

Legislation Passed During the First Two Years of Biden/Harris Administration when Democrats Controlled Congress

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The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 is a US \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill signed into law March 11, 2021 to speed up the country's recovery from the economic and health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and recession.

- I. Provisions of the Act:
 - a. Provided for direct economic stimulus payments to individual taxpayers with incomes of \$75,000 or less.
 - b. allocated \$350 billion in assistance to state and local governments, including workforce projects and investments to avoid cuts to police budgets, hire more police officers for safe, effective, and accountable community policing, ensure first responders have the equipment they need to do their jobs, and expand evidence-based community violence intervention and prevention programs.
 - c. Provided \$46 billion to support housing stability for eligible renters.
 - d. Over \$32 billion to help Tribal Nations and Native Communities recover from the pandemic, the largest single federal investment in Indian Country in history.
 - e. \$14 billion for COVID vaccine distribution.
 - f. \$130 billion to schools to help them safely re-open for in-person instruction.
 - g. \$300 billion in unemployment benefits
 - h. expanded child tax credit.
 - i. distribution of \$50 billion to small businesses
 - j. \$25 billion for relief for small and mid-sized restaurants.
 - k. expanded eligibility for Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies and gave states incentives to expand Medicaid.^[8]

- l. Provided \$24 billion in subsidies to childcare industry to keep childcare centers open.
 - m. Over \$25 billion to Jumpstart Universal Broadband Access – including Broadband Connections for 16 million students through the Emergency Connectivity Fund for schools and libraries to close the homework gap.
- II. *Impact of the act:*
- a. *Strongest Jobs Recovery on Record and the Strongest Recovery in the World: When President Biden came into office, there was tremendous economic uncertainty. Unemployment was at 6.4% when President Biden took office. Unemployment was not projected to drop below 4% until the end of 2025 in CBO's February 2021 (Pre-ARP) Forecast. Instead, unemployment was below 4% for the past 25 months in a row – the strongest record in more than five decades.*
 - i. *ARP drove historic 3-year job growth with 15 million jobs added since President Biden took office.*
 - ii. *Not only recovered all the lost jobs but added an additional 5.5 million more jobs versus pre-Covid.*
 - iii. *Powered the strongest recovery in the world: After the American Rescue Plan passed, the U.S. saw by far the fastest recovery in the G7, with significantly higher real wage growth. US has lower apples to apples core inflation than all major European allies.*
 - iv. *Powered the Most Equitable Recovery in Memory: In past recessions, persistent high long-term and youth unemployment as well as high numbers foreclosures and evictions led to long-term harms – "scarring" for millions of Americans and hard, long roads back for Black and Latino Americans. President Biden's Rescue Plan ensured that didn't happen this time:*
 - v. *Historic drops in unemployment for Black and Latino workers: With the strong recovery powered by ARP, Black unemployment saw its largest 1-year drop since the early 1980s and reached its lowest-ever annual rate in 2023;*

Hispanic unemployment saw its fastest 1-year drop and reached its lowest 2-year rate ever in 2022 & 2023.

- vi. *Least scarring in any recovery in memory: The American Rescue Plan led to the fastest drop in long-term and youth unemployment ever. It kept foreclosures historically low and evictions 20% below historic avgs.*
- vii. *Led to dramatic reduction in inequality: Economists have found that the strong post-ARP labor market's wage increases for middle-income and lower-income workers erased nearly 40% of the rise in wage inequality increases from the previous four decades.*
- viii. *Lowest women's annual unemployment rate since 1953: This recovery has seen a dramatic decline in women's unemployment to an average of 3.5% in 2023, the lowest annual average since 1953.*
- ix. *Strong recovery for Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian communities: Asian American unemployment averaged 2.9% over the last two years and AA NHPI small business formation surged. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander unemployment also fell by half from a 9% avg. in 2020 to 4% in 2022-2023.*
- b. *Led to the Largest Federal Investments in Preventing Crime, Reducing Violence, and Investing in Public Safety in History. Since the passage of the American Rescue Plan, we've had the largest federal investment in advancing public safety and preventing violence in our history through ARP funding and other federal funding.*
 - i. *Over \$15 billion in ARP funds committed to preventing crime and reducing violence, with investments by over 1,000 state and local governments to avoid cuts to police budgets, hire more police officers for safe, effective, and accountable community policing, ensure first responders have the equipment they need to do their jobs, and expand evidence-based community violence intervention and prevention programs.*
 - ii. *That includes \$1.2 billion for Medicaid Mobile Crisis Intervention Services – the American Rescue Plan included*

