



National and Regional Economic Update

Counties Connect: A Legislative Action Day
February 18, 2026



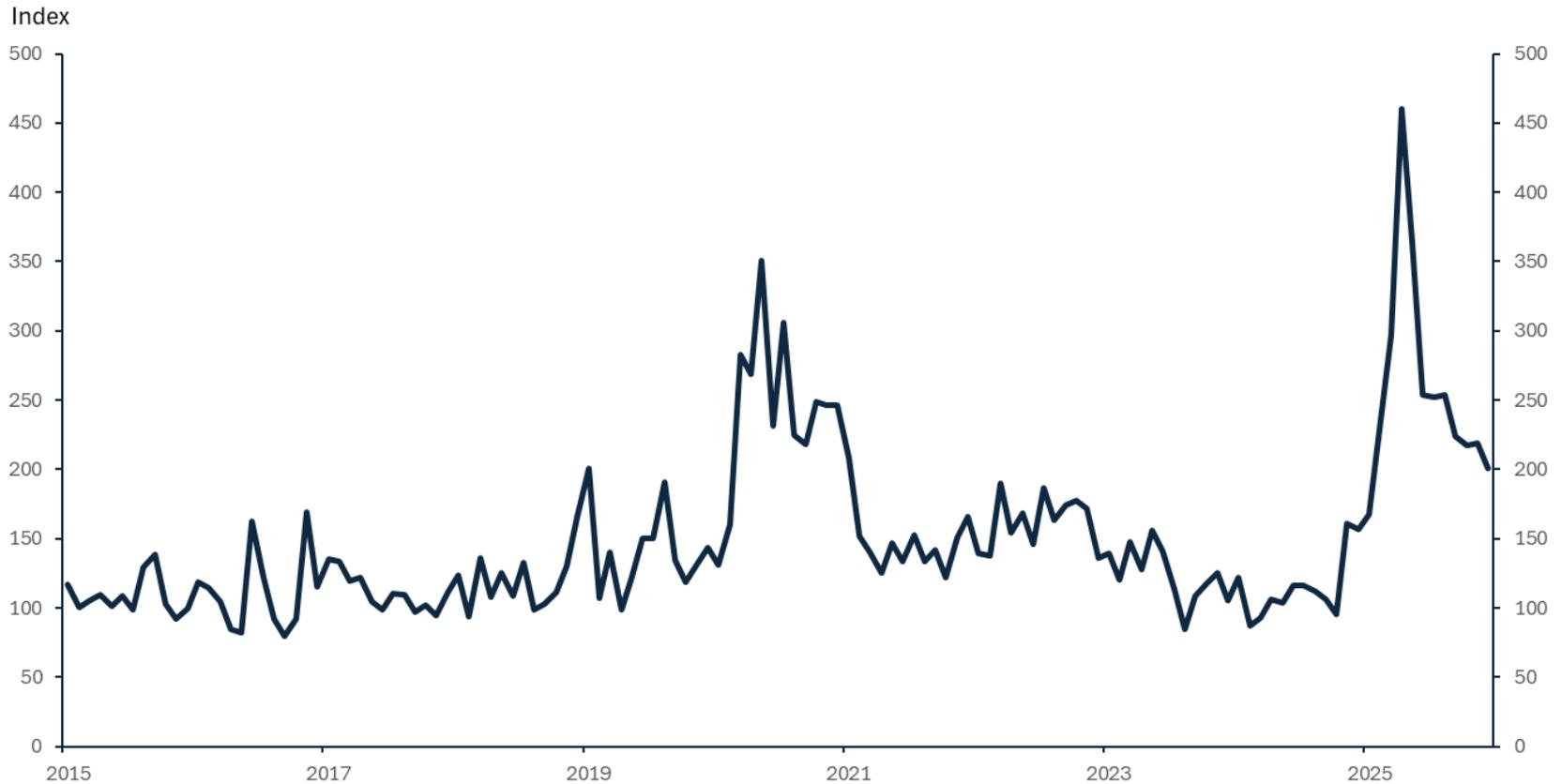
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Economic policy uncertainty diminished but remains elevated

