

The 2026 Auto Outlook:

Solving for Affordability, AI-Fraud, and the New Tax Landscape

March 4, 2026

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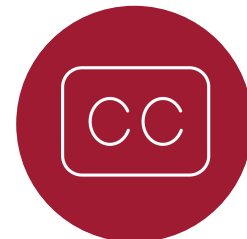
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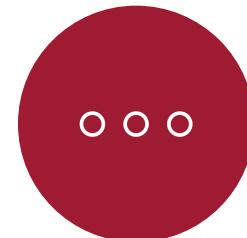
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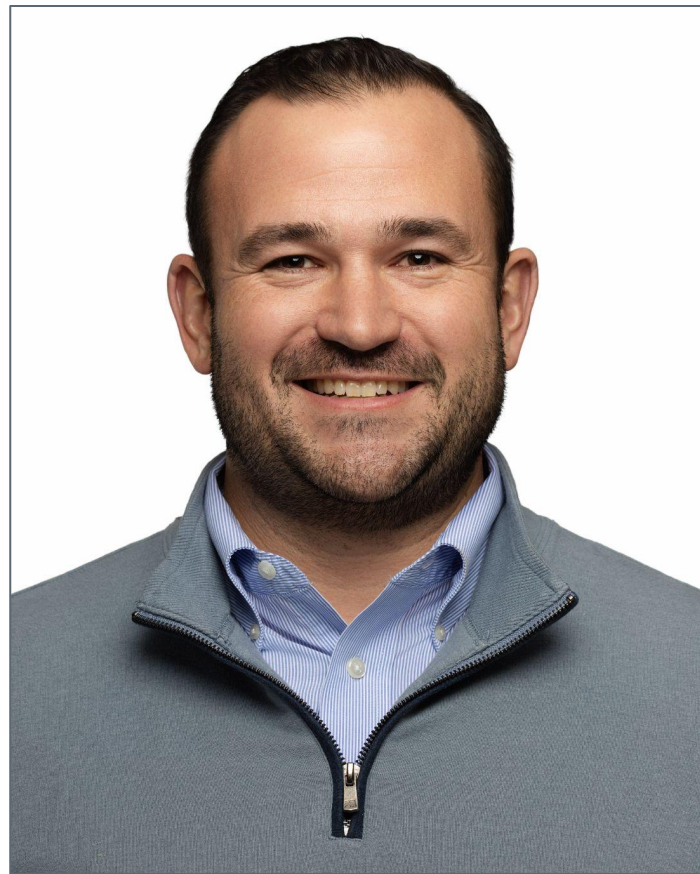
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Today's Auto Subject Matter Experts



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Equifax

Agenda

- 1 2026 Automotive Outlook
- 2 Addressing the Affordability Gap
- 3 Tax Incentivized Buyers
- 4 Auto Lender Fraud Challenges

Auto Industry Insights

60+ DPD Delinquency Rate by Score Tier in Latest Archive

Score Band		
Score Band ▲	% Delinquency Rate (#)	% Delinquency Change YoY
a. Deep subprime	9.2%	-6.6%
b. Subprime	1.1%	-11.3%
c. Near-prime	0.3%	-9.1%
d. Prime	0.1%	-4.2%
e. Super-prime	0.0%	-8.9%

Total Outstanding Auto Debt

Score Band		
Score Band ▲	% Accounts per Score Band	% YoY Trade Growth
a. Deep subprime	14.8%	10.4%
b. Subprime	8.1%	-2.4%
c. Near-prime	11.1%	-4.5%
d. Prime	17.1%	-5.2%
e. Super-prime	48.9%	-1.1%

Average Auto Transaction Price
\$49,191
 January 2026
 MSRP \$51,288, above \$50k for 10 months

