Building America Back Better
Biden's Agenda is Working for the IBEW

How President Biden's actions benefit working families and IBEW members

SIGNING THE LARGEST-EVER ENERGY BILL IN AMERICAN HISTORY

The Biden Administration and Congress have won a historic achievement for IBEW members and their families with the Inflation Reduction Act.

The enormous energy and tax package will put IBEW members to work in family-sustaining jobs for the secure, self-reliant grid of the future.

President Biden signed the bill into law on Aug. 16. President Biden, who spoke at the International Convention in May, is now following through on his promises to support organized labor and strengthen working families with this legislation.

"This historic legislation delivers funding to support lower carbon energy projects that will create new union jobs, lower energy costs and curb the climate crisis, and middle-class Americans will see no increase in taxes," International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said. "Most importantly, it ties prevailing wage and apprenticeship requirements to tax credits for lower carbon energy generation like nuclear, solar and wind. It also puts stiff penalties for violators that choose the low road into law. We've really never seen anything like it when it comes to protecting union workers."

At the White House celebration in September for the law, Boston Local 103 fifth-year apprentice Lovette Jacobs introduced President Biden. Her speech highlighted contrasting campaign promises with the list of accomplishments he has delivered.

"He made it clear that a pension is a promise, and as president, he would do whatever it takes to protect the retirement security of union workers across the nation," Jacobs said at the South Lawn gathering of 5,000 people. "He also promised to be a jobs president by putting blue-collar America to work rebuilding our economy. Two years later, I think we can all agree: promises were made, and promises were kept."

At a September celebration, Boston Local 103 fifth-year apprentice Lovette Jacobs introduces President Biden on the South Lawn of the White House.

Among the highlights of the inflation reduction bill is a tax credit to make it easier for Americans to purchase electric cars. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, transportation is responsible for 27% of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. IBEW members are already building approximately 500,000 new electric vehicle charging stations from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law enacted last year.

Other incentives in the bill will boost traditional forms of energy generation that employ thousands of IBEW members, including nuclear and carbon capture on coal and gas power plants, along with a new tax credit for developing solar and wind energy components.

For instance, nuclear power plants – currently the nation's largest producer of carbon-free energy and a leading employer of IBEW members – will be eligible for an estimated $30 billion in tax credits over the next ten years, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

The law also leans into the construction of electrical transmission lines and the domestic production of transformers and solar panels. It also carries Davis-Bacon prevailing wage law and apprenticeship requirements on tax credits for renewable energy projects like solar and wind, industries that have remained stubbornly anti-union.

Other highlights include:

- Historic investments in **clean energy infrastructure, domestic energy production and domestic manufacturing**
- **Buy America** incentives
- $7,500 **rebates to purchase EVs** for the IBEW-built charging network
- Extends the life of **current nuclear reactors**
- Grants for the construction of **electrical transmission lines**
- Expands commercial **development of carbon capture** utilization and storage
- Development of battery storage, hydrogen production technology
- Accelerates domestic **production of transformers and electrical grid** components
- Invests in disadvantaged **coal-dependent communities** who are too often left behind

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CHALLENGING IBEW MEMBERS TO MEET UNPRECEDENTED EV CHARGING NEEDS

Nearly $5 billion in new electrical vehicle charging systems are on the way, and demand for qualified installers has never been higher. That's why President Lonnie Stephenson has launched the Talent Pipeline Challenge to get at least 10,000 electricians across the U.S. signed up to be credentialed in the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program.

"EVITP has become such a gold standard in our industry that the Biden administration recently made it their preferred program for training the men and women who will be installing and maintaining thousands of EV charging systems across the United States over the next several years," he said.

IBEW is continuing a national push to certify and train members to install EV charging infrastructure.

EVITP is a 20-hour course for journey-level electricians. Members interested in signing up for the training can enroll in EVITP certification through their local JATC or ETA facility. The training program — covering equipment specs, vehicle types, solar and storage integration and more — can be taken in person, online or some combination of the two.

Business managers across the U.S. have been provided links for members to register to receive EVITP credentials. Members must complete the 18-hour course and its two-hour certification test to qualify for the challenge.

What's driving this challenge is the nearly $5 billion made available under President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to help build a national network of 500,000 charging stations located along so-called "Alternative Fuel Corridors" by 2030. Even better for the IBEW, the administration in recent months has indicated a strong preference for EVITP, with the program set to become the only named training standard in new federal rules regarding EV charging station construction.

According to estimates, nearly one out of every five vehicles on U.S. roads by 2030 — about 30 million — is expected to be electric. In addition, gasoline prices have spiked worldwide, helping to drive interest in vehicles that don't need gasoline or diesel for power.

