Workforce Conditions in Maine Through August

(September Data Not Available Because of Federal Government Closure)

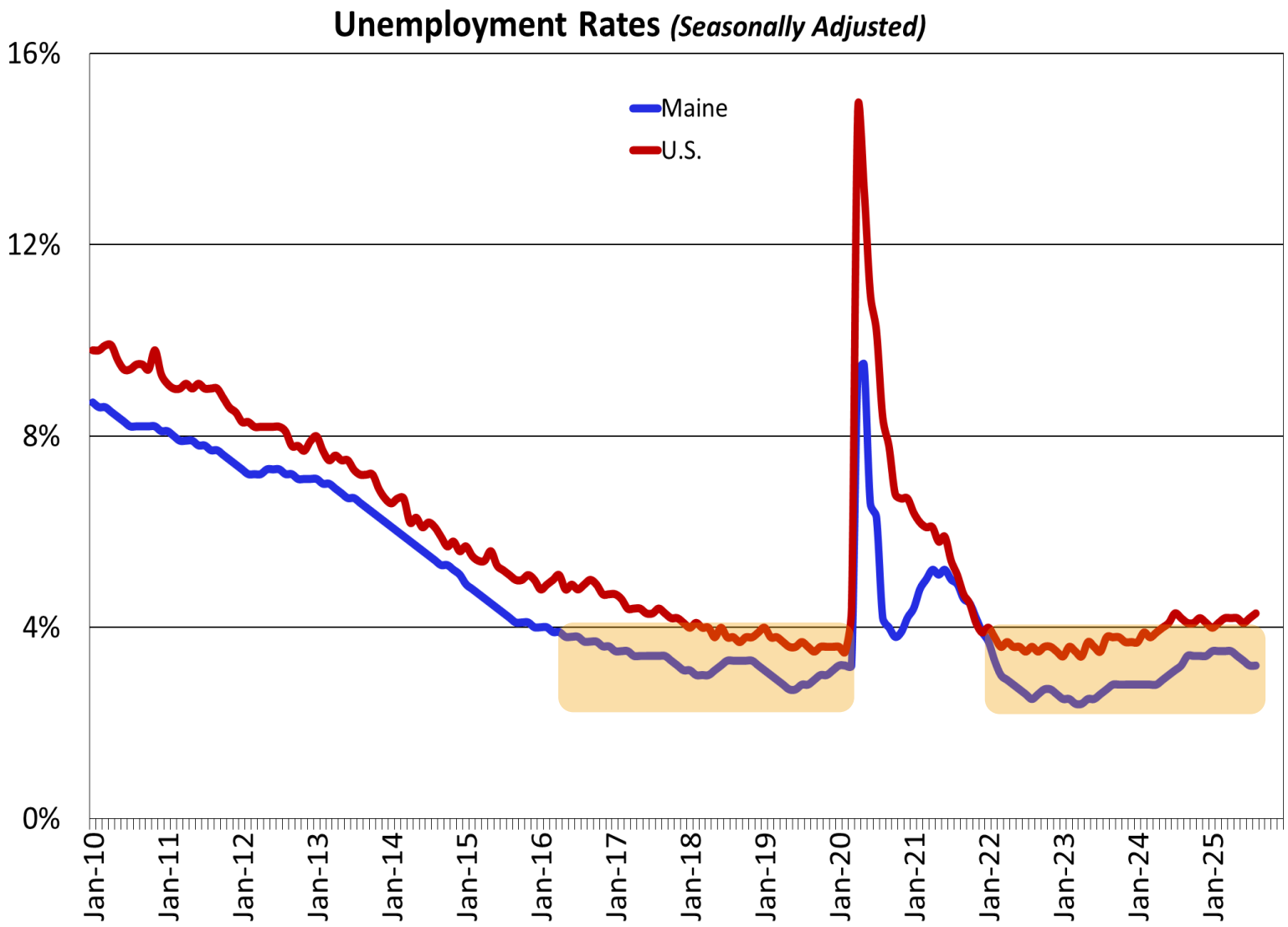
Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission
October 30, 2025

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Center for Workforce Research and Information

Glenn Mills
Center for Workforce Research
Maine Dept. of Labor
maine.gov/labor/cwri