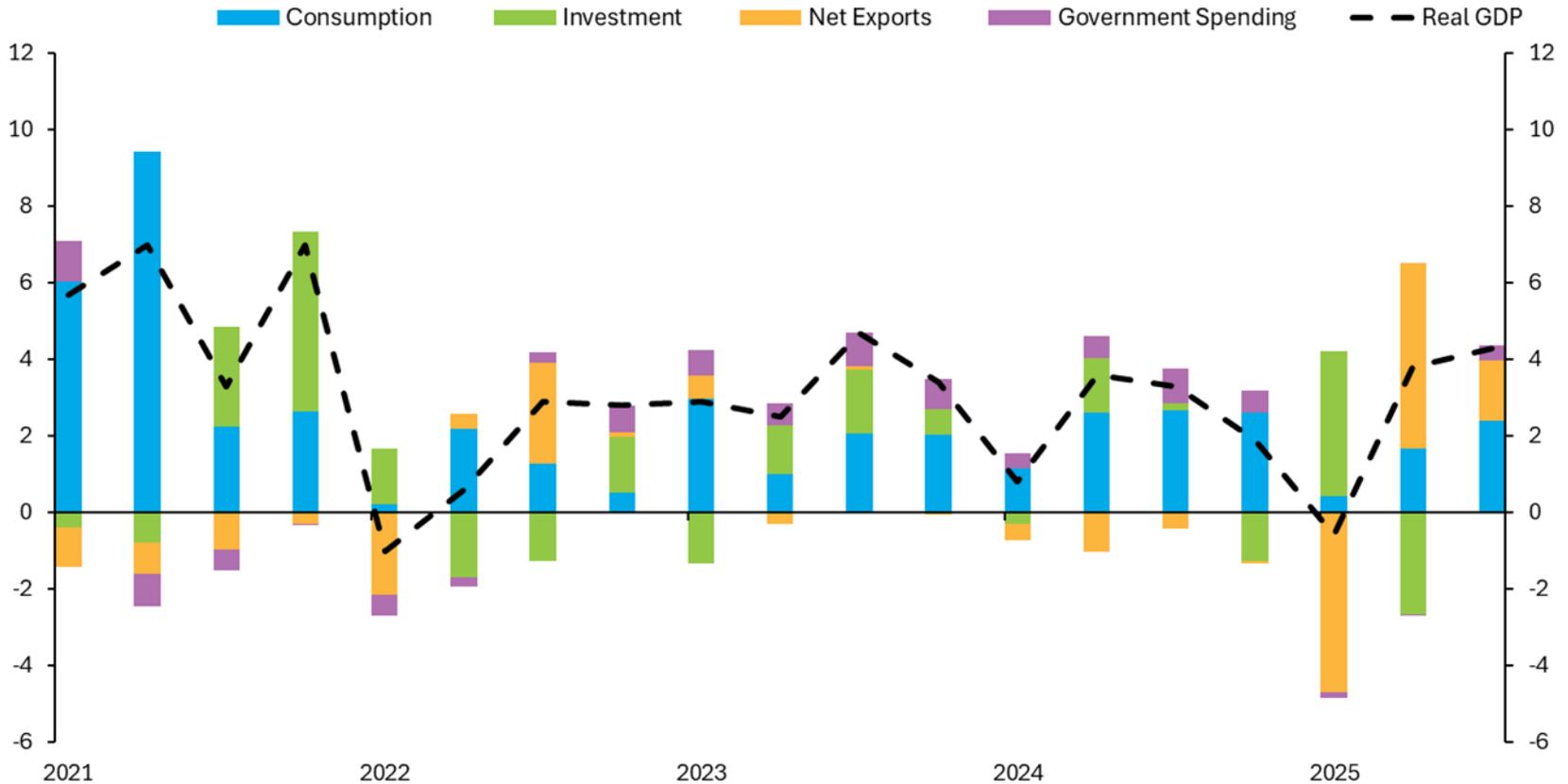
Economic Policy Uncertainty Index



Source: PolicyUncertainty.com/ Haver Analytics

Q3 GDP growth was strong primarily due to robust consumer spending

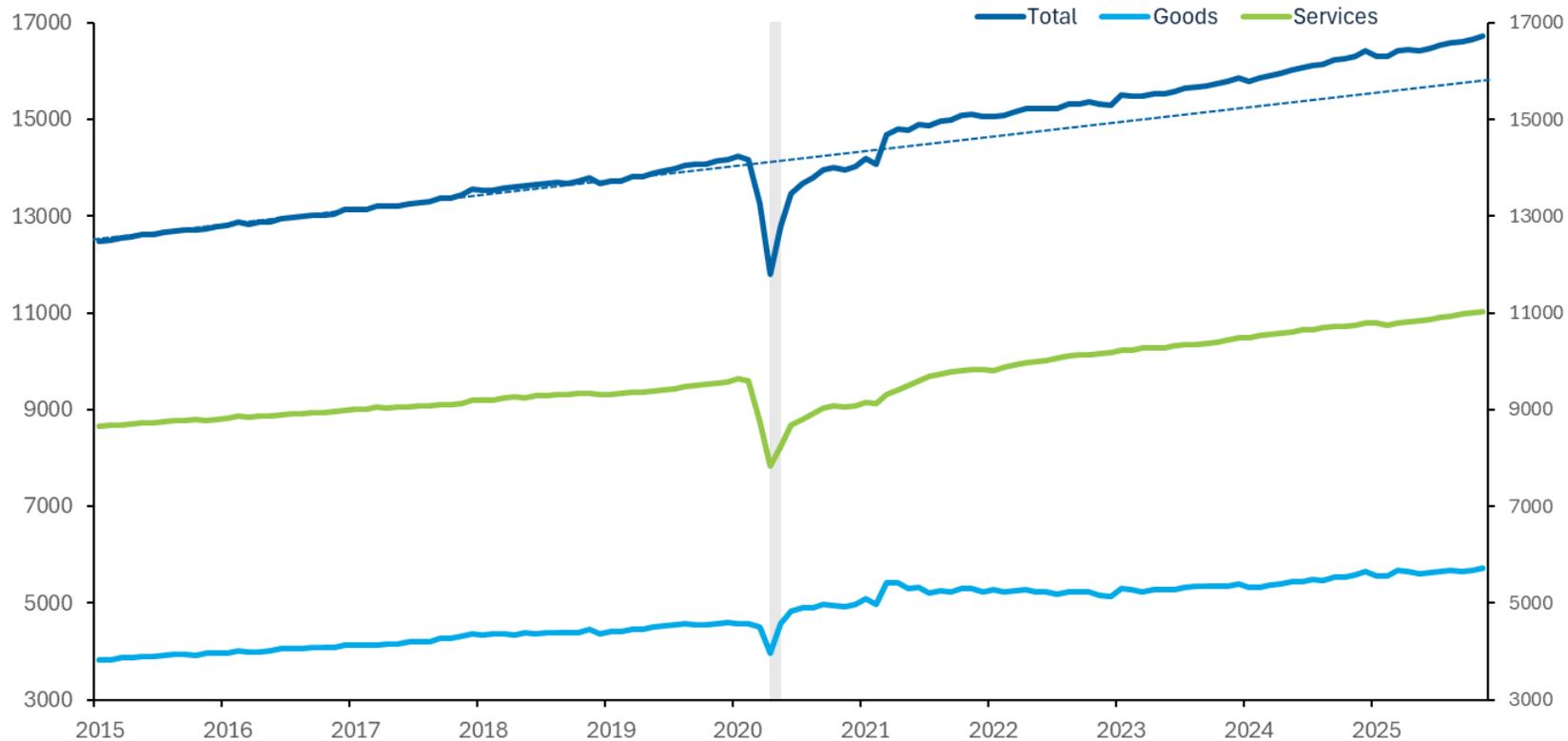
GDP Components



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis/Haver Analytics

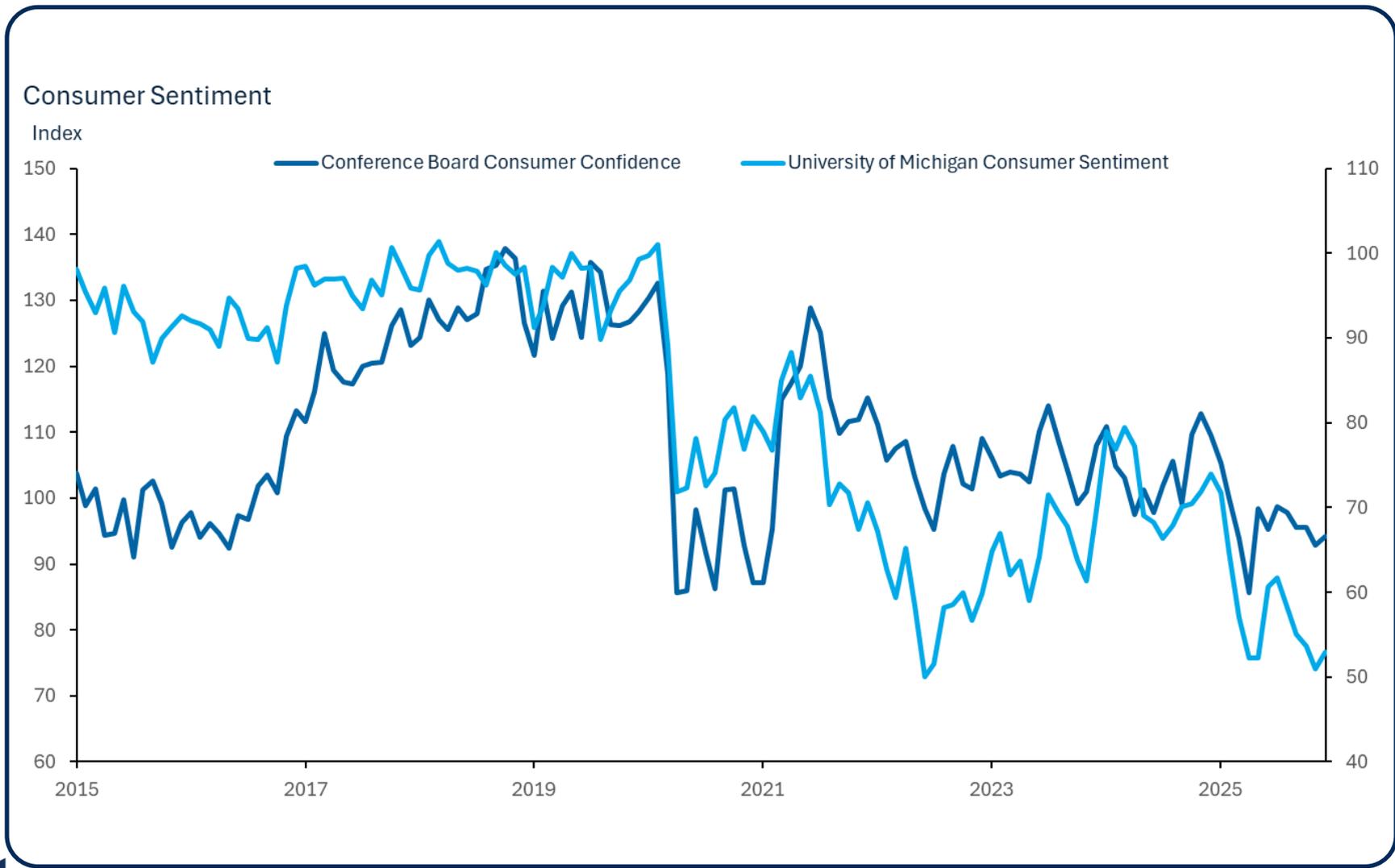
Consumer spending has remained healthy

Real Personal Consumption
