

*Jerry T. Jordan  
President  
Philadelphia Federation of Teachers*

*City Council Committee on Children & Youth  
March 30, 2021*



**PHILADELPHIA**  
*FEDERATION of TEACHERS*



# PHILADELPHIA

## *FEDERATION of TEACHERS*

**Jerry Jordan, President**

**Testimony for City Council Committee on Children and Youth**

**American Rescue Plan**

**March 30, 2021**

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Good evening, I'm Jerry Jordan, President of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers. Thank you Councilmember Gym for hosting this important town hall to hear from the Philadelphia education community regarding our collective priorities and vision for public education.

The School District of Philadelphia is poised to receive more than \$1 Billion dollars in funding from the American Rescue Plan, a sorely needed investment that is part of a \$1.9 Trillion dollar rescue plan to help our nation grapple with the devastation wrought by this unprecedented pandemic.

**We have important decisions ahead of us as a society: are we going to truly invest in our children, in the most vulnerable among us, in our communities, in our futures?** While one billion dollars is a huge opportunity, we cannot lose sight of the fact that well beyond its allocation, we will need to continue to address the systemic racism that has yielded deadly consequences. Our Black and brown students have, for decades, borne the brunt of education cuts and of foolish attempts to privatize public education and deny our young people the educational resources to which they are constitutionally entitled.

**This \$1B investment is not a panacea.** And we cannot use it to allow the District, City, Commonwealth, or the Federal government to shirk their collective responsibility to educate all of our young people. But make no mistake: this funding is a once in a generation opportunity to address some of the pressing issues that have, in some cases, quite literally poisoned school communities.

The Federation is leading a survey regarding the spending under the American Rescue Plan. Like you do, Councilmember Gym, the PFT believes that community and stakeholder input will be absolutely critical in identifying where this funding will have the greatest impact. Our survey identifies a variety of options towards which the education funding under the ARP can be allocated and also asks for open feedback. The survey, as well as a breakdown of the funding under the Rescue Plan, can be found on our website, [pft.org](https://pft.org).

While our survey is ongoing, I can safely say that **amidst a devastating facilities crisis and a devastating gun violence crisis, two of the top priorities emerging are facilities remediation and mental health services.**

First, let me speak to the facilities crisis. For far too long, students and staff have been endangered by simply walking into their school buildings. It's unconscionable, and it's exactly why the PFT started the [Fund Our Facilities Coalition](#), more than 70 organizations strong now, including many members of Council. In January 2021, our coalition reissued our collective demand for facilities funding. For [\\$200 Million](#), the most pressing environmental concerns within more than 225 School District of Philadelphia buildings can be remediated. This will include a host of items, including but not limited to asbestos and lead abatement, mold remediation, window and bathroom upgrades, and very significant ventilation upgrades, which, in light of COVID19 are especially critical.

The PFT believes that a significant portion of the funding will absolutely need to be allocated towards facilities remediation and modernization, **and** that this funding needs to have significant stakeholder oversight. Without oversight mechanisms, and without the Union and public's oversight into the work that takes place, we cannot trust that another debacle like Ben Franklin/SLA will not occur. The systems in place behind the spending of this funding will be critical.

Also, amidst a year of devastating gun violence, one that just this past week took the life of an 11 year old Philadelphia student, our young people need and deserve a full, impactful approach to their mental health and wellbeing.

As such, we need to engage in meaningful dialogue across sectors to address this crisis. We need to have real actionable solutions so that our students, the majority of whom are Black and brown and experiencing poverty, are not shortchanged time and again due to decades of systemic racism.

In the coming weeks, we will be sharing a full report on our survey on spending priorities. **I have attached a number of documents relevant to the Facilities Coalition ask as well as to the American Rescue Plan.** I want to again thank you for holding this important meeting. I look forward to hearing from more of the speakers and learning about their priorities so that we can collectively advocate for what our students need and deserve.

## ***Attachments and References***

*Fund Our Facilities Coalition*

[pft.org/fund-our-facilities](https://pft.org/fund-our-facilities)

*ARP PA Specific Factsheet:*

[tinyurl.com/ARPPAFacts](https://tinyurl.com/ARPPAFacts)

*ARP Federal Overview:*

[tinyurl.com/ARPOverview](https://tinyurl.com/ARPOverview)

*ARP Survey:*

[tinyurl.com/ARPsurveyPFT](https://tinyurl.com/ARPsurveyPFT)

Attachments continue on following pages.



