

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks to the North America's Building Trades Unions Tradeswomen Build Nations Conference From Rehoboth Beach, Delaware
September 28, 2024

[The President addressed the conference, which was held at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, LA, via teleconference from his residence in Rehoboth Beach, DE.]

Hey, Sean. Thanks for that introduction, pal. We go back a long way, you and I. And we go back—look, the fact is the building trades have been a significant part of my career my whole career, all 800 years of it.

Hey, look, good morning, tradeswomen of North America and Chair Vicki O'Leary; and I want to talk—Brandon Bishop, the secretary; and Liz Shuler, my AFL–CIO president. You've always had my back. I'll never forget it.

Julie Su, my Acting Secretary of Labor, is in the crowd. She just spoke. I got to hear her, even though I'm up in—up northeast.

Look, I kept my commitment. I have an administration that looks like America. That includes having more women senior role—in senior roles than at any time in—ever, starting with the amazing Vice President, Kamala Harris.

And together, we're proud to have most pro-union administration in American history. I know this simple truth: Wall Street didn't build America. You know damn well they didn't build the middle class. Unions built the middle class. Unions built the middle class.

And we're beginning to thrive. In fact, I asked the Secretary of Treasury to study what my—I was getting criticized that—my being so supportive of unions was going to cost money. Well, guess what? When unions do well, the studies shows, all Americans—all—union and non-union—do better. It's a big reason why our economy is the strongest in the world.

It comes down to something my dad used to—that dad taught me. He said, "Joey, a job is about a lot more than a paycheck." You've heard me say this before. "It's about your dignity. It's about your place in the community. It's about being able to look your kid in the eye and say 'Honey, everything is going to be okay' and mean it."

That's why Kamala and I are so damn proud to have the greatest job creation record of any single Presidential term: nearly 16 million new jobs so far, 800,000 manufacturing jobs, and over 300,000 more women in manufacturing than when I took office.

Where the hell is it written to say we can't lead the world in manufacturing? We are leading, and we will continue to.

The economy has also created 848,000 construction jobs, a record 8.2 million jobs across the construction industry, including over 100,000 more women in construction. And construction is booming.

But that's not all. We've achieved the lowest unemployment rate for women in 70 years. We narrowed the gender pay gap. And there are more women, especially mothers, in the workforce than ever before.

And here's how we're making that progress. My predecessor promised "Infrastructure Week" every week for 4 years, and he never build a damn thing, literally. Well, with your support, we're

going to have Infrastructure Decade. We provided well over a trillion dollars for infrastructure in America.

And bipartisan infrastructure law—we're investing over 5—so far—just so far, 50,000 projects have been designated across America so far, modernizing our roads, bridges, ports, airports, clean water systems, affordable high-speed internet, and so damn much more.

It's creating tens of thousands of good jobs for the building trades. You're literally building back America. And we're just getting started.

When I signed the CHIPS and Science Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, which is the most significant laws ever for climate and clean energy, science and innovation, so far, it's not only generated what we put in—remember the criticism of "Biden put in too much Federal money"? "He shouldn't be making that debt." Well, guess what? It's attracting nearly \$1 trillion in private-sector investment in advanced manufacturing, semiconductors, clean energy, and more here in America, creating tens of thousands of good-paying building trades jobs.

And these are construction jobs now. And in the future, they're going to maintain these factories. They're going to be needed for a long time.

In fact, construction of new factories has more than doubled. Clean energy workers are joining unions at the highest rate level in all of American history.

And guess what? With your support, I signed an Executive order to make sure large Federal construction projects—are pro-labor; they're project—they have project labor agreements; and that contractors, subcontractors, unions are all put in place before the construction begins so we know exactly who's going to get paid what. These agreements make sure construction is top-notch, on time, on task, and on budget.

"Buy America" has been the law of the land for a—since the 1930s. And to tell you the truth, no one paid attention. I didn't even realize it was written into the law until about 12 years ago—15 years ago, when we were deciding whether—how labor would have a fair shot of organizing.

But it said, when you send me money as a President, you—I should use that money to build or buy—we use American labor and American products, whatever that I'm spending that money for.

Past administrations, including my predecessor, failed to "Buy America." Not anymore. Federal projects helping build American roads, bridges, highways will be made with American products, built by American workers, creating good-paying jobs, instead of doing what they did: send the job overseas for cheaper labor and bring home the product, which costs more.

In fact, we're requiring these kinds of jobs to pay Davis-Bacon prevailing wage for jobs that don't require a college degree and jobs you can raise a family on. And these increase—and this is going to increase wages for more than a million construction workers.

