Business Inflation Expectations (BIE) Survey

Monthly Report: November 2026

Federal Reserve Bank *of* Atlanta

Headline Results

1. Firms' year-ahead unit cost expectations increased to 2.5 percent. Year-ahead unit cost expectations have fallen considerably since hitting a peak of 3.8 percent in April 2022 but remain somewhat elevated relative to their prepandemic average of 2.0 percent (from January 2017 through December 2019). Firms' year-ahead unit cost uncertainty has increased since a low of 1.9 percent in February this year.
2. Firms reported a mean 5.0 percent (median 4.0 percent) price increase over the past 12 months, and a mean 4.2 percent (median 3.0 percent) expected price increase over the next 12 months. Realized and expected prices increased from August (4.5 percent mean realized price and 3.7 percent mean expected price).
3. In November's special questions, we asked firms about the inventory they hold, how tariffs affected them, and how tariffs affect their cost structure.
4. Overall, most firms indicated that they had been affected by the tariffs in 2025, with the majority reporting a price increase in response. The pricing behavior of firms is inexorably linked to the type of inventory they hold, with some firms able to take advantage of cost-locking mechanisms to address the uncertainty around tariffs.

About the BIE

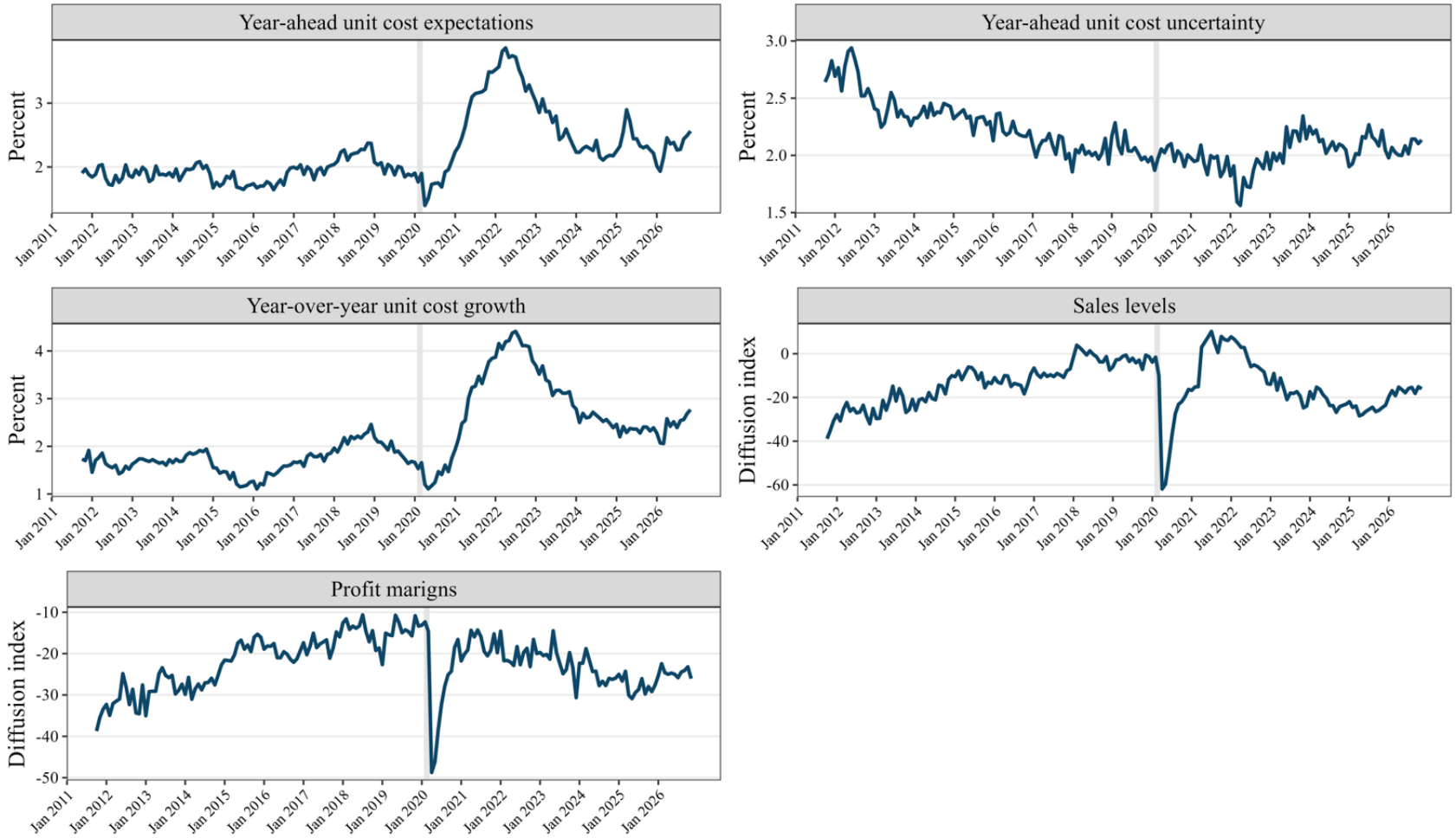
The Business Inflation Expectations (BIE) survey is fielded by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. It was designed, tested, and refined by the Atlanta Fed Economic Research Survey Center.

Our monthly Business Inflation Expectations survey goes to about 690 panel members (as of February 2024), who occupy executive and managerial positions at Sixth District firms. We contact panel members each month by email, and they respond via a web-based instrument.

Survey questions pertain to current, past, and future outcomes at respondents' firms. Our primary objective is to elicit the respondent's subjective forecast distributions over own-firm future unit-cost growth. We gather qualitative information on firms' sales levels and margins on a monthly basis. We include a set of rotating quarterly questions covering firms' longer-run probabilistic unit-cost expectations, quantitative sales gaps, and realized/expected price change. Our survey also includes special questions on timely, policy-relevant topics.

For more information on survey design and methodology, please refer to resources on the BIE page.

