



# Building America Back Better Biden's Agenda is Working for the IBEW

*How President Biden's actions benefit working families and IBEW members*

## NEGOTIATING A BIPARTISAN DEAL WITH CONGRESS FOR MORE JOBS, CLEANER INFRASTRUCTURE

President Joe Biden proposed the [largest investment in American infrastructure](#) since World War II back in March. Four weeks later, he renewed his call for the \$2.3 trillion American Jobs Plan during an address to Congress, with the IBEW at the heart of his pitch.

Today, President Biden and Congress are working to pass a bill that will upgrade America's flagging infrastructure, better position the U.S. as a global competitor and aggressively combat climate change.

The [Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework](#) deal that was announced on June 24 includes plans to modernize the electric grid, expand access to broadband internet, invest and electrify the transportation sector, including public passenger rail, ports, roads, bridges and airports. The framework will create and sustain good-paying union jobs with strong labor protections.

"This is a once-in-a-generation chance to set America on a path to prosperity and prevail in the global economic challenges we currently face," said [IBEW President Lonnie Stephenson](#).



*Major upgrades to the country's transmission lines are included in infrastructure legislation.*

## EVITP a Necessary Component



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*IBEW members are gearing up to install 500,000 new electric vehicle charging stations to accommodate a spike in new electric vehicle sales.*

Key to this plan are 500,000 new electric vehicle charging stations and the standardization of the buildout of the nation's EV infrastructure. The IBEW is pressing lawmakers to ensure that the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP) is included in any legislation. The EVITP program has been developed through collaboration among the IBEW, automobile and energy storage device manufacturers, utilities, electrical contractors, state and local electrical inspectors and the national fire protection agency.

"Without proper credentialing, the EV buildout will be vulnerable to unscrupulous companies hiring unqualified workers, paying low wages and contributing to the race-to-the-bottom mentality that is already rampant in the renewable energy industry," Stephenson said.



## MAKING THE IBEW INTEGRAL IN FEDERAL EV EXPANSION DISCUSSIONS

IBEW was front and center in a [June 4 conversation with White House officials](#), industry leaders and agency procurement officials about transitioning the entire federal vehicle fleet from gas-powered to electric.

White House Council on Environmental Quality chair Brenda Mallory said the transformation of more than 600,000 cars and trucks to an all-electric fleet will accelerate the advancement of America's industrial capacity to supply domestically produced zero-emission vehicles and electric batteries, while creating good-paying union jobs in manufacturing, engineering and skilled-trades and significantly cutting the federal government's carbon footprint.

IBEW's Austin Keyser, assistant to the international president for government affairs, said when it comes to building the electric vehicle charging infrastructure, there is no better model for scaling up and training the construction workforce than the IBEW and National Electrical Contractor Association's jointly administered program.

"We have been around since the inception of electricity; we are not a start-up looking for funding," Keyser said.

The IBEW has over 1,000 signatory contractors, spread across all 50 states, who are using EVITP credentialed journeymen. "There isn't an inch of U.S. land that isn't served by a local IBEW/NECA training center," Keyser said. "As the market grows, we can instantly grow with it using local workers."

The number of apprentices may change, but the curriculum and structure are already in place, he said. "The IBEW and our contractors have already made sure of that."

To date, no national standards exist for the buildout of the charging network. EVITP ensures that federal investment providing for the installation of EVSE is performed safely, and with the highest level of quality.

## HOLDING FIRST WORKER TASK FORCE MEETING AT IBEW TRAINING CENTER

Vice President Kamala Harris and Labor Secretary Marty Walsh [traveled to Pittsburgh in late June](#) for the first meeting of the White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment.

The roundtable featured Local 5 organizer Bill Garner and counterparts from seven other unions. President Biden created the task force in April, giving appointed cabinet members and top advisors six months to report back on how the federal government can support union growth and collective bargaining.