\$1.2 billion to fund mobile crisis intervention units staffed with mental health professionals & trained peers.

iii. It also includes \$1 billion in Family Violence Prevention and Services Program to reduce domestic violence with immediate crisis intervention, health supports, and safety.

c. American Rescue Plan's Expansion of the Affordable Care Act Led to Record-Breaking Health Care Enrollment and Savings: ARP substantially increased consumer subsidies, eligibility to middle-income families and provided strong incentives for states to expand Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act. Result:

i. ARP/IRA-extended ACA extension led to over 21 million Americans enrolling in coverage, an increase of 9 million from when POTUS took office.

ii. Thanks to the American Rescue Plan and Inflation Reduction Act, millions of Americans are saving an average of \$800 a year on premiums. The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to keeping health insurance premiums low, giving families more breathing room and the peace of mind that health insurance brings. To do that, the President is calling on Congress to make the expanded premium tax credits that the Inflation Reduction Act extended permanent.

iii. Provided health coverage to 3 million Americans who would have otherwise had no health insurance.

iv. Provided affordable health coverage to millions of middle-class Americans who were previously excluded from receiving consumer subsidies.

v. Provided more than \$3 billion in Medicaid funding to North Carolina, Missouri, Oklahoma, and South Dakota for Medicaid expansion, covering over one million people.

vi. Gave states an easier pathway to extend Medicaid postpartum coverage for a full 12 months – ensuring access to critical care for nearly 700,000 women in 45 states and the District of Columbia.

d. Largest Small Business Boom in History Due to ARP-Driven Strong Recovery and Small Business Investments: The Biden-Harris Administration:

- i. Increased COVID EIDL to \$2 million while increasing anti-fraud controls.
 - ii. Reformed PPP to more equitably distribute funds to the smallest businesses.
 - iii. Restaurant Revitalization Fund helped over 100,000 restaurants, bars, and food trucks stay open.
 - iv. Shuttered Venues Program provided relief to 13,000 venues.
 - v. Invested a historic \$10 Billion in the State Small Business Credit Initiative leveraging up to \$100 billion in capital for small businesses.
 - vi. Invested in innovative Community Navigators program that delivered training to over 350,000 entrepreneurs and 1:1 counseling services to over 33,000 small business owners
 - vii. Invested \$125 million through the Capital Readiness Program to [43 non-profit community-based organizations](#) to help underserved entrepreneurs launch and scale their small businesses – winners ranged from Asian/Pacific Islander Chamber of Commerce to Urban League of Greater Atlanta. This, and the strong recovery that ARP powered, led to:
 - A record 16 million new business applications over the past 3 years; 55% higher than year before pandemic.
 - Share of Black households owning a business has more than doubled, and Latino and Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander small business formation surged as well.
 - Women-owned businesses formation substantially outpaced overall business formation.
- e. Led to Lowest Child Poverty Rate in American History: The American Rescue Plan expanded the Child Tax Credit, made it fully refundable, and delivered it monthly in 2021. This historic expansion drove:
1. Child poverty cut nearly in half to lowest rate ever.
 2. Black child poverty cut by over 50%, Hispanic child poverty cut by 43%, and dramatic drops in Native American, white

and Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander child poverty—all record lows.

