



CARE IS ESSENTIAL

THE AMERICAN JOBS PLAN INVESTS IN BLACK, LATINA AND ASIAN WOMEN TO BUILD A CAREGIVING INFRASTRUCTURE TO MAKE CARE JOBS GOOD UNION JOBS FOR ESSENTIAL CARE WORKERS OF ALL RACES.

- **CARE WORKERS ARE THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR ECONOMY AND OUR FAMILIES AND SHOULD BE RESPECTED, PROTECTED AND PAID FOR THEIR ESSENTIAL ROLE IN OUR NATION'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM.** Home care and nursing home workers are part of the backbone of care in our country helping seniors and people with disabilities live with dignity, whether at home or in a facility. Women, largely women of color and immigrants, make up the home care industry--three out of five home-care workers are people of color and one in three are immigrants. They provide assistance with bathing, dressing, toileting, meal preparation, housekeeping and other activities of daily living for others yet, too often, are unable to provide for their own families.
- **AMERICAN FAMILIES ARE DESPERATE FOR CARE.** The need for care is familiar to most families and it's why voters say long-term care should be a priority for the country. A combined 92% of voters across party lines say long-term care should be a priority for the country, including a notable 67% who think it should be a high priority. As our population ages and the demand for home and community-based services is sharply on the rise, Americans are left to fend for themselves to find and pay for care for themselves or a loved one. An estimated 20 million seniors and people with disabilities need long-term services and supports (LTSS), and want to receive these services at home or in the community, rather than in an institution.
- **CARE WORKERS WERE ESSENTIAL LONG BEFORE THE PANDEMIC.** The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare an already broken and unjust long-term care system as Black, Latina, Asian women and immigrants of all races have historically and intentionally been underpaid and overlooked. Far too many care workers have been infected, and even died, because they lacked adequate personal protective equipment, testing, vaccination, affordable healthcare and paid leave. Care workers have risked their own families' health to care for others, and many have been forced to make the impossible choice of going to work unprotected or staying at home without pay.
- **HOME CARE JOBS ARE THE FUTURE OF WORK.** Over the next decade alone, the demand for home care will grow by 46 percent, with more than one million new home care jobs needed. Yet inadequate and imbalanced funding for LTSS, and high rates of worker turnover due to low wages, lack of benefits and inadequate training, have created chronic worker shortages across the country, even before the pandemic, and severely limits access to home care services.
- **INVESTING IN HOME CARE JOBS WILL LEAD TO A MORE EQUITABLE RECOVERY AND STRENGTHEN THE ECONOMY AT LARGE.** The country now faces record job losses and women, and disproportionately women of color, are feeling the deepest impact. Women lost 5.5 million jobs since the pandemic started; **865,000 women stepped out** of the workforce in last September alone, primarily due to the caregiving needs of their families; and **all of the net job losses this past December** were due to women, primarily women of color, being laid off. Home care jobs are job enabling jobs--not only will investment provide new job opportunities for those seeking employment, but it will also allow women who are family caregivers to return to the workforce. Greater investment in the professional development of underpaid and underemployed Black, Latina and immigrant caregivers will lead to job gains in other sectors where care workers will spend their increased wages on goods and services.
- **THE AMERICAN JOBS PLAN IS GROUNDBREAKING BECAUSE IT RECOGNIZES THAT THE CARE ECONOMY IS ESSENTIAL AMERICAN INFRASTRUCTURE.** It finally acknowledges the central role women, especially Black, Latina and Asian women, play in our communities and in our economy. By investing in care work as essential infrastructure, the \$400 billion plan would:
 - Expand access to Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) to older Americans and people with disabilities;
 - Build Medicaid HCBS infrastructure that will help create and transform millions of care jobs into high quality jobs with family-sustaining wages, benefits, and a choice to join a union while also strengthening the service delivery system for people with disabilities and older adults;
 - Expand opportunities for training and career advancement.

Enacting this proposal will require Congress to pass legislation and make a \$400 billion down payment to invest in Medicaid and transform the care infrastructure for the future of our economy. Currently, Medicaid is the largest payer for home care services in the country, yet lacks adequate funding and infrastructure to ensure families who need care can access it or give professional caregivers the needed support for their own families. These federal dollars should be contingent on states meeting standards that include expansion of affordable quality care, good jobs, and a robust structure that makes it possible for workers to have the choice to join unions.

THIS LEGISLATION MUST INCLUDE:

- ▶ **NEW FUNDING** to expand access to home and community-based services, building on the foundation of existing state Medicaid HCBS programs, structured so states receive incentives to expand access to those who need home care services and build a sustainable care workforce.
- ▶ **HOME CARE AUTHORITIES** would strengthen the home care infrastructure to create a one-stop shop for home care services to provide high quality care for aging adults and people with disabilities and to make home care a rewarding career by providing workers, who work in isolation and do not have a common employer, better opportunities for training and to join together in a union or worker organization.
- ▶ **A CLEAR PATH FOR WORKERS AND CONSUMERS TO HAVE A STRONGER VOICE TO RAISE STANDARDS IN THE CARE SYSTEM.** Workers should have the choice to join unions and engage in collective bargaining to ensure that wages and benefits are sufficient to support families, and consumers should have a say in how their providers are paid under Medicaid. Medicaid rates must be set high enough to accommodate family sustaining wages and benefits that are necessary to transform these jobs into long-term careers. States should establish a transparent rate setting process for Medicaid personal care services that bring together consumers, workers, and other stakeholders to help determine the rates that will support robust access to high quality care.
- ▶ **A PATHWAY TO CITIZENSHIP FOR QUALIFIED IMMIGRANT HOME CARE WORKERS TO HELP ADDRESS THE CARE GAP AND CREATE A ROBUST CARE WORKER PIPELINE.** Undocumented care workers are overrepresented in the home care industry—one in ten workers are undocumented immigrants and that may be higher depending on location. A pathway to citizenship would create a strong pipeline for home care workers, allowing all providers—regardless of where they work, where they live, or where they are from—to work with dignity, safety and stability, and enabling us to meet our nation’s colossal current and future caregiving needs.

NATIONAL POLLING SHOWS 88% SUPPORT FOR WORKFORCE PROVISIONS IN THE BIDEN CARE ECONOMY PLAN PLAN, 97% AMONG BLACK WOMEN AND 93% AMONG LATINAS. A recent national poll of 1,391 voters with an oversample of Black and Latina women -- who are often the caregivers at home, at work and in their communities -- shows overwhelming support for action supporting the care economy. The poll, released by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) found that majorities of voters, by a margin of 89% to 11%, want Congress to take action on home care. This sentiment is even stronger among women of color, with 93% support for Congressional action among Black and Latina women.

THERE IS STRONG NATIONAL SUPPORT FOR BIDEN’S CARE ECONOMY PLAN (88% SUPPORT TO 12% OPPOSE), with an overwhelming majority of voters favoring the creation of good care jobs, including:

- *Investments in recruitment and retention of the care workforce*
- *Employment benefits, including health insurance, paid family leave and paid sick leave*
- *Creating 1.5 million new care jobs and increasing wages for care workers*
- *Raising the federal minimum wage for care workers to \$15/hr*

Many Americans worry about affording long-term care, with **69% OF RESPONDENTS EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT PAYING FOR LONG-TERM CARE** for themselves or family members. During a pandemic that has ravaged nursing homes, Americans would prefer care at home rather than a care facility. (**75% PREFER CARE AT HOME** vs. 8% at nursing homes, with 17% responding both/same).