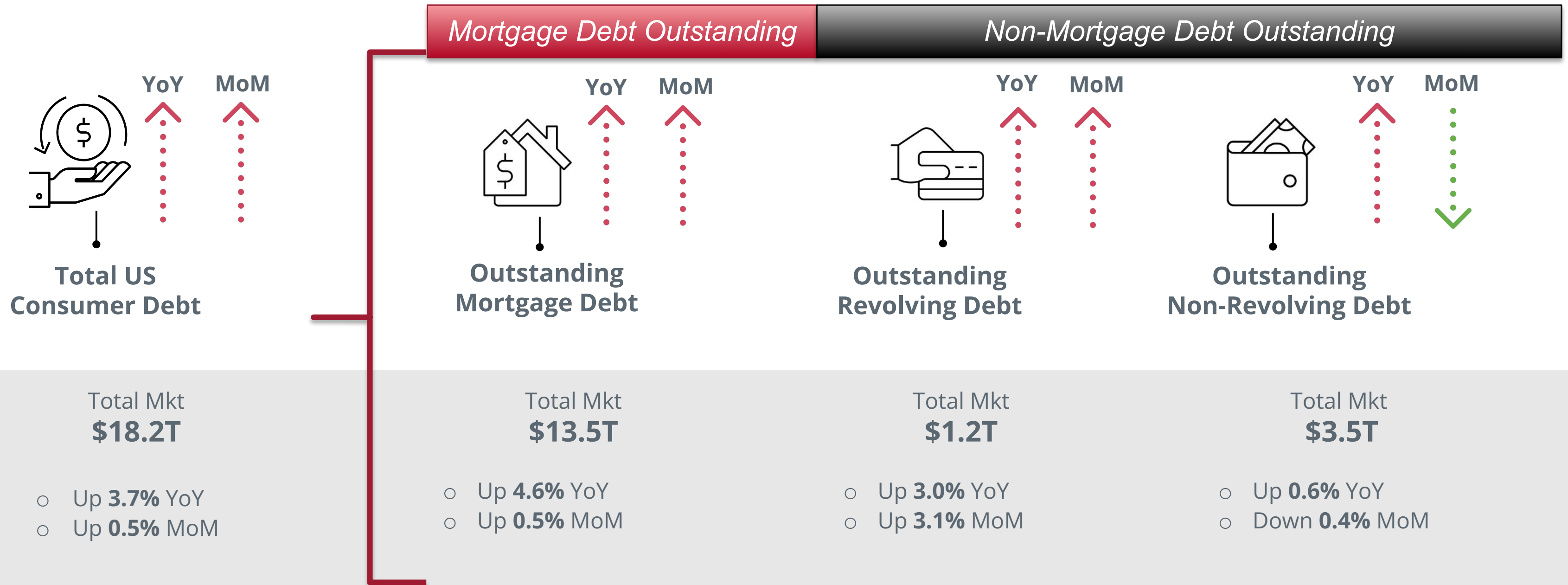
Auto Affordability Index
36.3
 Weeks of Income
 Vs 33.7 in Nov 2019

Average Auto Loan Rate
10.90%
 January 2026
 Elevated, expected to moderate

Source: Equifax Automotive Insights Report, February 2026, Portfolio Data as of December 2025
 Source: Cox Automotive

Solving the Affordability Gap

As of December 2025, outstanding **mortgage, revolving and non-revolving consumer debt** continue to **climb YoY**



Poll

In today's economic climate, what do you view as the biggest hurdle for your prospective borrowers?

High Interest Rates /

High Insurance Premiums

Vehicle Prices

PTI Ratios

Negative Equity

Income / Job Stability

Tax Incentivized Buyers

Equifax Insight

Loan originations typically increase 12%-20% during tax season

IRS Tax Refund Statistics

Comparing 2nd Week of February
YoY 2025 to 2026

- Total Returns Received down by 2.6%
- Total Number of Refunds down by 5.1%
- Total Amount Refunded increased by 8.4%
- Average Refund Amount of \$2,476 (Up 14.2%)
- Total Amount Refunded increased by 8.3%

Refund numbers expected to increase in coming weeks

Source: [IRS Filing Season Statistics](#)

