



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

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

## GETTING ANOTHER PUBLIC SHOUTOUT FROM PRESIDENT BIDEN

President Biden toured the Ford electric F-150 plant in Michigan on May 18, highlighting his American Jobs Plan and the importance of remaking auto manufacturing to help curb climate change.

And once again, Biden took the opportunity to promote the key role of the IBEW in his plans for an [electric vehicle revolution](#).

"We're going to put Americans back to work ... and that includes putting IBEW members to work installing 500,000 charging stations along our roads and highways," President Biden said. "The IBEW is ready to do it and they can."

The visit to the Dearborn, Mich. Ford plant gearing up to produce the Ford F-150 Lightning was planned to draw attention to the burgeoning electric vehicle market and the intensifying efforts to gather support for an infrastructure bill that includes the construction of 500,000 electric vehicle charging stations by IBEW members.

Over the next five years, domestic electric vehicle sales are likely to double, with all of the major car companies on track to expand their electric offerings.

"For decades, Detroit wasn't just the heart of American manufacturing," [IBEW President Lonnie Stephenson said](#). "It led the world in innovation and good union jobs. Investment in electric vehicle infrastructure ... allows America to again take the lead in innovative and advanced manufacturing that can put millions of Americans to work in good, union jobs."

Today, the U.S. has over 45,700 charging stations and over 116,000 charging outlets, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

President Biden's American Jobs Plan is a crucial component of the expected growth, leading to good-paying, blue-collar union jobs in manufacturing and in the charging infrastructure, President Stephenson said.

## ACHIEVING CLEAN ENERGY GOALS BY MAINTAINING THE NATION'S NUCLEAR FLEET

Department of Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm reiterated the administration's commitment to nuclear power at a recent House of Representatives Appropriations subcommittee hearing. In response to a question from Rep. Cheri Bustos of Illinois, [Granholm said](#) the country's 93 nuclear reactors account for 52 percent of carbon-free electricity generation.



At Plant Vogtle in Georgia, IBEW members are constructing the first new nuclear plant in a generation.

"In Illinois, four [reactors] are scheduled to close. We are not going to be able to achieve our climate goals if our nuclear plants shut down. We have to find ways to keep them operating," Granholm said, adding that President Biden's American Jobs Plan establishes a clean energy standard that includes nuclear power as a key component.

In its 2022 spending plan, the Biden administration is also proposing up to \$1 billion in tax credits to prevent the premature closure of nuclear plants.

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Commissioner Jeff Baran visited Plant Vogtle last month in Georgia.



"During my visit to Vogtle this week, I had a great meeting with @IBEW Local 84 and Local 1579," [Baran tweeted](#). "I really appreciate hearing the perspectives of the operators, maintenance workers, electricians, and other @IBEW members working at the operating plant and construction site."

Plant Vogtle is the nation's only nuclear construction project and when it comes online, it will be home to one of the world's most advanced reactors.



*U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Commissioner Jeff Baran tweeted this photo during his visit to Plant Vogtle. He is pictured with IBEW Local 84 and Local 1579 members.*

## AT THE LABOR DEPARTMENT, PROVIDING STEADFAST SUPPORT FOR UNIONS

Policy at the Department of Labor is looking a lot different than under the Trump administration, or even under Obama.

The DOL's anti-corruption unit, the Office of Labor-Management Standards, is going back to defending unions. Under the agency's mandate of transparency and accountability, disclosure forms collected by the OLMS require detailed information about unions' membership and finances.

The new OLMS director, Jeffrey Freund, plans a public campaign to tout unions' compliance with the agency's transparency rules.

"We know there are organizations out there who have an agenda to defeat union organizing, to reduce union power, and to generally diminish the importance of unions in the American economy," [Freund said](#). "And they take our data, they produce a picture based on cherry-picking examples, and extrapolate that to the labor movement writ large. And that has an effect."

"It has an effect on workers who are members of those unions," Freund continued. "It has an effect on workers who are not members of those unions but who may be thinking about organizing. It has an effect on public policymakers."

Trump administration OLMS staff imposed greater scrutiny of unions and hired more investigators to search for irregularities.

## ADVANCING FAIRNESS, RECOVERY IN 2022 BUDGET

President Biden's 2022 spending plan makes the case that a promising future means aggressive action to combat climate change while rebuilding the country's infrastructure and addressing longstanding economic inequalities.

Released on May 28, [the proposed budget](#) includes the [American Jobs Plan](#) and the [American Families Plan](#) and asks Congress to ease prescription drug prices, expand health care and more.

"Where we choose to invest speaks to what we value as a nation," President Biden said. "This year's budget, the first of my presidency, is a statement of values that define our nation at its best."

[IBEW President Lonnie Stephenson said](#) it fulfills Biden's promise to Build Back Better with significant investments to modernize the nation's infrastructure that will lower emissions, increase reliability and support middle-class, union jobs.

It will also aggressively tackle climate change by investing \$36 billion into renewable energy technology and expanding clean energy tax credits.