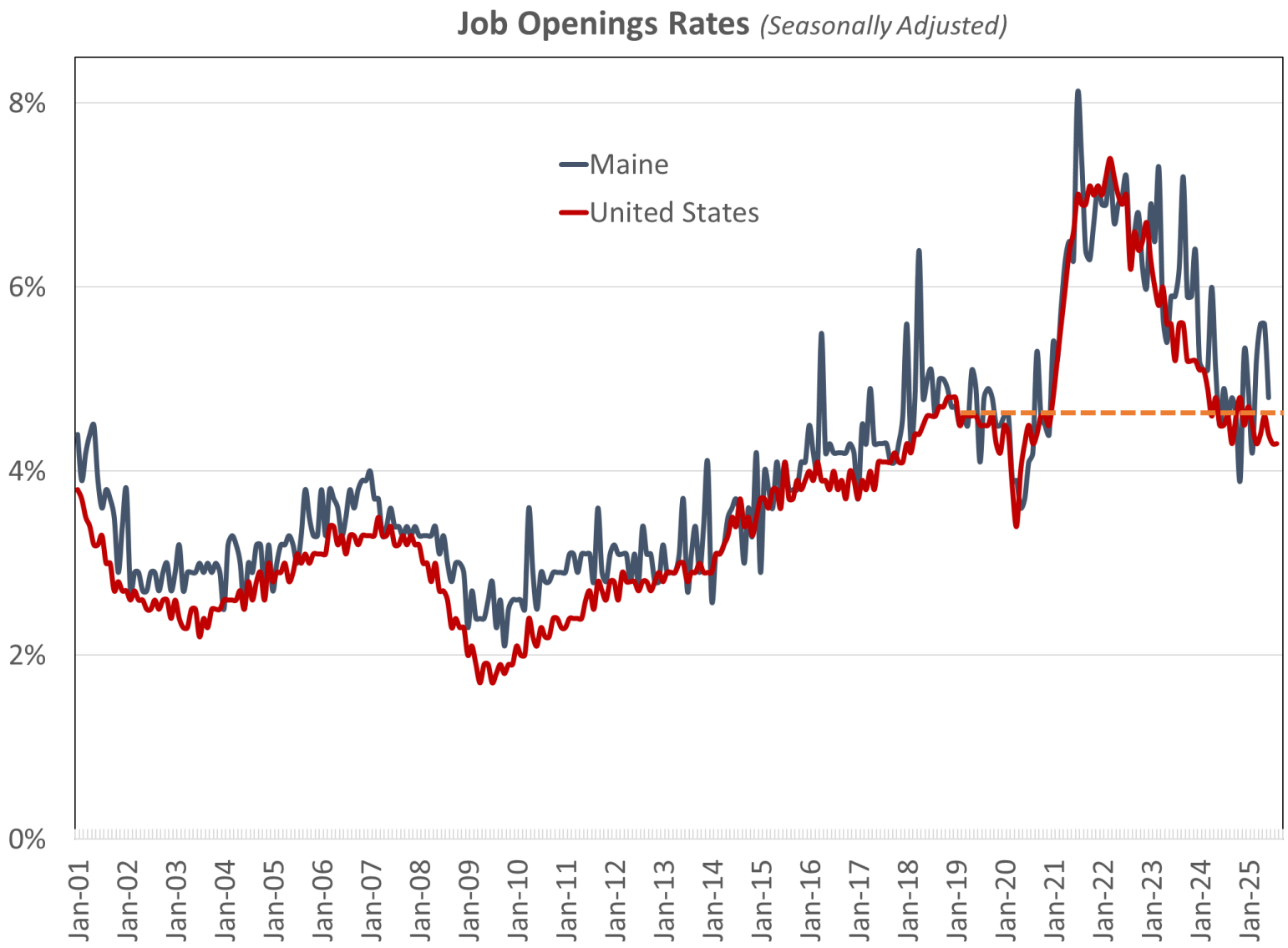
Unemployment remains low

The unemployment rate dipped to 3.2% this summer. The 45 months below 4% is approaching the record 50 months ending with the pandemic's onset in early 2020.



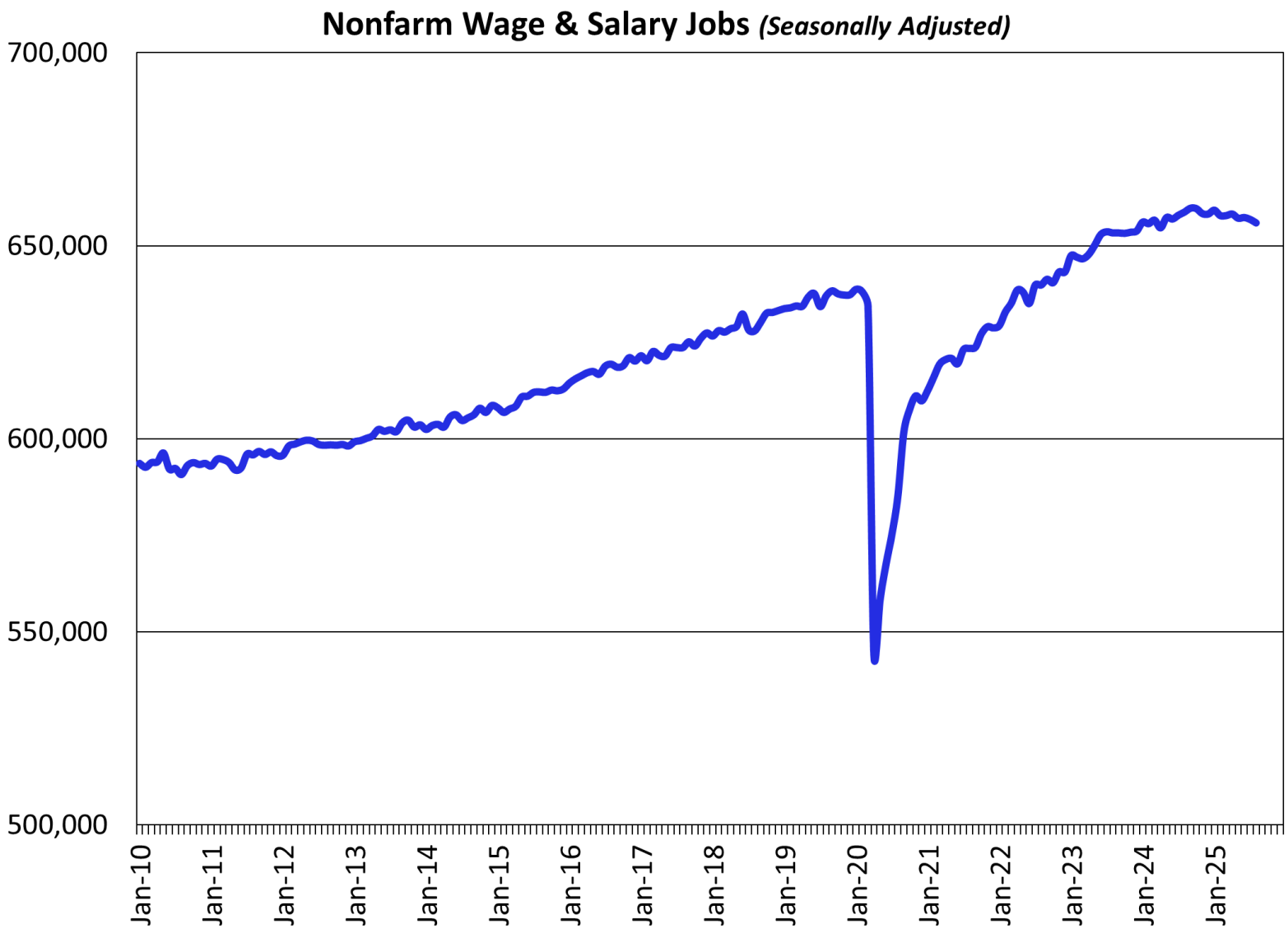
Job openings rates are similar to pre-2020

