

BACKGROUNDER – ERA Policy Group

May 6, 2021

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1. **Welcome (3 minutes: 11:00 a.m. – 11:03 a.m.)**

2. **New Item – Legislative Discussion (10 minutes: 11:03 a.m. – 11:13 p.m.)**
 - a. **American Families Plan**

As a reminder, this is a presidential proposal, the Congressional timeline for legislative language and a bill is not yet clear. A lot of changes will be made to this plan before we see actual text of a piece of legislation.

A month after he laid out a roughly \$2 trillion infrastructure plan aimed at helping the nation recover from the coronavirus pandemic, President Joe Biden unveiled an additional \$1.8 trillion federal investment in education, child care and paid family leave during his first address to Congress on April 28. The massive package -- which Biden is calling the American Families Plan -- is the second half of his effort to revitalize the nation and ensure a fairer recovery.

The families plan pairs with Biden's infrastructure proposal, known as the American Jobs Plan, which calls for improving the nation's roads, bridges, broadband, railways and schools. It would also provide a boost to manufacturing and funnel \$400 billion into augmenting home- and community-based care for the elderly and disabled and raising the wages of care workers. It would be paid for by increasing corporate taxes.

The tax increases contained in the two economic recovery packages would fully pay for the investments over the next 15 years, according to the White House.

It is unclear whether lawmakers will consider Biden's two plans together or separately -- or whether Democrats will try to push it through without Republican support, as they did the rescue bill.

Provisions in the American Families Plan:

Affordable Child Care

Biden's proposal calls for having low- and middle-income families pay no more than 7 percent of their income on child care for kids younger than age 5. Parents earning up to 1.5 times the median income in their state would qualify.

The president also wants to invest more in the child care workforce to bring their wages up to \$15 an hour, from the typical \$12.24 hourly rate they earned in 2020.

The COVID-19 relief plan provided about \$39 billion to child care providers. The amount a provider receives is based on operating expenses and is available to pay employees and rent, help families struggling to pay the cost and purchase personal protective equipment and other supplies.

Free Community College

President Biden is proposing a \$109 billion plan to make two years of community college free. The federal government would cover about 75 percent of the average tuition cost in each state when the program is fully implemented, with states picking up the rest. States would also be expected to maintain their current contributions to their higher education systems. If all states, territories, and tribes participate, about 5.5 million students would pay nothing in tuition and fees, according to the White House.

Biden, along with first lady Jill Biden, has called for making two years of tuition free since 2015, when he helped former President Barack Obama launch a similar initiative. That proposal died in the Republican-controlled Congress, but it inspired several states to take up the idea. Free tuition programs followed in New York, Rhode Island and Oregon, to name a few.

But Biden's free community college measure falls well short of plans from progressive Democrats, some of which also call for making four-year public colleges free for some students, as well as broadly canceling student loan debt.

Biden has so far resisted calls from party leaders such as Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) to cancel up to \$50,000 of debt per borrower. The president has said he would support canceling up to \$10,000 per borrower but has indicated that he believes Congress should make changes through legislation, which would make them harder to undo.

In addition to his community college measure, Biden would create a \$39 billion program that provides two years of subsidized tuition for students from families earning less than \$125,000 who are enrolled in four-year historically Black colleges and universities or other minority-serving institutions.

Enhancing Pell Grants

The President would provide up to approximately \$1,400 in additional assistance to low-income students by increasing the Pell Grant award. Nearly 7 million students, including many minorities, rely on Pell Grants, but their value has not kept up with the rising cost of college. Students can receive up to \$6,495 for the 2021-22 school year. Biden has promised to double the maximum award.

Paid Family and Medical Leave

A limited federal paid family and sick leave measure was included as part of the major pandemic rescue package passed by Congress in March 2020. It provided up to two weeks of paid sick days for workers who were ill or quarantined, as well as an additional 10 weeks of paid family leave if they needed to care for a child whose school or daycare was closed due to the pandemic. The requirement expired in December, though the federal government will continue to subsidize employers who choose to offer the paid leave through September.

