

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023*

**Remarks on the National Economy in West Columbia, South Carolina**  
*July 6, 2023*

*The President.* Hello, South Carolina!

Thank you, Nikki, for that——

*[At this point, the President tried to move the podium riser in.]*

——if you wonder what I'm kicking here, I'm kicking this stand in. *[Laughter]* But it's not working.

*[The President moved the riser out of the way with his foot.]*

How about that? All right, maybe I stand on it and give my—I'll be 6'4". *[Laughter]*

Folks, thank you—*[inaudible]*—for being here. And I want to particularly thank my good friend Jim Clyburn. The truth of the matter is—all of you know it in South Carolina—I wouldn't be standing here were it not for Jim Clyburn. *[Laughter]*

Jim has been one of the most consequential leaders in South Carolina history, in my view. He's tough, he's loyal, he's principled. And—and he let me—I want to tell you something: If he has your back, you—he always has your back.

And, Jim, it's good to be back in your home with you and your daughter.

And look, former Mayor Steve Benjamin couldn't be here today—and you all remember Steve as your mayor—because he's traveling with his family. And it's great to have him here—have him part of our team. But his mom and dad are here.

By the way, if you have seats, sit down. *[Laughter]* I'm sorry. I once said, "Everybody take a seat," and there were no seats. They said, "Biden is so stupid, he didn't know there were no seats." *[Laughter]* Anyway.

Also want to thank the leadership of Enphase and Flex for hosting us.

You know, I'm here to talk about what we're doing to invest in America—and I mean invest in America, all of America, starting here South Carolina—and to talk about the progress we made in building an economy from the middle out and the bottom up, not trickling down. When the—when you build from the middle out and bottom up, everybody does well, and the wealthy still do very well. With that trickle-down economy, not a whole lot dropped on my dad's kitchen table growing up.

It's all part of an economic vision for this country. I came to office determined—to the point of—some on my own team thought I was too determined—to change the economic direction of this country, to move trickle-down economics and get rid of it for everyone, from—the Wall Street Journal to the Financial Times called the program "Bidenomics." I'm not sure they meant it as a compliment at the time. *[Laughter]*

Our plan is working. And one of the things I'm proudest of is that it's working everywhere, not just in the coasts and big cities, like previous recoveries. This time, investment is working—and factories being built and jobs being created—happening in rural America, the heartland, all across America, in communities that have been left out and hollowed out.

This is what it looks like across the country. Over 13 million new jobs since I've been elected to office, more jobs than any President's ever created in their first 2 years. Nearly 800,000

manufacturing jobs, including 14,000 in this State alone—this State alone. And again, that's more—that's more in 2 years than was created in 4 years in any other administration.

Unemployment has been below 4 percent for the longest time in 50 years. Inflation is less than half of what it was a year ago, and we're continuing to work on it.

You know, I know we have more to do. Bringing down inflation remains one of the—my top priorities. Job satisfaction nationally—nationally—is at a 36-year high. The share of working-age Americans in the workforce is as high as it's been in 30 years. Remember they used to say, "Biden is spending all this money to keep people from working"? People are off the sidelines. Twenty years—twenty years high—higher than every single one of my predecessors.

And to pay for low-wage workers—the pay for low-wage workers has grown at the fastest pace in two decades. And, folks, it's no accident. It's Bidenomics in action.

Trickle-down economics has failed the country for decades. It means slashing public investment on things that helped America lead the world in innovation. You know, we used to invest 2 percent of our entire gross domestic product in research and development. You know what it is now? Point-7 percent.

We used to be ranked number one in the world in research and development. Know what we're ranked now? Number nine. China was number eight a decade ago, and now China is number two. And other countries are closing in fast.

This is the United States of America, for God's sake. We used to have the fastest—the best infrastructure in the world, rated number one. Now we're rated number 13 in the world in infrastructure. How can you have the best economy in the world and not have the best infrastructure in the world?