Job openings have subsided to rates similar to just before the pandemic. Rates may remain higher than they were 10+ years ago because of the large numbers of people reaching retirement.



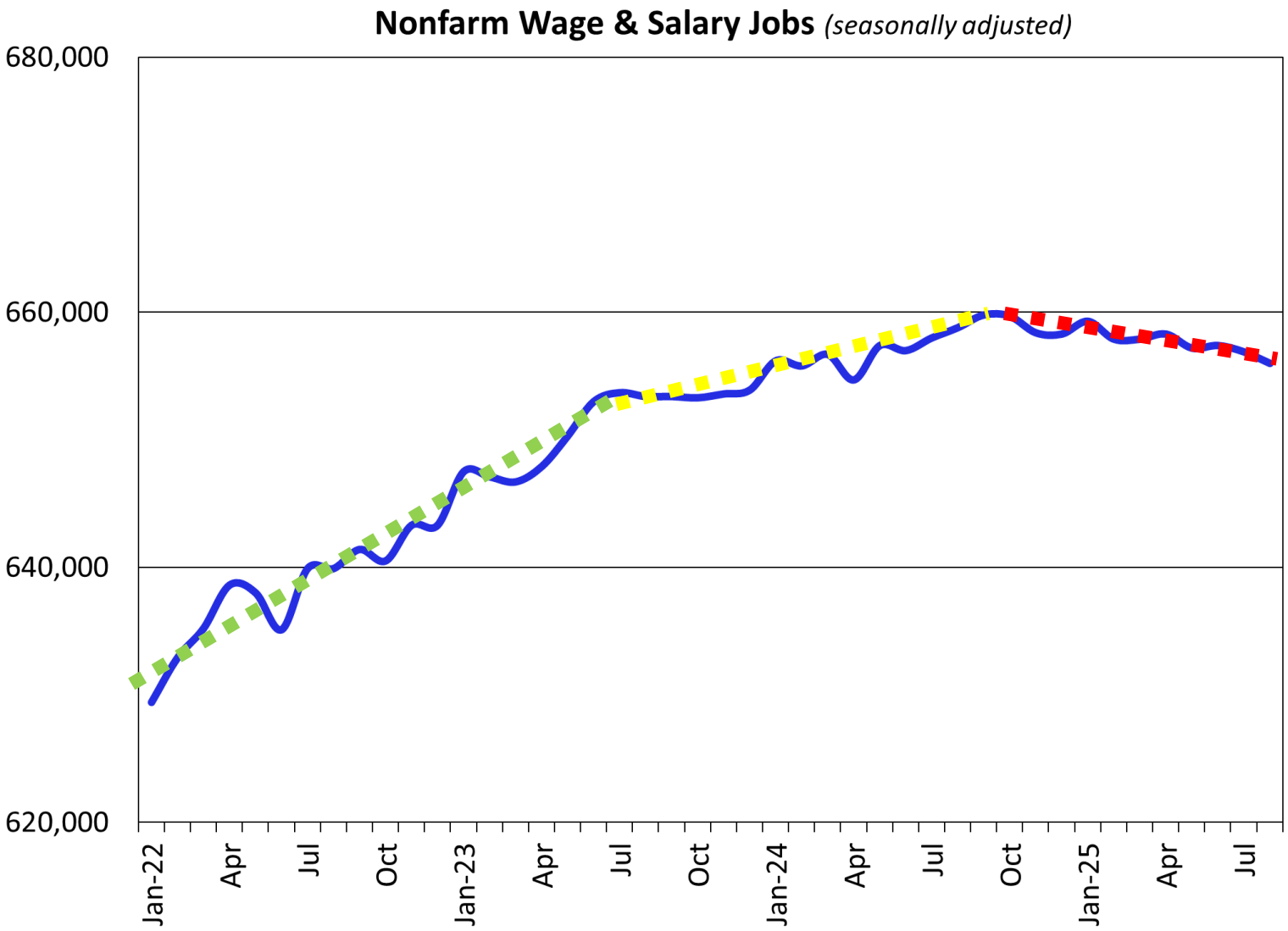
There are more jobs than prior to the pandemic…

The state has close to 18,000 more jobs than at the beginning of 2020.



…Recent slippage contributed to some adverse conclusions

The 656,500 nonfarm jobs in August was 3,300 (0.5%) below the September 2024 peak. This is according estimates derived from the Current Employment Statistics survey of employer payrolls.



Portland Press Herald

Is Maine approaching, or already in, a recession?

Posted September 5
Updated September 6

Daniel Kool
Staff Writer

As economists nationwide watch closely for signs of a recession, some have suggested one may be approaching — or already underway — in Maine.

Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, recently included Maine in a list of nearly two dozen states that he says are "in or at high risk of suffering a recession." That list featured every New England state, save for Vermont.

Zandi said his assessment, shared on social media late last month, was built on "where state economies are in their business cycle" based on factors like payroll, employment and industrial production, but he did not provide the full methodology.

