

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024*

**Remarks on Infrastructure Improvement Efforts in Baltimore, Maryland**  
*October 29, 2024*

*The President.* Hello, Baltimore! Hello, hello, hello.

Don't jump, guys. All right?

*Audience member.* Give them hell, Joe! *[Laughter]*

*The President.* Thank you, Gwen, for that introduction. And a big congratulations to your fellow longshoremen, who just won record wage gains. You deserve it, man.

You know, I'm called the most pro-union President in history. It's nothing hard, man. It's a simple proposition. The middle class built this country, and unions built the middle class, period. I mean it.

You sacrificed so much to keep America's ports open, especially during the pandemic. You deserve a strong contract.

I also want to thank the Governor Moore. I think he may be the best Governor in the country, man. Where are you, Gov? I tell you what, man, I wish to hell I would play ball with him. *[Laughter]*

You know, and, Mayor Scott, where—where—I—there you go. Stand up, man. Let them see you. This guy has got a—being a mayor of a major city is one of the hardest jobs in American politics. They think you have all the answers, and they know where you live. *[Laughter]*

And, Johnny O., county exec—where are you, Johnny? There you are. I used to be a county councilman. I think it's the hardest job in America. People think you know what you have. You don't have nearly what you think you have. They think you can solve all your problems. And when you can't, you get in trouble. And they know where you live too. *[Laughter]* So thank you, Johnny O. *[Laughter]* Appreciate it. We look forward to seeing you in Congress next year, man. Look forward to seeing you in Congress.

And Senator Ben Cardin and Senator Chris Van Hallen—Von Hallen—what the hell is his name? He's new. *[Laughter]* Chris Von—*[laughter]*. Chris and I have been doing this for so many years now, it's getting old. Or at least I'm getting old; Chris isn't getting old.

And, Ben, we're going to miss you in the Senate. We're going to miss you in the Senate.

And I want to thank Congressmen Mfume and Ruppertsberger and Sarbanes. But you know, every time I see Sarbanes, he seems about a foot taller. *[Laughter]* I don't know, man. Work—his dad taught me that I better understand and learn—I'd better learn Greek or I'm going to be in trouble. And my good friend—and he is a good friend; we've shared a lot together—Steny Hoyer. Steny, thanks for all you've done, pal.

And from my Cabinet and EPA—the director, Michael Regan.

You know, last spring, in the dead of night, that massive container ship crashed into the Key Bridge. Within seconds, steel beams crumbled into the harbor like toothpicks. Thirty thousand people lost their daily route to work, to school, and to home. Twenty thousand port-related paychecks became at risk.

Six construction workers were killed in the process. All were Marylanders: hard-working, strong, and selfless. I met with their families, as many of you did. And I vowed to them we would

never forget the contributions these men made to this city and that we would—and we'd do everything possible to reopen this port as fast as it possibly could be.

And I'm proud to say, with all the folks sitting—assembled here and the unions assembled here, you did just that. The Port of Baltimore is back open for business.

I want to thank the Coast Guard, the Navy, the Army Corps of Engineers—helped remove 50,000 tons of concrete and steel wreckage—50,000 tons. Some thought the shipping channel would be blocked for 6 months or more, but you cleared it in 78 days—78 days.

On top of this, my administration provided \$60 million in Federal funding to—and for response and recovery, offered grants to displaced port workers to get paid to help with the cleanup, and teamed up with businesses to keep auto farm—auto and farmers' shipments moving. The result: 8,000 workers back on the job, over 100,000 tons of cargo pass through this port again on a daily basis.

But, as I promised last spring, we won't stop until the new bridge is finished completely—finished, finished, finished. I'm calling on Congress to fully fund it this year—before we go out, this year—a new bridge built with American steel and union labor.

And that's not all. For years, I've been saying it's not enough just to rebuild America. We have to build it back better and stronger than before. That's why today I'm proud to announce we're delivering \$3 billion in funding from my Inflation Reduction Act to help clean up and modernize ports in 27 different States and Territories, from Pennsylvania to Georgia, Michigan, and beyond—including, yes, Puerto Rico.

I'd like to take that guy for a swim out there. Anyway. *[Laughter]* Steny is looking at me, "Don't get going, Joe." *[Laughter]* "Don't get going, Joe. Slow up."

But this also includes a \$447 million [\$147 million; White House correction] for the Port of Baltimore to upgrade its cargo equipment, infrastructure, and power grid.

Folks, ports are the lynchpin—the lynchpin—to America's supply chain. They keep goods moving. They keep the economy strong. And they employ over 100,000 union workers, from teamsters to longshoremen.

But for too long, they've run on fossil fuels and aging infrastructure, putting workers at risk and exposing nearby communities to dangerous pollution. Studies show more childhood asthma, lung disease, and heart disease and cancer in folks who live close to ports.

This is about environmental justice. I asked Gloria, who you heard from earlier, were any of the neighbors in Turner Station or across the water in Curtis City [Curtis Bay; White House correction]—communities too long left behind. It's simply wrong.

The new \$3 billion funding we're delivering today will help ports and communities all across America. It will cut ports' opening costs, strengthen supply chains, make America businesses more competitive, and keep consumer prices down while slashing carbon pollution, and support an estimated 40,000 new, good-paying jobs at the port and clean-energy manufacturing all across America.

In fact, the funding for this port is estimated to create 2,000 new jobs—jobs for longshoremen, ironworkers, engineers, electricians, utility workers, steelworkers, laborers, and so much more—good-paying union jobs you can raise a family on without a college degree.