SAAR, Bil. Chn. 2012\$



Source: BEA, Haver

However, consumer sentiment is down

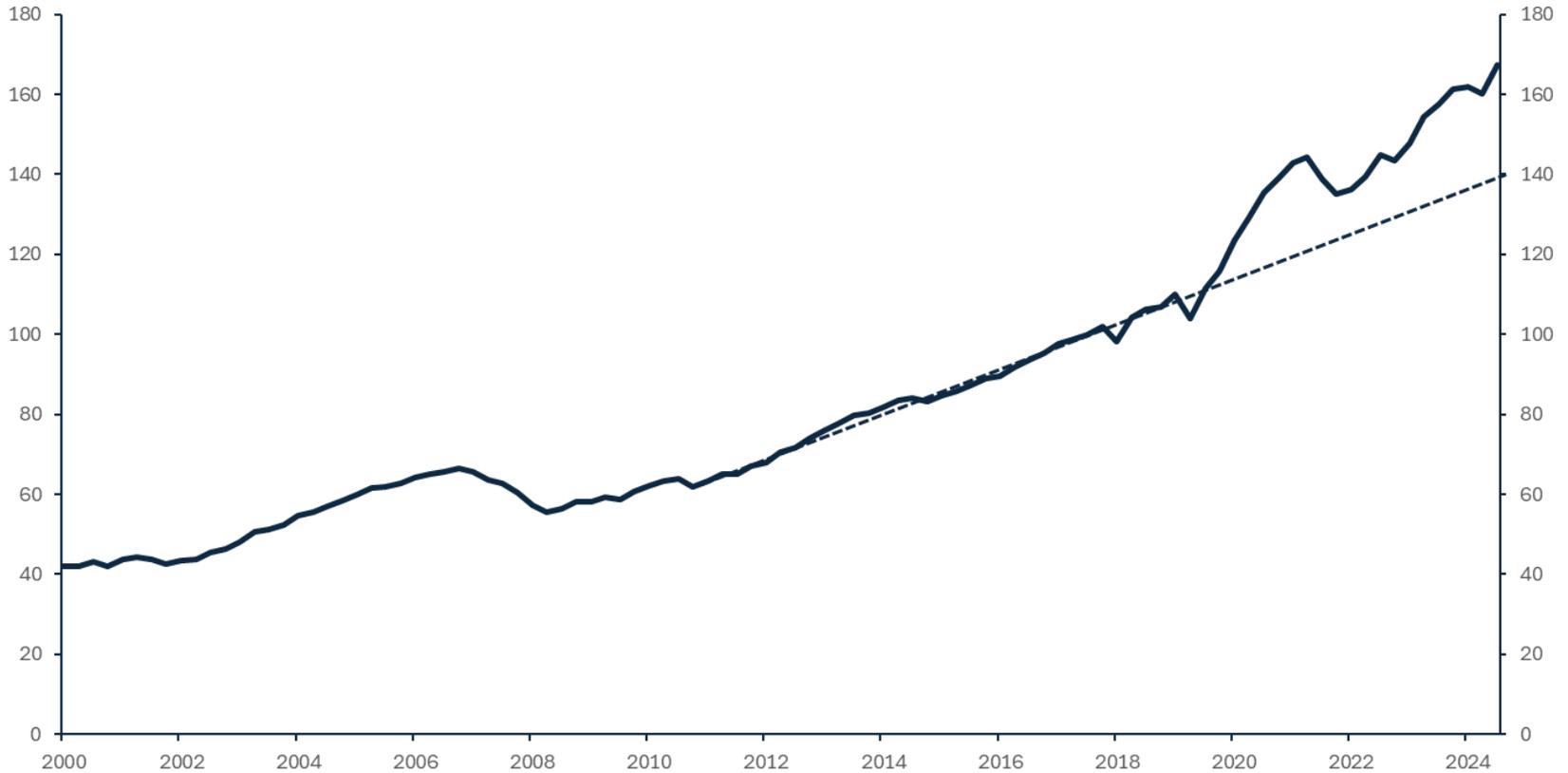


Source: Conference Board, U Mich, Haver

Asset holders are buoyed by the wealth effect

Household Net Worth

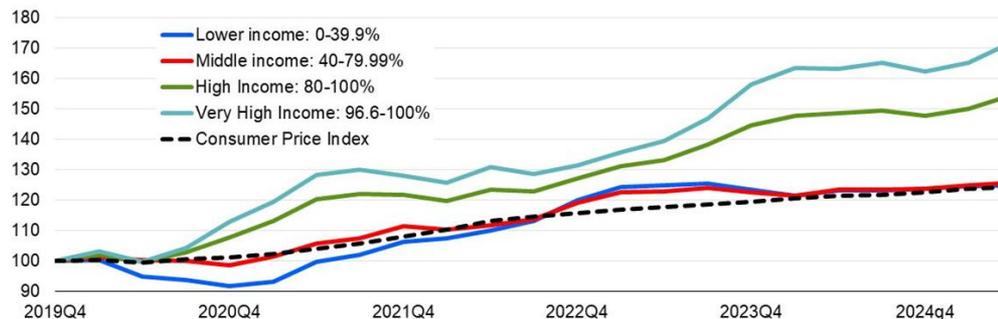
Trillions \$



Source: Federal Reserve Board, Haver

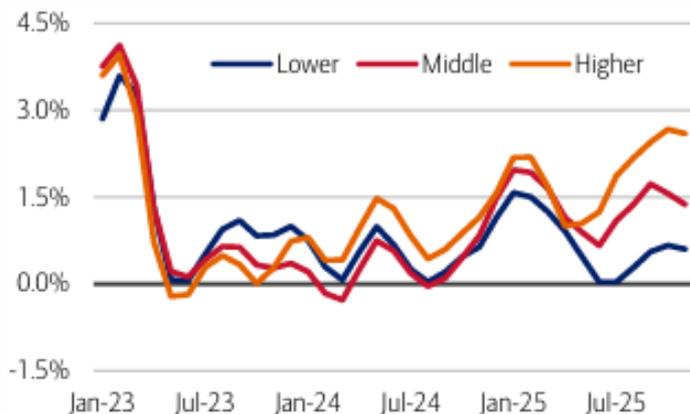
High income consumers are driving strong consumption growth

