

President-Elect Biden Calls for Paid Leave During Pandemic

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President-elect Joe Biden provided an overview Jan. 14 of his proposal to fight the coronavirus, help workers and strengthen the U.S. economy.

His plan has two phases. The first is the American Rescue Plan that the president-elect is asking Congress to pass immediately. The second is a forthcoming broader recovery package of policy priorities, including infrastructure, that he plans to outline in February during an address to a joint session of Congress.

The American Rescue Plan comprises paid leave, an increased minimum wage, an extension of unemployment compensation, more support for small businesses and relief to those who need help.

We've gathered articles on Biden's proposal from trusted media outlets.

Paid Leave

Paid sick and family leave benefits that expired at the end of December would be reinstated under Biden's proposal through Sept. 30. The proposal would extend the benefit to those employed at businesses with more than 500 employees and less than 50, as well as federal employees excluded from the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Employers with fewer than 500 workers could be reimbursed for the cost of providing the leave.

(CNN Politics (<https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/14/politics/biden-economic-rescue-package-coronavirus-stimulus/index.html>))

Increased Minimum Wage

Biden also called for an increase in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. "People tell me that's gonna be hard to do," he said, but Florida just enacted legislation to raise the state's minimum wage to this level. In his televised remarks, Biden said this should be the national standard. "No one who works 40 hours a week should live below the poverty line," he said.

(The Washington Post (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/us-policy/2021/01/14/biden-stimulus-covid-relief/>))

Assistance for Small Businesses

Biden's proposed plan also calls for \$15 billion to create a new grant program for small-business owners, separate from the existing Paycheck Protection Program. In addition, he proposes making a \$35 billion investment in some state, local, tribal and nonprofit financing programs that make low-interest loans and provide venture capital to entrepreneurs. In his televised remarks, Biden noted that half of the total U.S. workforce is employed by small businesses, calling them the nation's "engines of economic growth." He added that the low-cost capital would help fund female- and minority-owned businesses.

(CNN (<https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/14/politics/biden-economic-rescue-package-coronavirus-stimulus/index.html>))

Large Rescue Package

The proposed \$1.9 trillion rescue package proposal would combat both the economic downturn and the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposal contains more than \$400 billion to fight the pandemic, with money to speed vaccine deployment and safely reopen schools. Another \$350 billion would help state and local governments, while the plan would include \$1,400 direct payments to individuals, more-generous unemployment benefits and subsidies for child care costs. Biden acknowledged that the stimulus he was proposing would be expensive but said the nation could not afford anything less.

(*The New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/14/business/biden-economy.html>))

Plan to Speed Vaccinations

The proposal calls for a \$20 billion campaign to speed vaccinations through the launch of community vaccination centers around the nation and mobile units to deliver the shots to remote areas. Biden also proposes hiring 100,000 more public health workers and instituting a stronger surveillance system to monitor new mutations of the virus.

(NPR (<https://www.npr.org/2021/01/14/956940196/-1-400-checks-and-help-for-the-jobless-whats-in-bidens-plan-to-rescue-the-econom>))

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