



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**“Build Back Better” Remarks as Prepared for Delivery by Vice President Joe Biden on the Caregiving and Education Workforce in New Castle, Delaware**

Good afternoon.

I want to thank the Colonial Early Education Program here at the Colwyck Center for hosting us.

I just met with Sarah Johnson, and her 3-year-old son, Noah, who is a student here.

She said the program does wonders, helping Noah learn his letters and numbers, socialize with other kids, and understand his emotions and develop his personality.

But like so many parents, she’s worried.

About her job as a dental assistant, and noticing changes in Noah’s behavior since he hasn’t been in school since March. She has had to lean on her parents to help. It’s really tough.

But parents like Sarah, and places like this center, and the caregivers and educators who work here – they also give me a lot of hope.

That’s why I couldn’t think of a better place to talk about the third plank of my Build Back Better plan for our economy.

This one is about easing the squeeze on working families that are raising their kids and caring for aging loved ones. And it’s about creating jobs with better pay and career pathways for caregivers, and showing them the dignity and respect they deserve.

But I know it’s hard to think of that future when you’re just trying to get through the crisis at hand.

I know that's the case for child care facilities across the country.

They've had to close their doors and layoff staff. They're not getting the protective equipment they need as they reopen.

In virus hotspots, they can't reopen at all.

We are in a child care emergency. It didn't have to be this way. That's why I'm calling on the President to get these facilities the resources and equipment they need – now.

Enough.

Each day the pandemic's death toll grows.

Each day, in some states, more people test positive than the day before.

Each day too many Americans are still out of work, losing hope.

It's been reported by his own staff that the President is "not really working this anymore. He doesn't want to be distracted by it."

His own staff admits that Donald Trump fails the most important test of being the American President: the duty to care – for you, for all of us.

It's also been reported that he will block any funding for more testing and tracing in the next COVID-relief bill – just as states report record cases, and hospitalizations and deaths continue to rise.

He simply doesn't understand.

We can't deal with our economic crisis without solving the public health crisis.

And for all his bluster about his expertise on the economy, he is unable to explain how he will actually help the working families hit the hardest.

He has quit on you and he has quit on this country.

But this election is not just about him.

It's about us.

It's about you.

And I will do what a President is supposed to do.

Care. Lead. And never give up.

Over the last two weeks I've shared my agenda for economic recovery.

I call it Build Back Better, because we can't just build back to the way things were before. The first plank rejects the defeatist view that automation and globalization mean we can't ensure American workers lead us to a future Made in America.

The second plank helps us outcompete the rest of the world and tackle climate change. It will put millions of Americans to work in good union jobs, modernizing our infrastructure while building a clean energy future.

Today, I'm outlining the third plank – mobilizing a 21st century care and early childhood education workforce to deal with the caregiving crisis in this country.

If we truly want to reward work in this country, we have to ease the financial burden of care that families are carrying. And we have to elevate the compensation, benefits, and dignity of caregiving workers and early childhood educators.

Even before the pandemic, millions of working families have faced enormous financial and personal strains trying to raise their kids and care for their parents or loved ones living with a disability.

It's the sandwich generation that includes everyone from an 18-year-old daughter caring for her mother who suddenly gets sick, to a 40-year-old Dad raising his child and caring for his own aging parents.

The joy and love are always there. But it's hard. It's really, really hard. Families are squeezed emotionally and financially.

They need help, but often can't find it or afford it.

And the professional caregivers out there – home health workers, child care workers – who are more often women, women of color, and immigrants – are too often underpaid, unseen, and undervalued.

Then the pandemic hits and the squeeze tightens for everyone.

Nursing homes have been hit hard.

If you're a frontline worker, you struggle to find safe child care for your kids.

Others of you have become unexpected 24/7 caregivers, trying to keep your children safe and learning, while you're working remotely yourself.

Or you've had to put your career on hold indefinitely, or seen your hours cut, or your job lost.

The confusion over schools reopening only makes things worse.

And the last few months has only underscored how vital it is for families and older Americans to have more home and community care choices that best fit their needs.

We are trapped in a caregiving crisis within an economic crisis within a public health crisis.

You're doing everything you can, but this President is not.

If I'm your president, here's what I would do.

First, let's start with caring for aging relatives and loved ones with disabilities and helping them live independently.

Here's an example.

Right now there are 800,000 people who are eligible for home and community care through Medicaid and who have signed up for it.

But they are all waiting for that phone call back.

For some, the wait is five years. Five years. My plan makes a bold investment so that states can clear that waiting list. And to make sure we ease the financial burden for more families going forward, we will make long-term federal investments.

We will have a major innovation fund to allow states to test and expand successful ways that improve home and community care, increase prevention, and reduce costs and hospitalizations.

Think of expanded vital services like rides to appointments, meals and day programs for seniors, and making their homes safer for them.

This builds on an initiative we created under the Affordable Care Act. The very program that this President ceaselessly tries to gut.

For example, there's a pilot program in 27 cities in 16 states where a nurse, occupational

therapist, and a handyman come to a home that's caring for an aging family member.

They might not be able to cure a mother's Alzheimer's, but they can make sure she doesn't break her hip.

They walk through the house and install the handrail in the right spot in the bathroom, or fix the door so it doesn't stick as she tries to open it.