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# The AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN



*Act of 2021*

**THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN** will provide urgently needed relief in the form of \$1.9 trillion to help American families, businesses, students and workers recover from the pandemic.

It will cut child poverty in half, extend a lifeline to the unemployed, help families pay their bills and keep a roof over their heads, help states and local communities save the jobs of the people who provide essential services, and safely reopen schools.

## THE PLAN CONTAINS:



**\$350 billion**  
to state and local governments to help cash-strapped state, local and town operations.  
This money will prevent mass layoffs of public employees, and can be used to provide premium pay to essential workers.



**\$14 billion**  
to speed vaccine distribution.



**Lower health insurance premiums**  
for millions who buy insurance through the Affordable Care Act marketplace.



**\$100 million**  
for emergency assistance for rural housing.



**\$170 billion**  
to help schools and colleges, including:  
**\$126 billion** to public K-12 schools, with funding specifically to address learning loss, and  
**\$40 billion** to higher education institutions, with at least 50 percent required to be allocated to emergency financial aid to students.



**\$49 billion**  
for COVID-19 testing, tracing and research.



**100% subsidies**  
for continuation of job-based health coverage (COBRA) for those who have lost employer-sponsored healthcare.



**Stabilization funding**  
for distressed multiemployer pensions and improvements to single-employer pension plans.



**\$1,400 in direct payments**  
to the vast majority of Americans.



**\$24 billion**  
for Community Health Centers, rural healthcare providers and a public health workforce.



**\$40 billion**  
to stabilize child care and the child care workforce.



**Extension of credits**  
to public sector employers that voluntarily offer emergency paid sick leave and family leave benefits.



**\$300 per week**  
in enhanced unemployment insurance benefits through Sept. 6, 2021.



**\$140 million**  
to support mental health and decrease burnout of healthcare professionals.



**\$7.1 billion**  
in E-Rate funding to expand broadband access.



**Expansion and improvement**  
of the child tax credit and the earned income tax credit.

The American Rescue Plan is a lifeline for millions of Americans and for the country itself. And it is a testament to the power of winning elections. The AFT pushed to go bold, and that's exactly what we got—a recovery plan on the scale needed to enable us to recover from the crises we face. Think about what this one ambitious piece of legislation will do—cut child poverty in half. Every person in this country deserves the freedom to thrive, fueled by opportunity and justice. This plan helps make it possible for Americans to recover from our struggles and thrive.





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## How the American Rescue Plan Helps Pennsylvania

The American Rescue Plan will provide immediate aid to protect the jobs of frontline workers like nurses and EMTs; get our schools reopened safely and quickly; help those hit hardest by the pandemic feed their families, pay their bills and keep a roof over their heads; and ramp up testing and vaccine production and distribution.

### Aid to States, Cities, Towns and Tribes

- The rescue plan will provide more than **\$13.7 billion in state and local aid for Pennsylvania.**

### Help for Schools and Colleges

- **Pennsylvania will receive \$5 billion** in K-12 funding.<sup>1</sup>
- **Pennsylvania's** colleges and universities will receive **\$1.3 billion** to make higher education safe.

### Child Care Relief

- **Pennsylvania** gets \$1.2 billion in desperately needed child care relief funding.<sup>2</sup>

### Help for Pennsylvania Families<sup>3</sup>

- **\$1,400 cash payments to 8.1 million adults and 2.8 million children in Pennsylvania.**
- **Child tax credit expansion.** Increases the maximum credit from \$2,000 to \$3,000 for each child age 6 and older, and \$3,600 for each child under age 6. **This would help 5 million people in Pennsylvania.**
- **Earned income tax credit expansion.** The American Rescue Plan triples the maximum EITC amount. **This will help 743,000 workers in Pennsylvania.**<sup>4</sup>
- **Paid sick and family leave** through credits to employers that offer emergency paid sick and family leave.
- **Enhanced unemployment insurance benefits.** The plan provides \$300 per week in unemployment insurance through Sept. 6, coupled with tax relief for most beneficiaries.

