Behaving Bad?** – A new study by the Pew Research Center found that 47% of U.S. adults agree that people have become ruder since the pandemic. Another 44% of respondents believe people behave the same, while 9% of respondents argue that people are more polite (source: [Pew Research Center](#)).
- **End of an Era** – The Stanford women's basketball team will miss their first NCAA tournament appearance since 1987, which was the second-longest tournament streak behind Tennessee's 42 straight appearances (source: [Yahoo Sports](#)).

Definitions and Indexes

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