Personal outlays by income group, 1999q4 = 100

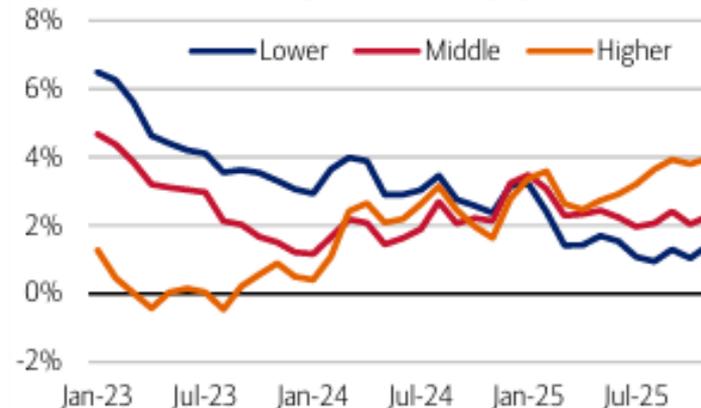


Sources: BLS, Moody's Analytics

Credit and debit card spending



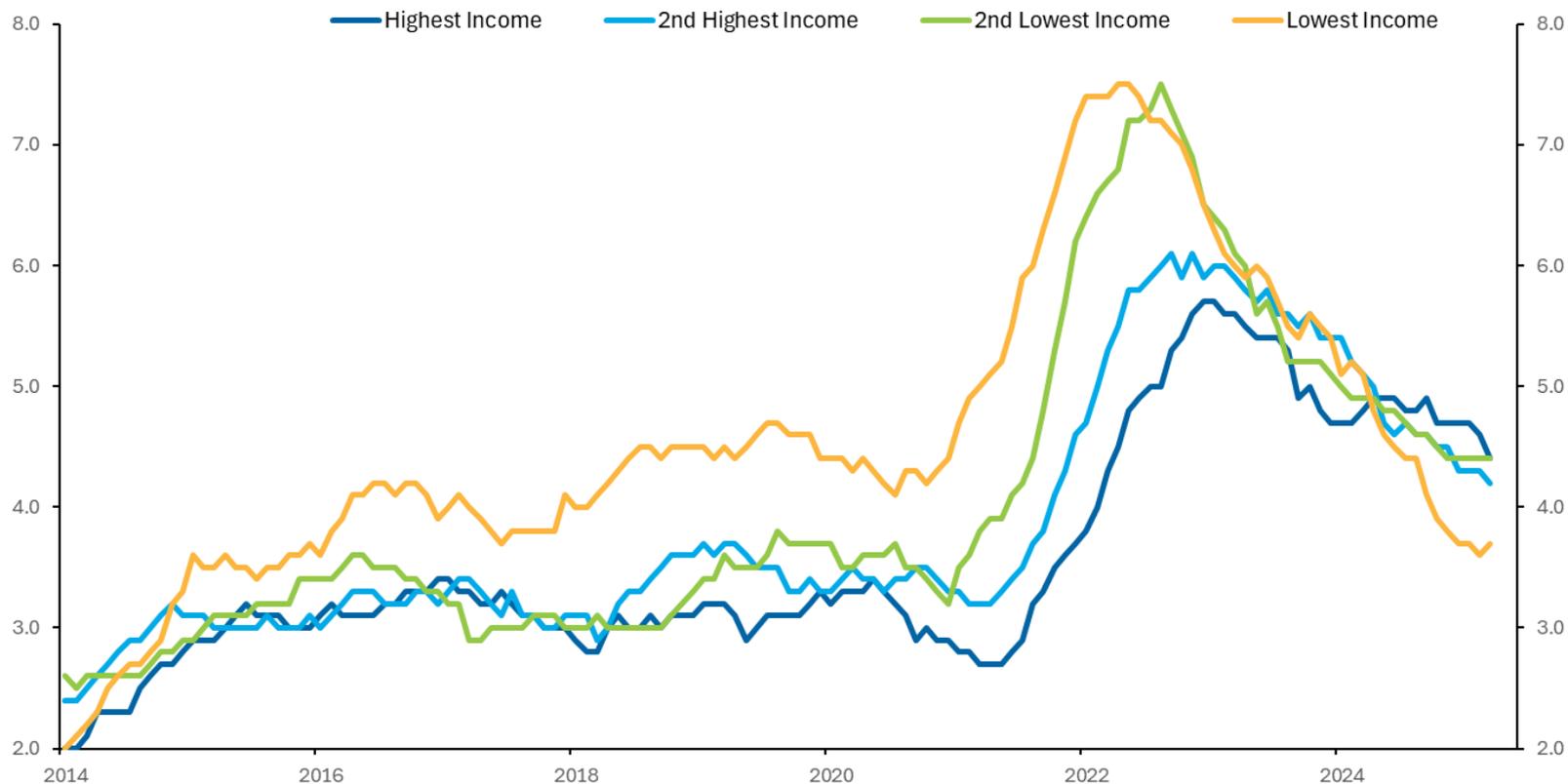
Wage and salary growth



Source: Moody's Analytics, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Bank of America