The American Families Plan would provide workers with a total of 12 weeks of guaranteed paid parental, family and personal illness/safe leave by the 10th year of the program, according to a White House fact sheet. The partial wage replacement would apply to individuals who wanted "to take time to bond with a new child, care for a seriously ill loved one, deal with a loved one's military deployment, find safety from sexual assault, stalking or domestic violence, heal from their own serious illness or take time to deal with the death of a loved one."

The plan would also ensure three days of bereavement leave annually starting in the first year of the plan's rollout.

Workers would receive up to \$4,000 a month through the national leave program, with a minimum of two-thirds of their wages replaced. The White House estimates the program will cost \$225 billion over 10 years.

According to the White House, approximately 30 million private sector workers, many of whom are low-income earners and part-time, did not have any paid sick leave before the pandemic.

Universal paid leave already has support among Democrats in Congress, who recently introduced a plan that would provide up to 12 weeks of universal paid medical and family leave for full- and part-time workers, including those who are self-employed.

Universal Preschool

Biden is calling for the federal government to invest \$200 billion in universal preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds through a national partnership with states. The administration estimates it would benefit 5 million children and save the average family \$13,000 when fully implemented.

The program would be accessible to families of all income levels, according to the White House. States would be required to pay about 50 percent of the cost when the measure is fully up and running. If a state were to opt out, the federal government would work with localities to implement the program.

A key Democratic priority, funding universal pre-K aims to both prepare children for K-12 learning and provide some financial relief to families paying for child care. The proposal will be constructed to prioritize high-need areas. It will carry the pledge to ensure publicly funded

preschool would include low student-to-teacher ratios and "developmentally appropriate curriculum."

While 44 states have some form of publicly funded pre-K, the National Institute for Early Education Research says that most spend too little per child to support high-quality, full-day pre-K. Only eight states enroll more than half of their 4-year-olds.

Recruiting Teachers and Strengthening the Educator Workforce

The American Families Plan aims to address teacher shortages and meet an anticipated increase in demand for universal pre-K educators by increasing funding for educator scholarships and specialty training, as well as raising wages for certain groups in federal programs.

The plan calls on Congress to double its scholarships for prospective teachers from \$4,000 to \$8,000 per year and expand the program to early childhood educators. The plan would invest \$2.8 billion in yearlong paid teacher residency programs, \$900 million in special education teacher development and \$400 million in teacher preparation programs at historically Black colleges and universities, tribal colleges and universities and minority serving institutions.

The plan would also allocate \$1.6 billion to help current teachers earn credentials for in-demand specialties, such as special education and bilingual education. An additional \$2 billion in the plan would go toward educator leadership programs, such as mentorships for new teachers and minority teachers.

All employees participating in pre-k programs and Head Start, a longstanding federal health and education program for low-income children, would earn at least \$15 per hour as part of the proposal, "and those with comparable qualifications will receive compensation commensurate with that of kindergarten teachers," according to the White House fact sheet.

Nutrition Assistance for Children

President Biden wants to invest \$25 billion to make the summer Pandemic-EBT permanent and available to the 29 million children receiving free and reduced-price meals. Congress created the program last spring to provide funds to low-income families whose children could not receive meals in school because of pandemic closures. The president would also expand the free meals program for children in the highest poverty districts so that an additional 9.3 million kids would qualify.

Below are the relief measures the plan would extend or make permanent:

Keeping the Expanded Child Tax Credit through 2025

The American Families Plan would maintain the new enhanced child tax credit for another four years. And it would make it fully refundable permanently. Congress passed a one-year

expansion of the child tax credit as part of the March relief bill. Families with children under the age of 6 will receive \$3,600 per child, while those with kids between the ages of 6 and 17 will receive \$3,000 for each child for 2021. That's up from a maximum of \$2,000 per child under age 17.

The enhanced portion of the credit is available for single parents with annual incomes up to \$75,000, heads of households earning up to \$112,500 and joint filers making up to \$150,000 a year.

Under the relief bill, families can receive half their total credit on a monthly basis -- up to \$300 per child up to age 6 and \$250 per child ages 6 to 17 -- starting in July and running through the rest of the year. They could then claim the remaining half on their 2021 tax returns. The credit will also be fully refundable for 2021 so more low-income households can take advantage of it.