We're making sure all new port equipment funded by the Clean Port—Clean Ports Program will be operated and maintained by people, not by robots, which is going to protect those jobs far into the future.

Folks, this is just a smart part of—small part of what we call "Investing in America" agenda, to invest in America and all Americans. It's working. Just look at how far we've come from the crisis we inherited from my predecessor.

An example, my American Rescue Plan—which not a single Republican voted for, I might add, although there is conversions—delivered immediate economic relief to those who need it most and got us through the pandemic.

The bipartisan infrastructure law is one of the most significant laws ever, ever written to modernize our roads, our bridges, our ports, our airport, help replace every poisonous lead pipe in America, and bring affordable high-speed internet to every household.

My predecessor promised "Infrastructure Week" every week for 4 years, but he never built a damn thing. *[Laughter]*

My CHIPS and Science Act also bringing semiconductor and advanced manufacturing back home where it belongs, where it started. And, through the Inflation Reduction Act, we made the largest investment ever in history to fight climate change and accelerate clean energy, which is the way my predecessor said—by the way, he'd repeal it if elected.

Folks, a lot at stake here.

We're all "Investing in America" agenda, and because of what we did, remember how we were going to go into depression and all that stuff? Guess what? We've got the strongest economy in the world. The whole damn world. And, in America, our "Invest in America" agenda has already attracted \$1 trillion in private-sector investments—\$1 trillion in energy—clean energy, high-tech factories, and so much more.

And here's what it means for Maryland. So far, in this State alone, it provides \$13 billion for nearly 1,000 infrastructure, energy, and manufacturing projects. It matters. For example, look at the Baltimore and the Potomac Tunnel. It's 150 years old. I've walked through that—I used to commute every day back and forth from Wilmington to Washington. I walked through it. It's leaking. It needs to be replaced. It's badly needed.

And thanks to the bipartisan infrastructure law, it finally is being replaced. When the project is done, it will shorten commute times significantly, increase safety, and, in the process, will create 20,000 new construction jobs. And that's just one example of the investment.

Folks, it's clear after years of broken promises by the last administration, Kamala and I and our entire administration are delivering for America. We created a record 16 million new jobs, more than any single Presidential term in American history. Wages are up. We brought inflation down to the same rate it was before the pandemic. In fact, wage gains have outpaced inflation. Some people have more money in their pockets. Interest rates are falling. Unemployment has been this low—hadn't been this low for this long in over 50 years—because of you all. Manufacturing is making a comeback.

Where the hell is it written saying we can't be the manufacturing capital of the world? Where is that written? So we're bringing jobs back home and factories home.

And by the way, we've invested more in red States than in blue States, because I said, when we got elected, we'd—I'd be President for all Americans—more in red States than in blue States. And those of you in Congress know that there's a group of Republican Members of the House saying we've got to keep this going, because, all of a sudden, they're realizing how helpful it is.

America once again has the world's strongest economy. Folks have filed a record 19 million new business applications since we took office. Each filing for a new business application is an act of hope.

Put it all together, in thousands of cities and towns, we're seeing the great American comeback story.

Consumer confidence is up this month larger than ever. The economy is growing. The middle class is doing well. We're showing we're the only nation in the world that always emerges stronger from a crisis than we went into the crisis—the only one. We have to keep that progress going and growing.

Let me close with this. When I see this port now—cranes in the air, ships and cargo on the move—I hope and feel what I hope you feel: a real sense of pride. I mean it sincerely. Pride. Pride in your community. Pride in our country. Pride in the capacity of our labor unions.

That's what "Baltimore Strong" is all about. It's about pride.

I know because generations of Bidens lived here since the 1850s. My dad was born here. He always told me the true measure of a person is not how often you get knocked down; it's how fast you get back up. That's Baltimore. It gets back up fast. That's Maryland. It gets back up.

And that's why I've never been more optimistic for our future. We just have to remember who in the hell we are. We're the United States of America, and there is nothing, nothing, nothing beyond our capacity when we do it together. So let's keep working together.

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

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Thank you. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:18 p.m. at the Port of Baltimore. In his remarks, he referred to Gwen Williamson, a crane operator at the Port of Baltimore and member of the International Longshoreman Association's Local 333; County Executive John A. Olszewski, Jr., of Baltimore County, MD; Sen. Christopher Van Hollen, Jr.; Gloria Nelson, president, Turner Station Conservation Teams; former President Donald J. Trump; and Vice President Kamala D. Harris. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 31.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Infrastructure improvement efforts in Baltimore, MD.

*Locations:* Baltimore, MD.

*Names:* Cardin, Benjamin L.; Harris, Kamala D.; Hoyer, Steny H.; Mfume, Kweisi; Moore, Westley W.O. "Wes"; Olszewski, John A., Jr.; Regan, Michael S.; Ruppersberger, C.A. "Dutch"; Sarbanes, John P.; Scott, Brandon M.; Trump, Donald J.; Van Hollen, Christopher, Jr.; Williamson, Gwen; Wilson, Gloria.

*Subjects:* Broadband and wireless technologies; Carbon emissions, reduction efforts; COVID-19 pandemic; Economic improvement; Economic stimulus legislation; Environmental justice; Environmental Protection Agency; Household income and wages; Inflation; Infrastructure improvements; Job creation and growth; Labor movement and organized labor; Lead service lines, replacement efforts; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Maryland, collapse of Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore; Maryland, Governor; Maryland, Port of Baltimore reopening; Maryland, President's visit; Port infrastructure, U.S. improvement efforts; Renewable energy sources and technologies; Semiconductor manufacturing; Small businesses, promotion efforts; Unemployment rate; Vice President.

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