I also signed an Executive order strengthening the pipeline for good jobs.

In fact, we expanded the registered—and Julie Su just spoke about it—registered apprenticeships, resulting in hiring of a million apprenticeships since I came to office. Remember they wanted to keep making private?

Under my administration, the number of women in apprenticeships has increased by nearly 50 percent. And a lot of folks don't realize it, but apprenticeship is like earning a college degree. I've urged Sean and all the labors leaders: Let them know the reason why people are hiring us, want us is because you're the best trained workers in the world. And when you go through an apprentice program, it's like earning a college degree.

An apprentice is you train for 4 to 5 years before you get full—before you're recognized for your trade. These were—you're some of the best workers in the world.

And I've always believed the National Labor Relations Board should be pro-labor. National Labor Relations Board—pro-labor. That's why one of the most significant things we've done is appointed National Labor Relations Board members who—that actually believe in unions and believe in the right to organize.

Remember what Trump did? Trump appointed union busters on that board.

Also, we made incredible progress and we know there's more to do to support women's economic security.

All around the country, local governments are using dollars from my "Invest in America" agenda for—to fund childcare—to fund childcare, requiring, for example, semiconductor companies applying for new Federal subsidies to make sure that all their workers have access to affordable childcare.

I recently signed an Executive order encouraging even more Federal agencies to prioritize projects that provide affordable childcare and other benefits the workers need.

I signed into law the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act and the PUMP Act, giving pregnant and postpartum workers long-overdue protections, and so much more.

I'd go on, except I know you have to—they're going to shut down that parade if I don't make this shorter.

And that's a stark contrast to my predecessor. You know, do you think he has any idea about the work you do every day? Hell, with regard to picket lines, he'd rather cross one than—instead of walking one.

But Kamala and I have no problem walking in it. We did. And we'll always walk alongside you, the union workers who built this country.

Let me close with this. Two years ago, Jill and I invited an ironworker from Cincinnati to be our guest at the State of the Union. She joined her local union more than 20 years ago, working her way up. The job helped her raise a family. The career gave her pride in her community. Her union is known as the "Cowboys in the Sky" because they built Cincinnati's skyline.

And because of the historic investments we're making, she's going to be working 10 stories over the Ohio River, building a new billion-dollar bridge—literally building a bridge of—to American dreams. That's all of you.

I spent my whole career believing in unions. I'm honored to be considered the most pro-union President ever, and I make no apologies for that.

I'm here to tell you that if you care about increasing the strength of unions, if you care about hardworking people who just want a fair shot, if you think about the dignity of work, look at the record of the Biden-Harris administration, we're providing a woman can—we're proving it.

And I've raised this—I was raised from the time I can remember: A woman can do anything a man can do. That's how I was raised by my mom and by my family. That includes being President of the United States of America.

And I've never been more optimistic about America's future. We just have to remember who we are. We're the United States of America, damn it. There's nothing beyond our capacity when we work together, and we're working together.

So God bless you all, and God protect our troops.

I'm sorry to go so fast, but you've got to get out there and let them see who you are. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Sean McGarvey, president, and Brandon Bishop, secretary-treasurer, North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU); former President Donald J. Trump; David M. Prouty and Gwynn A. Wilcox, members, and Jennifer A. Abruzzo, General Counsel, National Labor Relations Board; and Saria Gwin-Maye, member, Ironworkers Local 44 in Cincinnati, OH. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 30.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : North America's Building Trades Unions Tradeswomen Build Nations Conference in New Orleans, LA, remarks from Rehoboth Beach, DE.

Locations: Rehoboth Beach, DE.

Names: Abruzzo, Jennifer A.; Biden, Jill T.; Bishop, Brandon; Gwin-Maye, Saria; Harris, Kamala D.; McGarvey, Sean; O'Leary, Vicki; Prouty, David M.; Shuler, Elizabeth H.; Su, Julie A.; Trump, Donald J.; Wilcox, Gwynn A.; Yellen, Janet L.

Subjects: Acting Secretary of Labor; Apprenticeship programs and job training; Broadband and wireless technologies; Childcare, access and affordability; Climate change; Delaware, President's visit; Diversity, equity, and inclusion, improvement efforts; Economic improvement; Household income and wages; Inflation; Infrastructure improvements; Job creation and growth; Job training assistance programs; Labor movement and organized labor; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; National Labor Relations Board; North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU); Renewable energy sources and technologies; Secretary of the Treasury; Semiconductor manufacturing; Vice President; Women's rights and gender equality; Worker protections and labor standards; Workforce development, strengthening efforts.

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