### Help for our Workers, Especially Healthcare and Essential Workers, Recover from COVID-19

- Lowers or eliminates premiums for millions who buy insurance through Affordable Care Act marketplaces.
- **100 percent subsidies** for continuation of job-based health coverage (COBRA) for workers who have lost jobs.
- **\$80 billion for COVID-19** testing and tracing, manufacturing and procurement of personal protective equipment, and vaccine distribution.
- **\$8.5 billion for rural healthcare.**
- **\$4 billion for mental health** and substance use disorder services, treatment and prevention.
- **\$140 million to support the mental health of healthcare professionals** and public safety officers.
- **Hazard pay:** State and local aid can be used to provide "premium pay" to essential workers.

<sup>1</sup> Congressional Research Service, memorandum, "Estimated FY2021 Grants to States and Institutions of Higher Education Under the Education Stabilization Fund Based on the Senate-Passed Substitute to H.R. 1319," March 8, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Center for Law and Social Policy, "Child Care Relief Funding in House-passed ARP," Feb. 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, "Details of House Democrats' Cash Payments and Tax Credit Expansions," Feb. 9, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, "Senate vs House Cash Payments," March 2021.

The American Federation of Teachers is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

Randi Weingarten  
PRESIDENT

Fedrick C. Ingram  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Evelyn DeJesus  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

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# FUND OUR FACILITIES

IS A COALITION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS, LABOR ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS FOCUSED ON ENSURING CRITICAL INVESTMENT IN OUR SCHOOL FACILITIES.

## **We are advocating for a commonsense agenda based on the following:**

- Every child across the Commonwealth has the right to a quality public education in a school that is safe, healthy, and clean.
- For too long, students across the state have suffered from catastrophic disinvestment in their schools, resulting in physical and environmental hazards in their school buildings.
- As leaders in our communities, we have a moral imperative to work in a unified way to ensure that no child is ever again poisoned in their classroom.
- **NEW, January 2021:** As shameful conditions in school facilities have persisted without comprehensive remediation, facilities needs have increased. Additionally, the onset of the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated many of the existing needs within buildings, specifically around air quality and ventilation.

## **New, January 2021: Our Coalition is calling on an immediate investment of \$200 Million to remediate the most pressing environmental concerns within more than 225 School District of Philadelphia buildings.**

- More school cleaning and maintenance staff
- Rodent & pest control; asthma control
- Accelerated & expanded lead paint and asbestos stabilization
- Repair of water leaks
- Electrical & lighting upgrades
- Bathroom upgrades
- Window replacement
- NEW, January 2021: COVID related response and upgrades (including air quality)
- Improved strategic planning, data management, collaboration, and quality control efforts

***This \$200 million will help ensure Philadelphia's schools are safe, healthy, and clean. It does not negate the need for the billions of dollars needed for a longer-term facilities investment plan.***

While this figure is specific to Philadelphia's needs, our Coalition is founded on the principles of equitable access across the state and nation. We are part of a broader nationwide "Fund Our Future" investment agenda for public schools, and we hope that our collective efforts can serve as a model for other cities and states looking for sensible ways to ensure the safety and health of our children.

See Reverse for Coalition Partners | Updated January 2021 | **[pft.org/FOF](https://pft.org/FOF)**





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Darrell L. Clarke, President



REP. DONNA

BULLOCK

195th Legislative District  
Philadelphia County



COUNCILMEMBER AT-LARGE



COUNCIL MEMBER  
ISAIAH THOMAS



MARK  
SQUILLA

CITY COUNCILMAN  
— DISTRICT 1 —

STATE REP 175th  
MARY ISAACSON  
A STRONG PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATIC WOMAN.