"Getting in early practically guarantees that most of the coming installation and maintenance work will go to the IBEW. By helping the IBEW meet this challenge, you're laying a foundation that will allow us to dominate this new sector," Stephenson said.

Stephenson is calling particularly on business managers in the U.S. to make it a top priority to enroll members in EVITP training. "These next weeks will be make-or-break to honor our commitment to having IBEW professionals ready, willing and able to meet the demands of the EV vehicle charging network buildout," he said.

With more than 12,250 EVITP-credentialed electricians, the IBEW has met the initial challenge, although efforts to enroll members will continue. For more on the Talent Pipeline Challenge, click here.

TACKLING SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTIONS, COMPUTER CHIP SHORTAGES WITH MADE-IN-THE-USA POLICY

Beefing up domestic supply chains while strengthening security and competitiveness is behind the new law incentivizing the production of critical computer chips here in the United States.

President Biden signed the CHIPS and Science Act in July, representing another effort by the president to re-shore the manufacturing of crucial goods produced overseas to the country's economic and security detriment.

Today, the United States only produces 12 percent of the world's microchips, which are fundamental components in many modern technology products affected by pandemic-era supply chain disruptions. Moreover, nearly 75 percent of the chip production is in Asia.

"This is a crucial first step toward bringing industries critical to American commerce and national security back to the United States, where American workers can reap the benefits of the necessary technology," IBEW President Lonnie Stephenson said in a statement.

The Biden administration is seeking to build more domestic semiconductor factories like this IBEW-built GlobalFoundries plant in Malta, N.Y.

The CHIPS bill will provide resources for polysilicon-producing facilities across the United States, including Hemlock Semiconductor near Sagamore, Mich., which President Biden visited virtually in July.

"I'm told that one-third of all the chips in the world use the polysilicon made right here in your factory," Biden said. "Imagine if we had more of these kinds of factories doing some of the most sophisticated manufacturing in the world, employing thousands of workers, including UA plumbers and pipefitters, IBEW electricians, sheet metal workers, ironworkers."

Along with a bipartisan delegation from Congress, President Stephenson and other labor leaders, President Biden traveled to New Albany, Ohio, to tout a new Intel $20 billion semiconductor factory there that will create 7,000 union construction jobs under a project labor agreement. On the Sept. 9 visit, President Biden said:

> [PLAs] ensure major projects are handled by well-trained, well-prepared, highly skilled workers. They resolve disputes ahead of time, ensuring safer work sites, avoiding disruptions and work stoppages that can cause expensive delays down the line.
>
> These agreements make sure construction is top-notch and projects are on time, on task, and on budget.
>
> Back in February, I signed an executive order to make sure federal construction projects use these project labor agreements. It's a big deal that Intel is using one here, and I thank them for that.

Semiconductors are a key component of smartphones, automobiles, advanced medical equipment and other consumer products that have suffered from supply chain problems and global shortages. The new law will make appliances and computers cheaper, create high-paying jobs, and boost American manufacturing.

JOINING UNION MEMBERS TO CELEBRATE THE MULTIEMPLOYER PENSION BILL HE SIGNED

In July, President Biden traveled to Ohio to celebrate the most significant effort to protect multiemployer pensions in 50 years.

The Butch Lewis Act was one of the IBEW's most pressing priorities when President Biden signed it in early 2021. Saving hundreds of plans from insolvency and shoring up the backstop Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, this special assistance program will ensure benefits to multiemployer pension participants through 2051.

"We turned a promise broken into a promise kept," Joe Biden told a crowd of union workers in Cleveland on July 5. Among those in attendance were more than ten members of the IBEW from Cleveland Local 38 and Lorain Local 129.

Before this law, more than 200 multiemployer plans were heading toward insolvency, endangering up to 3 million retirees and their families at no fault of their own. Now, they will receive their full benefits for the next three decades. It also restores harsh benefit cuts that had already hit approximately 80,000 workers and retirees in multiemployer pensions.

Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown sponsored the Butch Lewis Act. "You fought for these pensions, you bargained for these pensions, you gave up raises at the bargaining table every three years for these pensions," Brown said to the union members. "You earned these pensions, period."

HONORING RICHARD TRUMKA WITH THE MEDAL OF FREEDOM

President Biden posthumously honored former AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country's highest civilian honor.

In awarding the medal in July, President Biden said, "No one did more work for American workers than he did. For Rich, his work was synonymous with the word that defined his life: dignity … His work was fierce, always trying to do the right thing for working people … Rich Trumka was the American worker."

Trumka died suddenly on July 5, 2021. He was succeeded by Portland, Ore. Local 125 member Liz Shuler, the first ever IBEW member to serve as AFL-CIO president. She was elected to a four-year term on June 12.