The troubled states span coast to coast, but Zandi told the Boston Globe this week that they tend to include states with "older populations and weaker demographics." Maine's population, based on median age, is the oldest in the country and has been for several years.

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BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS PRELIMINARY BENCHMARK (NATIONAL) – MARCH 2025

The preliminary estimate of the Current Employment Statistics (CES) national benchmark revision to total nonfarm employment for March 2025 is -911,000 (-0.6 percent), the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. The annual benchmark revisions over the last 10 years have an absolute average of 0.2 percent of total nonfarm employment. In accordance with usual practice, the final benchmark revision will be issued in February 2026 with the publication of the January 2026 Employment Situation news release.

Each year, CES employment estimates are benchmarked to comprehensive counts of employment from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). These counts are derived primarily from state unemployment insurance (UI) tax records that nearly all employers are required to file with state workforce agencies.

Table 1. Preliminary benchmark revisions to total nonfarm employment by state, not seasonally adjusted

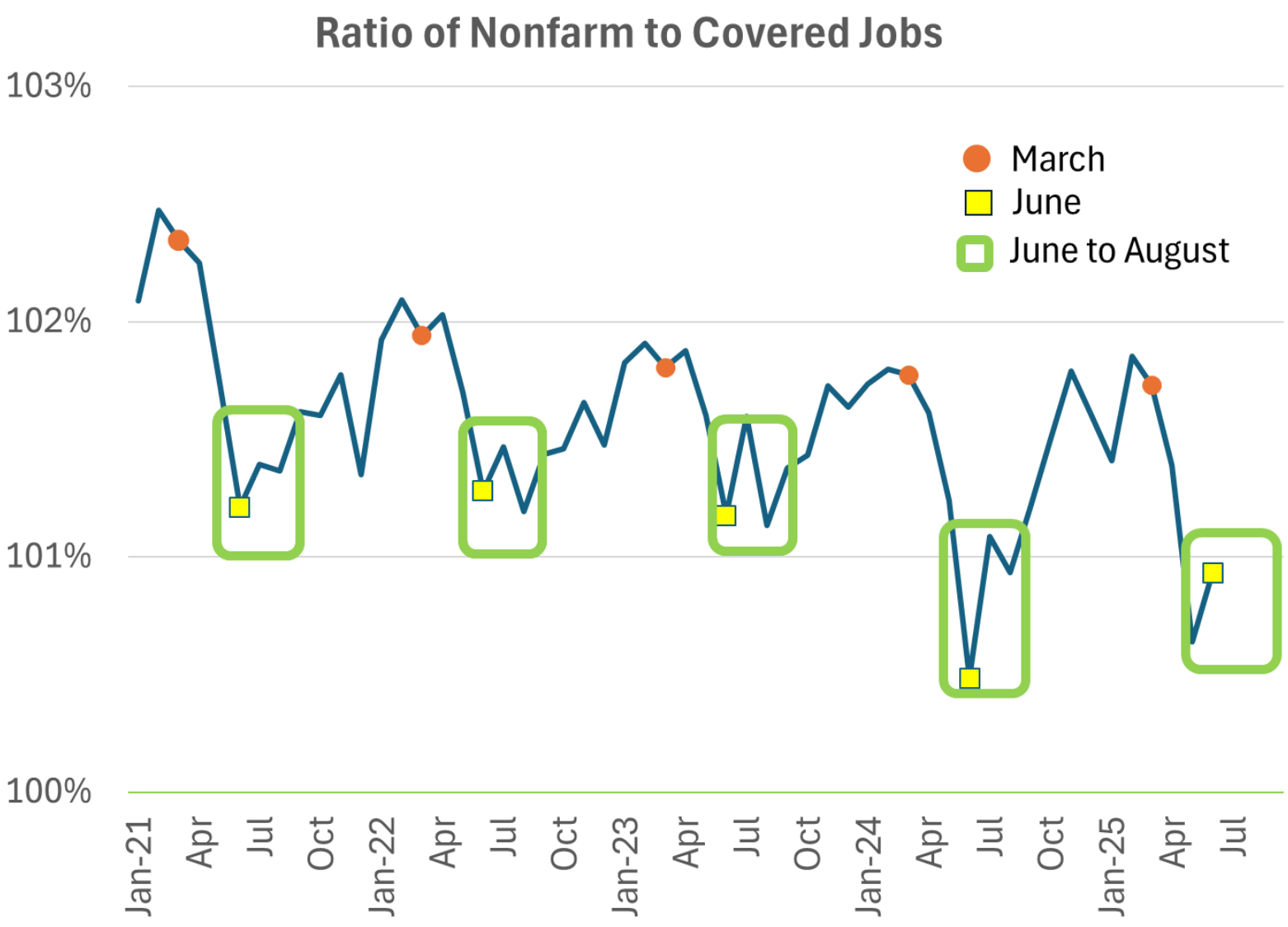
State	March 2025 Preliminary Benchmark Revision	
	Level (in thousands)	Percent[1]
Alabama	-13.3	-0.6
Alaska	-2.3	-0.7
Arizona	34.8	1.1
Arkansas	-11.3	-0.8
California	20.7	0.1
Colorado	-51.2	-1.8
Connecticut	5.5	0.3
Delaware	3.0	0.6
District of Columbia	-8.1	-1.1
Florida	-35.0	-0.3
Georgia	-1.8	0.0
Hawaii	-8.4	-1.3
Idaho	-12.6	-1.5
Illinois	1.7	0.0
Indiana	-8.9	-0.3
Iowa	4.3	0.3
Kansas	3.4	0.2
Kentucky	-8.5	-0.4
Louisiana	-5.3	-0.3
Maine	2.3	0.4