PHILLY HEALTHY  
SCHOOLS INITIATIVE



CONGRESSMAN

BRENDAN  
BOYLE

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PARKER  
COUNCILWOMAN  
9TH DISTRICT



MALCOLM  
KENYATTA  
PA STATE REPRESENTATIVE



Senator  
SHARIF STREET  
Representing the 3rd Senatorial District



public  
citizens for  
children + youth



AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION  
FOUNDATION  
Pennsylvania



Councilmember (At-Large)  
HELEN GYM



Katherine  
Gilmore Richardson  
COUNCILMEMBER AT-LARGE



Christine M.  
TARTAGLIONE  
STATE SENATOR  
2nd DISTRICT



THE PITTSBURGH FEDERATION OF TEACHERS



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201ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
MIKE  
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Rep. Danilo Burgos  
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Rep. Amen Brown  
Rep. Carol Hill-Evans  
Rep. Dave Delloso  
Rep. Tina Davis  
Rep. Joe Webster  
Allegheny Labor Federation  
Councilmember Curtis Jones





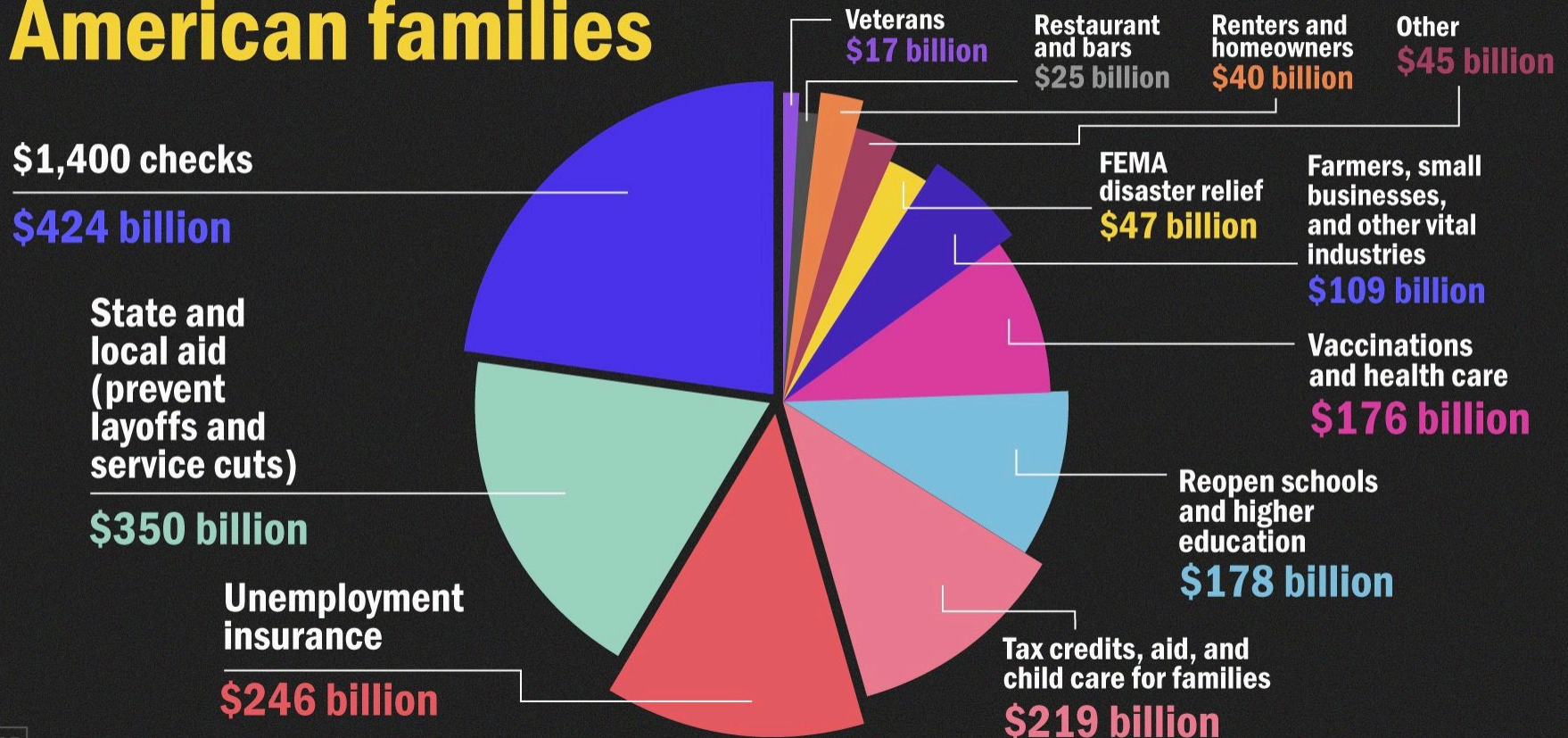
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# How the American Rescue Plan Helps American Families & Funds Our Future



# Who does the American Rescue Plan help?

## American families



Source: Congressional Budget Office, "Estimated Budget Effects of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021" (2021).