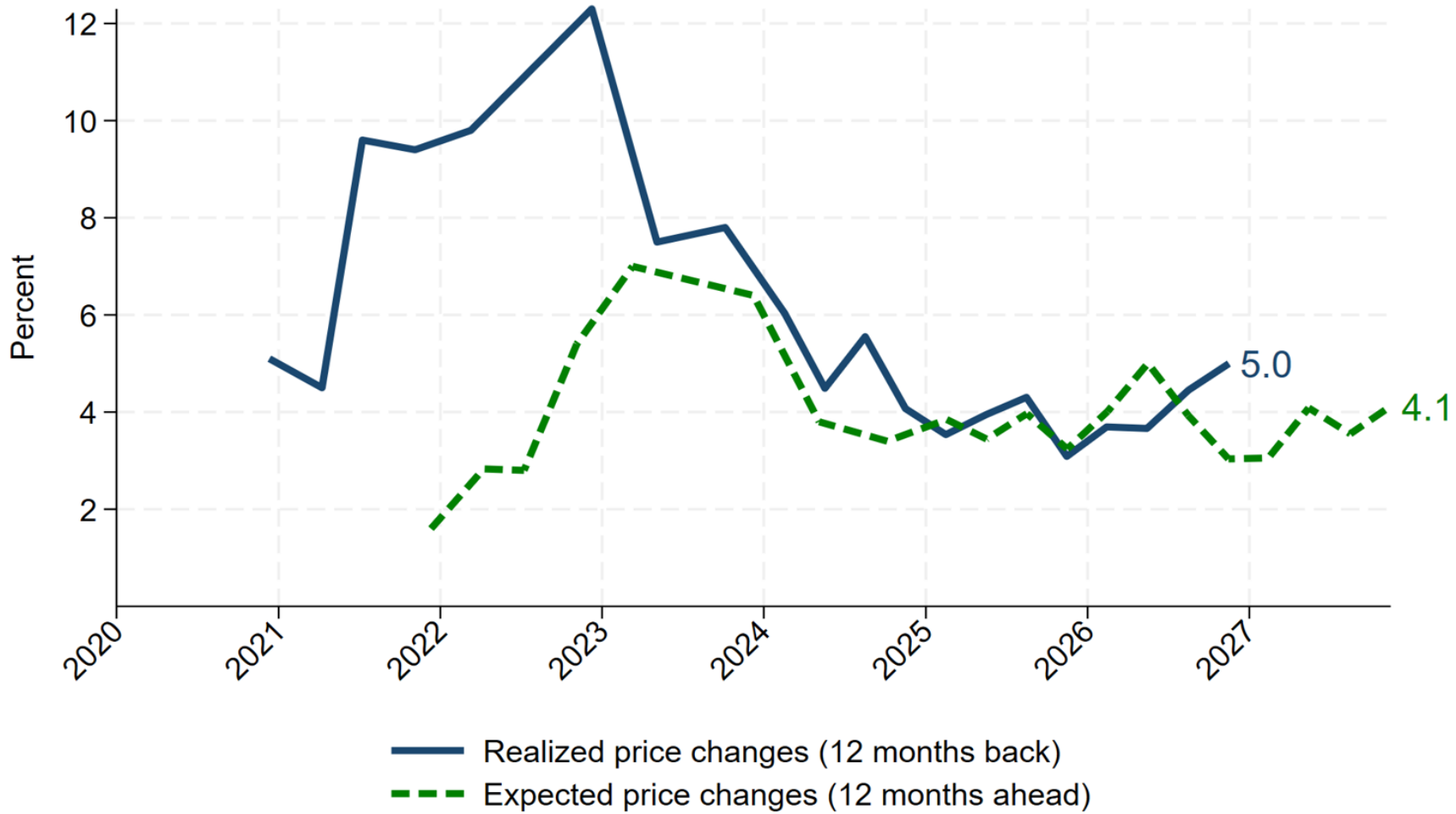
Core Monthly Questions



Note: The data are shown monthly.

Source: Atlanta Fed Business Inflation Expectations (BIE) survey

Rotating quarterly question: Looking back over the last 12 months, by about what percent did your firm change prices? Looking ahead over the next 12 months, by about what percent does your firm expect to change prices?