Researchers have found the benefit could reduce child poverty by nearly half -- a statistic Biden repeatedly cited when advocating for the rescue package.

Permanent Affordable Care Act Subsidies

Biden's proposal would permanently extend the more generous subsidies contained in the rescue package, which are currently in effect for two years. The boost in aid is part of Biden's effort to get more Americans covered by health insurance by making it more affordable, particularly for the middle class.

Under the rescue law, enrollees pay no more than 8.5 percent of their income toward coverage, down from nearly 10 percent. And lower-income policyholders receive subsidies that eliminate their premiums completely.

Permanent Child Care Tax Credit

The president is calling on Congress to make permanent the enhancements to the child and dependent care tax credit contained in the relief package.

Under that plan, families can receive a tax credit for as much as half of their spending on qualified child care for children under age 13, up to a total of \$4,000 for one child or \$8,000 for two or more children. Parents making less than \$125,000 annually are eligible for the full credit, while those earning between \$125,000 and \$400,000 will receive a partial credit.

Permanent Enhanced Earned Income Tax Credit

The latest package would make permanent the expansion of the earned income tax credit for workers without children. The relief law bolstered the credit by nearly tripling the maximum credit and extending eligibility to more childless workers. The minimum age to claim the credit

will be reduced to 19, from 25, and the upper age limit will be eliminated. This was the largest expansion to the earned income tax credit since 2009.

The Pay-fors:

Raising Income Taxes

Biden wants to reverse a key plank of the Republicans' 2017 tax cuts by returning the top marginal income tax rate to 39.6 percent up from 37 percent. It would apply only to those in the top 1 percent.

Raising the Capital Gains Tax Rate

The proposal would require households earning more than \$1 million annually to pay higher taxes on capital gains, which typically make up the largest share of income for the wealthy. The long-term capital gains of these taxpayers would be subject to the top marginal rate for income - currently 37 percent, but rising to 39.6 percent under Biden's plan.

Right now, investments held for at least one year are subject to a top federal capital gains rate of 20 percent. Individuals earning \$200,000 a year and married couples making \$250,000 a year pay an additional 3.8 percent tax on their capital gains to help fund the Affordable Care Act.

Taxing Unrealized Capital Gains at Death

Currently, heirs of wealthy Americans enjoy a tax break. Assets that pass directly to them receive a "step-up" in their cost basis, meaning they are valued as of the date of death. This can minimize the tax burden on the heirs when they eventually sell the assets. And it means the gains accrued during the lifetime of the parent who died are never taxed.

Biden would require estates to pay taxes on unrealized gains of more than \$1 million, or \$2.5 million per couple when combined with existing real estate exemptions. However, family-owned businesses and farms would not have to pay taxes when passed on to heirs who continue to run the business.

Ending breaks for Hedge Fund Partners and Real Estate Investors

Biden is asking Congress to close the carried interest loophole so that hedge fund partners would have to pay ordinary income rates on their income. Currently, the income is often treated as capital gains, which are subject to lower tax rates. Also, he wants to end a tax break that allows real estate investors to defer taxation when they exchange property for gains greater than \$500,000.

Enhancing IRS Enforcement

Biden wants to send \$80 billion to the Internal Revenue Service to fund enhanced enforcement of high earners. The administration believes the enhanced measures to crack down on tax evasion would increase revenue for the government by \$700 billion, although some outside experts are skeptical and the Congressional Budget Office -- the accepted scorekeeper -- is unlikely to project that much revenue.

His plan would also require financial institutions to report information on account flows so that earnings from investments and business activity are subject to the type of reporting that wages already are.

3. New Item - Legislative Discussion (10 minutes: 11:13 a.m. - 11:23 a.m.)

a. [American Jobs Plan](#)

As a reminder, this is a presidential proposal, the Congressional timeline for legislative language and a bill is not yet clear. A lot of changes will be made to this plan before we see actual text of a piece of legislation. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), has reportedly said that she hopes to pass a bill by July 4 - an ambitious target for such a mammoth piece of legislation which still needs to be drafted and scored.