NAMING FORMER AFL-CIO STAFFER AS TOP LABOR ADVISOR

Celeste Drake has been appointed President Biden's top labor advisor. She served as the first-ever made-in-America director at the White House Office of Management and Budget since 2021, where she helped develop and implement domestic policy. Drake was formerly a trade and globalization policy specialist for the AFL-CIO, playing an instrumental role in shaping U.S. trade policy to promote inclusive growth for working American families and the manufacturing sector.

SELECTING IBEW/NECA PARTNERSHIPS AS APPRENTICESHIP AMBASSADORS

St. Louis Local 1 Electrical Connection and Chicago Local 134's Powering Chicago have been chosen as U.S. Department of Labor apprenticeship ambassadors.

Labor-management partnerships between local unions and their respective National Electrical Contractors Association chapters are among 200 entities chosen to share their experiences and collaborate with the DOL to champion apprenticeship opportunities.

A new U.S. Department of Labor initiative is widely promoting the use of registered apprenticeship programs like Portland, Ore. Local 48's.

"Not enough people understand apprenticeships or what unions are all about," said Powering Chicago's executive director Elbert Walters III. "We need to share the story so that more and more people can enjoy the benefits and opportunities of a career in the IBEW."

Secretary Marty Walsh created the DOL apprenticeship initiative to bring together industry, labor, education, equity and workforce leaders to promote registered apprenticeships in high-demand industries.

Both Powering Chicago and the Local Connection work with pre-apprenticeship programs to expand opportunities for those traditionally underrepresented populations in the trades, like women and people of color.

Walters said that Powering Chicago participates in more than 20 pre-apprenticeships, funneling a steady pipeline of individuals into apprenticeships and solid middle-class career opportunities as journey-level inside and outside electricians.

The IBEW and NECA are the largest private sector trainer of electrical workers in the United States, jointly operating nearly 300 registered apprenticeship training centers in the United States. This partnership invests $200 million annually on training at no cost to participants or taxpayers.

SCRAPPING TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S WATERED DOWN APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS

The Department of Labor put the final nail in the coffin of the Trump administration's attempt to allow industries to water down training standards by cheapening the value of the gold-plated labor-management apprenticeship model that has served the IBEW for generations.

Following President Biden's move to rescind the Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Program in the first days of his administration, the DOL has issued its final rule. Effective on Nov. 25, it cemented Biden's initial executive order to rescind IRAPs when he took office early in 2021. The IRAP program would have conferred a journeyman status on training programs with far fewer standards for training and curricula.

The IRAP programs would also be able to pay so-called apprentices minimum wage and require little actual training, effectively substituting poorly paid unskilled workers to pad apprentice ratios and driving down the cost of nonunion bids on construction projects.

"Everyone's safety would be at risk," said IBEW President Lonnie Stephenson. "Our jobs demand meticulous attention to detail and a skill level honed through years of intense classroom and hands-on training. We build schools and hospitals, office towers and sports arenas, highways and bridges and the utility infrastructure that powers North America.

"Imagine working on those projects alongside people who could endanger you, not to mention the risks when those buildings and roads are opened to the public," Stephenson said.

The DOL said registered apprenticeships are “proven to be highly successful for both industry and workers and incorporates valuable quality standards and worker protections. This is consistent with the Administration's priority to expand Registered Apprenticeship because of its success as a pathway to the middle class and ability to connect a diverse workforce to family-supporting jobs.”

IBEW members strongly support high quality registered apprenticeship programs, the gold standard in the electrical construction industry.

It further said the IRAP program does not align with the DOL’s priorities of providing high-quality training emphasizing apprentice safety and welfare. It found justification for the need for IRAPs flawed and the program unnecessarily redundant.

“A skilled workforce is foundational to a strong economy, and RAPs provide a proven avenue by which to deliver much-needed talent development to various industry sectors,” the DOL rule said. “For over 80 years, the Registered Apprenticeship system has been successful in providing the industry with high-quality work-based learning.”

FUELING THE GROWTH OF DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING JOBS

After more than 1.3 million jobs in the manufacturing sector were lost to the depths of the pandemic in 2020, recent data shows manufacturers have added back 1.4 million factory jobs, adding 668,000 additional manufacturing jobs since the Biden administration began.

Biden administration policies intended to promote the growth of domestic manufacturing – like expanding made-in-the-U.S. rules for federal procurement and tax credits for American semiconductors and other factories – are expected to continue the expansion.

“One of the most striking things that we are seeing now,” Brian Deese, director of the White House National Economic Council, told the New York Times, “is the number of companies — U.S. companies and global companies — that are committing to build and expand their manufacturing footprint in the United States, and doing so based on their view that not only did the pandemic highlight the need for more resilience in their supply chains but that the United States is creating a policy environment that makes long term investment here in the United States more attractive.”

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