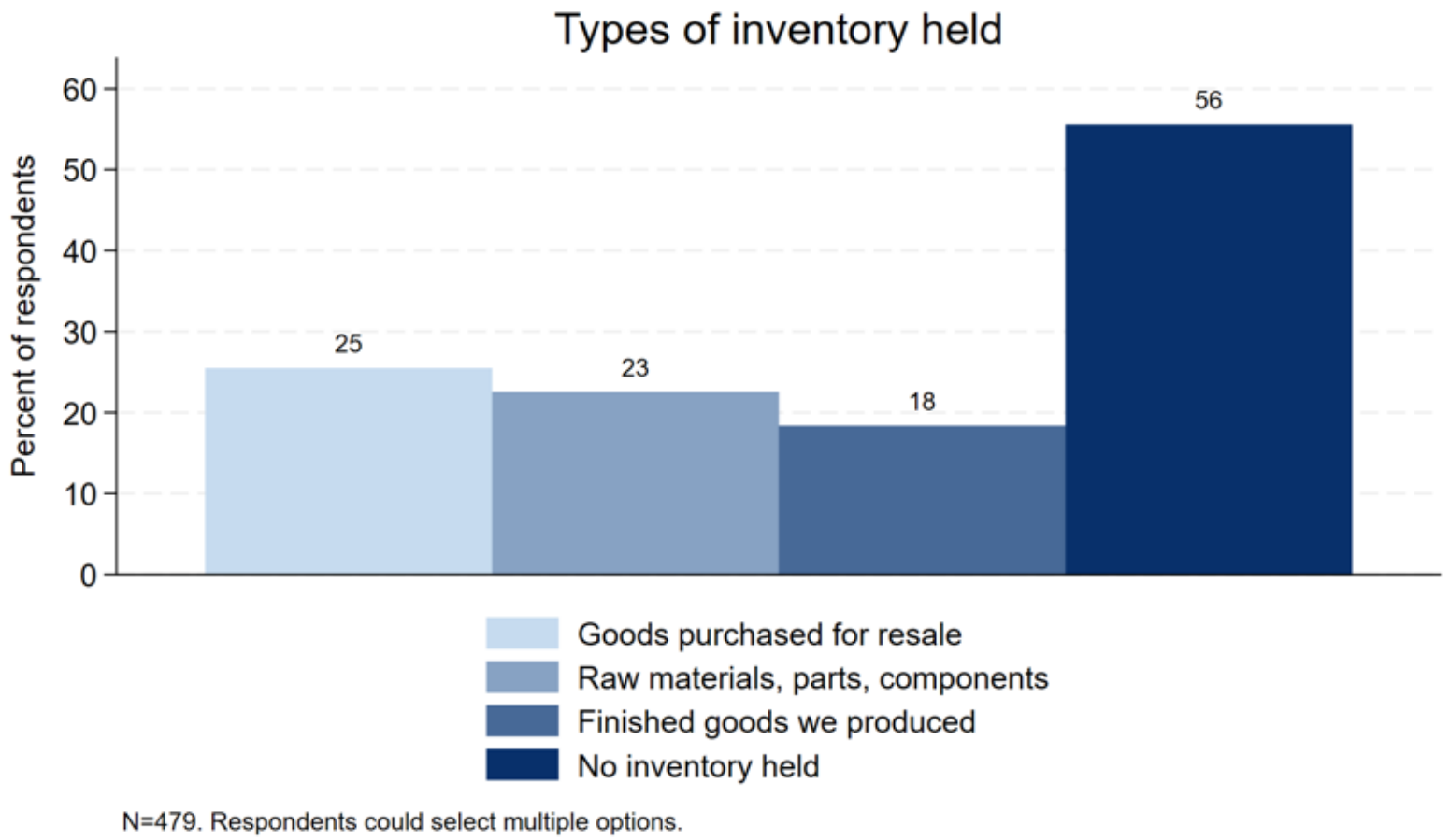


Note: This quarterly question officially started in February 2024. The results prior to that were results collected through our Special Questions Series.
Source: Atlanta Fed Business Inflation Expectations (BIE) survey

BIE Special Questions: November 2026

In the past 12 months, has your firm held inventory?
Select all that apply

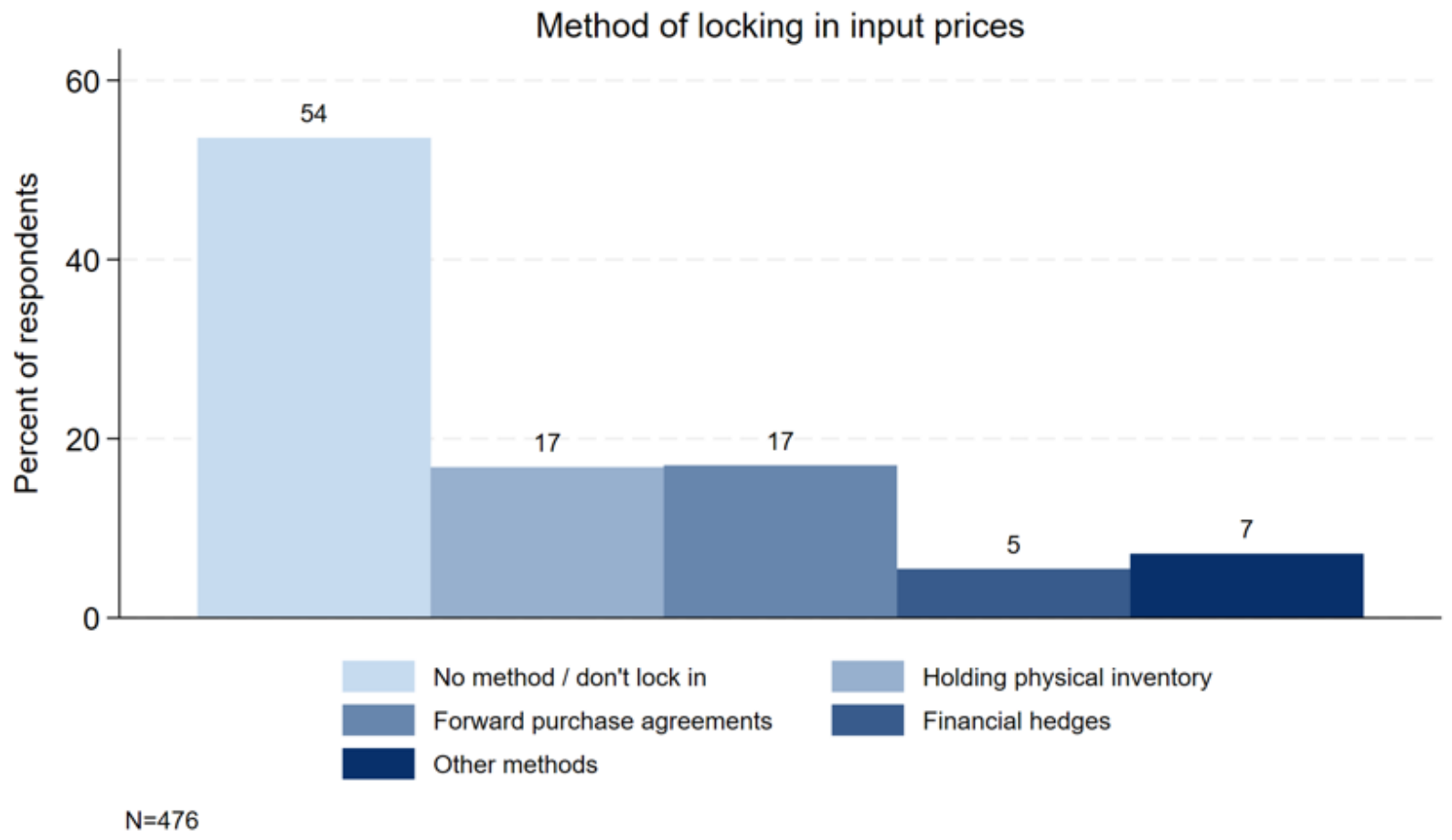
More than half of firms report holding no inventory, while those that hold inventory report holding multiple different types.