3. *Over 9 million children in rural areas benefited from the expanded credit.*
 4. *5 million children in Veteran and active-duty families benefited from the expanded credit.*
 5. *Child Tax Credit payments were delivered reliably with the first ever monthly payment – on the 15th of each month with 90% using direct deposit.*
 6. *Over 60 million children in 40 million working families received largest Child Tax Credit in history.*
 7. *Historic expansion to ~240,000 Puerto Rican families: For the first time, ARP permanently made Puerto Rican families eligible for the same Child Tax Credit as other American families. ARP also quadrupled funding available for Puerto Rico's Earned Income Tax Credit.*
- f. *Funded a Historic Vaccination Campaign: ARP provided \$160 billion to support vaccination, therapeutics, testing and mitigation, PPE, and the broader COVID Response effort. This led to:*
- i. *Over 230 million Americans are fully vaccinated, up from 3.5 million when President Biden took office, while closing the racial gap in vaccine access.*
- g. *First-Ever National Eviction Policy Called "The most important eviction prevention policy in American history."*
- i. *Emergency Rental Assistance and other American Rescue Plan assistance helped over 8 million hard-pressed renters stay in their homes without sacrificing other basic needs.*
 - ii. *Emergency Rental Assistance and Other ARP housing policies cut eviction filings to 20% below historic averages since start of Biden-Harris Administration.*
 - iii. *Called the "the most important eviction prevention policy in American history" by Matthew Desmond, Pulitzer Prize Winner author of "Evicted" – and the "deepest investment the federal government has made in low-income renters since the nation launched its public housing system."*

- iv. *HUD Emergency Housing Vouchers have already helped 47,500 households at risk of homelessness lease their own rental housing – supporting those at risk of or experiencing homelessness or housing instability, and those fleeing domestic violence.*
- h. *Helped Keep Over 225,000 Child Care Programs Open and Provided Historic Nationwide Support for Medicaid Home-Based Care*
 - i. *American Rescue Plan Stabilization Assistance has reached over 225,000 Child Care Providers – that employ 1 million child care workers – and have the capacity to serve as many as 10 million children.*
 - ii. *Led to lower child care costs by \$1,250 per child, helped bring hundreds of thousands of women with young children into the workforce, and increased wages for child care workers by 10%, according to Council of Economic Advisors Report.*
 - iii. *More than 8-in-10 licensed child care centers nationwide received ARP assistance.*
 - iv. *Benefited 30,000 rural child care programs – in most states, 97% of rural counties or more received aid.*
 - v. *Invested \$37 billion to expand access to home-based care and support direct care workers: Thanks to the American Rescue Plan, President Biden delivered \$37 billion that all 50 states and the District of Columbia chose to invest to expand access to home care and improve the quality of*

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

The law includes the largest federal investment in public transit in history. The law includes spending figures of \$105 billion in public transport. It also spends \$110 billion on fixing roads and bridges and includes measures for climate change mitigation and improving access for cyclists and pedestrians. Increasing use of public transport and related transit-oriented development can reduce transportation emissions in human settlements by 78% and overall US emissions by 15%.

- I. Provisions of the law:
 - a. The law includes spending \$21 billion for environmental projects, \$50 billion for water storage, and \$15 billion for electric vehicles.
 - b. It also includes \$73 billion to overhaul the energy policy of the United States.
 - c. The law also gives \$4.7 billion to cap orphan wells abandoned by oil and gas companies and \$1 billion to better connect neighborhoods separated by transport infrastructure as part of environmental justice efforts.
 - d. This \$1 billion will be spent through the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) discretionary grant program^[90] that, among other priorities, promotes: "New or improved, affordable transportation options to increase safe mobility and connectivity for all, including for people with disabilities, through lower-carbon travel like walking, cycling, rolling, and transit that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote active travel."
 - e. By November 2023, around \$400 billion from the bill was allocated to more than 40,000 projects related to infrastructure, transport, and sustainability. Public attention has remained relatively low, due in part to slow implementation of project.

It will be rolled out over 10 years. This is the most important piece of legislation ever taken to mitigating climate change.

- f. **Energy** :\$73 billion will be spent on overhauling the energy policy of the United States. The Boston Consulting Group projects \$41 billion of the Act will be germane to climate action in energy. \$11 billion of the \$73 billion amount will be invested in the electrical grid's adjustment to renewable energy, with some of the money going to new loans for electric power transmission lines and required studies for future transmission needs. \$6 billion of that \$73 billion will go to domestic nuclear power. Also of that \$73 billion, the IIJA invests \$45 billion

in innovation and industrial policy for key emerging technologies in energy; \$430 million–\$21 billion in new demonstration projects at the DOE; and nearly \$24 billion in onshoring, supply chain resilience, and bolstering U.S.-held competitive advantages in energy; the latter amount will be divided into an \$8.6 billion investment in carbon capture and storage, \$3 billion in battery material reprocessing, \$3 billion in battery recycling, \$1 billion in rare-earth minerals stockpiling, and \$8 billion in new research hubs for green hydrogen.^[85] The DOE has imposed grant requirements on \$7 billion of the IIJA's battery and transportation spending, which are meant to promote community benefits agreements, social justice, and formation of trade unions. Finally, the law gives \$4.7 billion to cap orphan wells abandoned by oil and gas companies.^{[86][87][88]}