On March 31, President Joe Biden unveiled the [American Jobs Plan](#), an eight-year, \$2 trillion investment to modernize and improve U.S. infrastructure, generate jobs and economic growth, and promote American national security interests. The proposed framework is a key step towards President Biden's goal of enacting his Build Back Better plan, including investments to modernize highways and railways, upgrade ports, expand electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, upgrade water and energy infrastructure and expand broadband access.

Alongside the American Jobs Plan, President Biden also proposed the Made in America Tax Plan, including revenue-raising provisions to support the \$2 trillion blueprint over the next 15 years.

The proposal is high-level and did not include proposed legislative text. Thus, the Congressional timeline for legislative language and a bill is not yet clear. A lot of changes will be made to this plan before we see actual text of a piece of legislation. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), has reportedly said that she hopes to pass a bill by July 4 - an ambitious target for such a mammoth piece of legislation which still needs to be drafted and scored.

NSBA has developed a [checklist](#) for the American Jobs Plan which highlights the key areas that will likely have the most significant impact on the small-business community. More details about the proposal are below.

Transportation Infrastructure and Resilience

The Plan calls on Congress to invest \$621 billion in transportation infrastructure and resilience, including:

- \$115 billion to improve 20,000 miles of highways, roads and bridges.
- \$174 billion to build EV charging infrastructure and incentivize EV purchases, support the transition from diesel transit vehicles and electrify school bus United States Postal Service (USPS) fleets.
- \$85 billion to modernize and expand bus, rapid transit and rail services with the goal of reducing congestion and improving equitable access.
- \$80 billion to address Amtrak's repair backlog, modernize the high-traffic Northeast Corridor, improve and expand existing corridors and enhance passenger and freight rail safety.
- \$25 billion to upgrade airports, including funding for the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) assets and a new program to support terminal renovations.
- \$17 billion for inland waterways, coastal ports, land ports of entry and ferries.
- \$20 billion to increase road safety for all users, including a new Safe Streets for All Program to fund state and local "vision zero" plans to reduce crashes and fatalities.
- \$20 billion to ensure new projects increase opportunity and access, advance racial equity and enhance environmental justice.
- \$50 billion to increase infrastructure resilience against extreme weather events, including through grants and tax incentives.

Clean Drinking Water

The Plan calls for \$111 billion to update and improve water infrastructure, including \$45 billion to replace lead pipes and service lines, \$56 billion in drinking water grants and low-cost loans to states, Tribes, territories and disadvantaged communities, and \$10 billion to monitor and remediate PFAS (per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances) in drinking water.

Digital Infrastructure

The Plan recommends \$100 billion to achieve universal high-speed and affordable broadband coverage, with priority for publicly owned broadband networks, and ensures funds are set aside for broadband infrastructure on Tribal lands. Moreover, the Plan calls for enhanced transparency and competition by requiring clear price disclosures and lifting barriers that favor private providers.

Power Infrastructure

The proposal supports a \$100 billion investment to improve the electric transmission system with the goal of achieving carbon neutrality in the electricity generation sector by 2035. The Plan proposes that Congress develop a new Grid Deployment Authority at the Department of

Energy to leverage existing rights-of-way along roads and railways and support creative financing tools to spur high priority, high-voltage transmission lines. The Plan also supports an Energy Efficiency and Clean Electricity Standard (EECES) to promote the more efficient use of existing infrastructure and leverage carbon pollution-free energy, such as nuclear and hydropower. The Plan also calls for:

- \$5 billion for the remediation and redevelopment of Brownfield and Superfund sites.
- An expansion of the Economic Development Administration Public Works program, including lifting the \$3 million cap on projects.

Health Care Infrastructure

The Plan urges Congress to expand access to home and community-based services (HCBS) and extend the Money Follows the Person program that supports innovations in the delivery of long-term care under Medicaid. Specifically, he is calling on Congress to allocate \$400 billion toward expanding access to HCBS for seniors and people with disabilities.

Importantly, President Biden plans to release a second package in late-April that will include more healthcare-related and social policies such as drug price reform and permanent ACA enhanced premium subsidies.

Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), along with some Democrats, are advocating for the inclusion of policies related to expanding health insurance such as lowering the Medicare age or a public option within the second portion.