Source: Atlanta Fed's Business Inflation Expectations (BIE) survey

What is the primary method your firm uses to lock in prices for any inputs in advance of when those inputs are used in production?

Fewer than half of all respondents report the ability to lock prices they experience. Of those able to lock prices, most report holding inventory or forward purchase agreements.

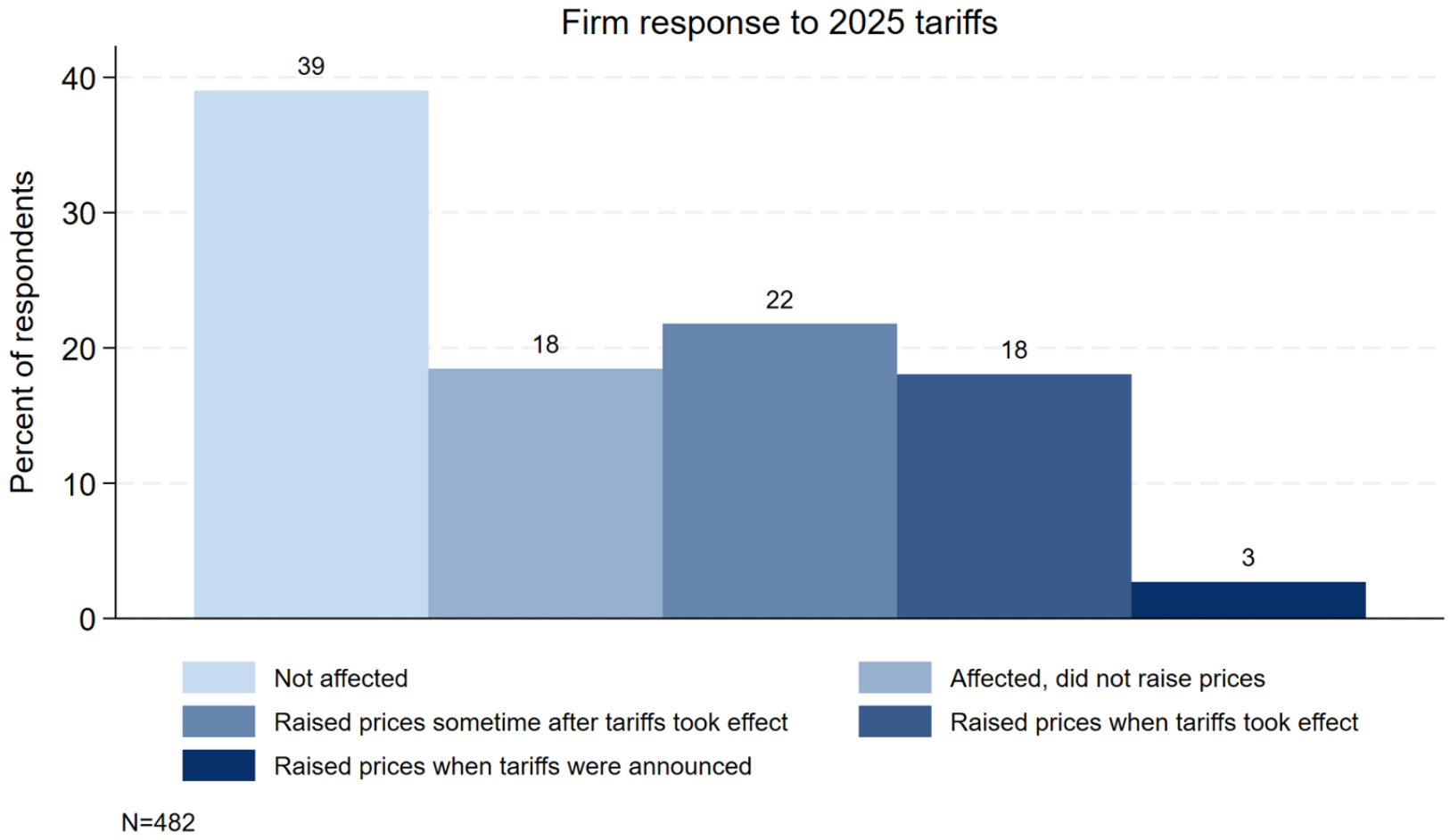


Source: Atlanta Fed's Business Inflation Expectations (BIE) survey

In 2025, the United States raised tariffs on many imported goods, including steel, aluminum, autos, and imports from most trading partner countries.

How did your firm pass tariff-related cost increases through to the prices it charges customers?

Over 60 percent of respondents reported being affected by the 2025 tariffs.

