

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr.

Markup of the Build Back Better Act

September 13, 2021

Today we continue this Committee's critical work of revitalizing our economy for the future, lowering costs for American families, and combating the worsening climate crisis.

We will markup our portion of the Build Back Better Act. This transformational legislation is needed now as the American people are facing a public health crisis, a rapidly escalating climate crisis, and long-term economic challenges.

We will begin by taking critical action to combat the worsening climate crisis. There is no time for delay. This summer, the communities of nearly one in three Americans were hit by an extreme weather disaster. Earlier this month, the remnants of Hurricane Ida devastated my state with both severe flooding and tornadoes. Natural disasters cost Americans a record-shattering \$95 billion in damages last year and they are expected to be even higher this year. Bold action is clearly needed – the days of incremental change are long gone.

The Build Back Better Act will create a clean energy future that produces millions of good paying jobs right here at home. The legislation invests \$150 billion in a Clean Electricity Performance Program that will help us meet our climate goals. It invests \$27.5 billion in a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to support the rapid deployment of low- and zero-emission technologies. We also invest in electric vehicles, appliance and building efficiency rebates, electric transmission, and low-income solar.

Also, on the environmental front, we provide \$30 billion in funding to fulfill the President's commitment to replace all lead service lines in drinking water systems, as well as \$10 billion for Superfund cleanups, and \$5 billion for environmental and climate justice block grants.

Turning to health care, we expand access to coverage, make it more affordable, and lower the cost of skyrocketing prescription drugs. The Build Back Better Act gives the federal government the ability to finally negotiate lower drugs costs with drug manufacturers, so Americans are no longer paying three or four times as much for the same drugs as people in other countries.

It also finally closes the Medicaid coverage gap, which will expand coverage to more than four million uninsured Americans. We also provide \$190 billion in funding to allow more seniors and individuals with disabilities to receive the services they need in their homes. And the

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legislation includes a historic expansion of Medicare – adding dental, hearing, and vision benefits for seniors for the first time.

We also make critical investments in public health and preparedness. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that our public health system was not equipped for the full force of a global pandemic. Today, we will provide the critical funding necessary to ensure our nation will be able to address any future public health emergencies head on.

Finally, we will make investments in public safety, broadband, manufacturing, and privacy.

The Build Back Better Act is transformational legislation that invests in the American people, responds to the challenges of our time, and builds back a better future for generations to come.