Under my predecessor, Infrastructure Week became a punchline. Every—every—every month—anyway. It's just—I won't get into it. *[Laughter]* On my watch, we're making infrastructure a decade headline. A decade.

Yesterday, we announced that since I took office, we have attracted a half a trillion dollars—\$497 billion—in private investment in American manufacturing, both here and around the world. It's historic, and it's Bidenomics in action. Instead of exporting jobs to cheaper labor costs—what we did for decades—we're creating jobs here and exporting American product. Product, not jobs. That's the story here in South Carolina.

Earlier, we heard the leadership of Enphase say that \$60 million they're investing here. Well, that's 1,800 jobs across the country and up [to; White House correction] 600 permanent jobs right here in South Carolina, all a direct result of the so-called Inflation Reduction Act I wrote—we wrote and passed.

Well, that's the legislation that passed where so much money is coming in to make all this happen. And by the way, parenthetically, I want you to—you're going to hear about the deficit—I cut the deficit \$1.7 trillion in 2 years. Nobody has ever done that. Cut the debt 1.7. This generates income. It generates growth.

Enphase first commercialized the component that converts solar energy into electricity. All that solar energy doesn't do a whole lot of good if you can't do it and convert it into electricity. It's called—they invented a thing called a solar microinverter.

Jobs that used to go to Mexico, India, Romania, and China are now coming home to South Carolina. Now Enphase is partnering with Flex to make these parts here in South Carolina. And today, they're shipping their first microinverters made in America. Made in America.

And the good news is 90 percent of these jobs require intelligence but don't require a college degree. And Flex is working with Midlands Tech—Midlands Technical College in Columbia to develop training and pathways so folks can get these jobs.

Since I took office, we've seen over 60 domestic manufacturing announcements all across the solar supply chain. One of the biggest is in Dalton, Georgia. You may find it hard to believe, but that's Marjorie Taylor Greene's district. *[Laughter]* I'll be there for the groundbreaking. *[Laughter]*

Look, and just today the Department of Energy announced new incentives for companies to bring solar power manufacturing back to our shores. We're in a real race; China is ahead of us. This is another step in helping us meet the goal of a hundred percent clean, renewable energy—electricity by 2035. By 2035, all electricity in America is going to be generated by clean energy—that's a big deal—and saving billions of tons going into the air of pollution.

We see the same story in semiconductors, those small, little computer chips the size of the tip of your finger that affect nearly everything in our lives, from your cellphone to automobiles and refrigerators to the most sophisticated weapons systems. They need these.

And guess what? America invented these chips. We're the ones that invented them. We sophisticated those chips. We made them what they are.

But over time, we went from producing nearly 40 percent of the world's chips down to less than 10 percent. That's why we designed and I signed the CHIPS and Science Act—all these names don't mean much until you know what they produce—because I knew we had to reclaim America's leadership.

Now, all over the country, semiconductor companies are investing a record hundreds of billions of dollars to bring chip production back home in Ohio, New York, Arizona, all across the—like outside Columbus, Ohio, Intel is investing, in a thousand acres outside of Ohio, \$20 billion. Twenty billion. It's going to take 7,000 people to build the two—they call them "fabs"—factories. And it's going to take 5,000 permanent workers.

Near Syracuse, Micron is investing up to \$100 billion over the next 20 years, beginning now. In Phoenix, Arizona, TSMC is investing \$40 billion, producing thousands of good-paying jobs.

As I said, for example, in Ohio, those 7,000 jobs building the facility are going to generate economic growth in that entire region outside of Columbus because they're generating—they bring along—you need storage, you need drugstores, you need a lot of things to maintain those jobs. And we're also seeing 3,000 jobs—those 3,000 jobs working in the fabs. You can make \$100,000 a year. That's the average salary. And you don't need a college degree, making a hundred grand. The middle class—the middle class—this is a game changer, where "Investing in America" agenda is about bringing supply chains home, a clean energy future, made in America.