Employer tax data indicates estimates for some months were low

Each spring payroll survey-based estimates are revised when they are benchmarked to lagging, but more complete tax data that nearly all employers are subject to. Tax data points to upward revisions to the number of jobs in the summer of 2024 and for May and June this year. Estimates for other months in those two years appear to be on-target. *(This is more certain for 2024 than for 2025 because the tax data for this year isn't as settled.)*

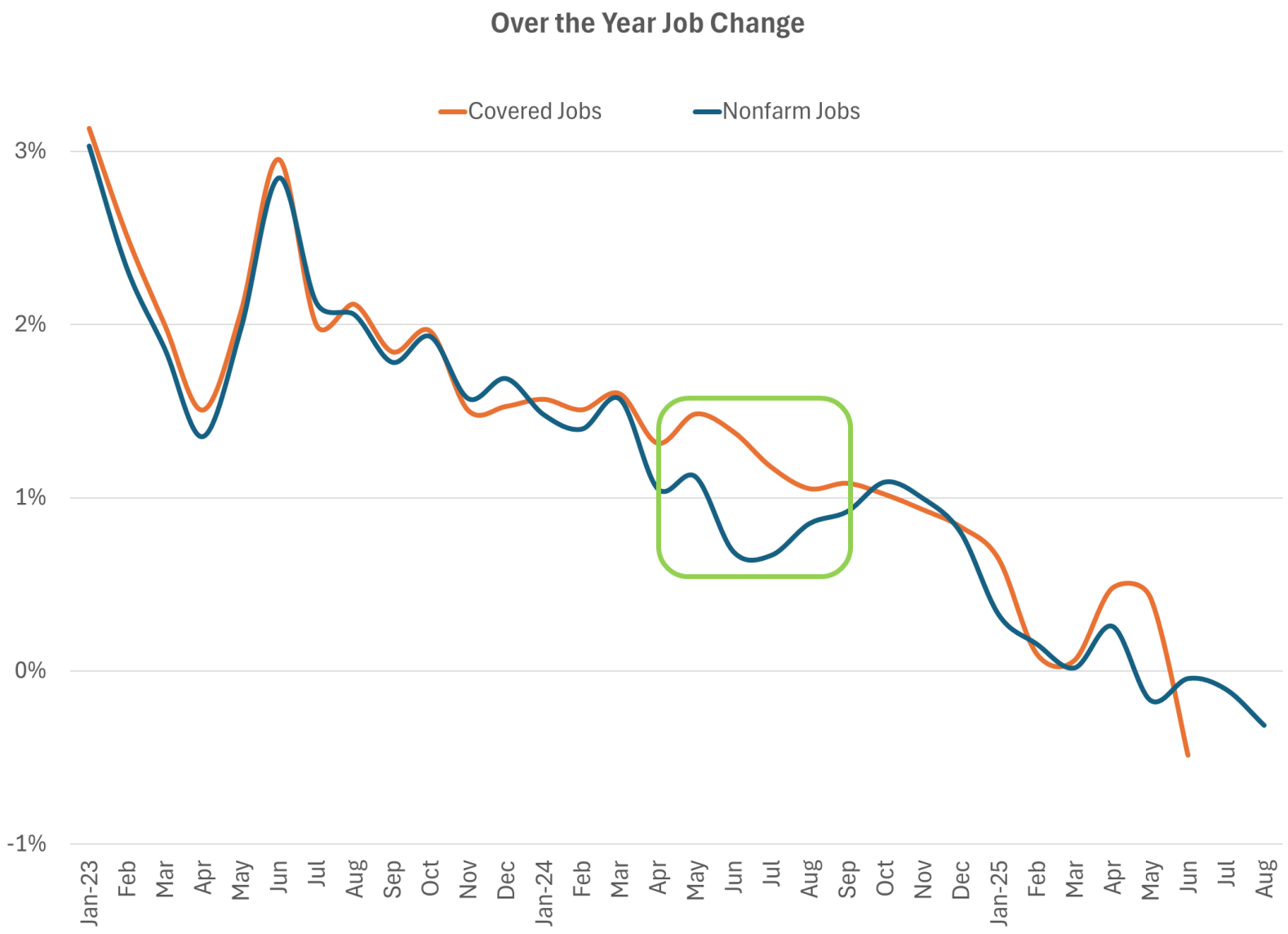
Covered wage and salary jobs data comes from quarterly unemployment insurance tax filings. It lags by about six months.

Nonfarm wage and salary jobs data comes from the Current Employment Statistics survey of employers. It is benchmarked to covered jobs in March of each year.