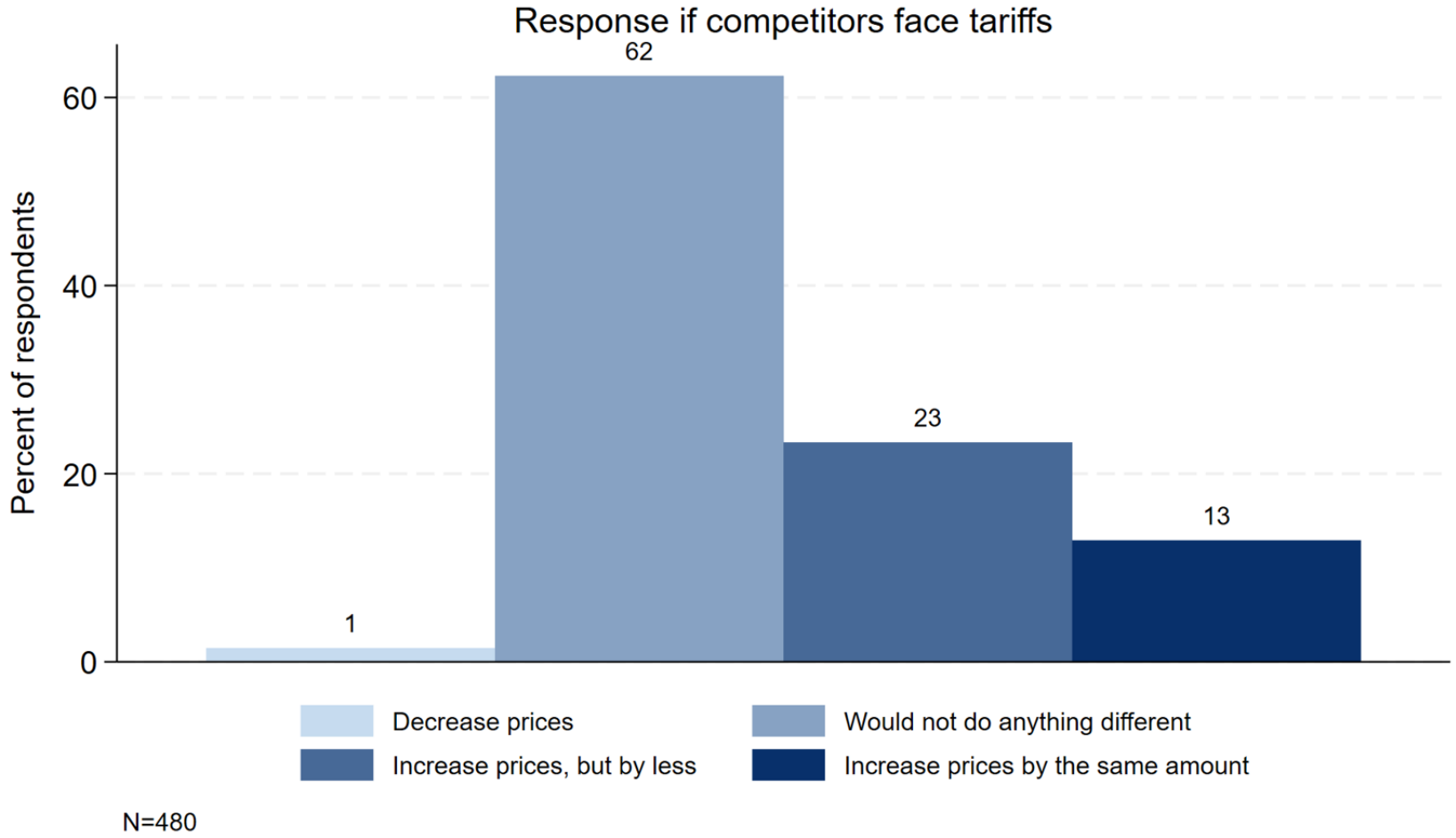


Source: Atlanta Fed's Business Inflation Expectations (BIE) survey

Suppose your firm is not affected by tariffs, but tariffs raise costs for your competitors.

How would your firm respond?

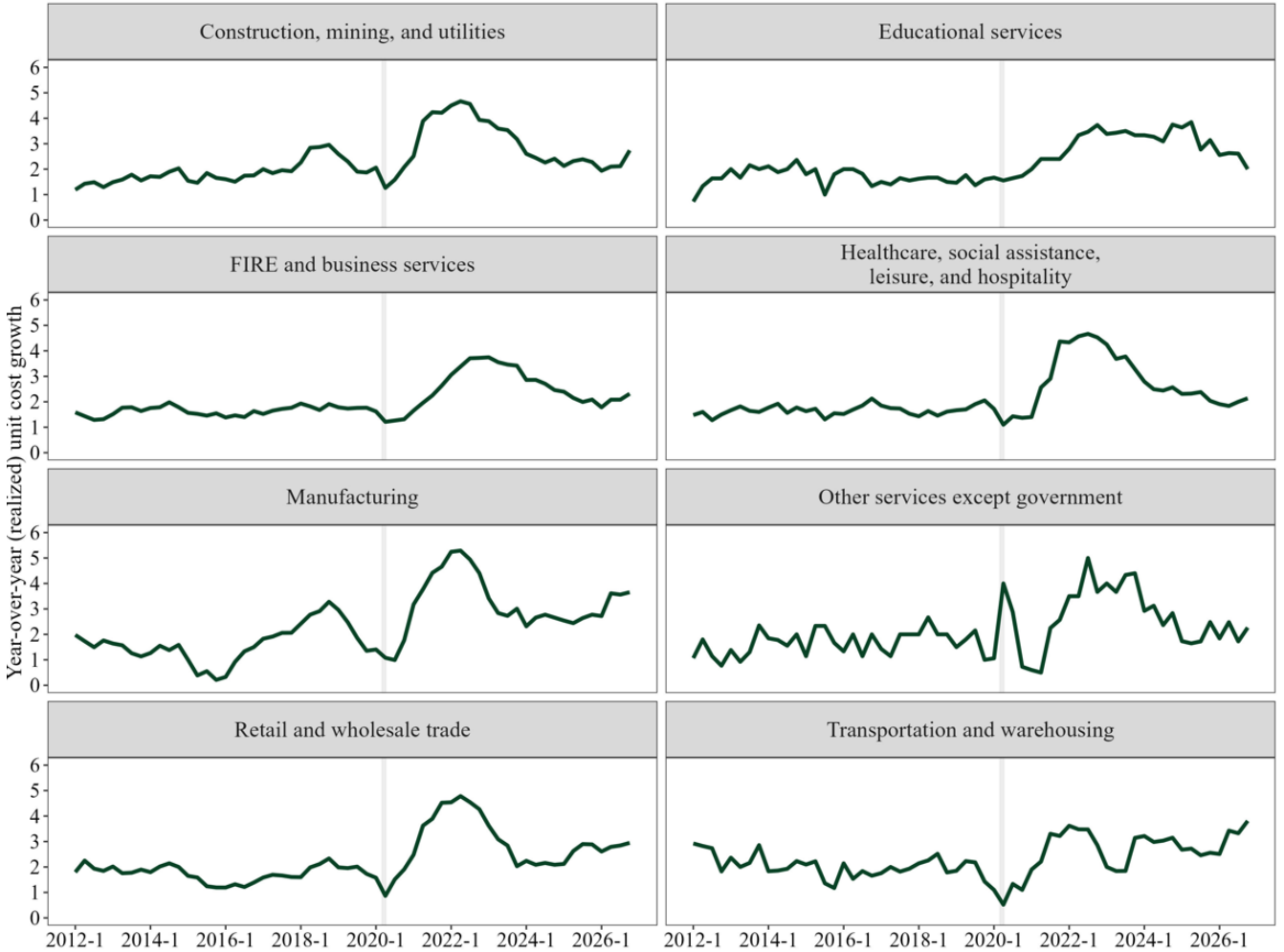
When firms are given a scenario where a competitor(s) is facing a tariff while the firm is unaffected, almost two-thirds of respondents report no change to their prices.