Manufacturing Sector

The Plan includes \$300 billion to support U.S. manufacturing, strengthen supply chains and increase access to capital for domestic manufacturers, including:

- \$50 billion to create a new office at the Commerce Department dedicated to monitoring domestic industrial capacity and funding investments to support the production of critical goods.
- \$46 billion in federal procurement dollars to promote the manufacturing of EVs, charging ports and electric heat pumps for residential heating and commercial buildings, and to develop advanced nuclear reactors and fuel.
- \$52 billion in capital access for domestic manufacturers, including an extension of the 48C tax credit program and the creation of a new financing program to support debt and equity investments for manufacturing.
- \$50 billion in semiconductor manufacturing and research, as called for in the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) for America Act ([H.R. 7178](#) and [S. 3933](#)).
- \$30 billion over four years for major new investments in medical countermeasures manufacturing, research and development (R&D) and related bio-preparedness and biosecurity, including investments to shore up the strategic national stockpile.

- \$14 billion for the National Institute of Standards and Technology to combine industry, academia and government to advance technologies critical to future competitiveness.
- \$31 billion to create a national network of small business incubators and innovation hubs, which provide small businesses in underserved communities access to credit, venture capital and R&D funding.
- \$5 billion for a new Rural Partnership Program to support economic development in Tribal nations and rural regions.

Research and Development

The Plan urges Congress to increase its investment in research and development to lay the foundation for the future breakthroughs that create new businesses and jobs and increase exports, including:

- \$50 billion for the National Science Foundation to create a technology directorate to expand existing programs and focus on fields such as semiconductors, biotechnology and advanced computing, communications and energy technologies.
- \$40 billion to upgrade research infrastructure in laboratories and minority-serving institutions and universities.
- \$35 billion for research to address the climate crisis, including new methods for emissions reductions, building climate resilience, and climate science generally.
- \$15 billion to support demonstration projects for climate R&D priorities such as carbon capture and storage, floating offshore wind, biofuels, bioproducts, quantum computing and EVs, among others.

Workforce Development

The American Jobs Plan aims to increase workforce development programs and improve racial and gender equity through a \$100 billion investment across various programs. Moreover, the Plan calls for the passage of the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act ([H.R. 842](#)) to strengthen and protect the right of workers to join a union. NSBA strongly opposes the PRO Act. Additionally, the Plan emphasizes the need for increased enforcement mechanisms to ensure workplace safety, health and nondiscrimination rules.

Increased Enforcement

The summary of the proposal states, “The President’s plan includes funding to strengthen the capacity of our labor enforcement agencies to protect against discrimination, protect wages and benefits, enforce health and safety safeguards, strengthen health care and pensions plans, and promote union organizing and collective bargaining.”

The summary states, “In addition to a \$10 billion investment in enforcement as part of the plan’s workforce proposals, the President is calling for increased penalties when employers violate workplace safety and health rules.”

Paycheck Fairness Act

The summary fact sheet states that the infrastructure plan “tackles pay inequities based on gender.” Again, there are no details, but the Paycheck Fairness Act is a top priority for Democrats.

On April 15, the House passed the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 7) by a 217-210 vote. The legislation, if enacted, would require employers to prove that pay disparities between men and women are job-related, among other provisions.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) reintroduced the bill in January. It has been reintroduced many times since 1997 but has failed to pass both chambers of Congress. The bill would, among other provisions:

- Require employers to show that pay disparities between men and women are job-related and consistent with business necessity.
- Make it easier for plaintiffs to participate in class-action lawsuits that challenge systemic pay discrimination.
- Strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963 (EPA) and provide greater remedies for prevailing plaintiffs.
- Prohibit employers from asking job applicants about their salary history or relying on salary history to set compensation. But an employer could use a prospective employee's wage history if the employer makes a job offer and the applicant reveals his or her salary is more than the proposed salary. The employer could then increase the salary offer.
- Prohibit employers from retaliating against workers who discuss their pay with co-workers. The National Labor Relations Act already gives employees the right to discuss their pay.

Contractor Blacklisting and Union Neutrality

The Plan also seems to include some version of the rescinded contractor blacklisting scheme, as well as union neutrality requirements, as it states, “The President’s plan says that employers benefitting from these investments follow strong labor standards and remain neutral when their employees seek to organize a union and bargain collectively.”