- g. **Broadband** - The law invests a total of \$65 billion in advancing the U.S. quest for broadband universal service. Of this \$65 billion, the law invests \$42.45 billion in a new infrastructure grant program by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration called the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program, with highest priority going to communities with Internet speeds below 25 downstream and 3 upstream Mbps. \$2 billion will go to the NTIA's Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, \$1 billion to a new middle mile infrastructure program, \$1.44 billion in formula grants to state and territorial digital equity plan implementation, \$60 million in formula grants to new digital equity plan development, and \$1.25 billion in discretionary grants to "specific types of political subdivisions to implement digital equity projects". The law gives the USDA \$5.5 billion of the \$65 billion total to deliver broadband to rural communities smaller than 20,000 people, \$5 million of which is obligated to utility cooperatives. The law invests \$14.2 billion of the total in the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program, the successor to the American Rescue

Plan's broadband subsidies. It gives a \$30 monthly discount on internet services to qualifying low-income families (\$75 on tribal lands), and provides a \$100 discount on tablets, laptops and desktops for them. The program ran out of funds on April 30, 2024. The law also requires the FCC to return consumer broadband labels it developed in 2016 to statute, to revise its public comment process and to issue rules and model policies for combating digital deployment discrimination, with the United States Attorney General's cooperation, and the Government Accountability Office to deliver a report on updating broadband thresholds by November 2022.

- h. **Water** - to support safe drinking water programs, the law provides:
 - i. \$11.7 billion for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF)
 - ii. \$15 billion to local water systems for lead service line replacement
 - iii. \$9 billion to address emerging contaminants such as PFAS (\$4 billion through the SRF and \$5 billion through grants to water utilities)
 - iv. \$3.5 billion to build water and sewer systems for the Indian Health Service.
 - v. For surface water programs, such as watershed management and pollution control, the law provides:
 - 1. \$12.7 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to support state and local government water quality programs
 - 2. \$1.7 billion for geographic-based programs including the National Estuary Program, the Great Lakes program and the Chesapeake Bay Program.
 - 3. The Act provides \$8 billion for helping Western states deal with the Southwestern North American megadrought. Spending for many related projects is

included under the category "Western Water Infrastructure".^{[109][110]}

- i. **Bridges-** Prior to the enactment of the infrastructure law in 2021, no dedicated federal bridge funding had existed since fiscal year 2013. The law created two new programs specifically to fund bridge projects:
 - i. With \$27.5 billion over five years, the BFP distributes funds to every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico based on a formula that accounts for each state's cost to replace or rehabilitate its poor or fair condition bridges. Each state is guaranteed a minimum of \$45 million per year from this program. At least 15% of each state's funds must be spent on off-system bridges (i.e., public bridges that are not on federal-aid highways), and 3% is set aside each year for bridges on tribal lands. Off-system and tribal bridge projects may be funded with a 100% federal share (as opposed to the standard 80% federal share).
 - ii. With \$12.5 billion over five years, the BIP is a competitive grant program to replace, rehabilitate, preserve, or make resiliency improvements to bridges. Half of the funding is reserved for large bridge projects, which are defined as projects that cost over \$100 million. Large projects are funded at a maximum 50% federal share, while other projects are funded at a maximum 80% federal share.
- j. **Passenger rail-** The infrastructure law is the largest investment in passenger rail since the 1971 creation of Amtrak (which under the law will receive \$22 billion in advance appropriations and \$19 billion in fully authorized funds). It directly appropriated \$66 billion for rail over a five-year period (including the Amtrak appropriations), of which at least \$18 billion is designated for expanding passenger rail service to new corridors, and it authorized an additional \$36 billion. Most of this funding for new passenger rail lines is implemented through the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail

program, which will receive \$36 billion in advance appropriations and \$7.5 billion in fully authorized funds.