# The American Rescue Plan Helps Schools, Students & Educators: \$170 Billion for K-12 and Higher Education

Focus	Amount
K-12 Public Schools	\$122.8
Private School set aside <i>prohibits using the new money to support private school vouchers or other mechanisms for spending public money on private school</i>	\$2.75 billion
Higher Education	\$40 billion
BIA and outlying areas	\$1.7 billion

# The Fine Print: K-12

## The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund

\$122.7 billion, available through Sept. 30, 2023

The American Rescue Plan allocates funds to states/SEAs proportional to Title I grants, which then must distribute at least 90% of funds to school districts/LEAs. Funds to states must be spent within one year of receipt.

- States are required to reserve at least:
  - 5% for activities to address “learning loss,”
  - 1% for evidence-based summer enrichment program, and
  - 1% for “evidence-based comprehensive” afterschool programs.
- School districts must reserve at least 20% to address “learning loss.”
- Remaining funds to school districts are flexible and can be used for:
  - Repairing ventilation systems,
  - Reducing class sizes and implementing social distancing guidelines,
  - Purchasing personal protective equipment, and
  - Hiring support staff to care for students’ health and well-being.
- School districts will be required to create and share plans publicly for returning to in-person instruction within 30 days.



# The Fine Print: K-12

## What Else Is In It?

The American Rescue Plan also includes:

- Additional IDEA funding for FY 21, including grants to states, preschool grants and programs for infants and toddlers. *\$3.03 billion*
- Identifying and providing children & youth experiencing homelessness with wrap-around services and assistance to attend and fully participate in school activities. *\$800 million*
- Funding for the Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools Program for governors to provide services or assistance to non-public schools that enroll a significant percentage of low-income students. *\$2.75 billion*
- Targeted aid for Bureau of Indian Education-operated and funded K-12 schools and Tribal Colleges or Universities. *\$850 million*
- Creates an Emergency Connectivity Fund that benefits rural communities by reimbursing schools and libraries for wi-fi hotspots, modems, routers, devices that combine a modem and router, and connected devices. *\$7.17 billion*

# The Fine Print: K-12 and Higher Ed

## Maintenance of Effort. Maintenance of Equity.

### Maintenance of Effort (MOE):

- States must maintain spending on both K-12 and higher education in FY 2022 and FY 2023 at least at the proportional levels relative to a state's overall spending. The MOE can be waived by the Secretary of Education.

### Maintenance of Equity (States):

- States cannot cut per-pupil spending for “high-need” LEAs at a rate steeper than overall cuts in per-pupil spending across all local education agencies. States cannot fund “highest poverty” LEAs below their FY 2019 funding.

### Maintenance of Equity (School Districts/LEAs):

- LEAs cannot cut per-pupil spending or staffing for any high-poverty school at a rate steeper than overall cuts in per-pupil spending across all schools served by the LEA. Exempts districts serving <1,000 students, operating a single school or serving all students in single grade span in one school or those granted a waiver.

### Maintenance of Equity (Higher Education):

- Makes changes to the federal 90/10 rule, which prohibits for-profit colleges from receiving more than 90% of their revenue from federal aid programs. Regulations would not take effect until January 2023.

# The Bottom Line: K-12

## How American Rescue Plan K-12 Funds Can Be Spent

- Anything already allowed under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and/or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Expenditures that let school districts continue operations and retain existing staff.
- Programs or activities directed for low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth, including community schools.
- Supplies for cleaning school buildings.
- Technology to support remote instruction.
- Mental health services.
- Summer or after-school programs.
- Efforts to address “learning loss.”
- School building upgrades and repairs for reducing COVID transmission, including improving ventilation.