An initial trial found that about \$3,000 in program costs yielded more than \$20,000 in savings.

Simple steps that save lives, save money, and provide critical peace of mind.

Here's another example.

Whether in rural North Carolina or central Philadelphia, people of color in economically distressed communities face punishing health disparities from systemic discrimination.

They don't have health insurance. They don't see a doctor. Language is a barrier.

They slip through the gaps so their treatable condition turns into a chronic condition.

That's why community health workers are real heroes. They go into these communities and make sure folks are getting the care they need. My plan puts 150,000 more of these workers in our communities throughout the country.

These are things we can do now.

Second, we can also make high-quality child care more affordable and accessible.

My child care plan is straightforward.

Every 3- and 4-year-old child will get access to free, high-quality preschool like students have at this center.

And low-to middle-income families won't spend more than 7% of their income on child care for children under age 5.

The most hard-pressed working families won't have to spend a dime. Here's how it works.

They can either get up to an \$8,000 tax credit for child care.

For a middle-class family with a couple of young kids spending about \$300 a week on child

care, that means annual tax savings of \$8,000 in their pocket. That means everything to working parents living paycheck to paycheck.

Or the federal government would send funding to states, which then work with child care providers to cover the costs for working families with young children over 7% of their income.

So, say both parents work and need child care.

You go to [childcare.gov](https://childcare.gov), which we created under the Obama-Biden Administration, to help you find child care that works for you.

Under my plan, it takes you to your state website. Local child centers pop up. You can call or fill in your information. You apply. The state then sends you a letter saying that you're approved and lays out the amount you're going to pay. The state sends that information to the child care provider. And then the state reimburses that child care center on the back end.

You just pay what you're supposed to pay – not a dime for some working families and no more than 7% for others.

We can do that. This would save families thousands of dollars.

And there are other common-sense steps we can take, like expanding a tax credit for businesses to build child care facilities on site, or supporting more after-care, weekend, and summer care for families.

Third, as we expand access to caregiving, we need to pay and support our caregivers.

They do God's work, but home health workers aren't paid much. They have few benefits. Forty-percent are still on SNAP or Medicaid.

So my plan is direct.

It gives caregivers and early childhood educators a much needed raise.

No one should have to work more than one job to make ends meet.

Under my health care plan that defends and expands Obamacare, they will have more affordable health insurance. I will make sure these workers have an effective way to unionize and collectively bargain to protect their rights and earned benefits.

This plan will help workers, especially those without a college degree, gain new skills in

good-paying industries like health care, and provide new pathways to advance their careers.

For example, a home health worker can access the training needed to become an EMT, a nurse, a physician's assistant, or a doctor. Or an early childhood educator can receive the coaching to keep delivering high-quality learning experiences.

We can do this.

The bottom line is that a mobilized caregiving and early education workforce would: save working families time and money, get their loved ones the care and early childhood education they need, and put more people to work.

It's a triple win.

That keeps seniors in their homes if they choose.

That recognizes the realities facing modern families – and provides them much-needed economic support in the middle of a pandemic.

Just imagine.

We can put 3 million Americans to work in new care and early childhood education jobs.

And combined with my proposal to provide families with up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave, we can free up millions more people to join the paid labor force.

Meaning at least 2 million additional jobs and more economic growth for our nation.

This is a fresh, bold way to build up a critical part of our labor force and help us recover faster and stronger.

When we usually talk about a jobs package, there is a big push for shovel-ready jobs.

But that's what care jobs are.

These workers are ready now. These jobs can be filled now. Allowing millions of people, primarily women, to get back to work now.

It is the right thing to do for our families and our most essential workers.

And it is the smart thing to do for our economy.

Today, millions of our people can't fully pursue the jobs and careers they dream of due to our caregiving squeeze.

That means tens of billions of dollars less in wages each year for our families.

It means more disruption for our businesses, and less jobs and growth for our economy.

This is both a moral and an economic imperative for our nation.

And we pay for it by rolling back unproductive tax cuts for high-income real estate investors while ensuring high-income earners pay their tax bills.

We invest those savings of \$775 billion over ten years into building our economy back better than before.

And tomorrow, I'll be joining a virtual townhall with SEIU members – home care workers, fast food workers, janitors – to hear directly from them about why this matters so much.

Because, you see, this is also about something bigger.

It's about the dignity and respect for working people. And that's precisely what this election is about, too.

The American President has a duty to care for us all.

To see people where they are. To understand what they're going through and where they want to be.

I've been a single parent. Even though I had a lot more support than a lot of folks going through tough times, I know how hard it is.

So very, very hard.

When Jill and I got married, I saw how difficult it was for her to start her teaching career while being a new mom. We cared for our parents to the end, my mom moved in with us.

Our entire family was there for our Beau when he died from cancer.

We know what so many of you are going through.

But now everything just feels different.

There's just that feeling, that sense where you just don't know if everything will be okay.



But I'm here to tell you that it can be – it will be.

You know, my Dad was an honorable, decent man. He never went to college. He got knocked down a few times, but always got up. He worked hard and built a great middle-class life for our family.

He used to say, “Joey, I don't expect the government to solve my problems, but I expect them to understand my problems.”

I understand – to my very core.

And I know that together, we can do this.

We are America. We don't settle. We aspire.

Let's get to work.

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