

America

Biden's domestic policy bill

White House 'eyes' new clean energy strategies

WASHINGTON, Oct 26, (AP) - The White House is zeroing in on a package of clean energy strategies for President Joe Biden's big domestic policy bill that officials believe could reach similar greenhouse gas emission reduction goals as an initial proposal that was quashed by opposition from a centrist Democrat.

The Biden administration discussed the proposals Monday at the White House with the leaders of about a dozen environmental and justice groups, according to a senior administration official who requested anonymity to share the plans. A new approach was needed after coal-state Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W. Va., rejected the White House's earlier clean energy plan.

The emerging proposals would expand grants and loans in the agriculture and industrial sectors to help them shift to clean energy providers with fewer greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming, the official said. There would also be new, refundable home improvement tax credits for tapping solar and other renewable energy sources. The official said momentum was building as the group coalesced around the new ideas.

Strategies

The new strategies come as the president and Democrats in Congress are struggling to wrap up talks on Biden's now-scaled-back package of at least \$1.75 trillion in social services and climate change investments before he departs later this week for two global summits overseas.

Vice President Kamala Harris visited the afternoon meeting with the leaders of some of the nation's leading environmental and justice organizations and reiterated the president's commitment to the goals of the package - even as she acknowledged the sometimes grueling process to achieve consensus in the party.

"The president and I and our administration are unwavering in our commitment to these issues. Absolutely unwavering," she said. "But you know, there's an old saying, you don't want to watch sausage being made and you don't want to watch a bill being made."

A cornerstone of Biden's climate change strategy had been a clean energy plan that would have rewarded power providers that use clean sources and penalized those that don't.

But that approach had to be scrapped when Manchin objected. With Republicans fully opposed to Biden's big package, the president needs the support of all Democrats in the 50-50 split Senate, with no votes to spare.

The senior administration official said the administration was not wedded to one clean-energy strategy as a "silver bullet."

Instead, the administration is coalescing around the new package of strategies that the official said could potentially reach the same emission reduction goals without adding new costs to the overall proposed budget.

Plan

A plan backed by Democrats offers tax credits and spending to boost renewable power such as wind and solar and sharply increase the number of electric vehicles. Advocates think the plan, plus executive branch action such as a pending Environmental Protection Agency rule to curb methane emissions, and action by states, should be enough to meet or nearly meet Biden's goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030, compared with 2005 levels.

Biden said at a town hall last week that he expects to spend the \$150 billion that had been targeted for the clean-energy program on climate programs. Advocates say the money would most likely be used as block grants to states to pursue their own emissions cuts.

It's unclear if the new proposals would be acceptable to Manchin, whose home state is a leading producer of coal and natural gas. He has preferred an approach that does not favor one industry over the other as coal begins to be phased out for cleaner energy sources.

The new strategies appear to use more incentives to encourage clean energy use rather than penalties for failing to make the transition, which could help win over Manchin. But climate change advocates have argued that penalties are needed to get industries to more quickly turn to cleaner sources as the world races to confront the dire threats of climate change.

White House rethinks tax strategy

Billionaire tax criticized as Biden pushes for deal

WASHINGTON, Oct 26, (AP) - The Democrats' idea for a new billionaires' tax to help pay for President Joe Biden's social services and climate change plan quickly ran into criticism as too cumbersome with some lawmakers preferring the original plan of simply raising the top tax rates on corporations and the wealthy.

Biden said Monday he's hopeful the talks with Congress can wrap up overall agreement on the package this week. It's tallying at least \$1.75 trillion, and could still be more. Biden said it would be "very, very positive to get it done" before he departs for two overseas global summits.

"That's my hope," the president said before leaving his home state of Delaware for a trip to New Jersey to highlight the child care proposals in the package and a related infrastructure measure. "With the grace of God and the goodwill of the neighbors."

Resolving the revenue side is key as the Democrats scale back what had been a \$3.5 trillion plan, insisting all the new spending will be fully paid for and not pile onto the debt. Biden vows any new taxes would hit only the wealthy, those earning more than \$400,000 a year, or \$450,000 for couples.

The White House had to rethink its tax strategy after one key Democrat, Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., objected to her party's initial proposal to raise tax rates on wealthy Americans by undoing the Trump-era tax cuts on those earning beyond \$400,000. Sinema also opposed lifting the 21% corporate tax rate. With a 50-50 Senate, Biden has no votes to spare in his party.

Instead, to win over Sinema and others, the White House has been floating a new idea of taxing the assets of billionaires and another that would require corporations to pay a 15% minimum tax, regardless of if they show any profits. Those both appear to be gaining traction with another pivotal Democrat, Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., who told reporters he supported new ways to ensure the wealthy to pay their "fair share."

