



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Build Back Better” Remarks as Prepared for Delivery by Vice President Joe Biden in Dumore, Pennsylvania

Thank you.

It’s great to be back in Scranton. It’s great to be back in Dunmore. And it’s great to be back home.

I want to thank Bob and everyone here at McGregor Industries for showing me around this morning.

This is the kind of small manufacturing business that demonstrates the resilience, creativity, and staying-power of America’s industrial base.

We’re living through a time unlike any in American history.

Our country is facing three crises simultaneously.

A pandemic that has infected over 3 million Americans and cost more than 130,000 lives – and shows no signs of slowing down.

An economic crisis that has left almost 18 million Americans out of work – with some of the greatest pain inflicted on small businesses and communities of color.

And a national reckoning on the issue of racial injustice that has long plagued our country.

These come on top of widening economic inequality and a mounting climate crisis. Each of these is an enormous challenge that is testing our strength, our patience, our resilience, our commitment to our core values, and our commitment to one another.

But each of these is also a tremendous opportunity for our nation. An opportunity to prepare now for the future threats we know are rising around the world. An opportunity to address the fundamental inequities in our nation – the growing gap between the very wealthy and everyone else. And an opportunity to finally – and *fully* – live up to the words and the values enshrined in the founding documents of this nation.

That we are all created equal and are entitled to be treated equally throughout our lives.

We all know the stakes couldn’t be higher. That’s why this is no time for divisive politics.

Donald Trump may believe in pitting Americans against Americans.

I don't.

We have a health crisis. An economic crisis. A racial justice crisis. A climate crisis.

And we need to come together as Americans to solve them.

This is our moment to imagine and to build a new American economy for our families and the next generation.

An economy where every American gets a fair return for their work – and an equal chance to get ahead. An economy that is more powerful precisely because everyone is cut in on the deal. An economy that says investing in the American people and working families is more important than the nearly \$2 trillion dollar tax break Trump predominantly handed out to the richest Americans.

Donald Trump loves to talk ... and talk ... and talk.

But after three and a half years of big promises, what do the American people have to show for it?

He promised a health care plan – but he never even offered his own bill. Instead he fought repeatedly to take health care away from tens of millions.

He promised an infrastructure plan and never delivered.

He promised to bring back jobs, but manufacturing was in recession even before COVID-19.

He promised to buy American, but he let federal contractors double the rate of offshoring jobs in his first 18 months in office.

And when it comes to COVID-19, after months of doing nothing other than predicting the virus would disappear – Trump has simply given up. He's waved the white flag and walked away.

And his failures come with a terrible human cost and a deep economic toll.

Time and time again, working families are paying the price for Donald Trump's incompetence.

Small business has ended up with the short end of the stick, too.

Less than a third of the massive amount of money the Congress and the Federal Reserve made available to the private sector has gone to Main Street businesses.

Big business – the wealthy – Trump's cronies and pals – they've been the big winners, again.

The truth is, throughout this crisis, Donald Trump has been almost singularly focused on the stock market ... the Dow ... the NASDAQ ... not you ... not your families.

But if I'm elected president, I will be laser-focused on working families and the middle class – not the wealthy investor class.

And this will be my guiding principle: We will reward hard work – not excessive wealth.

You see, growing up rich and looking down on people is very different from how I grew up here in Scranton. Here, nobody thought Wall Street bankers and CEOs built this country. You could just look around your neighborhood – or your kitchen table – and see who built this country.

It was at my grandfather Finnegan's kitchen table that I learned money doesn't determine your worth.

He'd say: *Joey, no one in the world is more worthy than you— and everyone is your equal.*

My dad taught me: *A job is about a lot more than a paycheck— it's about dignity, respect, your place in the community.*

And I remember my uncle saying, *"Joey, you're labor from belt buckle to shoe sole"* – and I took pride in it.

Determination. Resilience. Grit.

The strength to get up no matter how many times you've been knocked down.

Respect for hard work. And for the people who do it.

Those are the values I learned growing up in Scranton. And those are the values I'll take with me into the Oval Office.