Homes, Schools and Commercial Buildings

The Plan recommends a \$213 billion investment to produce, preserve and retrofit affordable housing through tax credits, formula funding and grants and project-based rental assistance. President Biden is advocating for \$27 billion to support a new Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator to mobilize private investment in commercial and municipal buildings and clean transportation. Moreover, the Plan recommends \$18 billion for the modernization of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals and clinics and \$10 billion for the modernization and resilience of federal

buildings, including through a Federal Capital Revolving Fund to support investment in the purchase, construction or renovation of federal facilities.

Additionally, President Biden is urging Congress to modernize K-12 and community college facilities, including prioritizing safety, equity and energy efficiency.

President Biden is bolstered by a Democratic Congress, though the tight margins in the Senate make passing the sweeping proposal more challenging. Congressional Democrats have hinted that if need be, they will push through parts or all of the package through the reconciliation process, which would allow Congress to enact legislation on taxes, spending and the debt limit with just 51 votes of the Senate.

Fortunately for Biden, on April 5, the Senate parliamentarian greenlighted a strategy that would allow Democrats in the evenly split 50-50 chamber to rely on a 51-vote threshold to advance some bills, rather than the typical 60 votes typically needed. The so-called budget reconciliation rules can now be used more often than expected – giving Democrats a fresh new path around the Republican blockade.

The prospects for a massive infrastructure investment, once a bipartisan source of unity on Capitol Hill, have cracked and groaned under the weight of political polarization. Where Biden sees an urgency in going big, Republicans want a narrow plan that focuses on roads and bridges, and warn that any corporate tax increase would crush economic growth.

The standoff almost ensures a months-long slog as Congress hunkers down to begin drafting legislation and the White House keeps the door open to working across the aisle with Republicans, hoping that continued public attention will drum up support. However, Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) declared plainly that Biden's plan is "something we're not going to do."

A core dividing line is Biden's effort to pay for infrastructure by undoing Donald Trump's tax break for corporations, a signature achievement of the Trump White House and its partners in Congress. The 2017 Republican tax bill, which all the Republicans voted for, slashed the corporate rate from 35 percent to 21 percent. Biden proposes raising the rate to 28 percent and instituting a global minimum rate to dissuade companies from relocating in lower-tax havens.

Shepherding Biden's proposal through Congress remains a work in progress, particularly in the evenly-divided 50-50 Senate, where Democrats have the majority because Vice President Kamala Harris, can cast a tie-breaking vote.

But a single senator can break ranks to influence the size and shape of the package. Recently, Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), indicated he would prefer a corporate tax rate at 25 percent, lower than what Biden is proposing.

Seizing on Democratic divisions, Republicans have signaled zero interest in undoing the tax cuts they approved with Trump, and instead prefer a smaller infrastructure package paid for by user fees on drivers or other public-private partnerships that share the costs.

Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) a member of Senate Republican leadership, said a smaller infrastructure package of about \$615 billion, or 30 percent of what Biden is proposing, could draw bipartisan support.

Administration officials have encouraged Republicans to talk more fully about what they dislike and would do instead, under the opinion that a battle of ideas will only help Biden gain support with voters.

4. Update: Administration Advances COVID-19 Workplace Safety Rules (10 minutes: 11:23 a.m. – 11:33 a.m.)

This is informational, no action is required by the Policy Group. This Group may want to examine and discuss as companies reopen their offices and are deciding how the work arrangements they've relied on during the pandemic will now factor into employees returning to work, and COVID-19 safety rules.

After weeks of delay, the Biden administration is advancing emergency workplace safety rules to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The rules were sent by the Labor Department to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review--this is the first step before the safety standards are released to the public and go into effect.

Originally, after taking office, Biden gave the Labor Department a March 15 deadline to decide whether mandatory workplace safety rules were needed to protect workers from COVID-19. However, after the deadline passed, the agency said that they were reviewing additional evidence, based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) analysis and new information regarding variants and vaccinations. House Democrats and Representatives from some states have been exerting pressure on the Biden administration to explain the status of the rules.

It is expected that the OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs will release the new rules in around two weeks, and they are likely to take effect immediately upon release.