Employer tax data indicates estimates for some months were low

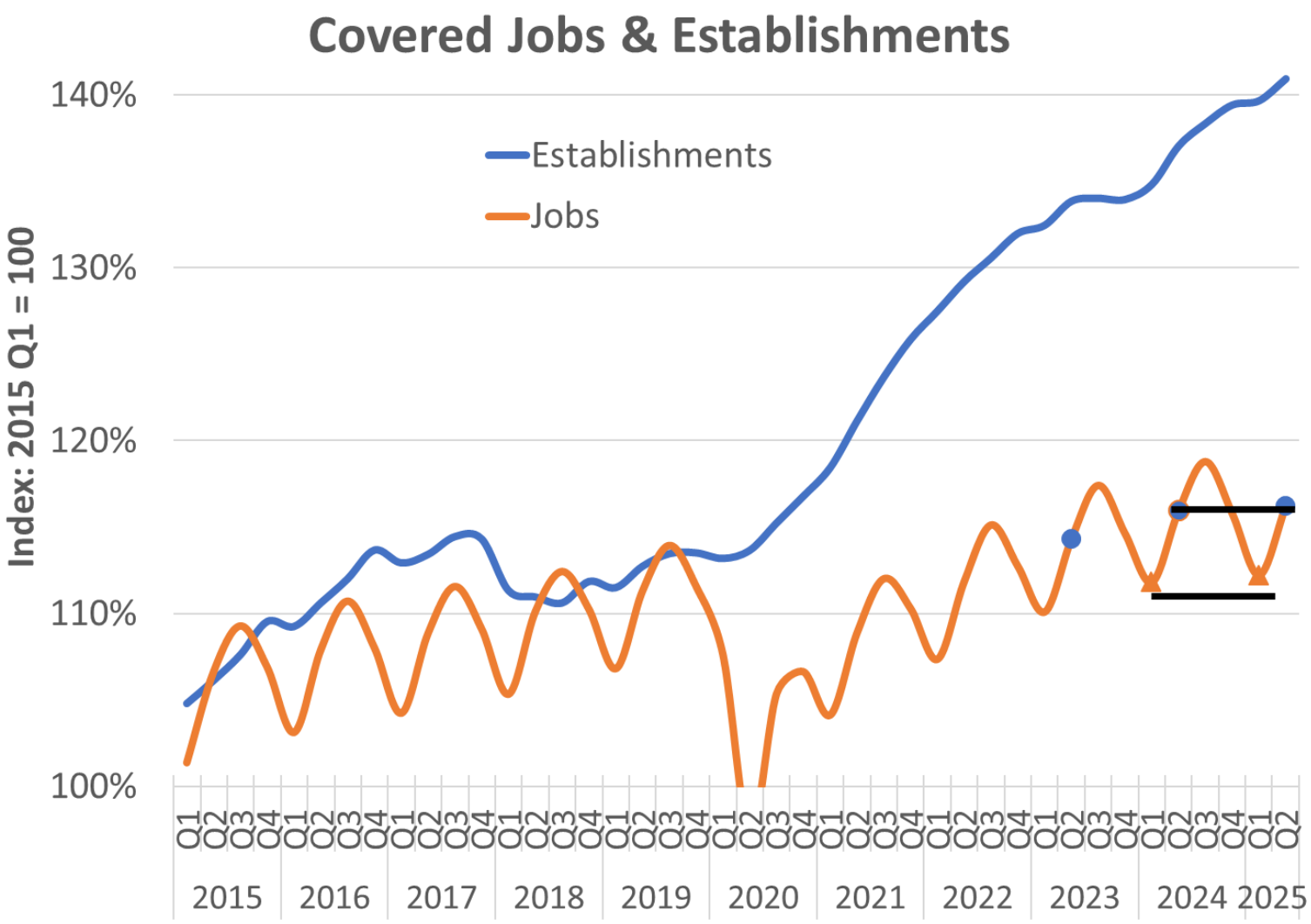
Data for years through 2023 is pretty settled and 12-month change for the two jobs series tracks closely. After 2023 there is more divergence. Next spring's annual revisions are likely to increase nonfarm jobs data for summer 2024 and perhaps for some months in the second quarter of 2025.



Covered jobs confirm slower gains though the second quarter

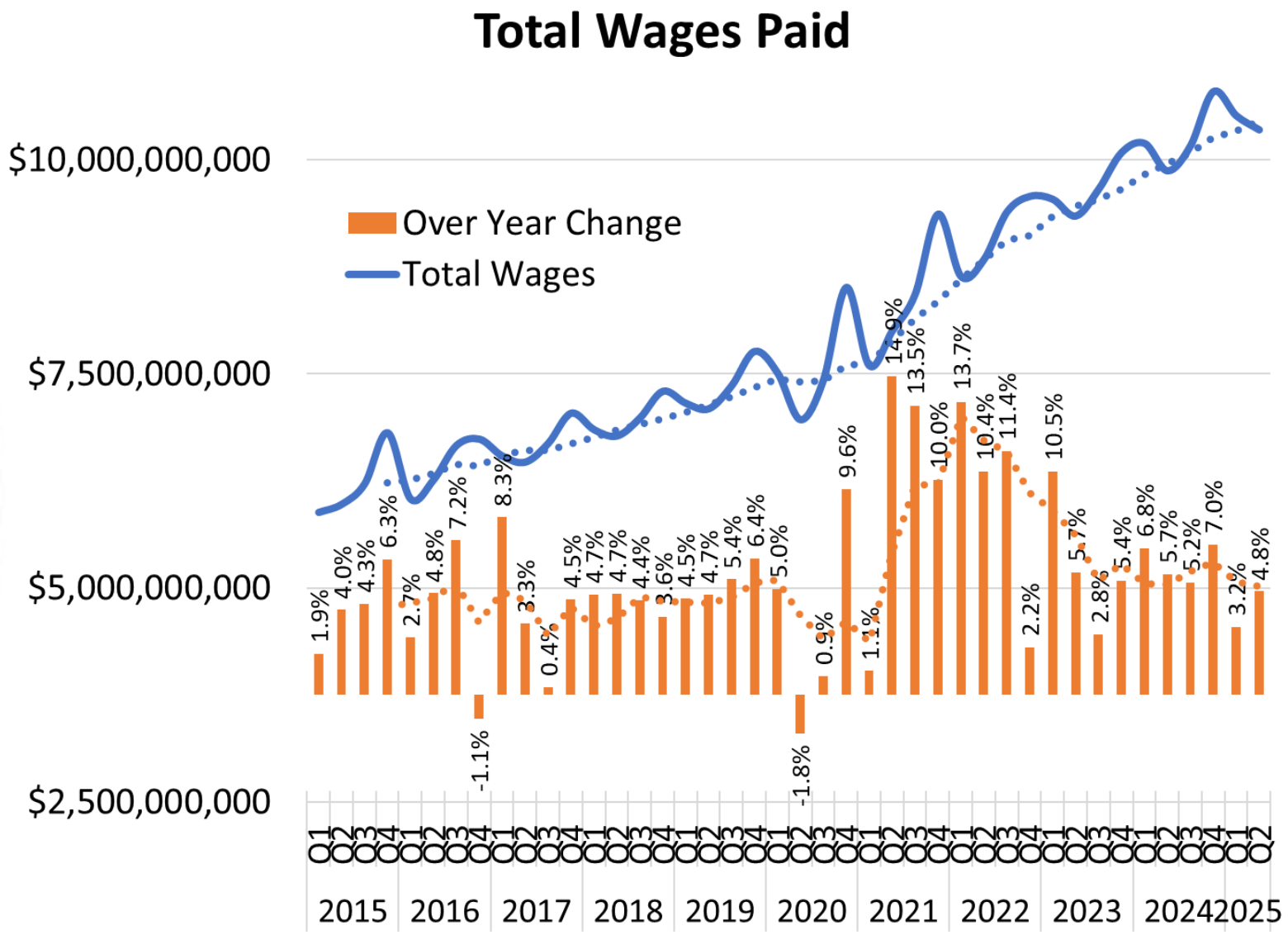
There were about 2,300 more jobs in the first quarter and 1,500 more in the second than one year earlier. (Q2 2025 tax data remains unsettled and subject to change.) More quarters are needed to confirm whether the recent decreases in monthly estimates provide and accurate portrayal of the jobs situation.