I'll give more help to Main Street businesses and entrepreneurs and ask more of corporate America.

Nearly half the jobs in America are in small businesses.

And even back in early May, some estimates found that more than 100,000 small businesses had been permanently shut down. More have closed since. It's been devastating.

Enough. Enough.

It's time to reverse the priorities in this country.

Let's help small businesses manage through this pandemic and recover — and let's help millions of would-be entrepreneurs get out from under their debts so they can start a business.

And it's time corporate America paid their fair share in taxes. The days of Amazon paying nothing in federal income taxes should be over. Let's make sure their workers have more power and a voice.

It's way past time we put an end to this era of shareholder capitalism.

The idea that the only responsibility a corporation has is to its shareholders is an absolute farce. They have a responsibility to their workers, to their community and their country. That isn't a new or radical notion. Those are the basic values and principles — that helped build this nation. Now the challenge is to take those fundamental values — and apply them to the new economy we have to build in the years ahead.

I call my plan to do it the "Build Back Better" plan.

It's bold. It's practical. It's focused on building the economy of the future, not the past.

And it responds to five truths laid bare in this moment of crisis.

First, we've seen in the course of this pandemic the need to strengthen our industrial base as a long-term source of middle class job creation.

Let's use this opportunity to make bold investments in American industry and innovation so the future is Made In America — and in *all* of America.

I do not accept the defeatist view that the forces of automation and globalization mean we can't keep well-paid union jobs here in America — and create more of them.

I do not buy for one second that the vitality of American manufacturing is a thing of the past. American manufacturing was the Arsenal of Democracy in World War II, and must be part of the engine of American prosperity *now*.

So today, I'm releasing a detailed blueprint for how we create millions of good-paying union jobs building the products and technologies we will need now and in the future.

It starts with a pretty basic idea: when we spend taxpayer money, we should use it to buy American products and support American jobs. My plan would tighten the rules to make this a reality. And it goes further.

During my first term alone, we'll invest \$400 billion to purchase products and materials our country needs to modernize our infrastructure, to replenish our critical stockpiles, and to enhance our national security.

These funds will provide a reliable, predictable demand for products made by American workers and supply chains of American small businesses.

We'll purchase clean energy technologies to fight climate change; building materials, including steel products like those produced here; stockpiles of critical goods and equipment; and advanced technologies to modernize our government and enhance our national security. To ensure the future is made in America, we need to win not just the jobs of today — but the jobs and industries of tomorrow.

That means fighting unfair trade practices and curbing the theft of American intellectual property by countries like China.

America can't sit on the sidelines in the race for the future.

That's why I am proposing a dramatic Research & Development investment — \$300 billion in my first four years alone — to sharpen America's competitive edge in new industries where global leadership is up for grabs, like battery technology, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and clean energy.

And this money will be used purposefully to ensure all of America is in on the deal — including communities that have historically been left out — Black, Brown, and Native American entrepreneurs, cities and towns in every region of the country.

All told, this will be a mobilization of R&D and procurement investments in ways not seen since World War II.

In addition to bringing back the jobs that have been lost this year, my plan will help create at least five million new jobs — good paying jobs — in manufacturing and innovation right here in the United States.

Second, we've seen the importance of a more resilient economy for the long-term.

Our president wasn't prepared for the pandemic. He ignored the detailed briefings and warnings about the threat of pandemics that we gave to his administration in the transition. He shut down the pandemic office we had in the White House. He praised the Chinese government even as the virus was coming to our shores because he was so afraid they would walk away from his trade deal.

Let's not get caught flat-footed again.

Let's get prepared to meet the accelerating climate crisis.

That means investing in infrastructure and clean energy and creating millions of good-paying union jobs in the process.

Next week, I'll be laying out an updated blueprint for how we build a modern, safe, sustainable infrastructure and clean energy economy — how we make sure the communities who have suffered the most from pollution are first to benefit from this investment — and how to strengthen the union movement, by making sure that unions are building America, just like they built the middle class.

