



Timothy W. Burga
PRESIDENT

Melissa Cropper
SECRETARY-TREASURER

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

March 24, 2021

To: Ohio AFL-CIO Executive Board
CLC and Area Labor Council Principal Officers
Building and Construction Trades Council Principal Officers
Local Union Principal Officers
Constituency Groups
Retiree Chapters

From: Tim Burga, President, Ohio AFL-CIO *TB*

Cc: Melissa Cropper, Secretary-Treasurer, Ohio AFL-CIO

1. On March 11, President Biden signed into law a historic victory for working people. For months, we have demanded that our federal government provide a road map out of the pandemic and the economic crisis. The American Rescue Plan is that road map. For starters, it expands health care for unemployed workers, provides meaningful investment in front-line public services, ensures pension relief for millions of retirees, and it funds the vaccine so that we can end the pandemic. Enclosed, is an expanded summary of the key provisions contained in the American Rescue Plan. Included in this act are fixes for issues Labor has been championing for years, and it was a united labor movement that ultimately pushed this extraordinary bill over the finish line. Now, we must turn our attention to major labor law reform (PRO Act) and a comprehensive infrastructure bill.
2. The campaign to pass the Protect the Right to Organize (PRO) Act is underway. This much-needed labor law reform is fifty years in the making and now is our time to demand it happens. The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed the bi-partisan bill (225-206), with all four of Ohio's Democratic delegation standing with Labor and none of the twelve Republican members supporting us. The action now turns to the U.S. Senate where Sherrod Brown is on our side, but an all-out effort is needed, with Labor speaking as one loud and clear voice to be heard. Our field staff and central labor councils are busy recruiting and writing Letters to the Editors, generating support for local government resolutions, and developing a social media and direct communication strategy for Senator Rob Portman. Heading into April, the campaign will step up efforts with a national Social Media Day of Action on April 8 and a national Week of Action beginning on April 26, including Workers' Memorial Day on April 28, and concluding on May 1 (May Day).

The AFL-CIO PRO Act Toolkit is up and available for your use at go.aflcio.org/proact. This is an excellent one stop site for talking points, sample letters, action items and more. Furthermore, IUPAT has a great website at www.passtheproact.org that we encourage you to check out for additional information on the PRO Act.

www.ohioaflcio.com

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN WHAT'S IN IT?



1. Funds public health: Provides \$48.3 billion for testing, contact tracing and personal protective equipment (PPE); \$7.5 billion for vaccine distribution; \$5.2 billion for procurement of vaccines and supplies; and provides \$10 billion to expand domestic production of PPE, vaccines and medical supplies under the Defense Production Act.

2. Increases workplace safety: Provides \$200 million for pandemic-related worker protection activities at the Labor Department, half of which would go to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to support OSHA enforcement and worker training in high-risk sectors such as meat processing, health care, correctional facilities and agriculture.

3. Provides relief for state, local and tribal governments: Provides \$350 billion in aid to state, local, tribal and territorial governments to help deal with the budgetary impact of the pandemic.

4. Reopens schools safely: Provides \$125 billion in state grants to help local educational authorities reopen K-12 public schools safely, address instruction loss and support students as they recover from the effects of the pandemic. Provides \$39.6 billion to colleges and universities and their students, at least half of which must be spent on emergency financial aid grants.

5. Makes direct payments: Provides \$1,400 in direct payments to individuals making less than \$75,000 and married couples making under \$150,000, and for dependents claimed on federal tax returns.

6. Extends unemployment benefits: Extends pandemic-related unemployment assistance that was set to expire on March 14, including the current \$300 supplement to unemployment benefits, for another six months through Sept. 6. Provides that the first \$10,200 of unemployment benefits received by taxpayers making less than \$150,000 will not be subject to federal taxation.

7. Provides relief for multiemployer pensions: Provides approximately \$86 billion in financial assistance to struggling multiemployer pension plans, which the plans will not have to repay, to cover all benefits due through plan year 2051, with no cuts to accrued benefits.

8. Fully subsidizes COBRA: Subsidizes 100% of health care premiums of COBRA-eligible individuals who lose their job or had reduced hours, who will not have to pay any premiums, for six months. The employer or health plan can claim a refundable tax credit against their Medicare payroll tax liability for the cost of the premiums.

9. Provides payroll support to the airline and aerospace industries: Provides \$15 billion for the wages and benefits of employees of airlines and contractors in the airline industry, on terms similar to airline payroll support in previous legislation: no layoffs or pay cuts through Sept. 30 or whenever the assistance is exhausted, whichever is later, and the continuation of current restrictions on stock buybacks, dividend payments and executive pay. Provides another \$3 billion to create a payroll support program for aviation manufacturers.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN WHAT'S IN IT?

- 10. Boosts transportation:** Provides \$30.4 billion for grants to transit agencies, which can be used for operating expenses, including payroll costs and PPE, and \$1.7 billion for Amtrak in fiscal year 2021, including funding to recall furloughed workers and restore the frequency of long-distance routes.
- 11. Extends the Paycheck Protection Program:** Extends eligibility for the PPP forgivable loan program to more tax-exempt groups, including 501(c)(5) labor organizations. Creates a new \$28.6 billion grant program for restaurants.
- 12. Reduces child poverty:** Expands the child tax credit through 2021, increasing the maximum credit to \$3,600 for each child younger than 6 and \$3,000 for other children, and making the credit fully refundable.
- 13. Expands tax credits for child and dependent care:** Expands the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit to \$4,000 per child or \$8,000 for two or more children, and makes the credit fully refundable. Provides \$39 billion for child care, including \$15 billion in grants to states to help low-income families afford child care and help essential workers regardless of their income, and \$24 billion for state grants to child care providers.
- 14. Funds emergency paid leave for federal workers:** Provides \$570 million to create an Emergency Federal Employee Leave Fund to provide up to 15 weeks of emergency paid leave for civilian employees and postal workers, including those who have COVID-19, who are caring for someone with COVID-19, are looking after children during virtual classes, or are obtaining a COVID-19 vaccine. Provides \$13 million for an Emergency TSA Employee Leave Fund and \$9 million for an Emergency FAA Employee Leave Fund.
- 15. Extends sick, family and medical leave tax credits:** Extends current tax credits through September 2021 and expands eligibility to include state and local governments.
- 16. Extends the employee retention tax credit:** Extends the current tax credit through Dec. 31, 2021, and increases the percentage of wages covered for severely distressed businesses.
- 17. Expands the earned income tax credit:** Expands the earned income tax credit for taxpayers without children for 2021 by increasing both the credit percentage and phaseout thresholds.
- 18. Funds veteran retraining:** Provides \$386 million to create a rapid retraining program for veterans who are unemployed because of the pandemic.
- 19. Provides housing assistance:** Provides \$21.6 billion for emergency rental assistance to prevent evictions and \$10 billion to help homeowners avoid foreclosure; \$5 billion for emergency public housing vouchers; and \$5 billion to address homelessness.
- 20. Extends nutrition assistance:** Extends a 15% increase to monthly benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program through Sept. 30, 2021.

