

American Economy & Goods

The high cost of American-made goods, combined with our dependence on imported products, has significant consequences for the U.S. economy. It affects manufacturing jobs, wages, domestic businesses, consumer purchasing power, and even national security.

There is an economic problem worth examining: When American consumers cannot afford American-made products, domestic manufacturers may struggle to attract enough customers to expand production and lower their prices.

How this affects the American economy

1. Loss of manufacturing jobs. When companies relocate production overseas, some American workers lose employment, and communities can lose important sources of income.
2. Declining domestic manufacturing capacity. When factories close, the United States can lose specialized equipment, skilled workers, and supplier networks that are difficult and expensive to rebuild.
3. Dependence on foreign countries. Relying heavily on imports can expose Americans to international shipping disruptions, trade disputes, and shortages.
4. Reduced affordability. American-made products can become inaccessible to middle-income and lower-income households, limiting demand for domestic goods.
5. Challenges for small American businesses. Smaller manufacturers may struggle to compete against overseas factories producing millions of inexpensive products.
6. National security concerns. Dependence on foreign suppliers for critical materials, electronics, medical supplies, and industrial components can create strategic vulnerabilities.

However, imports also benefit the American economy. They lower prices for consumers, provide inputs to American manufacturers, and support employment in transportation, retail, logistics, and other industries.

How much manufacturing has America lost?

1979 manufacturing employment peak

19.6 million

2025 manufacturing employment

12.8 million

24 million

18 million

12 million

6 million

0 million

1979

2025

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Brookings. Figures rounded.

Manufacturing employment fell by approximately 6.8 million jobs between these two points. Trade, automation, productivity improvements, and changes in consumer demand all contributed to long-term shifts.

Bureau of Labor Statistics+1

What about bringing manufacturing back?

Rebuilding American manufacturing could create jobs and strengthen domestic supply chains. But it would not automatically make goods cheaper. For example, Federal Reserve research published in 2026 found that tariffs can increase prices for both imported and domestically produced goods.

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That brings us back to your proposed petition to Amazon and other retailers.

Country-of-origin shopping filters could help consumers identify and support American manufacturers more easily. They would not solve the manufacturing cost problem on their own, but they could make domestic products more visible and give shoppers greater control over their purchasing decisions.

The larger economic question is how America can rebuild domestic manufacturing while keeping everyday necessities, including clothing, affordable for American households.