



## REBUILDING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE, COMMUNITIES and FAMILIES

Our nation's infrastructure is literally collapsing around us and austerity budgets have put our communities at risk. We now have an historic opportunity to address these physical and human infrastructure needs, but we will need bold new programs and policies to address problems.

We commute on congested roads with hazardous potholes, over bridges in disrepair, and far too many of us are forced to drink water from leaching lead pipes. At the same time, America cannot afford an infrastructure proposal that becomes a Trojan horse for bad policies, like more tax cuts for the wealthy or profitable corporations, inefficient tax credits, or privatization that profits corporations at the expense of taxpayers. Communities and families were struggling before the COVID-19 crisis wrought havoc on health and daily life. Students and education professionals across the nation learn and work in unsafe facilities without basic resources. Working families lack the resources and support to get back on their feet and thrive in the 21st century.

AFSCME urges Congress to support a real infrastructure plan with investments that improves roads, bridges, transit, schools and water systems. An infrastructure plan should grow our economy, create good jobs, invest in communities, promote public health, and enable workers to have a strong voice on the job. **AFSCME urges Congress to:**

### 1) Repair and Rebuild America's Physical Infrastructure

- Provide the necessary level of investments to rebuild transportation infrastructure: \$530 billion for roads, highways and bridges, and \$105 billion for transit.
- Provide \$130 billion in grants and bonds to help address critical physical and digital infrastructure needs in public schools across the country to ensure students and education staff can safely return to school.
- Provide \$80 billion to the Public Housing Capital Fund to repair and modernize public housing residences, eliminate the national capital backlog, and improve the health and quality of life for seniors, children, disabled and low-income residents.
- Provide \$56 billion to fully fund the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds and increase funding for the School Drinking Water Grant Program.
- Provide \$45 billion to accelerate the adoption of zero-emission transit buses and school buses as an essential aspect of building equitable, sustainable infrastructure.

- Provide \$5 billion for the Build America’s Libraries Fund to support long-term improvements to library facilities.

## **2) Repair and Rebuild America’s Community and Family Infrastructure**

- Provide \$700 billion in critical investments for child care, including fair pay and wages for providers, as well as \$25 billion in critical investments in child care facilities.
- Provide \$400 billion to expand home and community-based services, invest in the home care workforce, and ensure they have a pathway to organize and form unions. A small portion of this funding (\$1 billion in new Medicaid funds and \$2.7 billion in grants) must protect and safeguard the choice for families and individuals to access intensive quality services and treatment at Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (ICFs).
- Provide \$225 billion for a national comprehensive paid family and medical leave program that includes 12 weeks of paid parental, family, personal illness and safe leave and three days of bereavement starting in the first year. In addition, pass the Healthy Families Act (H.R. 2465, S.1195) that would allow workers to accrue up to seven paid sick days.
- Provide \$45 billion for nutrition assistance that includes \$25 billion to expand summer Electronic Benefit Transfers (EBT) and \$17 billion to expand free school meal programs.
- Provide \$40 billion for dislocated worker programs and sector-based training that also includes funding for Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (ES) to help place workers who are seeking jobs that are essential to economic infrastructure with employers.
- Provide \$500 million in federal funding for states to improve their unemployment technology systems.
- Establish an automatic increase in federal Medicaid funds triggered by a rise in unemployment in a state, in order to rebuild our economy back better, stabilize state budgets, and ensure health care coverage for the unemployed.
- Establish a Public Health Infrastructure program to address chronic underfunding of state, local, tribal and territorial public health infrastructure through a sustained, dedicated investment in public health foundational capabilities and workforce.
- Support free college for all at community colleges or public universities.

### **AVOID OUTSOURCING AND PROTECT WORKERS**

The outsourcing of engineering, design, inspection, supervision, and management to corporations and private firms is increasing despite studies showing that outsourcing engineering and similar

functions costs more than doing the work in-house. State transportation departments should conduct cost-benefit studies before outsourcing engineering and similar services on federally funded projects.

Public-Private Partnerships and Private Activity Bonds (PABs) are costly tax subsidies for private companies seeking profits at the taxpayers' expense. **AFSCME believes Congress must support robust federal oversight of any proposed transfers of ownership or operations and oppose any policy that promotes the privatization of public services or infrastructure.**

In addition, AFSCME believes Congress must:

- **Pass the Public Sector Freedom to Negotiate Act** (H.R. 3463, S. 1970 in 2019).
- **Pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act** of 2021 (H.R. 842, S.420).
- **Pass the Safety, Efficiency, and Accountability in Transportation Projects Through Public Inspection Act** (H.R. 1099 in 2019) which would require public employees to perform construction inspection functions in carrying out a design-build project that uses a two-phase contract.
- **Maintain transparent, accountable and sound management of publicly owned infrastructure and assets** and ensure that local jurisdictions are adequately protected from partisan power grabs seeking to strip them of those assets.
- **Limit Private Activity Bonds (PABs) and other forms of tax-exempt financing.** New projects must create good jobs, avoid worker displacement and require worker protections like those associated with federal grants and contracts, and must include: 1) Prevailing wages and benefits for operations and maintenance workers; 2) Federal Transit Act (Section 13c) type protections of the wages, benefits, working conditions, anti-displacement and protection of collective bargaining rights for affected operations and maintenance workers; 3) Davis-Bacon wage and benefit requirements for construction work; and 4) Transfer of worker protection requirements to all future employers for the length of the agreement.

*April 30, 2021*

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*AFSCME's 1.4 million members provide the vital services that make America happen. With members in communities across the nation, serving in hundreds of different occupations — from nurses to corrections officers, child care providers to sanitation workers — AFSCME advocates for fairness in the workplace, excellence in public services and freedom and opportunity for all working families.*