New employer establishments continue to outpace job growth.



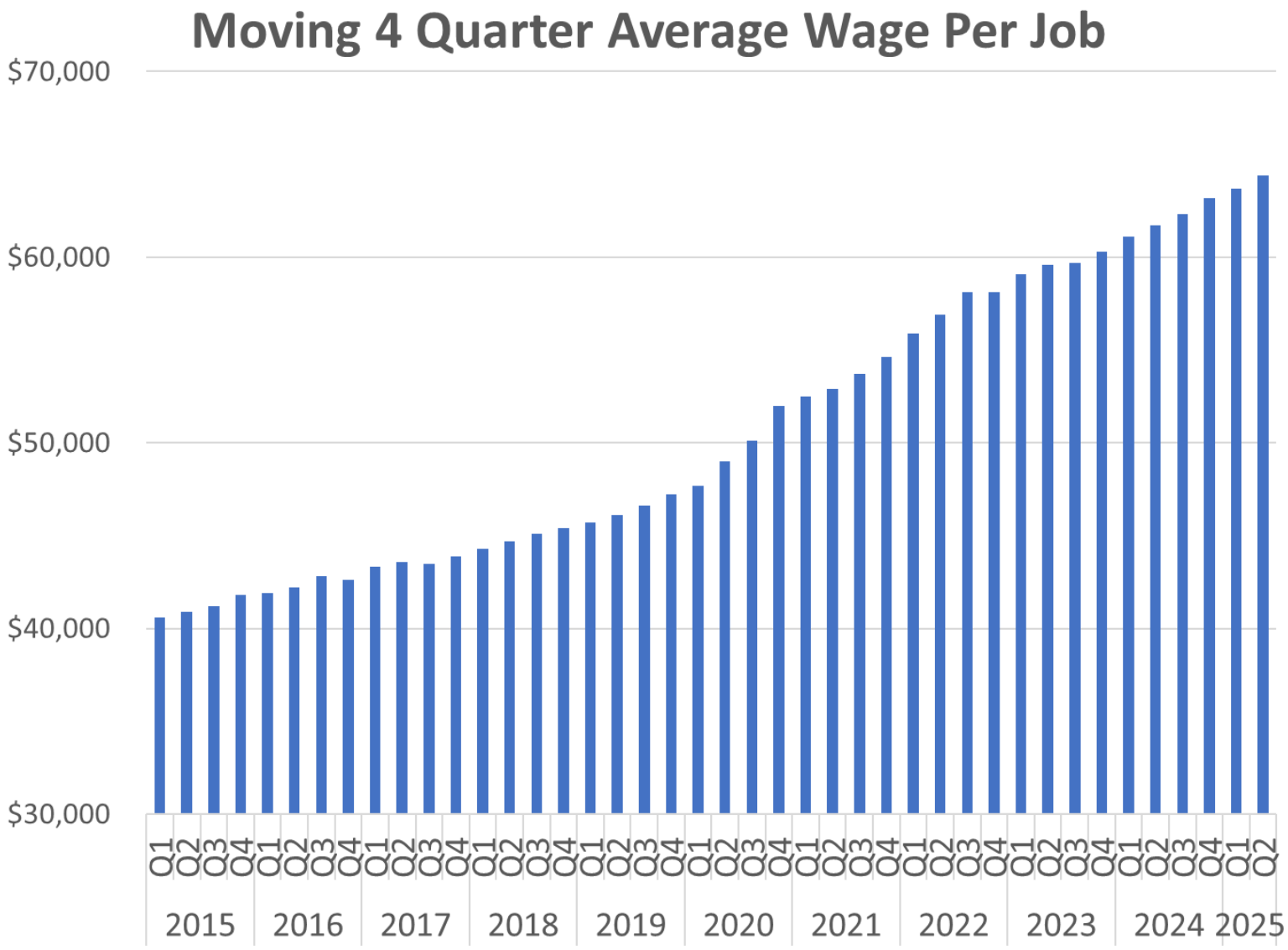
Total wages are rising at rates similar to just before the pandemic

Total wages paid reached $41.8 billion in the year through June. Gains have slowed from the combination of lower job growth and inflation.