Wage growth has slowed especially for low-income households

Atlanta Wage Growth Tracker by Income



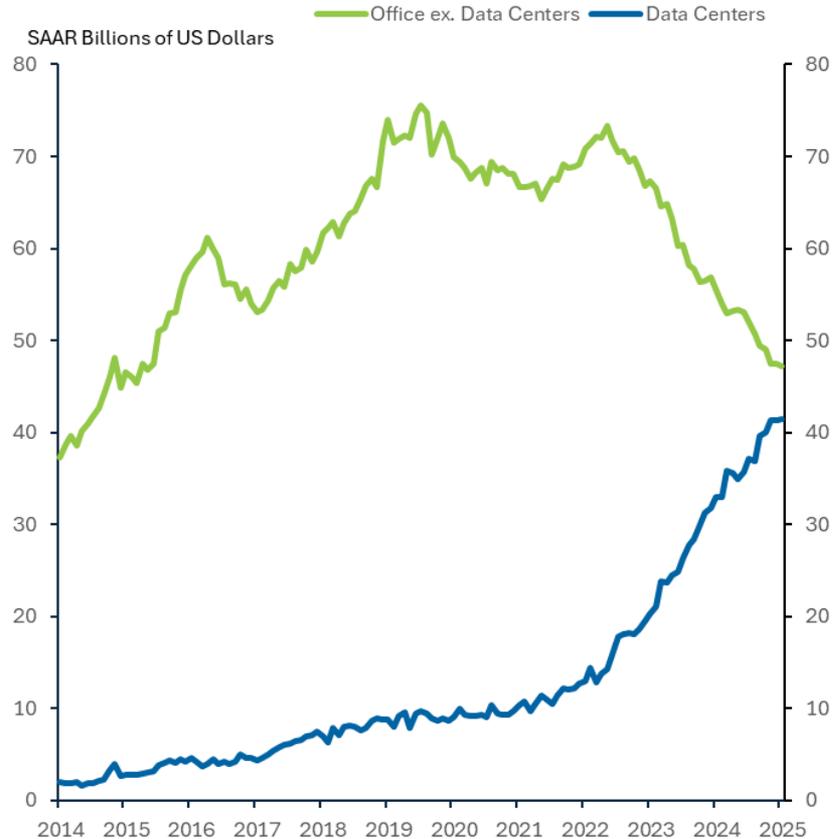
Source: Atlanta Fed, Haver

AI-related investment is strong

Industrial Production

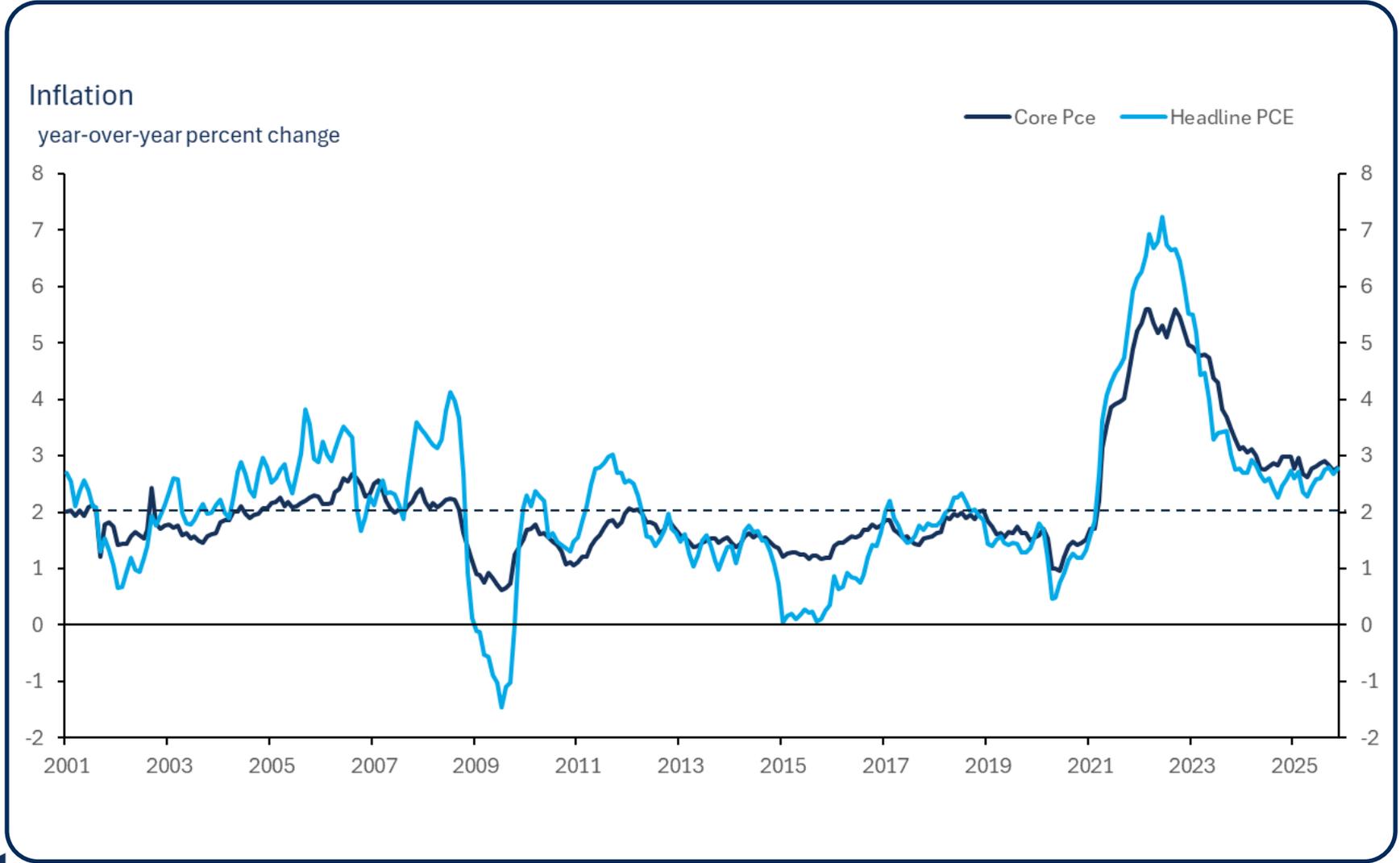


Private Construction

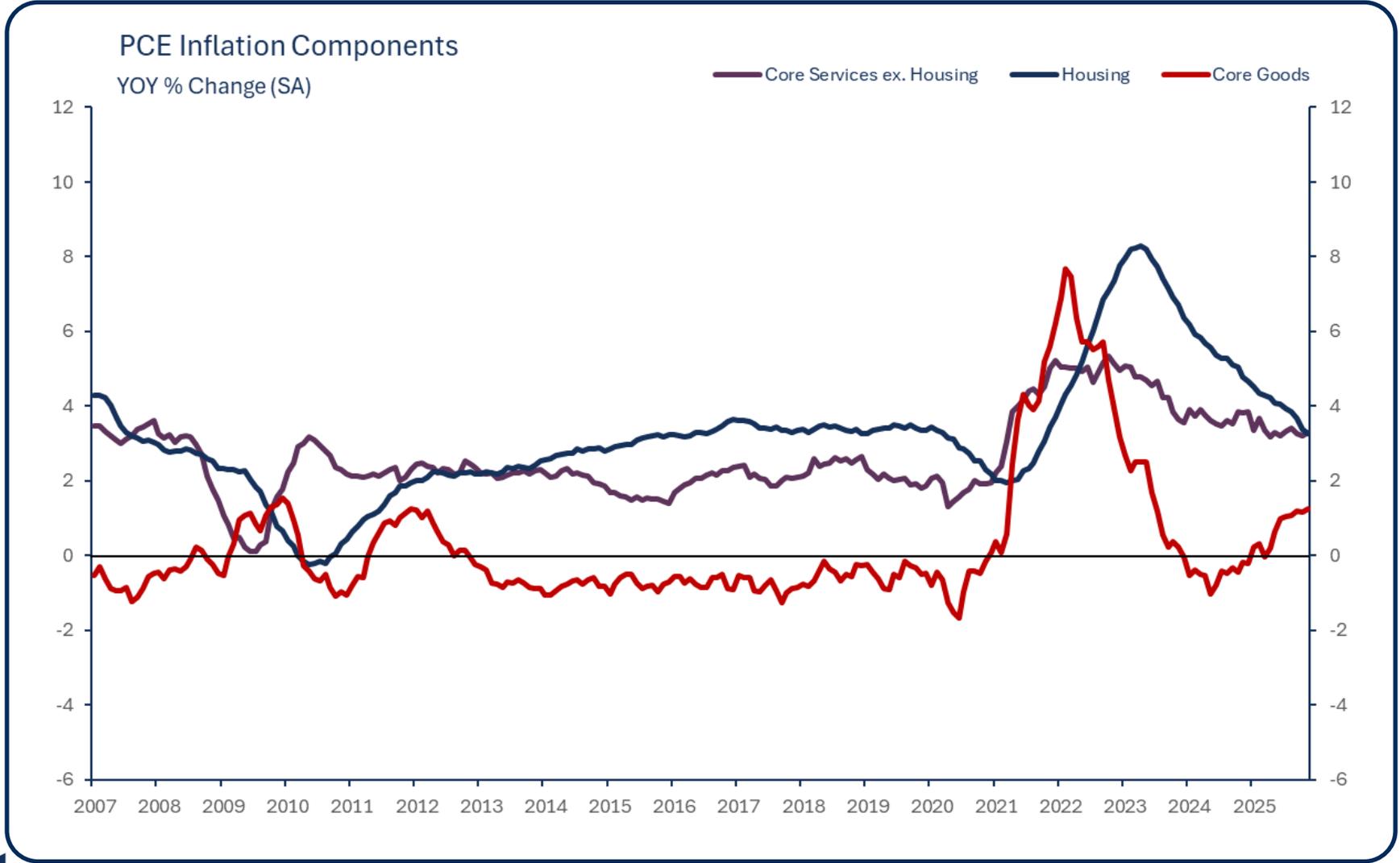


Source: U.S. Census, Federal Reserve Board Haver

There has been a lot of progress on inflation, but it remains stubbornly above the Fed's 2 percent target