Third, we've seen in this pandemic the immense burdens working parents, and especially women, are carrying as they try to work and care for their children or their aging parents or their loved ones with disabilities.

It's been especially hard in this crisis — but let's face it, it's always hard.

So let's make it easier to afford child care and care for aging relatives.

And let's offer more pay and more economic dignity for the millions of workers — often women, and women of color — who we entrust to help teach our youngest and care for our oldest loved ones.

Donald Trump has no idea what it is to be a single parent who's barely getting by but needs to find child care.

He hasn't a clue what it's like to provide care for an aging parent.

That's understandable.

But it's unconscionable that he doesn't even really try to empathize with those who are struggling. Like a lot of you, I understand it personally.

I know how hard it is to be a single dad who has to work with two young sons at home.

I know what it means to bring your aging parent into your home to take care of them in their final years.

I've done both. And it's hard. And it's hard for millions of Americans who are just trying to make ends meet.

In the weeks ahead, I'll be laying out a plan to mobilize American talent and hearts to build a 21st century caregiving and education workforce.

Fourth, we've seen millions of American workers and small business owners put their lives on the line to keep our country going.

We need to treat these folks and their families as essential not just in times of crisis – but *at all times*.

Maybe Donald Trump can look those grocery store workers in the eye and tell them they're not worth \$15 an hour, or spend time with frontline workers and then tell them they shouldn't have the right to organize for better pay, paid leave, benefits, and working conditions.

Maybe he can. But I can't. And *I* won't.

It's not enough to just praise these workers. We need to pay them.

And let's finish the job of Obamacare by ensuring everyone has access to quality affordable health care.

Let's lower the cost of prescription drugs, stop the surprise bills, and provide a public option to cover the millions of Americans without care.

Let's make sure everyone has access to a good education regardless of their zip code.

Let's triple the amount of money we direct to Title 1 schools in America. You've got 18 Title 1 schools here in Scranton and Dunmore. Imagine how big a difference that will make.

I think because of this pandemic, everyone has a renewed appreciation for just how hard our teachers work and how important their job is — let's give them the resources and support they need to both get through this crisis and to empower the next generation of American ground- breakers. Let's pay them.

Finally, we've seen with horrifying clarity the costs of systemic racism in America.

We need a comprehensive agenda for racial equity in this country. This isn't just about

police reform. It's about dealing with the deep wound of systemic racism in this nation.

So, we need a dedicated agenda to close the wealth gap, to expand affordable housing, to invest in Black, Brown, AAPI and Native American entrepreneurs, and to make real the promise of educational opportunity.

For too long the battle for racial equity has divided America – when it should unite us.

Donald Trump cynically claims that he is defending America's heritage by embracing a flag and public monuments to people who tried to permanently rip this nation apart.

Do you think Trump has *any idea* that 360,000 Pennsylvanians fought on the side of the Union to defeat that flag – including more Black soldiers than any other state.

Do you think he has any clue that 33,000 Pennsylvanians died in the Civil War fighting against everything that flag stood for.

I see a different America than Trump.

One that, despite all our flaws and shortcomings and failings, is still after more than two centuries dedicated to equality, liberty, human dignity and justice.

The challenges we face today are among the biggest in our history. We have to come together as a country to solve them – there *is* no other way.

I have long said that America is at its best when we are one people, one nation, One America.

That's the tragedy of Donald Trump being our president today. He is exactly the wrong person to lead us at this moment. He will not bring this country together. He is determined to drive us apart. He will not be a president for all the people. He believes he was elected to represent only his base. He will not appeal to the best in us. He is determined to stoke and revive the worst moments from our past.

I have no illusions about how tough the road ahead is for our country. But I'm optimistic for one reason above all others.

I know the history and the heart of this country.

And given the chance – just a *chance* – ordinary Americans can do extraordinary things. They have never, ever, ever let their country down. And they won't let the country down now.

The only thing that can tear America apart is America itself. So we just need to remember who we are.

This is the United States of America. And there is nothing -- not a single thing – we have ever failed to do. When we've done it together.

Thank you.