"The IBEW has always been clear that slashing carbon emissions while ensuring our nation's energy security requires an all-of-the-above strategy that taps into every energy supply, and this budget does just that," Stephenson said. "It invests hundreds of millions of dollars into nuclear power while supporting a wide array of clean energy resources and technologies, including hydrogen, electric vehicles, advanced energy storage and transmission."



By pairing clean-energy tax credits with strong labor standards and protections, the budget assures that clean-energy jobs will be good union ones.

"I'm especially pleased that the president is making sure that the clean-energy revolution does not leave any worker behind by doubling federal investment in coal communities, including support for carbon capture technology and direct assistance to dislocated coal workers," Stephenson said.

"This budget will mean hundreds of thousands of good energy and manufacturing jobs in nearly every corner of the nation, and I call on Congress to take action to make it happen," he said.

## MEETING WITH UNION MEMBERS AT A WISCONSIN PLANT TO PROMOTE INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Labor Secretary Marty Walsh traveled to Wisconsin on May 25 to meet with unions and business leaders and boost the American Jobs Plan. The subject of bipartisan negotiations on Capitol Hill, the AJP is a proposed investment in the country's infrastructure and transportation system that will put hundreds of thousands of Americans to work, many in the IBEW's core sectors. Walsh was joined by Rep. Ron Kind.

"I know there's a lot of talk in Washington right now and concern about China's rise in the 21st century. You want to beat China? Out-compete China. Invest in the best infrastructure in the world, in our roads, our highways, our bridges, our ports, our airports. Let's close once and for all the digital divide," Kind said.

IBEW members were a prominent presence at the event, as seen [in this video](#).

## HIGHLIGHTING INFRASTRUCTURE WITH WEEKLONG POLICY PUSH

Meeting the challenge of scaling up national infrastructure in time for an expected electric vehicle boom was the subject of a [panel that brought together experts](#) from industry, government and labor in May.

IBEW's Political & Legislative Affairs Department Director Austin Keyser participated in the discussion, "Building the Workforce and Industrial Capacity to Meet the Infrastructure Moment." It was part of a weeklong series of workshops highlighting the state of the nation's infrastructure and included President Biden, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka and many others.

"We have a historic opportunity to make truly transformational investments," [President Biden said](#).

"I propose a once-in-a-generation investment in America, unlike anything we've seen since we built the interstate highway system or won the space race years ago."



In recent conversations with industry and government officials, IBEW's Political & Legislative Affairs Director Austin Keyser, bottom right, has been promoting the professionalism of the union's apprenticeship program.

### *A Skilled Workforce for Electrified Transportation Networks*

Keyser emphasized the importance of deploying a professionalized IBEW workforce to integrate the new technologies of tomorrow. The IBEW's training model conceived by the IBEW and its signatory contractors is the best for implementing training standards and educating skilled electricians.

"We have been doing this for over 100 years," Keyser said. "There is no better program or model for scaling up the construction workforce. We have been around since the inception of electricity."



Throughout multi-year apprenticeships, IBEW members learn to make load calculations, read schematics, blueprints and other complex documents as well as the intricacies of the National Electrical Code. New curricula like EVITP (Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program) come along periodically. "This isn't a new industry," Keyser said. "It's simply a new task for electricians."

While localized battery deployment, broadband and smart grids combine in the coming years to meet evolving consumer needs, broadly skilled electricians will be critical.

"You can't just have a technician who is trained only to install a device on a wall," Keyser said. "This is a more complex electrical system than that."

## GREENLIGHTING LARGE-SCALE OFFSHORE WIND PROJECT

The country's first large-scale offshore wind project is moving forward, the [Biden administration announced](#) with its approval on May 11. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo were joined at the announcement event by labor leaders who have been working to ensure that the project is built and maintained by union labor.



*Vineyard Wind off the coast in Massachusetts will create 3,600 jobs and power 400,000 homes.*

Vineyard Wind will install more than 80 turbines off the coast of Massachusetts for the 800-megawatt project. The decision grants Vineyard Wind final federal approval for the project expected to create 3,600 area jobs and power up to 400,000 homes.

President Biden's goals include adding 30 gigawatts of offshore wind generation to the U.S. coast by 2030.

Augusta, Maine Local 1253 President Nick Paquet recently testified about the jobs potential of offshore wind development before the state Legislature.

"The Gulf of Maine's steady and consistent winds hold the East Coast's greatest potential for wind power generation," [Paquet testified](#). "As a result, an economic analysis from the consulting firm Wood Mackenzie predicts that wind generation will support over 200,000 jobs."

## INSPIRING WIDESPREAD COMMITMENT TO WORKERS' RIGHTS

In the back and forth of negotiations over the details of infrastructure legislation, a [bloc of members of Congress](#) warned House Speaker Nancy Pelosi not to overlook labor rights.

"President Biden's American Jobs Plan is a bold vision for a once-in-a-generation federal investment in our nation's crumbling infrastructure," said the May 27 letter from more than 200 members of the House of Representatives. "To fulfill this vision, Congress must ensure that middle class family-sustaining jobs will be created by including strong labor standards on all forms of federal infrastructure investment moving forward."

