

House passes Biden's Build Back Better Act

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Sun Correspondent
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President Joe Biden is one step closer to getting his Build Back Better Act passed after the House of Representatives approved it on Nov. 19.

The proposed legislation is designed to provide funding to support working families, increase access to homeownership, and address climate change.

New Mexico Representatives Teresa Leger Fernández, D-N.M. and Melanie Stansbury, D-N.M. held a press conference Nov. 19 to explain how the new bill will help New Mexicans.

The Act includes the extension of the child tax credit for another year. The credit allows most families with children to receive between \$250 and \$300 a month.

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Leger Fernández and Stansbury both showed their support for the tax credit.

“We extended the child tax credit because we could not tell families that the clock struck midnight and we were going to send them back into poverty; and we strengthened the child tax credit to include all children, no matter their immigration status, because our immigrant families are part of our community,” Leger Fernández said.

According to the most recent U.S. Census data, 21.5 percent of New Mexico parents and guardians were forced to quit their jobs to care for a child. That is seven times higher than the national average of 3.2 percent.

Housing is one of the most significant issues facing people in Gallup. Many are unable to buy homes. Leger Fernández explained that the Build Back Better Act also includes \$150 billion specifically for housing. Fifty-billion-dollars of that will be earmarked for building more affordable housing.

The Build Back Better Act also addresses the climate crisis through investing in clean energy as well as expanding electric tax credits, and establishing clean fuel tax credits.

Stansbury explained that the bill provides many provisions to address climate change “across every sector of our society and every community within the United States and our affiliated territories and communities all over the world.”

These sectors include the ones that emit greenhouse gases, like energy, transportation, and electricity.

Stansbury noted that the bill includes funding to upgrade the grid and develop clean energy as well as money for states, Tribes, and local governments to work on plans to transition their energy sectors.

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When asked why Republicans did not support the bill, Leger Fernández said she was unsure what their reasoning was but that it ultimately made her sad that they didn't vote for the legislation.

"It was very sad that we didn't have any Republicans support this [and] that we had so few Republicans support the infrastructure bill as well," she said. "[They] don't want Biden to have any wins, to have accomplishments.

"We need to not govern like that; we need to govern in terms of what do Americans need ...," Leger Fernández concluded.

In total, the Build Back Better Act has a price tag of \$1.7 trillion. The Senate plans to vote on the bill before Christmas, although if any changes are made, it will have to go back to the House.

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