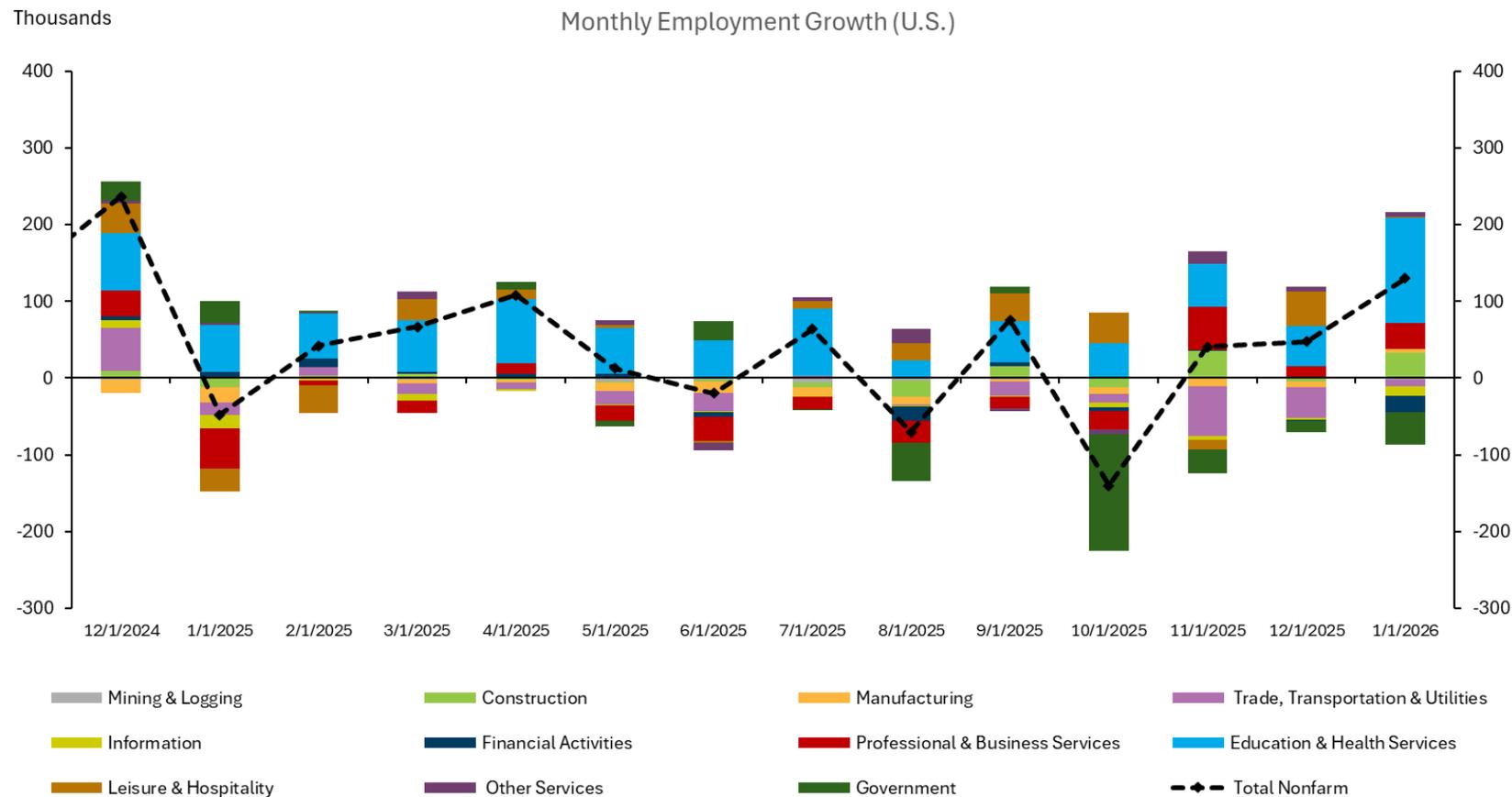


Core goods are now contributing to inflation due to some tariff impact



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Haver Analytics

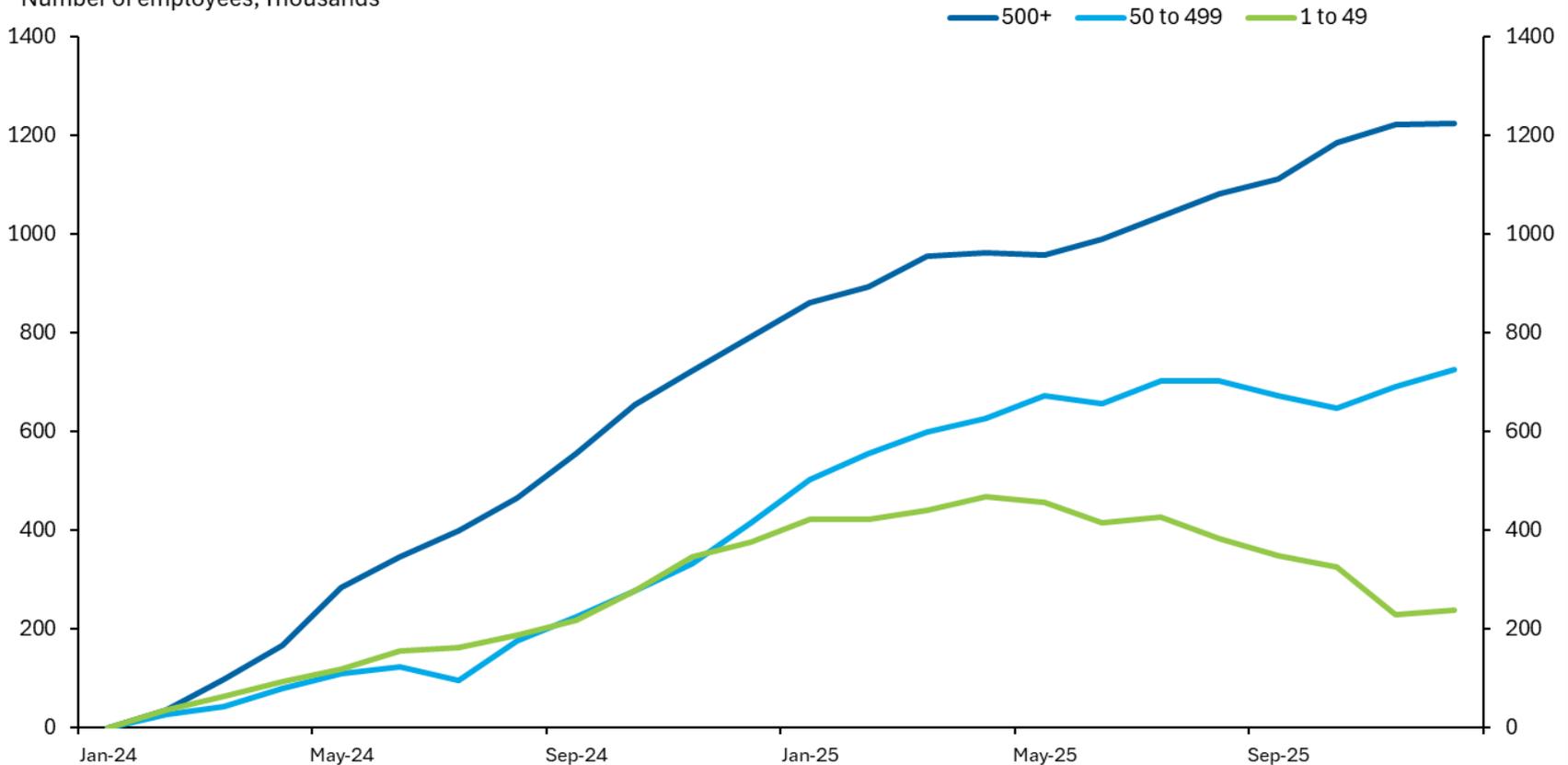
Recent job gains are dominated by a few industries



Most of the pullback in hiring demand has been from small firms

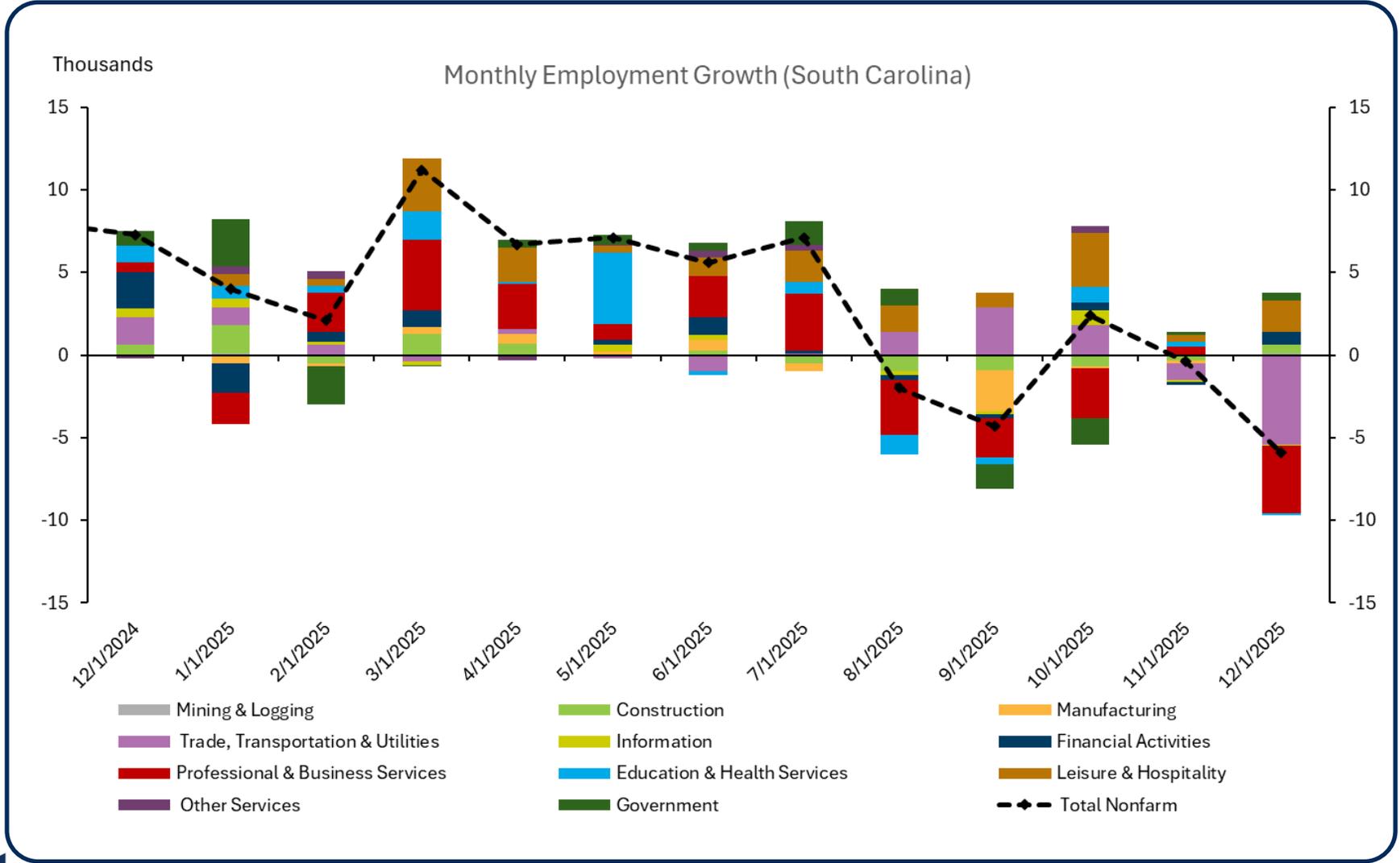
Cumulative Change in Employment since January 2024 by Firm Size