Democrats on the Senate Finance Committee, led by Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, are prepared to roll out the tax revenue plan in a matter of days. It is likely to include other revenue-raising tax measures, including a plan to beef up the IRS to go after tax scofflaws.

"Here's the heart of it: Americans read over the last few months that billionaires were paying little or no taxes for years on end," Wyden said at the Capitol.

The billionaires' tax is being modeled on a 2019 bill from Wyden to treat assets as in-

'Investigation ongoing'
'We've got to run': Idaho mall shooting leaves 2 dead

BOISE, Idaho, Oct 26, (AP) - Cheri Gypin thought something had fallen from the ceiling when she heard several large bangs at the largest shopping mall in Boise, Idaho.

Then Gypin and a friend saw about 60 people, including families pushing strollers, come running at them - with some shouting there was an active shooter at the mall on Monday afternoon.

"My friend was trying to process it," Gypin said. "I just looked at her and said, 'We've got to run.' So we just ran and kept running until we got to the outer perimeter of the parking lot."

Two people were killed and four injured - including an officer - at the Boise Towne Square shopping mall, authorities said. The officer was injured in an exchange of gunfire with the suspect, who was detained and hospitalized in critical condition, police said.

Boise Police Chief Ryan Lee told reporters that the shooting was reported about 1:50 pm and included a report that one person was "shot and down."

When officers arrived, they saw someone who matched the description of the suspect.

Another idea, up to a 3% ultra-rich surtax, has been proposed by Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass.

Under Wyden's emerging plan, the billionaires' tax would hit the wealthiest of Americans, fewer than 1,000 people. It would require those with assets of more than \$1 billion, or three-years consecutive income of \$100 million, to pay taxes on the gains of stocks and other tradeable assets, rather than waiting until holdings are sold.

Tax

A similar billionaire's tax would be applied to non-tradeable assets, including real estate, but it would be deferred with the tax not assessed until the asset was sold.

Overall, the billionaires' tax rate has not been set, but it is expected to be at least the 20% capital gains rate. Democrats have said it could raise \$200 billion in revenue that could help fund Biden's package over 10 years.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell called it a "hare-brained scheme" and warned of revenue drying up during downturns. Some Republicans indicated such a

tax plan could be challenged in court. But key fellow Democrats are also raising concerns, saying the idea of simply undoing the 2017 tax cuts by hiking top rates was more straightforward and transparent.

Under the House's bill from the Ways and Means Committee, the top individual income tax rate would rise from 37% to 39.6%, on those earning more than \$400,000, or \$450,000 for couples. The corporate rate would increase from 21% to 26.5%. The bill also proposed a 3% surtax on wealthier Americans with adjusted income beyond \$5 million a year.

The panel's chairman, Rep. Richard Neal, D-Mass., said he told Wyden in a discussion Monday that the implementation of the senator's proposed billionaire's plan is "a bit more challenging."

Neal suggested that the House's proposal was not off the table despite Sinema's objections. In fact, he said, "our plan looks better every day."

Once Democrats agree to the tax proposals, they can assess how much is funding

available for Biden's overall package to expand health care, child care and other climate change programs.

Democrats were hoping Biden could cite major accomplishments to world leaders later this week. They are also facing an Oct. 31 deadline to pass a related \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package of roads, broadband and other public works before routine federal transportation funds expire.

"We need to get this done," Biden said in remarks at a New Jersey transit center.

After months of start-and-stop negotiations, Biden's overall package is now being eyed as at least \$1.75 trillion. But it could still climb considerably higher, according to a second person who insisted on anonymity to discuss the private talks.

Biden huddled with the conservative West Virginia Democrat Manchin and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer at the president's Delaware home on Sunday as they work on resolving the disputes between centrists and progressives that have stalled the bill.

Officers from the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives were assisting in the investigation.

About a quarter of a mile (0.4 kilometers) away, officers closed part of a road near a busy intersection so they could investigate a second crime scene related to the shooting incident. Officers at the second crime scene declined to answer questions.

Investigators were working to notify the family members of those injured and killed in the shooting, Lee said.

Boise Mayor Lauren McLean asked people and the news media to give the victims and their families privacy as they deal with the trauma of the shooting.

"Countless people found themselves in a situation they never would have or should have expected," McLean said, praising shopkeepers and others for reacting "so quickly to take care of folks that were there. You showed in a tough and chaotic moment how much you care and what you're willing to do to support and care for strangers."

