

Bill

'It's going to be zero. Zero'

# What is the 'price' of massive Biden plan?

WASHINGTON, Sept 26, (AP): What will it cost to enact President Joe Biden's massive expansion of social programs?

Congress has authorized spending up to \$3.5 trillion over a decade, but Biden is prodding Democrats to fully cover the cost of the legislation - by raising taxes on corporations and the wealthy, negotiating the price of prescription drugs and dialing up other sources of federal revenue such as increased IRS funding.



Biden

The idea is that entire package should pay for itself. Defending a bill not yet fully drafted, Democrats are determined to avoid a deficit financed spending spree. They are growing frustrated by the focus on the proposed \$3.5 trillion spending total, arguing far too little attention is being paid to the work they are doing to balance the books. Biden on Friday said he would prefer the price tag described as "zero."

"We pay for everything we spend," Biden said at the White House. "It's going to be zero. Zero."

But the revenue side of the equation is vexing, and it's emerged as a core challenge for Democratic bargainers as they labor to construct one of the largest legislative efforts in a generation. Their success or failure could help determine whether the bulk of Biden's agenda becomes law and can withstand the political attacks to come.

Republicans, lockstep in opposition, aren't waiting for the details. They've trained their focus on the \$3.5 trillion spending ceiling set by Democrats, pillorying that sum as fiscally reckless, misguided, big government at its worst.

Pushing

"The radical left is pushing in all their chips - they want to use this terrible but temporary pandemic as a Trojan horse for permanent socialism," Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said Thursday. "Trillions upon trillions more in government spending when families are already facing inflation."

Part of the problem for Democratic leaders is the lack of a consensus about which programs to fund and for how long. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., acknowledge the price will likely come down and say they have a "menu" of revenue raisers to pay for it. But without certainty on what initiatives will be included, no final decisions can be made.

"This is not about price tag," Pelosi said Thursday. "This is about what's in the bill."

Biden and administration officials stress the plan is as much about fairness as dollars and cents. By taxing the wealthy and corporations, they hope to fund paid family leave and child tax credits that help those reaching for the middle class, all while adopting environmental and economic poli-

cies that help the US compete with China. But the haggling over a final spending target is overshadowing the policy goals they are trying to achieve.

Washington Rep. Pramila Jayapal, a lead negotiator for House progressives, said Friday that reporters should not depict the measure as costing trillions of dollars when the accompanying proposed tax increases would cover the cost.

"I just believe that this is going to be a zero-dollar-bill - that's the No. 1 priority," she said.

Sharon Parrott, president of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal think tank based in Washington, warned Democrats that emphasizing the \$3.5 trillion figure could detract from what they are trying to achieve.

"The debate so far has been overly focused on a single number: the \$3.5 trillion in gross new investments over the next ten years - including both spending increases and tax cuts - that may be included in the package," Parrott wrote in an August blog post. "True fiscal stewardship requires a focus on the net cost of the package and, even more fundamentally, a focus on the merits of the investment and offset proposals themselves."

Conflict

What Biden is really pushing are two goals that can easily come into conflict. He wants to restore the middle class to the epicenter of economic growth, but do so without worsening the national debt or raising taxes on people earning less than \$400,000 a year.

Further complicating things is that many of his spending policies are actually tax cuts for the poor and middle class, which means he is raising taxes for one group in order to cut them for another.

Democrats also have to contend with how the measures are assessed by the Congressional Budget Office, the final arbiter of how the legislation will affect the federal balance sheet.

The Democrats' expanded child credit and dependent care credits, enacted earlier this year, are counted as costs in a CBO score. Biden wants to extend these programs as part of the budget, which he is now arguing amounts to one of the largest middle-class tax cuts in US history.

"It's reducing taxes, not increasing taxes," Biden said Friday.

It's not entirely clear whether Biden's claim of "zero" cost is feasible under the 10-year outlook used by the CBO to assess the economic impacts of legislation. Biden's own budget officials earlier this year estimated that his agenda would increase the national debt by nearly \$1.4 trillion over the decade.

Biden on Friday described the multi-tiered talks with legislators as at a "stalemate." More meetings are expected in coming days.

In the evenly split Senate, key Democratic senators such as West Virginia's Joe Manchin and Arizona's Kyrsten Sinema have qualms about the total spending. Democratic moderates are jockeying for advantage against their liberal counterparts. With time running short, Biden is asking for more patience to get the numbers right so that the votes will follow.

America

**3 dead in train derailment:** At least three people were killed Saturday afternoon when an Amtrak train that runs between Seattle and Chicago derailed in north-central Montana, toppling several cars onto their sides, authorities said.

The westbound Empire Builder train derailed about 4 p.m. near Joplin, a town of about 200, Amtrak spokesman Jason Abrams said in a statement. The accident scene is about 150 miles (241 kilometers) northeast of Helena and about 30 miles (48 kilometers) from the border with Canada.

Liberty County sheriff's dispatcher Starr Tyler told The Associated Press that three people died in the derailment. She did not have more details. Amtrak said in a statement that there were multiple injuries. (AP)

**Police probe fatal fall:** San Diego police are investigating the deaths of a woman and her 2-year-old son Saturday after they fell from the third level of Petco Park, just as thousands of baseball fans were heading inside for a Padres game, the San Diego Union-Tribune reported.

The woman, 40, and the boy were pronounced dead at 4:11 p.m., about 20 minutes after police were alerted to the incident, Lt. Andra Brown told the newspaper. The pair fell from the third level concourse - the equivalent of six stories high - to the sidewalk below on Tony Gwynn Drive, Brown said.

