

We Demand More



October 20, 2021

Hon. Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi
1236 Longworth H.O.B
Washington, DC 20515

Majority Leader of the Senate Charles E. Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear President Biden, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, and Democratic leadership:

The [We Demand More coalition](#) represents tens of millions of America's women and caregivers who must be centered in our country's economic recovery. We write to you on their behalf and on behalf of our communities to demand that our country's leaders address our urgent needs in an effort to truly build back better.

Women and families must not be ignored or shortchanged. The Build Back Better Act must include investments in child care to meet the urgent needs of women and families, make monthly checks to families permanent, include permanent paid family and medical leave, and expand access to health care without abortion restrictions.

As our coalition has highlighted repeatedly, the COVID-19 pandemic has cast a bright light on how the years of sexist and racist neglect of care infrastructure, insufficient paid leave policies, attacks on reproductive rights, and stagnant wages have positioned our country for catastrophe. **As is always the case when our country faces a crisis, the burden falls on the shoulders of women and caregivers, especially Black women, women of color, and Indigenous women.**

Women and caregivers must be centered in the debate about how our country will build back better from the pandemic and right the systemic wrongs that have brought women and families across the country to a crisis point. Women and families need and deserve

robust investments to stop their economic losses and help families and communities grow. In September alone, over 309,000 women left the workforce. In fact, **while men gained 220,000 jobs, women lost 26,000 jobs:**¹ This is unsustainable and risks putting our nation on the path toward economic recession. **Only when women and caregivers thrive, do nations thrive.**

It is reprehensible to see some politicians ignore the hard lessons learned from the pandemic in the service of pandering to monied special interest groups—over the daily needs of our communities. Too many political debates have focused on internal Washington games and not on what will be lost and what harm will be caused by arbitrary, unnecessary cuts to President Biden's Build Back Better agenda. The truth is that every bit of this agenda is essential, popular, and can be paid for by making large corporations and the wealthy finally pay their fair share of taxes. **Republicans' refusal to support these programs, and the attempts by some Democrats to take core investments out of the package, hack away at funding levels for proposed programs, or limit access, are unacceptable.**

Women were the frontline defense, working extra shifts as nurses, custodians, doctors, early learning educators, lab techs, and home caregivers to fight COVID-19. Women worked in fields, factories, and grocery stores to keep food on the tables of all Americans. And women, particularly Black women, Indigenous women, Asian and Pacific Islander women, and Latinx women, came out in droves across the country, organizing their communities in the face of increased, GOP-created barriers to voting, white supremacist violence, and the pandemic, to elect leaders who promised to prioritize our needs. We know that the majority of our elected Democratic leaders, and the majority of the American people, stand with us. We demand that those who are attempting to whittle down the critical programs currently proposed listen to the voices of people around the country and stop the obstruction and cruel cuts.

The We Demand More coalition urges Congress to pass a bill that works for women as hard as women have worked throughout the pandemic.

Therefore, the undersigned organizations, representing tens of millions of women around the country, are **calling on Congress to meet this moment and the needs of the people who put them in power with a robust Build Back Better Act.** Congress must:

- Invest *boldly* in direct spending to build the comprehensive child care and early learning systems that children, families, early learning educators, care providers, employers, and communities need to ensure that our economy can grow and thrive. It must:
 - Guarantee child care assistance to all eligible families;

¹ National Women's Law Center, 2021, *Men Gained 220,000 Jobs in September While Women Lost 26,000*, <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/September-Jobs-Day.pdf>. Accessed 15 Oct. 2021.

- Cap the cost of child care at 7% of a family's income;
- Provide fair compensation to early learning educators; and
- Ensure diverse and adequate child care supply in areas of greatest need, so that families have it when and where they need it.
- Pass permanent paid family and medical leave that would ensure that *all working people* have access to at least 12 weeks of paid leave to bond with a new child, address a personal illness or an illness in their family, or handle needs that arise from a military deployment. An effective and inclusive program would:
 - Include a definition of family that recognizes the diversity of families in America, so that every worker can care for their loved ones; and
 - Provide a progressive wage replacement rate that ensures that all workers, including low-income workers, can afford to use their leave and still meet their family's financial needs.
- Invest in health care access and affordability, and:
 - Make the American Rescue Plan's advance premium tax credit permanent;
 - Address high out-of-pocket costs; and
 - Act to close the coverage gap for those excluded from our health care system, including people with low incomes in the twelve states that have failed to adopt the Medicaid expansion.
- Make the American Rescue Plan's expansion of the child tax credit, earned income tax credit, and child and dependent care tax credit permanent to support children's health and development, help families make ends meet, and lift families out of poverty.
- Ensure that any Build Back Better package is free of abortion restrictions and abortion coverage bans that create more barriers to essential health care.

To support these investments in women, families, and communities, Congress must ensure that big corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes.

There can be no excuses, delays, or additional compromises. Congress must seize this moment and move urgently to pass a bold Build Back Better Act that truly invests in our families and communities—or risk losing the faith and trust of women voters.

About We Demand More

Formed in 2020, We Demand More is a coalition of organizations using our collective power to fight for the courageous women workers and caretakers, especially women of color, who are on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis and who are particularly impacted. Their lives, livelihoods, and families depend on lawmakers and business leaders doing more — and we need everyone to *demand* more. We've formed the We Demand More coalition to fight for four demands from Congress and corporate leaders:

1. Prioritize our health and safety ahead of corporations.
2. Get life-sustaining relief to us NOW.
3. Make state governments strong; they are our lifeline.

4. Stop the attacks on our reproductive health care, including abortion access.

More information on the We Demand More coalition can be found on its website at www.WeDemandMore.org and its letter to Congress can be found [here](#). Below is a full list of the We Demand More coalition's members:

Endorsement is an indication of solidarity within our movement and a recognition of the urgency of these policies. Endorsement does not necessarily mean that orgs have expertise in or are actively working towards each priority or policy listed.

Abortion Access Force
Advocates for Youth
All Women's Progress
All* Above All Action Fund
African American Ministers In Action
American Association of University Women Action Fund
Birth In Color RVA
Black Women's Roundtable
California National Organization for Women
Catholics for Choice
Center for American Progress Fund
Chicago Foundation for Women
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Daily Kos
DemCast USA
End Rape on Campus
Equal Pay Today
Equal Rights Advocates
Feminist Majority
Feminist Women's Health Center
Free Speech For People
Global Justice Center
The Greenlining Institute
Hollaback!
Hopewell Fund
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Mass NOW
Mississippi Black Women's Roundtable
MomsRising Together
NARAL Pro-Choice America
NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland
National Birth Equity Collaborative

National Black Justice Coalition
National Organization for Women
National Organization for Women - Connecticut chapter
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
New American Leaders Action Fund
New Century Trust
New Voices for Reproductive Justice
Paid Leave for All Action
PathWays PA
Period Equity
Planned Parenthood Action Fund
Public Citizen
Resilience
ServeUSA
Sisters Lead Sisters Vote
SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective
Supermajority
Time's Up
Ultraviolet
United State of Women
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
#VOTEPROCHOICE
Voto Latino
Women Employed
Women's Fund of Rhode Island
Women's March