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DHAMAN Signs Agreement with Kuwait Society for the Handicapped to Provide Healthcare Services for People with Disabilities

Health Assurance Hospitals Company (DHAMAN) signed a cooperation agreement with the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped (KSH) to provide primary healthcare services for persons with severe disabilities who reside at the Association.

On this occasion, DHAMAN CEO Mr. Thamer Arab, said that this cooperation agreement represents a partnership that comes in the context of DHAMAN's efforts to provide high-quality healthcare to all segments of society, based on its vision of its holistic societal role and its care for people with special needs as an integral part of society in compliance with the vision of a New Kuwait 2035.

He added that through this agreement, DHAMAN will provide healthcare services at KSH's headquarters, including medical examinations,



reviewing sick cases, periodic visits and dental consultations, providing training programs for nurses working at the Association, as well as organizing awareness lectures with the Association's participation.

He noted that DHAMAN is executing a number of programs for different groups of society to implement its goal of raising healthcare indicators

by encouraging preventive health and increasing awareness of its importance, conditions and requirements, especially that such community efforts are part of the global healthcare standards of Joint Commission International (JCI) being applied by DHAMAN in different fields.

On her part, the Director-General of KSH Dr. Elham Al Hamdan, expressed

appreciation and gratitude for this initiative with DHAMAN, the leading organization in providing healthcare services, which expresses its commitment to its societal responsibility and role. She added that for 50 years, KSH has been providing integrated health care, educational and rehabilitation services for children with disabilities of all nationalities, free of charge, and this agreement

came as a result of our collective commitment to building strong relationships with community partners, and local organizations to share experiences and serve people with disabilities in the best possible way, in light of our mission of providing innovative and accessible care, education, and support to enrich and provide lasting positive change to the lives of the people we serve.

Affirming the Company's leadership role in enabling digital transformation

solutions by stc launches a new offer to support B2B customers under the "Weyak" initiative

solutions by stc, the specialized business arm of Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, announced the launch of a new offer tailored to the SME segment under the umbrella of the "Weyak" initiative to support local businesses.

The Company released a statement indicating that the offer comes as a continuation of the community-based initiative introduced by stc last month under the title "Weyak". The concept behind the initiative aimed to enable the digital transformation journey of local SMEs and start-ups through various supportive offerings.

Serving as the specialized business arm of stc, solutions by stc launched exclusive offers for B2B customers on various connectivity solutions, IT products, and mobility services. The offers fall in line with the Company's vision to expand its offering line by driving the market with new innovative offers that can attract more customers across various industries. solutions by stc mentioned that SMEs can benefit from the exclusive offers by subscribing to the variety of connectivity, mobility, IT, cloud, and cyber solutions, which will surely provide a great start to any business venture. These services will



Exclusive offers for SMEs with weyak Join us now.



serve as a steppingstone into the world of technology by raising productivity levels and enhancing efficiency through e-services, applications, and other solutions that will also contribute to a decrease in business expenses.

Additionally, the Company highlighted that B2B customers participating in



the offer will receive promotions as well as the opportunity to explore the various innovative solutions offered by solutions by stc. Ventures and businesses participating in the offer will have their services promoted through stc's social media platforms, presenting their solutions to a wider potential customer base.

Based on its vital role in supporting the local economy by catering to businesses of all sizes and specializations, solutions by stc considered the most innovative and sustainable digital solutions when launching the "Weyak" initiative. The various offerings aim to accelerate and streamline the digital transformation journey for companies in the local market.

The concept behind the initiative stems from solutions by stc's commitment to back the local economy in the gradual return to normalcy. Through the Company's effort to stand by ventures and businesses owned by nationals, hence the title "Weyak", solutions by stc aims to provide an array of services that address some of the challenges business owners are facing in today's market due to the pandemic.

The offer targets new customers who wish to benefit from the variety of competitively priced bundles offered by the Company such as connectivity, mobility, and cloud solutions as well as cyber security and IT services, with solutions by stc standing as their partner in their journey to success. Through the initiative, the Company will also be providing around the clock support to assist customers in utilizing the full breadth of its offerings. This



will streamline the objective of assisting customers in developing the foundation and means to digitally transform their businesses and operations.

solutions by stc stated that the Company will spare no effort in continuously showcasing the innovative offerings it provides to encourage and support SMEs in enhancing their business model. The Company strives to provide the local market with lucrative services offered by some of the world's largest service providers.

stc launched the community-based initiative, under the slogan "Weyak", with the aim of supporting local ventures overcome the repercussions of the pandemic, by promoting their offerings through stc's social media platforms.

To find out more about solutions by stc, visit www.solutions.com.kw, send an email to business@solutions.com.kw