Number of employees, Thousands



Source: ADP/Haver Analytics

According to payroll survey data, South Carolina's job growth weakened in 2025

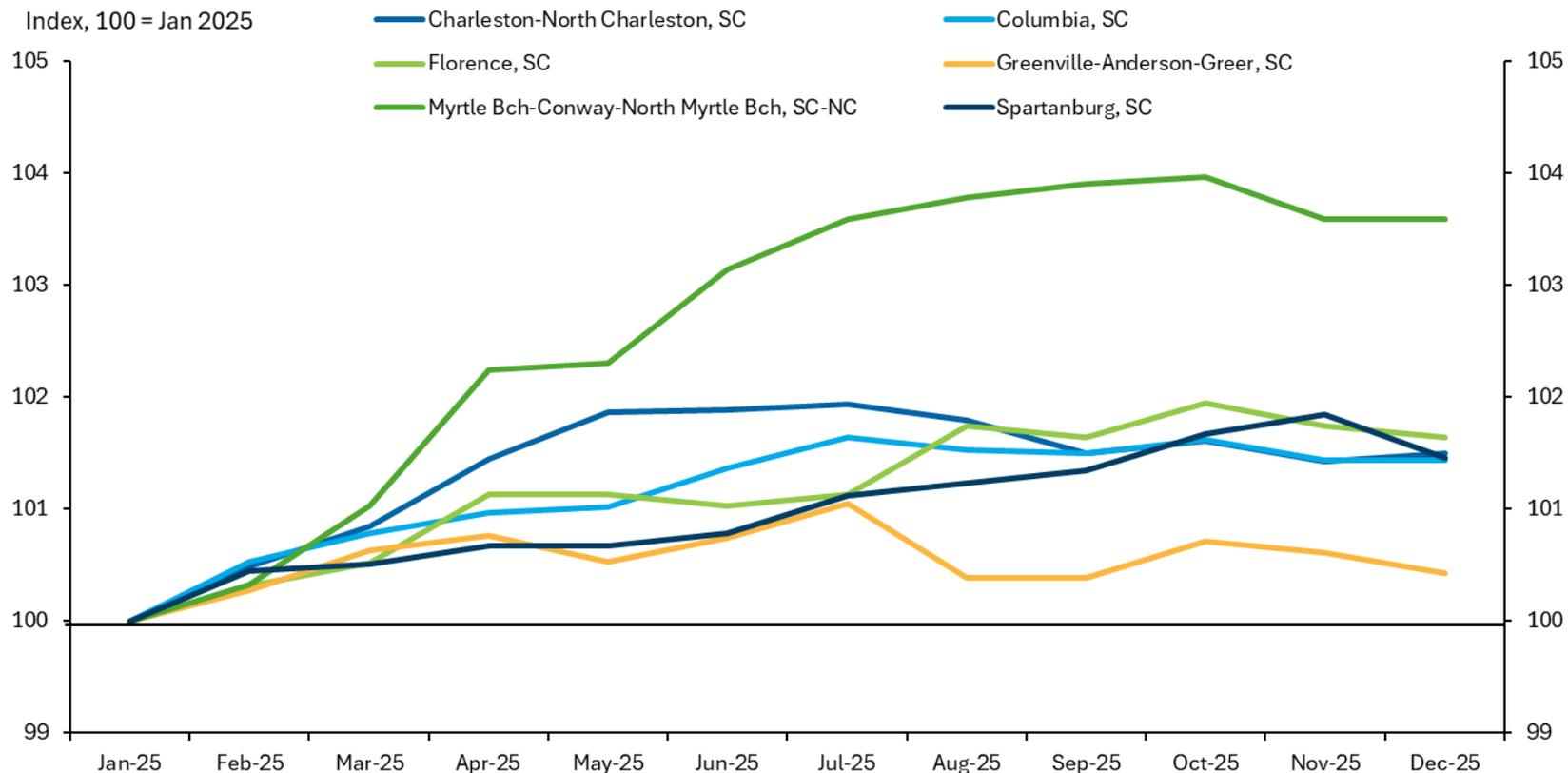


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics/Haver Analytics

The weakness in job growth varied by metro

1 Year Employment Growth

Index, 100 = Jan 2025



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics/Haver Analytics

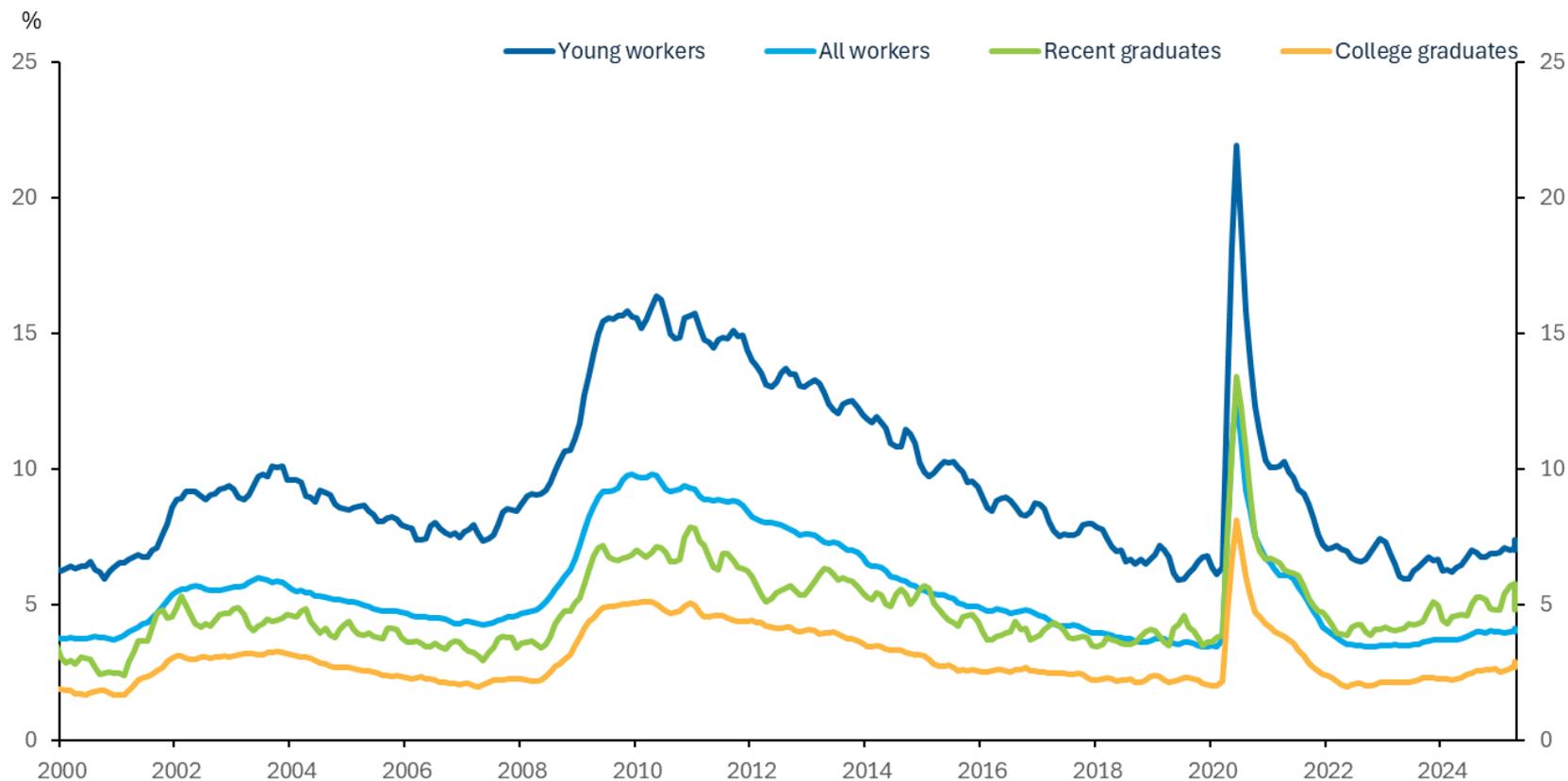
We are currently in a low hire, low fire environment