- i. The Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements program will receive \$5 billion in advance appropriations and \$5 billion in fully authorized funds, while programs for grade separation replacing level crossings will receive \$3 billion in advance appropriations and \$2.5 billion in fully authorized funds, and the Restoration and Enhancement Grant program intended to revive discontinued passenger rail services will receive \$250 million in advance appropriations and \$250 million in fully authorized funds. Per the law's requirements, at least \$12 billion is available and \$3.4–4.1 billion authorized for expanding service outside of the Northeast Corridor, and \$24 billion is available and \$3.4–4.1 billion authorized to partially rebuild the Corridor.
- ii. Transit station accessibility - The law established and authorized \$1.75 billion over five years for a new All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP). This program is designed to improve the accessibility of rail system stations that were built before the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). At the time of the infrastructure law's passage, over 900 transit stations were not fully ADA-compliant.
- k. **Highway removal and complete streets** -The law includes \$1 billion over five years for Reconnecting Communities planning and construction grants intended to build marginalized community-recommended projects removing or capping highways and railroads, the first \$185 million of which were awarded to 45 projects on February 28, 2023. The program was later combined with the Neighborhood Equity and Access program from the Inflation Reduction Act for efficiency reasons, before the next 132 projects were given \$3.3 billion in awards on March 13, 2024.

- l. **Charging stations** - The Act creates the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program within the Department of Energy. It provides funding of up to \$4.155 billion to state governments for up to 80 percent of eligible project costs, to add substantial open-access electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure along major highway corridors.^{[123][124]}
- m. **Vehicle safety** - The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act requires the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to develop a safety mechanism to prevent drunk driving, which causes about 10,000 deaths each year in the United States as of 2021, which will be rolled out in phases for retroactive fitting, and will become mandatory for all new vehicles in 2027. The technology, which is being developed by NHTSA in cooperation with the Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety and Swedish automobile safety company Autoliv, consists of a breath-based and a touch-based sensor that stops the car if the driver is above the legal blood alcohol content, and will be open-sourced to automobile manufacturers.
- n. **Wildlife crossings and conservation** -The infrastructure law created the Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program with \$350 million in funding over five years. This is a competitive grant program that funds planning and construction projects that prevent wildlife-vehicle collisions and improve the connectivity of animal habitats. The law also allocated \$1 billion to create the National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant program to improve the passage of anadromous fish such as salmon.

The CHIPS and Science Act

This act authorizes roughly \$280 billion in new funding to boost domestic research and manufacturing of semiconductors in the United States, for which it appropriates \$52.7 billion. The act includes \$39 billion

in subsidies for chip manufacturing on U.S. soil along with 25% investment tax credits for costs of manufacturing equipment, and \$13 billion for semiconductor research and workforce training, with the dual aim of strengthening American supply chain resilience and countering China. It also invests \$174 billion in the overall ecosystem of public sector research in science and technology, advancing human spaceflight, quantum computing, materials science, biotechnology, experimental physics, research security, social and ethical considerations, workforce development and diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts at NASA, NSF, DOE, EDA, and NIST.

RESULTS OF THIS DEMOCRATIC AGENDA:

US has the fastest growing economy, a strong labor market, and the most rapidly falling inflation of our European counterparts. The US has outpaced its counterparts in Europe and elsewhere. In terms of GDP, the US posted a 3.3% gain in the fourth quarter of 2023 putting the US at 2.5% over the course of 2023, outpacing all other advanced economies and on track to do so again in 2024 (usafacts.org/state-of-the-union/economy/).

Why hasn't this led to high approval ratings for the Biden administration?

This disapproval rating of incumbent leaders is common among developed democracies: Disapproval of head of state: 73% Germany, 71% France, 70% S. Korea, 70 Japan, 66% UK, 59% Canada, 54% U.S., and 46% Belgium. Fears following the pandemic, inflation, immigration, and income inequality are considered drivers of this disapproval, although there are no definitive studies (Lopez, The World's Unpopular Leaders: Why Biden Isn't Alone in his Low Approval Ratings, New York Times, March 28, 2024). In the US, the impact of the media is considered important. – many in the US say their finances are doing well but the economy is a disaster. Analysis of the news media focuses much more on negatives than positives (Paul Krugman, Biden's Approval is Low, Except Compared with Everyone Else, New York Times, May 13, 2024).