# The Fine Print: Higher Education

\$40 billion, available through Sept. 30, 2023

- The American Rescue Plan provides \$40 billion through existing Higher Education Emergency Relief (HEER) Fund, including funding for:
  - Public and private non-profit institutions *\$36 billion*
  - Historically Black colleges and universities, tribal colleges and minority-serving institutions *\$3 billion*
  - For-profit colleges to provide financial aid grants to students *\$400 million*
  - Institutions with the greatest unmet need related to the pandemic or those not served by the HEER formula *\$200 million*
- Institutions must spend at least 50 percent on emergency financial aid grants provided directly to students.
- Institutions can use remaining funds to replace lost revenue, reimburse for emergency expenses, and more.
- Maintenance of Effort and Maintenance of Equity requirements apply through FY 2023. Changes to the 90/10 rule would take effect January 2023.

# The Fine Print: State & Local Aid

\$350 billion, available through Dec. 31, 2024

- Provides \$350 billion to help states, cities, towns and tribal governments cover increased expenditures, replenish lost revenue and mitigate economic harm from the COVID-19 pandemic. Funds may be used to:
  - Respond to the COVID-19 emergency and address its economic effects, including through aid to households, small businesses, nonprofits, and industries such as tourism and hospitality.
  - Provide government services affected by a revenue reduction resulting from COVID-19.
  - Make investments in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure.
  - Provide "premium pay" to essential workers of up to \$13 per hour, capped at a maximum \$25,000.
- State and local governments *cannot* use the funds towards pensions or to offset revenue resulting from a tax cut enacted since March 3, 2021.
- State and local governments *can* transfer funds to private nonprofit groups, public benefit corporations involved in passenger or cargo transportation, and special-purpose units of state or local governments.

# The Fine Print: Direct Relief for American Families

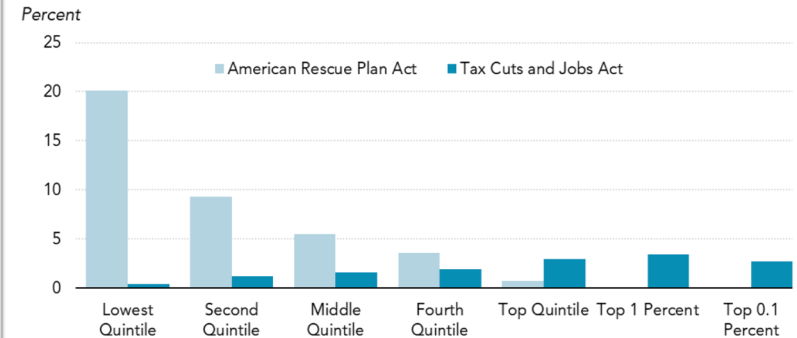
## The American Rescue Plan Helps Hurting Families:

- **Helping those at risk of losing their homes** by extending the moratorium on evictions and foreclosures to Sept 30 and providing legal support and \$5 billion in emergency assistance for the homeless.
- **Helping feed hungry families** by extending SNAP and the Pandemic EBT and other agriculture and nutrition programs.
- **Helping families pay household bills** with:
  - **\$25B for rental assistance**, on top of the \$25B from the Consolidated Appropriations Act
  - **\$5B to assist with water, electricity and utility expenses** through programs like Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- **Helping shore up child care** with:
  - \$15 billion for Child Care Development Block Grants
  - \$24 billion for providers
  - \$35 million for administration costs
  - \$1 billion for Head Start
- **Putting money in people's pockets** with \$1400 stimulus check for most Americans, expanded to include adult dependents and mixed status households.
- **Strengthening services with \$3.88 billion investment for people struggling** with mental health and substance-abuse.
- Helping rural communities with targeted aid for unique rural health, education, agriculture and infrastructure needs.
- **Helping workers with \$1 billion for workforce development.**
- **Directing immediate aid and benefits** for small businesses owners, restaurants and live venues, health care workers, transportation workers, federal employees, veterans, and other hard hit populations.