"You had the vice president and secretary of labor walk into a union hall — our hall — and sit down with a group of union members for two hours," President Stephenson said. "Their only agenda was to learn about union organizing from the experts, from the people who live and breathe it. The workers around the table were the VIPs that day."



*Pittsburgh Local 5 hosted Vice President Kamala Harris and labor secretary Marty Walsh for their first worker empowerment hearing.*

*Check out the August issue of the Electrical Worker for more on this story.*



## VISITING A SOLAR PROJECT IN NEVADA TO TALK GOOD JOBS

Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm and Rep. Susie Lee joined Las Vegas Local 357 members on a tour of the [Townsite Solar Project in Boulder City on June 11](#). Local 357 Business Manager James Halsey joined them to discuss the [American Jobs Plan](#), a far-reaching blueprint for making critical investments in the nation's energy infrastructure, particularly renewable resources.

IBEW members have been critical to the construction of the 232-megawatt solar farm, providing more than 150,000 labor hours of craftwork since last September.

"This solar plant is the perfect example of how we can use the potential in clean energy to create good-paying union jobs that grow the economy, reduce energy bills and address climate change," Granholm said. "President Biden's American Jobs Plan will create millions of clean energy jobs all across the supply chain that will be needed to plan facilities, manufacture materials, install transmission lines and solar panels, and it's going to help us get our country get to 100% clean electricity by 2035."

"Thank you, Secretary Granholm, for visiting Nevada last week and meeting with #NV03's incredible IBEW solar industry workers," Lee [tweeted](#). "Nevada is paving the way when it comes to building a clean energy economy for the future."



*Energy secretary Jennifer Granholm toured the solar project under construction with the assistance of Las Vegas Local 357 members.*

## IN A WIN FOR WORKERS, WHITE HOUSE AFFIRMS SUPPORT FOR ALASKA'S WILLOW OIL PROJECT

The Biden administration provided a lift to IBEW members and skilled construction workers in Alaska when it filed a brief in federal district court defending the Willow gas and oil project on the state's north slope.

Originally approved by the Trump administration, some thought Biden might reverse course. In the end, the administration decided the project could help reach carbon reduction goals and boost an Alaska economy that lags behind much of the lower 48 states. The project is expected to create about 1,000 skilled construction jobs.



*Alaska's Willow oil and gas project is providing jobs to dozens of Anchorage Local 1547 members.*

"Fundamentally, Alaska is an oil and gas state," Anchorage Local 1547 Business Manager Marcie Obremski said after the May 26 announcement. "That is what we've thrived on. Our members reflect that going back to the [Trans-Alaska Pipeline's construction in the 1970s]."

The Willow development is in the Northwest Petroleum Reserve, which has been set aside for oil and gas drilling since 1923. Developer ConocoPhillips has said it will include five drill sites, two airstrips, hundreds of miles of pipeline, 37 miles of gravel road and a processing facility to prepare oil for shipment. It could produce up to 160,000 barrels of oil daily and about 600 million barrels over three decades.

*Read more on this story in the August issue of the Electrical Worker.*



## IMPLEMENTING PRESIDENT BIDEN'S SUPPORT FOR AMERICAN MANUFACTURING

On June 11, the Biden administration said that federal agencies must ensure taxpayer support for American manufacturing in purchasing decisions. This announcement backed up a Made-in-America pledge President Biden made in his first days in office.

The [guidance directs agencies](#) to improve their made-in-America policies to promote economic security and good-paying union jobs in the United States, strengthening worker justice and building back a rejuvenated domestic manufacturing sector.

"We've seen plenty of politicians talk about promoting domestic manufacturing and made-in-America rules," [said IBEW President Lonnie Stephenson](#). "But President Biden has shown by his actions that for him, it's more than talk. And that's good news for working families, who have the most to gain from made-in-America guidelines."

"Our country has a lot of work to do to strengthen our economy and create millions of good jobs," Stephenson said. "The men and women of the IBEW are ready to work with lawmakers and business leaders as we work to rebuild America's manufacturing industry."