Before the pandemic, supply chains weren't something most Americans thought about. If I said to you 6 years ago, "We're worried about a supply chain," you'd look at me like, "Huh?" Well, I would have looked at you the same way. But today, after delays in parts and products, everybody knows why supply chains matter. We know for too long China has dominated the production of raw materials needed for critical products. That's why we're building alliances with our friends all across the world, increasing our production here at home to create alternative sources for the minerals we need.

Our goal is to bring the full battery supply chain home. We create a "Battery Belt" stretching from Michigan to Georgia.

In Chester County, South Carolina, Albemarle is investing \$1.5 billion to process lithium for electric vehicle batteries. That's not only will create 3,000—300 permanent jobs, but it will lift up a whole community—a whole community—restore some pride. It matters.

The lithium will power components like our—like the—like—it's going to be taking—being made in Redwood Minerals—excuse me—Redwood Materials near Charleston, where the company is making the largest investment in the State of—in the history of this State: \$3.5 billion to build a battery materials manufacturing plant, creating 1,500 jobs. That's another community changer. It's a game changer.

And those materials will go into batteries that will be recycled by companies like Cirba Solutions, which is investing \$300 million here in Richland County, creating another 300 permanent jobs. That's community after community after community there's been that change. And it's on its way. If you change enough communities, it's going to change the State, it's going to change the country.

In Jim Clyburn's district, Promega [Pomega; White House correction] Energy Storage Technologies is investing 279 billion dollars—million dollars—million—to manufacture batteries to store energy to power the grid.

Look, what do you think we'd have said that—if I came when I was here trying to get the nomination 3 years ago and I told you while—you know, while I was campaigning, that we'd see this kind of investment in South Carolina—billions of dollars?

I think you would've been a little skeptical. But that's why I fought so hard for the things I wanted to do. We didn't get much help from the other team, but that didn't stop us from getting it done. And that's going to transform America.

All told, since I signed the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS and Science Act into law, companies have announced \$11 billion in manufacturing and clean energy investments just in South Carolina. Eleven billion dollars.

Companies across the county—or, excuse me, across the country are expanding factories, building new ones, creating tens of thousands of good-paying jobs, most of which don't require a 4-year degree.

And when I say every job in America should be a good job, including a free and fair choice to join a union, I mean it.

*Audience member.* That's right!

*The President.* Every venture to manufacture clean energy technology would be made stronger by collective bargaining relationships. But that's up to you to decide.

It's not just—it's not just manufacturing. Through the bipartisan infrastructure law, we've already announced over 35,000 projects all across America, like the Brent Spence Bridge, which is a billion-dollar operation, over the Ohio River from Ohio to Kentucky.

And today, in New York, we're investing a record—a billion dollars to renew the Hudson Tunnel. You walk through that tunnel, it was built a hundred years ago. It's falling apart. You'll be able to go through it a hundred miles an hour instead of 30 miles an hour.

Up in Union County, South Carolina, we're rebuilding six bridges critical to moving people and goods across this region. Each bridge is over 60 years old with weight and volume restrictions that cause detours, congestion, and supply chain delays. The oldest one is where South Carolina 49 crosses the Tyger River. The biggest one is right here in Columbia: "malfunction junction." [Laughter] You all know it.

How many years you've been talking about fixing "malfunction junction"? Well, now, thanks to Jim Clyburn and help from the infrastructure law, it's finally going to get fixed. It's going to get fixed.

And we're removing every single lead pipe in America. More than 100,000 lead service lines go into homes here in South Carolina. And they're a risk to everyone's health, including children, so it's time to get them removed and replaced.

We're building. We're helping Richland School District One here in Columbia purchase 16 new electric buses. Because, guess what? The diesel buses cause asthma. They cause problems. They cause additional problems.

You all remember, during the pandemic, that thousands of people in this State didn't have a connection to a high-speed internet, wherever—in their business or their home. Everybody now talks about, "We're going to close that digital divide," that divide between those who have a reliable internet connection and those who don't.