Source: Atlanta Fed's Business Inflation Expectations (BIE) survey

Realizations and expectations by industry

Firms' realized unit-cost growth across most broad industry classifications continues to ebb from peak levels.



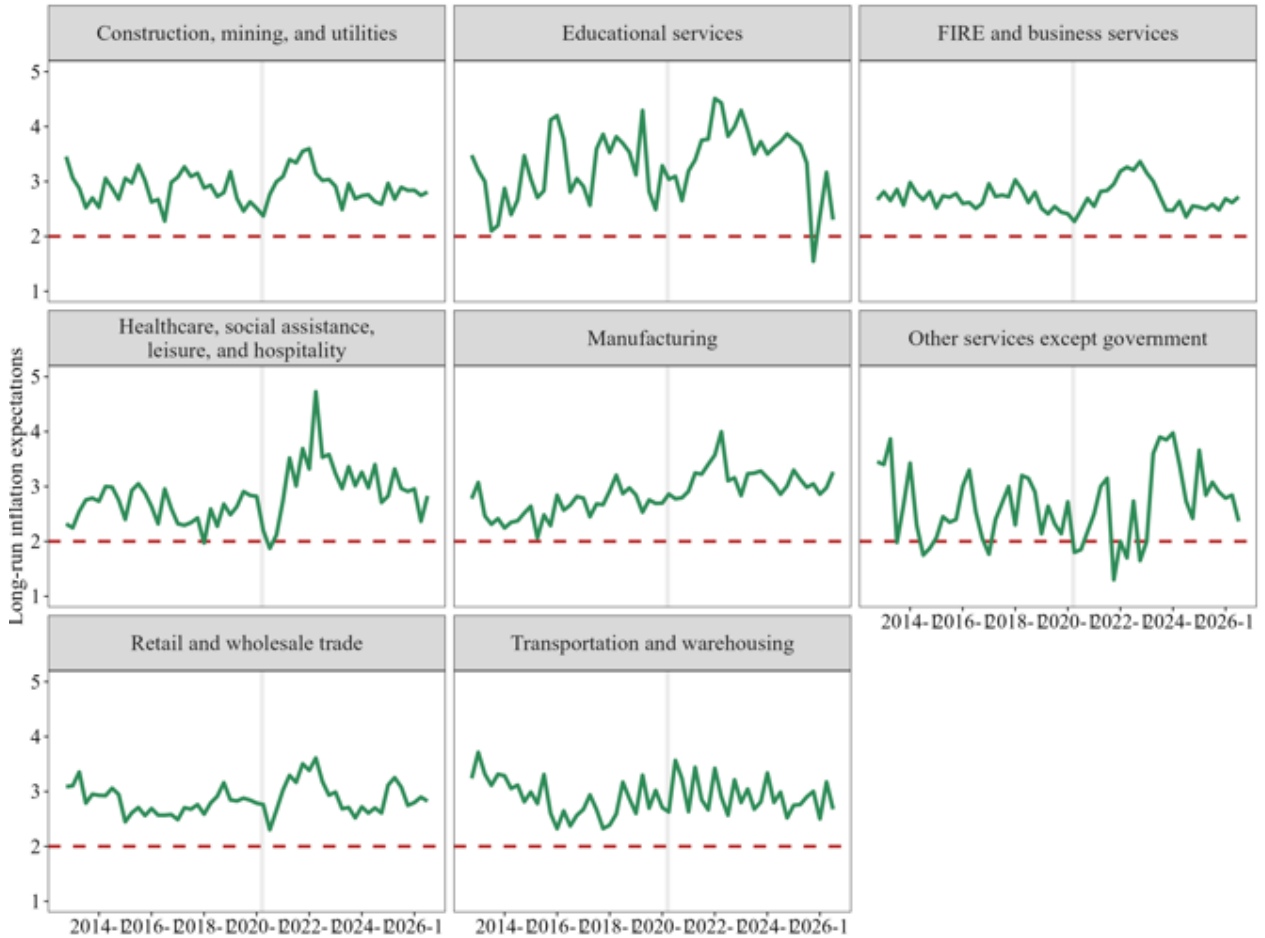
Note: The data are shown monthly.
Source: Atlanta Fed Business Inflation Expectations (BIE) survey

Year-ahead unit-cost expectations vary meaningfully by sector.