Their names were not released; both lived in San Diego. The mother and child had been at a dining/concession area on the concourse level prior to the fall, Lt. Adam T. Sharki said. The child's father was at the ballpark when the deaths occurred, police reported.

Police told the Union-Tribune it is too early to know whether the fall was accidental or intentional but noted that the victims' deaths "appeared to be suspicious." (AP)

**Sam becomes Category 4:** Far from land, Hurricane Sam strengthened into a Category 4 hurricane in the Atlantic Ocean on Saturday.

No coastal watches or warnings were in effect for Sam, which was about 990 miles (1,595 kilometers) east-southeast of the northern Leeward Islands in the Caribbean Sea on Saturday night. It was moving west-northwest at 8 mph (13 kph).

The U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said Sam had maximum sustained winds of 145 mph (230 kph). Forecasters said Sam could get even stronger Sunday morning with winds of 150 mph (240 kph).

Swells from the storm could cause dangerous rip current conditions off the coast of the Lesser Antilles early next week, officials said.

Meanwhile Teresa, which had been a subtropical storm, faded to a remnant low Saturday, about 150 miles (240 kph) north of Bermuda. (AP)

**Billionaire Scott dies at 90:** Billionaire Walter Scott, the past top executive of Peter Kiewit Sons Inc. construction firm who helped oversee Warren Buffett's conglomerate and donated to various causes, particularly construction projects around Omaha, has died. He was 90.

The Suzanne and Walter Scott Foundation that Scott founded said Scott died Saturday. The foundation did not mention a cause of death.

Scott served as a board member of Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway conglomerate from 1988 until his death, and even invested alongside Berkshire in the company's utility and energy unit. Scott held about 8% of Berkshire Hathaway Energy's stock and 105 Class A Berkshire shares with Buffett's Berkshire holding nearly all the rest.

Scott, who grew up during the Great Depression after being born in Omaha in 1931, spent his entire career working for the Peter Kiewit Sons' Inc. - the Omaha-based construction company, which builds major projects all over the world. (AP)



Scott

Police arrest man in teacher's death

# Rayner defends calling govt 'scum'

LONDON, Sept 26, (AP): The deputy leader of Britain's main opposition party refused Sunday to apologize for calling the governing Conservatives "scum."

Labour Party lawmaker Angela Rayner called members of the government a "bunch of scum - homophobic, racist, misogynistic" during a reception Saturday at the party's annual conference. The comment drew a reprimand from Labour leader Keir Starmer, who said he would not use such language and "will talk to Angela about it later on."

Conservative Party chairman Oliver Dowden said politicians should "make politics better, not drag it into the gutter. Let's see if we get an apology."

But Rayner defended the comments, saying she had used "street language" to convey frustration with Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government.

"Anyone who leaves children hungry during a pandemic and can give billions of pounds to their mates on WhatsApp, I think that was pretty scummy," she told Sky News, referring to controversies over support for poor families and the awarding of government contracts during the pandemic.

Rayner said she would only apologize if Johnson said 'Sorry' for his past comments "that are homophobic, that are racist, that are misogynistic."



UK Parliament, Deputy Labour leader Angela Rayner speaks during Prime Minister's Questions at the House of Commons, London, Wednesday, Sept. 22, 2021. (AP)

Johnson has a long record of offensive comments, including calling Papua New Guineans cannibals and comparing Muslim women who wear face-covering veils to "letter boxes."

The left-of-center Labour Party is holding its annual convention in the English seaside city of Brighton, seeking to chart a way back to power after more than a decade in opposition.

Meanwhile, British police said Sunday they have arrested a man on suspicion of murdering Sabina Nessa, a primary school teacher killed as she walked in a London park.

Company proud to support Kuwait National team for a decade

# Zain supports Jet Ski World Champions for 10th year



**Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its strategic partnership with the Kuwait National Jet Ski team for the tenth year. The team, part of the Kuwait Sea Sport Club, recently left Kuwait to take part in the upcoming second round of the World Jet Ski Championship 2021 to be held in October in Arizona, United States.**

Zain is proud to partner with the World Champions for the past decade as part of its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy. The company wishes the team and staff all the best of luck on their upcoming participation in the training camp of the World Championship to be held in Arizona by the UIM (the international governing body of powerboating). Zain's support of the team for the past ten years comes to affirm its confidence in the talents of Kuwait's youth

in representing the nation in internationally renowned championships.

The National Jet Ski team is authorized by the Kuwait Sea Sport Club to officially represent Kuwait in regional and international Jet Ski championships. The champions won a number of prominent titles during their past participations in the biggest Gulf, Asian, and International competitions.

Some of the team's most prominent accolades include the recent achievement at the Europe Championship (the first round of the World Championship) held last year, where World Champion and title holder Mohammed Borubayy attained the first-place title in the Pro GP category. The team also attained 7 medals (2 golds, 3 silvers, and 2 bronzes) as part of their participation in the World Jet Ski Championship

2019, as well as the IJSBA World Championship 2018 title with total points.

Zain expressed its pride in all National teams that raise the Kuwaiti flag high by achieving top international titles, and it further confirms its commitment towards Kuwaiti champions, which resembles the company's endless confidence of the competencies of the country's athletes and their capabilities in excelling in different fields.

As a leading digital service provider in Kuwait, Zain is constantly looking to identify and support excellence across the sports sector. The company will continue to put Kuwaiti National teams and individual athletes at the forefront of its priorities and pledges to continue motivating them to achieve all the recognition they deserve.

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