South Carolina is receiving \$1 billion to close that divide—[*applause*]*—connecting every home and small business across rural America and rural South Carolina that doesn't have reliable high-speed internet.*

Thanks to Jim Clyburn's Affordable Connectivity Program—fancy name, but it's real—that's saying that 359,000 South Carolinian families are already saving \$30 a month on their internet bills.

Look, we're doing this in communities all over the country. You can see exactly where the money is going and whether you're affected in your community here by going to invest.gov. Click onto invest.gov, put in your location, and they'll tell you what's happening in your community. You'll all see projects we're delivering in communities all across America.

Look, implementing this legislation also has another transformative impact. All those Members of Congress who voted against it suddenly realize how great it is, and they're bragging about it. As my mother would say, "God love them." [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Senator Graham for voting for the bipartisan infrastructure law and the CHIPS and Science Act, but I wish he'd voted for the rest.

Every Republican Member of the Congress voted against the Inflation Reduction Act. Every one. Every Republican Member of the House in this State voted to repeal the clean energy provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act that—that attached—attracted all these jobs.

You know, and then, after that effort failed, the Republican Study Committee, which includes over three-quarters of the House Republicans, just released a plan to go at trying to repeal it all again. That hasn't stopped them, though, from claiming credit—[*laughter*]*—now that billions of dollars and thousands of jobs are coming to the United States.*

It's not unusual. The distinguished Senator from the State of Alabama, a former coach of the university, strongly opposed the bipartisan infrastructure law. He's now hailing its passage. He said, quote, "Great to see Alabama receive critical funds to boost ongoing broadband efforts." [*Laughter*] It is great. But that's alright, because I'm one of those guys who believe in conversion. [*Laughter*]

Look, folks, on a very serious note, when I ran, when I got elected, when I proposed these pieces of legislation, I made a commitment that I would be President for all Americans, whether their elected officials voted for the—the events or not—all Americans, whether you voted for me or not. And I've kept my promise.

In fact, some analysis have said that the laws I've signed are going to do more to help red America than blue America. Well, that's okay with me, because we're all Americans. Because my view is: Wherever the need is most, that's the place we should be helping. And that's what we're doing. Because the way I look at it, the progress we're making is good for all Americans, all of America.

Let me close with this. I'm not here to declare victory on the economy. I'm here to say we have a plan that's turning things around quickly, but we have a lot more work to do.

When I came to office, we had a fundamental decision to make: Would we continue down the trickle-down economic path—a policy that's failed us time and again—that grew inequality, that saw jobs shipped overseas, towns hollowed out?

When I ran, I promised we would not continue down the trickle-down path. But here's the simple truth about trickle-down economics: It represented a moment when we walked away from how this country was built.

Bidenomics is just another way of saying "restoring the American Dream." Forty years of trickle-down limited that dream to those at the top. But I believe that every American willing to work hard should be able to get a good job no matter where they live—in the heartland, in the small towns, in every part of this country—to raise their kids on a good paycheck and keep their roots where they grew up.

That's the American Dream. My dad used to have an expression for—growing up. My word. He'd say: "Joey, a job is a lot—about a lot more than a paycheck. It's about your dignity. It's about respect. It's about being able to look your kid in the eye and say, 'Honey, it's going to be okay,' and mean it."

That's Bidenomics. It's rooted in what always worked best for this country: investing in America. Because when you invest in our people, when you strengthen the middle class, we see stronger economic growth that benefits everybody.

I've long said it's never been a good bet to bet against America. And I can honestly say it's never been—I've never been more optimistic about America's future. We just have to remember who we are, for God's sake. We are the United States of America. There is nothing beyond our capacity if we work together. So let's continue to work together.

God bless you all, and may God protect our troops. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:58 p.m. at the Flex Ltd. manufacturing facility. In his remarks, he referred to Nikki Hicks, automation technician, Flex Ltd., who introduced the President; Mignon L. Clyburn, vice-chair, University of the District of Columbia Board of Trustees; former Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin of Columbia, SC, in his capacity as Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement, and his parents Sam and Maggie Benjamin; former President Donald J. Trump; Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene; and Sen. Thomas H. Tuberville.

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