Renewable energy plays a prominent role in the infrastructure legislation. Key to Biden's climate change policies has always been strong labor standards, including the right to organize, to ensure that taxpayers fund high-road jobs with living wages in any transition to a lower emissions economy. Today, the solar and wind industries are 82 and 77 percent nonunion, respectively.

"For too long, policymakers have been presented with a false choice between safeguarding our planet or safeguarding the paychecks of their constituents," the letter said. "We know that both can and should be done by fully attaching strong labor standards to clean energy tax incentives."

This tracks closely to the IBEW's position, which is that projects that receive federal tax credits must require local hire, prevailing wages and employer neutrality in organizing campaigns to create middle class jobs for America's workers.



## PUBLICLY SAYING ENOUGH IBEW-POSITIVE THINGS FOR A HIGHLIGHT REEL

Joe Biden's the most pro-IBEW, pro-union president in history. But don't just take our word for it. Watch [this highlight video](#), with clips from President Biden's address to Congress, his comments from a meeting with labor leaders at the White House, an off-the cuff statement at a global climate summit and even a private video he made to thank the IBEW officers for their support.

"With this administration, you will have a partner, I promise you that," President Biden said to the IBEW officers. "You will have a partner to make it easier for workers to unionize and for unions to organize."

## THROWING ITS WEIGHT BEHIND ALASKAN OIL PROJECT IN COURT

The Biden administration defended the [Willow oil and gas project](#) in Alaska's National Petroleum Reserve on May 26. In federal court, Justice Department lawyers argued the ConocoPhillips project to produce 160,000 barrels of oil a day had been studied for years and complied with applicable laws.

## REINSTATING LOCAL HIRE PROGRAM CANCELLED BY TRUMP



The Department of Transportation will allow state agencies to use geographic or economic preferences to recruit workers for infrastructure projects, [Secretary Pete Buttigieg announced](#) on May 19.

"As we invest in world-class infrastructure for Americans, we want to make sure that our investments create jobs for people in the communities where the projects are located," Buttigieg said. "We're proud to launch the Department's local hiring initiative, with an additional focus on workforce development so that good jobs can become meaningful careers."

The four-year pilot program will provide economic opportunities to communities where construction workforces are often outsourced.

## LABOR UNIONS: RAISING AWARENESS OF THE BARRIERS TO ORGANIZING

The Senate changed hands this year from Republican to narrowly Democratic, thanks to the deciding vote of the vice president. But because of a procedural maneuver used in the Senate, the minority still wields tremendous power, blocking much of the Biden agenda and countless bills passed in the House of Representatives, including the PRO Act.

A worker fired for organizing activity spoke at an event highlighting the movement to remove the Senate filibuster on May 6. Zoe Muellner, onetime Colectivo barista, spoke about the urgent need for the PRO Act, which has passed the House but languishes in the Senate.

"Too long has the filibuster been weaponized against progress and used to stamp out the voice of the American people," Muellner said at the [End the Filibuster Town Hall](#). (Her comments begin at the approximate 1:13:33 timestamp.) "The workers of this country are being disenfranchised and taken advantage of."

She said the Colectivo workers in Wisconsin have been fired, forced into captive audience meetings and exposed to dangerous conditions during the pandemic, all for exercising their right to join Milwaukee Local 494.

"The PRO Act will help balance the scales in terms of worker power," she said. "This is not a political issue. This is a people issue."



## APPOINTING FRIENDS, ALLIES TO CRITICAL ADMINISTRATION JOBS

*Thea Lee, AFL-CIO Fair Trade Advocate, Selected to Serve in the Administration*

President Biden appointed Thea Lee as chief of the Labor Department's international affairs division, leaning on a solid labor ally to lead the bureau that investigates labor rights, forced labor and child trafficking.

Lee most recently headed the Economic Policy Institute, a public policy thinktank with a mission to protect and improve economic conditions for workers. Before that, she served for many years at the AFL-CIO in a variety of roles, including deputy chief of staff. At the AFL-CIO, she developed a track record of conducting rigorous economic research and overseeing an ambitious policy agenda.

*Dan Pedrotty Appointed as VP Harris's Policy Advisor*

Dan Pedrotty has been chosen director of labor policy for Vice President Kamala Harris, focusing on supporting the vice president in her role as chair of the White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment. Pedrotty comes to the White House from North America's Building Trades Unions, where he directed the Capital Strategies Program, which seeks to utilize members' pension savings in pursuit of benefit improvements and prudent, responsible investment policies.

*Gwynne Wilcox Advanced for Historic Role on NLRB*

Union-side employment attorney Gwynne Wilcox has been nominated by the White House to serve on the National Labor Relations Board, the first Black woman in the NLRB's 85-year history. The appointment could soon tip the political balance of the five-member board toward Democrats. The NLRB hears cases between unions and employers and determines whether workers are eligible to unionize.

*IBEW's Madison Burnett for Biden's New Apprenticeship Committee*

Las Vegas Local 357 member Madison Burnett is under consideration for a seat on the Department of Labor's Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship. Burnett is the longtime training director at the JATC of Southern Nevada. As part of his effort to strengthen and modernize registered apprenticeships, President Biden launched the committee in the opening days of his presidency.

### Contact Us

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

Produced by OPEIU Local 2