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics/Haver Analytics

And the labor market has been particularly difficult for recent graduates

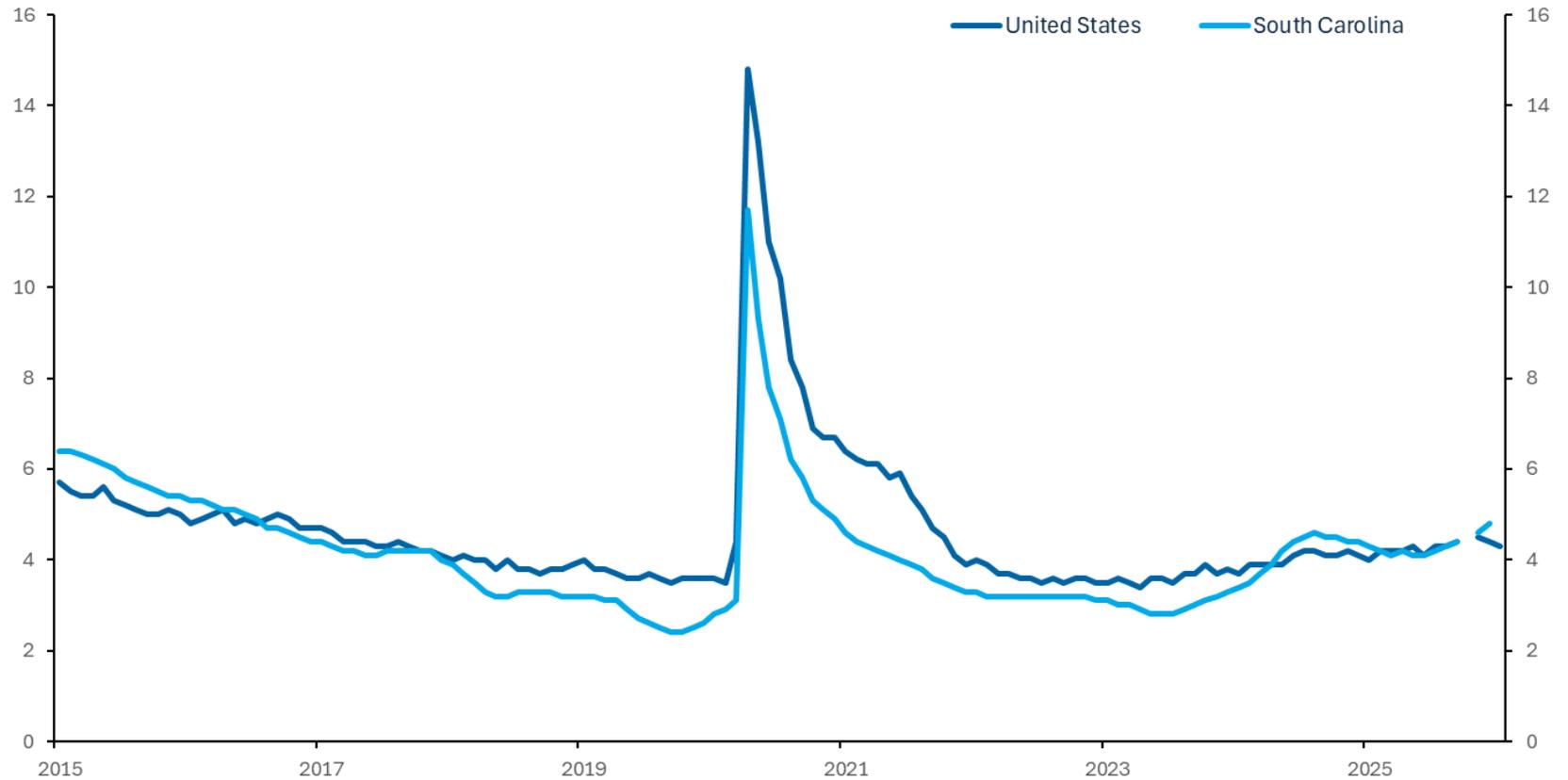
Unemployment Rate



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (IPUMS)/ NY Fed

South Carolina's unemployment rate ticked up slightly

Unemployment Rate
percent

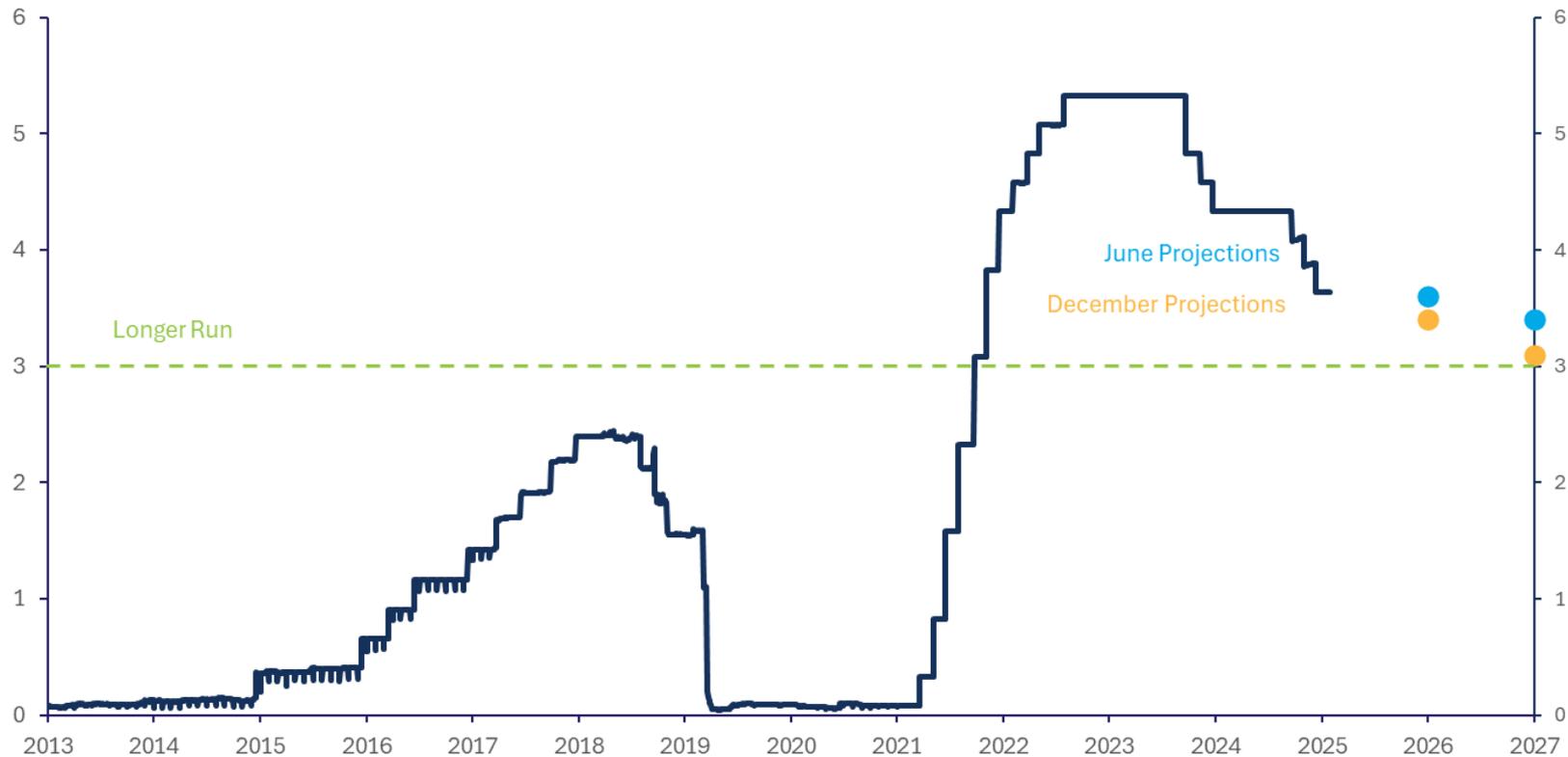


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics/Haver Analytics

The FOMC paused rate cuts at the most recent meeting

Fed Funds Rate

percent



Source: Board of Governors/ Summary of Economic Projections

Questions/Comments?

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