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## InCK Marks BLOG on Financing A Human Services Infrastructure

Infrastructure is more than roads and bridges. It is more than safe and decent housing and livable neighborhoods. It is more than a built and toxin-free environment.

Infrastructure also is an affordable and available health care system and a public health workforce that responds effectively to health needs, including pandemics like COVID-19. Infrastructure is a solid educational system that includes affordable and quality child care while parents work. Infrastructure is a caregiving workforce enabling seniors to live in dignity and persons with disabilities to live full lives and contribute to their community and the economy.

Just as road and bridge construction creates jobs, providing affordable and available child care and providing in-home health services creates jobs. These workers represent the workforce behind the workforce, enabling more people to be productive members of the economy, and they are part of the economy and the human capital infrastructure America needs to prosper.

Through the American Jobs Plan, the American Families Plan, and his federal discretionary spending budget, President Biden has proposed infrastructure investments to build this workforce. Some has been initiated in the American Rescue Plan Act and now needs sustainable investment, such as strengthening the public health workforce in underserved and lower-income communities most impacted by COVID-19. Some is reflected in the Jobs Plan and the Families Plan in making long-term, ten-year investments to expand the direct care and child care workforces. Some is incorporated into the 2022 discretionary budget, including additional investments in public education through Title I.

Together, President Biden's proposals create more than three million additional jobs in this health, education, and human services infrastructure and pay that workforce a living wage. Currently, the workforce of direct care workers, community health staff, and child care workers has been at the bottom of America's income scale, often earning \$12 per hour or less. Increasing their compensation as well as their numbers creates new jobs, new career pathways, and puts money and purchasing power into local economies. Public investments are key. Those who need and benefit from these services themselves have incomes that don't enable them to cover the full and fair value of the services they receive.

Over the next several months, Congress must act on President Biden's proposals. This will shape how well we build the infrastructure we need for our future prosperity. Even without considering the benefit this workforce offers to those it serves, the positive impact of making such investments is large in increased workforce productivity, more decent-paying jobs, and more community economic activity – what a robust infrastructure is about.

Under President Biden's proposals, these investments are paid for by reducing tax preferences and breaks for profitable large corporations and individuals making over \$1 million per year.

Members of Congress now must weigh the benefits with their means of financing. They must compare the benefits to the tens, if not hundreds, of millions of Americans who will directly benefit from these

investments, compared with the 250,000 Americans with incomes over \$1 million per year who have benefited from a tax code providing them preferences and loopholes to avoid taxation.,

It is true that Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos may be able to purchase fewer islands, personal jets, and Picassos if he pays more in taxes, but these items are not at the heart of Amazon's sales. Amazon – and more importantly main street businesses and local entrepreneurs – will do much better when those providing direct care in their communities have more resources to spend and invest.

President Biden's infrastructure plans can be truly transformational for America's economy. Now it is up to us in the public to insist upon and hold our elected official accountable to enacting it.

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