President Biden tapped a longtime voice for good jobs and American manufacturing, Celeste Drake, as the [first-ever Made in America](#) director at the Office of Management and Budget. Drake brings years of experience fighting on behalf of unions for fair trade and labor rights to the job.

## RESTORING FUNDS FOR CALIFORNIA'S BULLET TRAIN

In June, the Biden administration [announced that it would release](#) nearly \$1 billion in federal funding for the high-speed train already under construction to connect Los Angeles and San Francisco. Former President Trump had halted the funding in 2019, prompting a lawsuit by the state against the U.S. Department of Transportation.



*An artist's rendering of the California bullet train.*

## JOINING THE GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST FORCED LABOR

Along with leaders from other G7 countries on June 24, President Biden committed to upholding international labor standards and protecting individuals from forced labor.

Less than two weeks later, the Biden administration announced it would block imports of silicone, a raw material used in solar panels, from a Chinese company suspected of using forced labor. Customs and Border Protection will seize shipments from Hoshine Silicon Industry Co., which has been linked to human rights violations of Uyghur Muslims.

In a statement, [the White House said](#):

[China's] forced labor practices run counter to our values as a nation and expose American consumers to unethical practices. They also leave American businesses and workers to compete on an uneven playing field by allowing firms to gain advantage over their competitors by exploiting workers and artificially suppressing wages. The United States will not tolerate forced labor in our supply chains and will continue to stand up for our values and for U.S. workers and businesses.



The [United States excluded goods](#) suspected of utilizing forced labor in its supply chain last year, with Customs and Border Protection blocking cotton and tomato products from China.

## ACCELERATING OFFSHORE WIND DEVELOPMENT

The Biden administration announced the proposed sale of offshore wind tracts in shallow waters between [Long Island and the coast of New Jersey](#) with the potential to generate 7 gigawatts of energy, powering more than 2.6 million homes.

"The Biden-Harris administration recognizes the urgency of this moment, and the development of renewable energy resources is an important piece of addressing this reality," said U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland on June 11. "This announcement puts a priority on creating and sustaining good-paying union jobs as we build a clean energy economy."

Reaffirming its commitment to creating good-paying union jobs, the Interior Department said it would prioritize entering into a project labor agreement to construct any related project. President Biden has cited a goal of installing 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2030.

## EXTENDING UNION RIGHTS, HIGHER PAY TO NEARLY 50,000 TSA WORKERS

Transportation Security Administration airport screeners will be [eligible for more rights on the job](#) and the Homeland Security Department will also move to boost their pay, it announced on July 2.

"TSA employees are outstanding public servants who work on the frontlines, including throughout the pandemic, to keep the traveling American public safe," said Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas. "They deserve the empowerment of collective bargaining and a compensation structure that recognizes and rewards them for their contributions to our safety and security."

## STAFFING THE ADMINISTRATION WITH LABOR FRIENDS

### *Robin Carnahan Heading the GSA*

Former Ullico board member Robin Carnahan was confirmed in June [to lead the General Services Administration](#). With more than 12,000 employees and a \$21 billion budget, the GSA is among the most crucial federal agencies, overseeing more than 8,000 buildings, a half-trillion in property and \$66 billion in government purchases. Carnahan is the former Missouri secretary of state and served for three years on the board of Ullico, the only labor-owned insurance and investment company.

### *Nominating Jennifer Sung for the Federal Court*

President Biden has nominated [union-side attorney Jennifer Sung](#) to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Sung, who serves on the Oregon Employment Relations Board, has represented unions and workers in unfair labor practice lawsuits and labor arbitrations through a private practice in Oregon.

## Contact Us

IBEW Government Affairs Department | p: (202) 728-6046 | e: [political@ibew.org](mailto:political@ibew.org)  
[www.ibew.org/political](http://www.ibew.org/political)

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