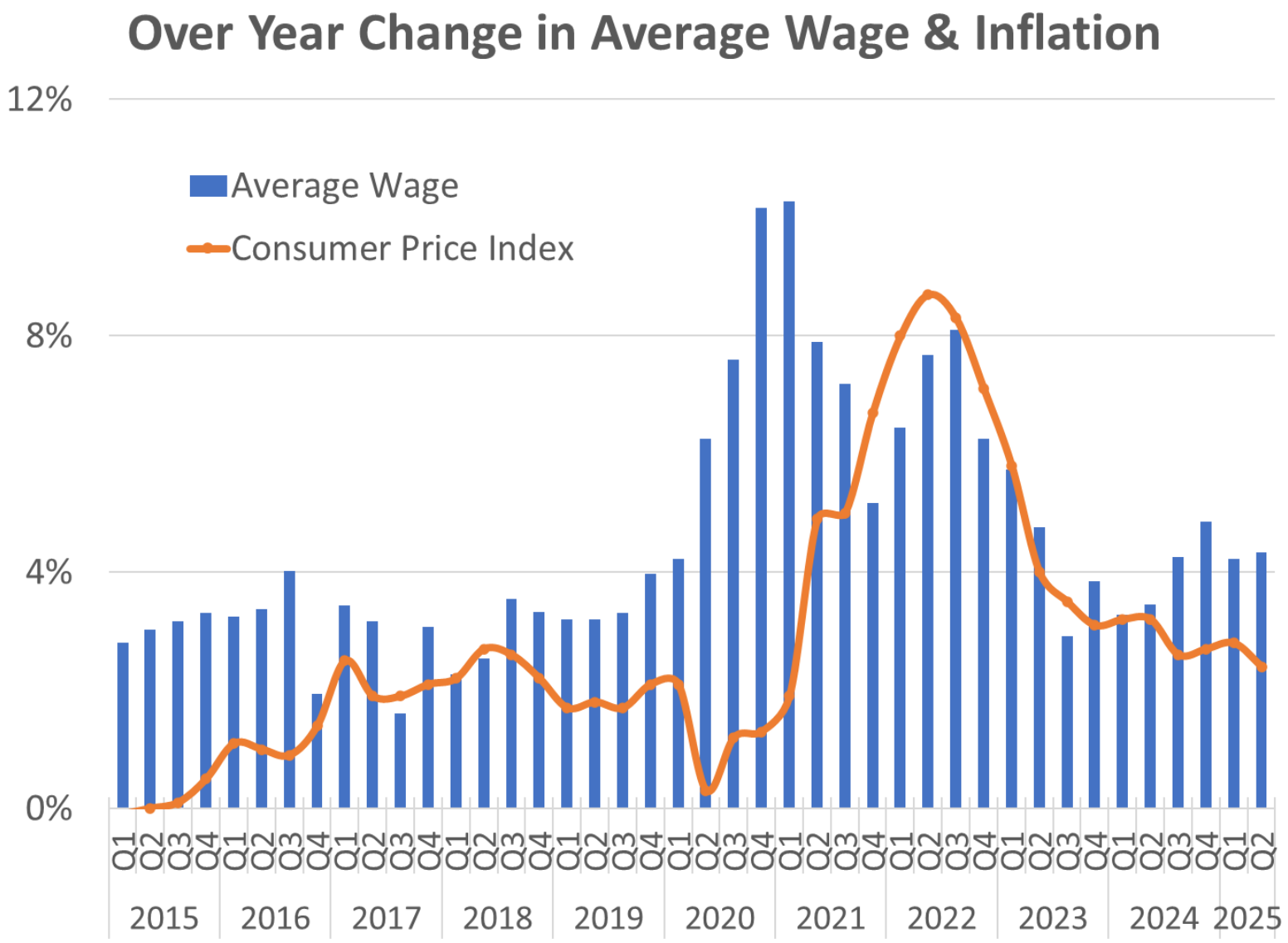
Average wages continue to rise

Though inflation has subsided, average wages continue to rise at rates well above the pre-2020 trajectory.



Average wages are beating inflation

After running at or below inflation from the end of 2021 through 2023, gains in average wages have exceeded inflation since then.



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

More Big Companies Bet They Can Still Grow Without Hiring

JPMorgan Chase has a 'strong bias' against adding staff, while Walmart is keeping its head count flat

By Chip Cutter Follow

Oct. 26, 2025 9:00 pm ET

American employers are increasingly making the calculation that they can keep the size of their teams flat—or shrink them through layoffs—without harming their businesses. Part of that thinking is the belief that artificial intelligence will be used to pick up some of the slack and automate more processes. Companies are also hesitant to make any moves in an economy that many still describe as uncertain.

"If people are getting more productive, you don't need to hire more people," Brian Chesky, Airbnb's chief executive, said in an interview. "I see a lot of companies pre-emptively holding the line, forecasting and hoping that they can have smaller workforces."

Airbnb employs around 7,000 people, and Chesky says he doesn't expect that number to grow much over the next year. With the help of AI, he said, he hopes that "the team we already have can get considerably more work done."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Tens of Thousands of White-Collar Jobs Are Disappearing as AI Starts to Bite

Layoffs at companies ranging from Amazon to Target are sending young and experienced workers alike into unwelcoming market

By Lindsay Ellis Follow, *Owen Tucker-Smith* Follow *and Allison Pohle* Follow

Oct. 28, 2025 9:00 pm ET

Quick Summary

- Major employers including Amazon.com have announced significant white-collar job cuts.
- The surge in white-collar layoffs is partly driven by companies adopting AI to handle tasks previously done by employees.
- Opportunities for blue-collar and specialized workers are increasing.

An artificial-intelligence tool created this summary, which was based on the text of the article and checked by an editor. Read more about how we use artificial intelligence in our journalism.