## Distribution of Federal Tax Change in the American Rescue Plan Act and Tax Cuts and Jobs Act

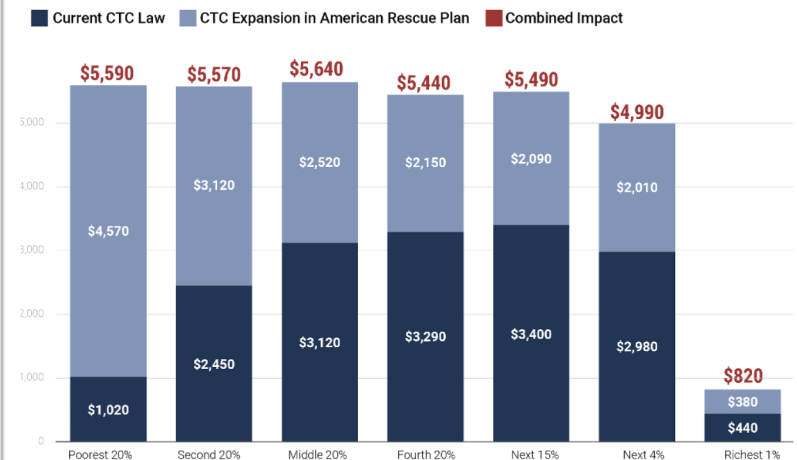


Percent change in after-tax income



Source: Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center Microsimulation Model (versions 0217-1 and 0920-2)

## How the American Rescue Plan Builds upon the Existing Child Tax Credit: Average Benefit by Income Group



Impacts of American Rescue Plan provisions making the Child Tax Credit fully refundable (no dollar cap or earnings limit) and increasing to \$3,000/\$3,600 in 2020 in the United States. (Limited to Taxpayers with Children Under Age 17)

Source: Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy microsimulation model, January 2021

# The Fine Print: Defeating COVID-19

The American Rescue Plan will immediately bolster our national fight against the COVID pandemic. It includes:

- \$7.5 billion for Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control to promote, distribute and monitor vaccines.
- \$1 billion for the CDC for vaccine awareness and engagement activities.
- \$600 million for the Indian Health Service's vaccine-related efforts.
- \$500 million for the Community Facility Program to help rural hospitals and local communities broaden access to COVID-19 vaccines & food assistance.
- \$500 million for the Food and Drug Administration to aid in activities such as development and surveillance of vaccines and therapeutics.
- 100% reimbursement to states for Medicaid recipients to get the vaccine for free.
- \$50 billion to expand COVID-19 testing through efforts such as implementing a national testing strategy for contact tracing, surveillance and mitigation.
- \$500 million for CDC tracking of COVID-19 hot spots and emerging variants.

# The Fine Print: Healthcare, COBRA and Paid Sick & Family Leave

The American Rescue Plan will also help defeat the pandemic by strengthening our healthcare infrastructure and investing in the health and wellbeing of healthcare providers and the nation. It will:

- Lower ACA health insurance premiums for millions of Americans.
- Cover 100% of COBRA subsidies for those who've lost employer-sponsored coverage
- \$140 million to support mental health and wellbeing of healthcare professionals.
- \$24 billion for Community Health Centers, rural healthcare providers and a public health workforce.
- Increase vaccine distribution capacity, provide medical supplies and medical surge capacity, expand access to telehealth, and help to fill the gap for rural healthcare providers.

Unfortunately, this does not make permanent paid sick and family leave benefits created in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020.

- It provides payroll tax credits for employers who voluntarily provide paid leave through the end of September 2021.
- It expands eligibility to state and local governments that provide this benefit.
- It expands the reasons for which reimbursed leave is permitted, such as obtaining a vaccination.



# The Fine Print: Even More Ways to Help the Country

- **Enhanced Worker Protections** *\$200 million*

Additional funding for the Department of Labor to bolster worker protection enforcement activities through the Wage and Hour Division, the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, the Office of the Solicitor, the Mine Safety and Health Administration, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the Office of Inspector General.

- **Community Navigator Program for Underserved Businesses** *\$100 million*

Designated funding for community organizations and community financial institutions with a focus on and experience working in minority, immigrant, and rural communities to serve as community navigators. Navigators help connect small business owners in these communities to critical resources, including small business loans, business licenses, and federal, state and local business assistance programs.

- **Expansion of Paycheck Protection Program Eligibility** *\$7 billion*

PPP loans are now available any 501(c) organization that is exempt from taxation including *not-for-profit labor* and other not-for-profit organizations which are conducted as active businesses and meet the requirements. Eligibility is restricted to unions with fewer than 300 employees and whose lobbying activities amount to less than 15 percent of the total activities. *Other restrictions apply.*

## OUR MISSION

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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