The new rules come at a time when many states started to roll back their pandemic restrictions, such as mask mandates. The rules are expected to require businesses to supply their employees with PPE, have a written plan to avert exposure in the workplace, and other precautions. The rules will stay in effect for the next six months -- acting as a floor for the 14 states that have instituted their own COVID-19 workplace restrictions and adding new requirements for employers in states with relaxed guidelines.

The new standards are open for public comment and the Labor Department is required to adopt permanent safety standards in the next six months. The temporary standards can also be challenged by affected parties in federal court.

5. **Update: [CDC Updated Mask Guidelines](#) (10 minutes: 11:33 a.m. – 11:43 a.m.)**

ERA Policy Group Chairman Bill Belknap wants to have discussion around the new CDC guidelines and what this will mean for small businesses, as more of the restrictions loosen and employees return to work.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) unveiled updated guidelines detailing activities that vaccinated people can safely resume, including attending small outdoor gatherings without the need to wear a mask.

The new "[interim public health recommendations](#)" detail a variety of situations in which individuals who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 can forgo wearing a mask, but urged the continued use of face coverings in most indoor settings and in crowded outdoor areas. It also says that, for now, vaccinated people should continue to avoid medium- and large-sized gatherings, and they should use prevention measures like masks and distancing when around unvaccinated people from multiple households. The CDC also still recommends getting tested if COVID-19 symptoms present themselves.

Fully vaccinated people, according to the CDC, can do the following:

- Visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without masks or physical distancing;
- Visit with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing; and
- Skip quarantine and testing guidelines following a known exposure, if they're asymptomatic.

6. **Update: [Climate Summit](#) (Paris Agreement) (5 minutes: 11:43 a.m. – 11:48 a.m.)**

On April 22, President Joe Biden pledged to reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent to 52 percent by 2030, in the latest push by the administration to aggressively combat climate change.

The target, more than doubles the country's prior commitment under the 2015 Paris climate agreement, when the Obama administration set out to cut emissions 26 percent to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025. The U.S. is currently not yet halfway to meeting that goal.

During the recent Climate Summit, all 40 world leaders the president invited to the virtual summit, including those from China and India, made new commitments. The U.K. and European Union have committed to slash emissions by 68 percent and 55 percent, respectively, by 2030. China, the world's biggest emitter, has vowed to reach peak emissions by 2030 and be carbon neutral by 2060.

During the summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping repeated the country's previous commitments and emphasized green development and multilateralism to reduce global emissions. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for concrete action on climate change and announced an

India-U.S. Climate and Clean Energy Agenda Partnership for 2030. He also re-confirmed the nation's vow to install 450 gigawatts of renewable energy by 2030. Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga announced a stricter emissions target of 46 percent reduction by 2030. Canada also updated its target and vowed to reduce 2005 emission levels by 40-45 percent by 2030.

The summit was a chance for the U.S. to rejoin global efforts on climate after then-President Donald Trump pulled out of the Paris accord, halted all federal efforts to reduce domestic emissions and rolled back more than 100 environmental regulations to favor fossil fuel production.

President Biden's pledge also moves forward his campaign promise to decarbonize the country's energy sector by 2030 and put the country on a path to net-zero emissions by midcentury. Biden so far has proposed a \$2 trillion infrastructure package that would aid a transition away from fossil fuels and toward clean energy, while promising to create green jobs. If passed, the legislation would be one of the largest federal efforts ever to reduce emissions.

In order to achieve a net-zero economy by 2050, the U.S. must curb emissions by 57 percent to 63 percent in the next decade, [according to an analysis](#) by Climate Action Tracker, an independent group that analyzes various government climate pledges.

The Climate Summit also comes ahead of a major U.N. climate conference in Glasgow, Scotland, in November, during which nations in the Paris agreement will unveil updated emissions targets for the next decade.

7. Update: Non-Partisan Award Follow-up (5 minutes: 11:48 a.m. – 11: 53 a.m.)

Chairman Bill Belknap wants to have a follow-up conversation about the idea of NSBA giving 'non-partisan' awards to members of Congress. The NSBA Communications Committee is working on the idea and developing some parameters.

8. Other Issues

9. Adjourn (12:00 p.m.)