

The Build Back Better Framework Will Deliver for the U.S. Virgin Islands

President Biden's Build Back Better framework will bring down costs that have held back families in the U.S. Virgin Islands for decades by cutting taxes and making child care, home care, education, health care, and housing more affordable. These investments will provide new learning opportunities for children, help parents and especially working parents make ends meet, and position the economy for stronger growth for years to come. The framework will create good-paying jobs for residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands, combat climate change, give our kids cleaner air and water, and make America the leader in global innovation and 21st century manufacturing.

The Build Back Better framework will:

Deliver the largest investment in child care and early education in history.

- **Provide access to affordable child care.** Child care is a major strain for families in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The lack of affordable options also makes it difficult for parents, and especially mothers, to remain in their jobs, contributing to the gap in workforce participation between mothers and fathers. **The Build Back Better framework will enable the U.S. Virgin Islands to provide access to child care for young children (ages 0-5) from low- and middle-income families, and ensure these families pay no more than 7% of their income on high-quality child care.**
- **Provide universal, high-quality, free preschool for every 3- and 4-year old in America.** Today, only 968 3- and 4-year-olds in the U.S. Virgin Islands have access to publicly-funded preschool. **The Build Back Better framework will enable the U.S. Virgin Islands to expand access to free, high-quality preschool to more 3- and 4-year-olds and increase the quality of preschool for children who are already enrolled.** Parents will be able to send their children to the preschool setting of their choice—from public schools to child care providers to Head Start—leading to lifelong educational benefits, allowing more parents to go back to work, and building a stronger foundation for the U.S. Virgin Islands' future economic competitiveness.

Address the existential threat of climate change.

- **Make the largest effort to combat climate change in American history.** The U.S. Virgin Islands is facing more heat waves, stronger tropical storms and cyclones, sea level rise, and challenges for coral reefs from climate change. **The Build Back Better framework will set the United States on course to meet its climate targets—a 50-52% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 2005 levels by 2030—in a way that creates good-paying union jobs, grows domestic industries, and advances environmental justice.** The framework represents the largest ever single investment in our clean energy economy—across buildings, transportation, industry, electricity, agriculture, and climate smart practices in our lands and waters. And the framework will create a new Civilian Climate Corps that will enlist a diverse generation of residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands in conserving our public lands, bolstering community resilience,

and addressing the changing climate, all while putting good-paying union jobs within reach. In clean energy and in other sectors, the Build Back Better framework will also strengthen domestic manufacturing and supply chains for critical goods, benefiting American businesses, workers, consumers, and communities.

Cut taxes and reduce some of the largest expenses for workers and families.

- **Make education beyond high school more affordable and accessible.** The high cost of a 2- or 4-year degree in the United States is a barrier for many students. **To help unlock the opportunities of an education beyond high school, the Build Back Better framework will increase maximum Pell Grant awards by \$550 for students at public and private non-profit institutions, supporting the 740 students in the U.S. Virgin Islands who rely on Pell.** The framework will also invest in the University of the Virgin Islands and other minority-serving institutions and the students they serve across the country, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs).
- **Train America's workers for the jobs of the future.** Of the world's biggest economies, the United States is second to last in investing in workforce development, and funding for federal job training programs has dropped by almost half since 2001. **The Build Back Better framework invests in training programs that will prepare the U.S. Virgin Islands' workers for high-quality jobs in fast-growing sectors like public health, child care, manufacturing, IT, and clean energy.** Public community colleges in the U.S. Virgin Islands will have the opportunity to benefit from grants to develop and deliver innovative training programs and expand proven ones.
- **Provide nutritious food options for children.** 15% of children across the country live in food insecure households, harming their long-term health and ability to succeed in school. **The Build Back Better framework will ensure that the nutritional needs of the U.S. Virgin Islands' children are met by providing 11,334 students with resources to purchase food over the summer.**
- **Reduce housing costs and expand housing options.** Thousands of renters in the U.S. Virgin Islands are rent burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on rent, while homeownership remains out of reach for many families. **The Build Back Better framework will expand rental assistance for U.S. Virgin Islands renters, while also increasing the supply of high-quality housing through the construction and rehabilitation of over 1 million affordable housing units nationwide.** It will address the capital needs of the entire public housing stock in the United States and it includes one of the largest investments in down payment assistance in history, enabling more first-generation homebuyers to purchase their first home.
- **Increase health care funding under Medicaid.** Health care should be a right, not a privilege, and residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands facing illness should never have to worry about how they are going to pay for treatment. **The Build Back Better framework will expand health care access by increasing the federal Medicaid**

allotment funding for the U.S. Virgin Islands to \$135 million and the federal Medicaid match to 83%. This additional funding will help ensure over 34,000 residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands enrolled in Medicaid continue to have access to high quality and affordable health care.

- **Expand Supplemental Security Income benefits to territories.** President Biden is committed to treating all residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands with dignity and respect. **The Build Back Better framework follows through on that promise by expanding Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits to thousands of low-income senior citizens and disabled citizens in the U.S. Virgin Islands, providing them with monthly checks to help make ends meet.** This is a historic step towards greater equality between territories and states, which all U.S. Virgin Islanders deserve.
- **Cut taxes for families and workers.** The Build Back Better framework will bolster financial security and spur economic growth in the U.S. Virgin Islands by reducing taxes on the middle class and those striving to break into it. The framework will **extend Child Tax Credit (CTC) increases of \$300/month per child under 6 or \$250/month per child ages 6 to 17. This will continue the largest one-year reduction in child poverty in history.** And critically, the agreement includes permanent refundability for the Child Tax Credit, meaning that the neediest families will continue to receive the full Child Tax Credit over the long-run. **The framework will also provide a tax cut of up to \$1,500 in tax cuts for low-wage workers in the U.S. Virgin Islands by extending the American Rescue Plan's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) expansion.**