Note: The data are shown monthly.
Source: Atlanta Fed Business Inflation Expectations (BIE) survey

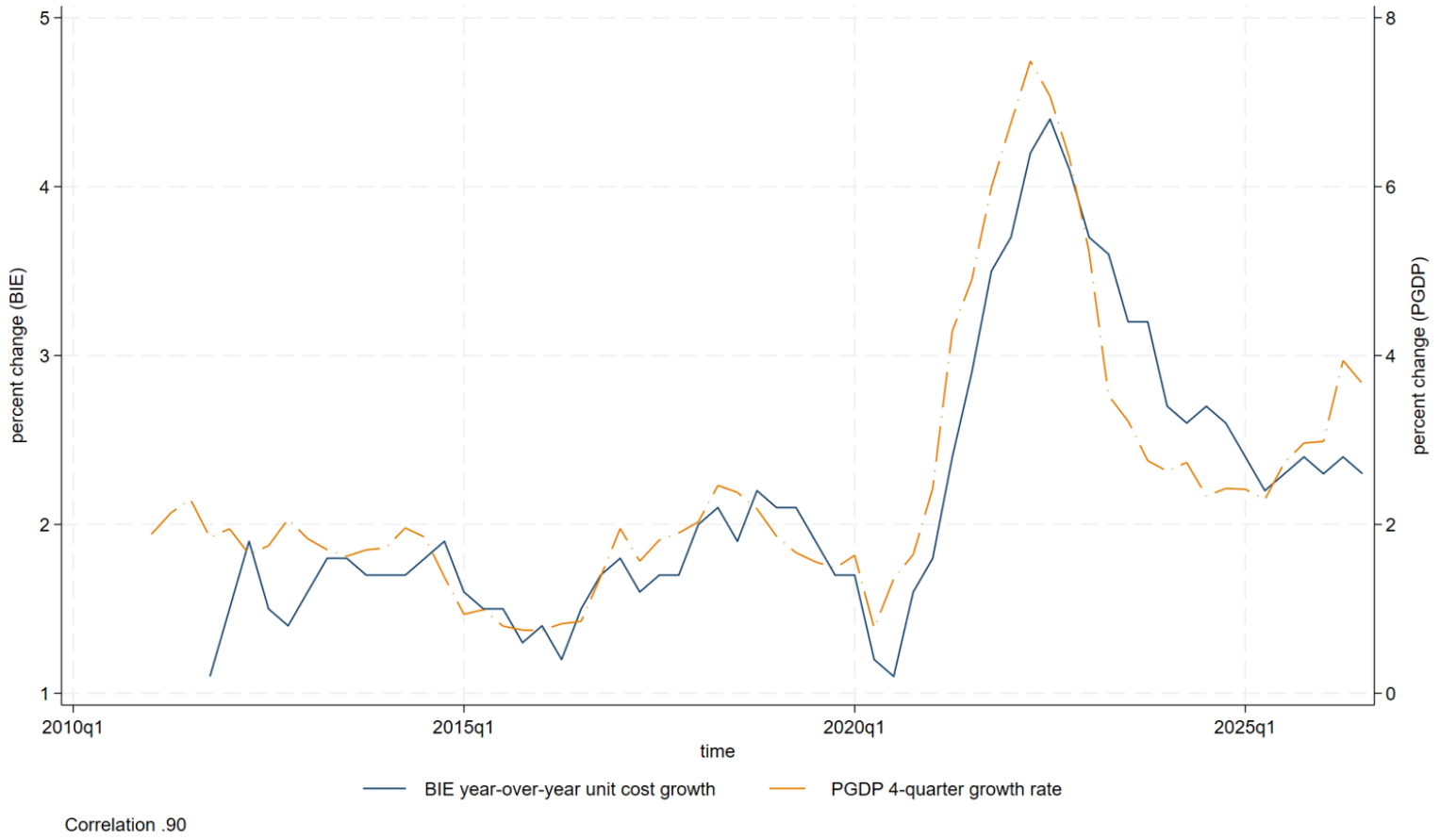
Longer-run unit-cost expectations across most broad industry classifications remain elevated relative to prepandemic averages.



Note: The data are shown monthly.
Source: Atlanta Fed Business Inflation Expectations (BIE) survey

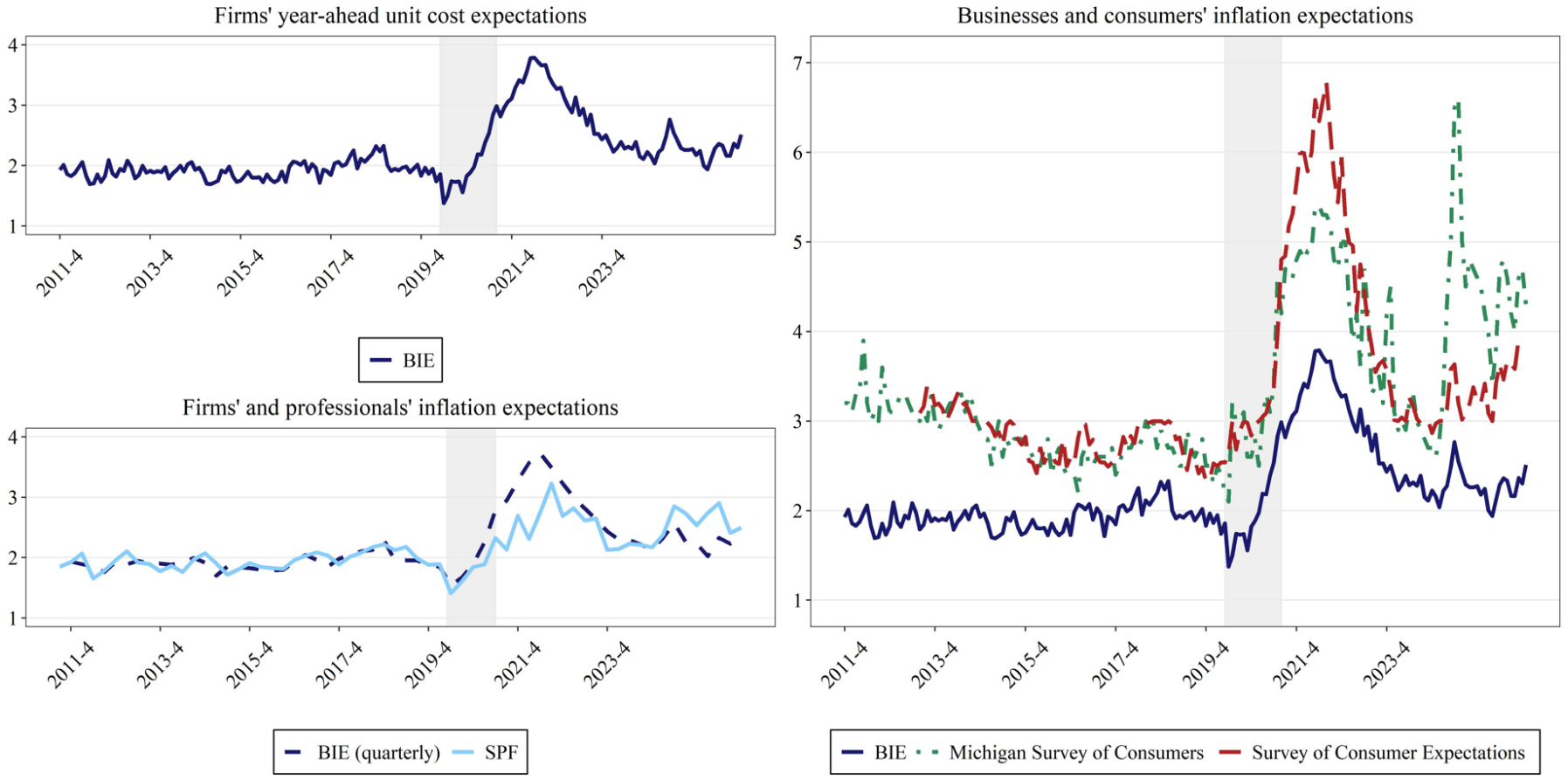
Comparing BIE realizations and expectations to actual data and other surveys