Equifax Auto Lending

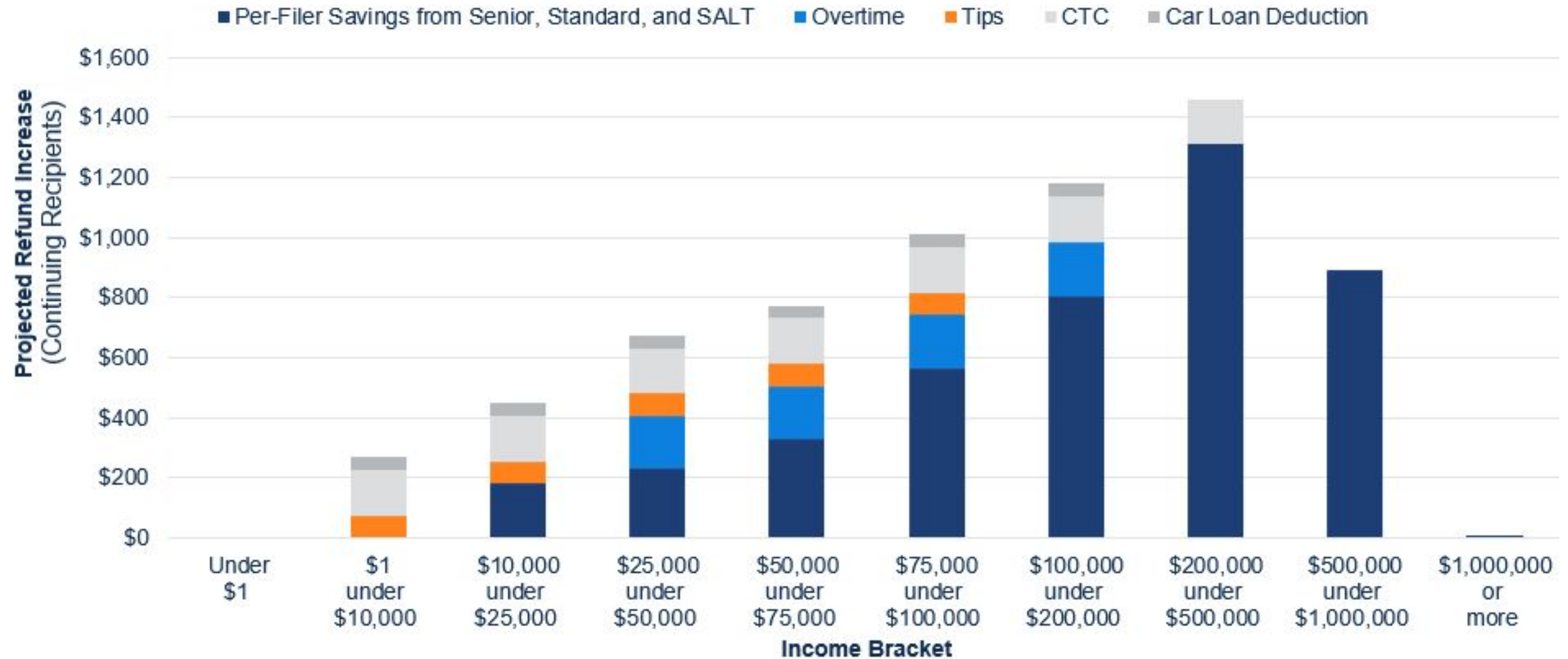
Tax Season Statistics

- ✓ **Largest inquiry volume typically in the 3rd week of February**
- ✓ **Income inquiries up by an average of 27% week over week during 3rd week of February**
- ✓ **Increase usually tails off end of March or early April**

Tax Refund Increase by Income Bracket

Tax refunds surge in 2026, but distribution tells a story of fragmentation

Estimated Increase in Tax Refunds by Income Group



Types of Fraud Challenging Auto Lenders



Credit Washing



Bust-Out Fraud



Income & Employment Fraud



Synthetic Fraud



always.



seek.



knowledge.

Your questions (and our answers)

1

SURVEY

Complete the survey questions through the poll on your screen.

2

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