BIE Unit Cost Growth versus GDP Chain-type Price Index



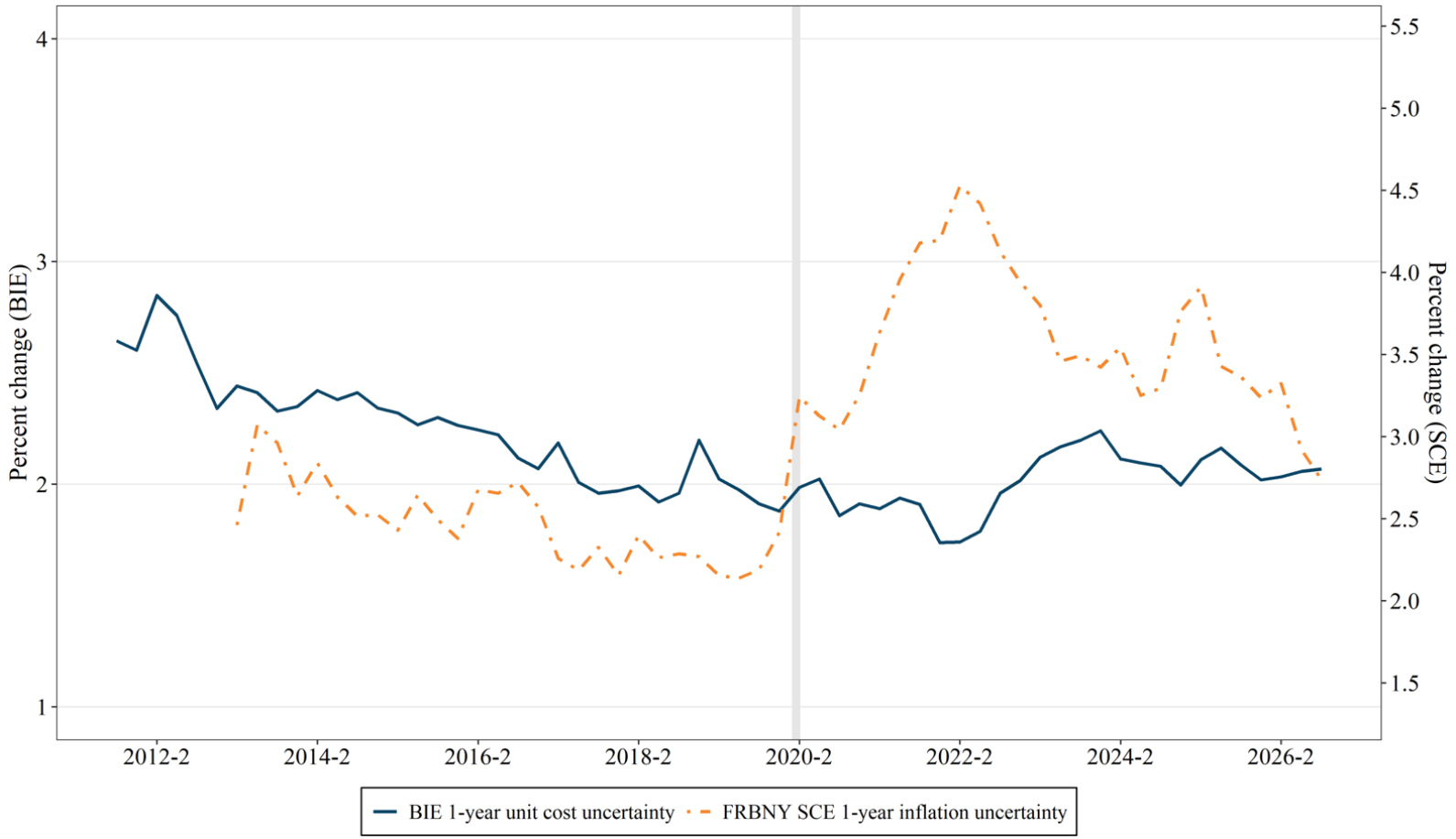
Note: The data are shown quarterly for both measures.
Source: Atlanta Fed's Business Inflation Expectations survey, Haver Analytics, and the Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED) GDP Price Index https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/GDPCTPI

BIE Survey versus SPF and Survey of Consumers



Note: Except the chart at lower left with quarterly data, all remaining chart data are shown monthly.
Source: Atlanta Fed Business Inflation Expectations (BIE) survey, Philadelphia Fed Survey of Professional Forecasters (SPF), and University of Michigan Survey of Consumers

Uncertainty: BIE versus SCE



Note: The data are shown quarterly for both measures.
Source: Atlanta Fed's Business Inflation Expectations (BIE) survey and the New York Fed Survey of Consumer Expectations (SCE)

Questions can be directed to:
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