

BRIEFING ROOM

Remarks by President Biden on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

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Boston Logan International Airport
Boston, Massachusetts

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THE PRESIDENT: Hello, Boston! (Applause.) Hello, hello, hello! Gov, is it okay if they sit down? Please, have a — take a seat if you have one. I once said that when there were no chairs out there, “Take a seat.” And they said, “There goes Biden again.”

Anyway, thank you. Jenaya, thank you for that introduction.

And I know Marty has a heavy load to carry, but he’s doing a hell of a job for me. Good to see you, Marty, there. Look, he’s making sure projects like the one here — that we’re here to talk about are done with not “labor” — union labor. Union labor. (Applause.)

We’ve got the building trades here with us today: the Laborers, Pipefitters, Ironworkers, Electricians, ~~steel-metal~~ [Sheetmetal] Workers, Painters, Operating Engineers, Sprinkler Fitters. And we also have got Service Workers, Hospitality Workers, Machinists, Mechanics. This is — this is going to — this project won’t get done without you. And when it gets done, it’ll get done the best. (Applause.)

You know, Gov, when I spoke to the National Chamber of Commerce and with the business roundtable, I said, “I’m a union guy.” And I made it clear why. It makes sense. The single-best-trained workers and trades in the world are American union workers. That’s the God’s truth.

And what people don’t realize — and I keep saying it and saying it over and over again, Senator, is that, you know, they have to — they don’t just show up and decide to be an electrician. They

get four or five years of training. Four or five years of training, like going to college; it's like going back to school. They get some pay during that period, but they got to do it.

And so, the reason why I'm always pushing labor and let — unions — union labor — is because, ultimately, it's the cheapest investment you make because it's the longest duration of whatever is done and is being done well.

And — and besides, you know, everyone — my dad used to have an expression, "Everyone is entitled to be treated with dignity." Everybody. And I want to tell you, unions demand they be treated with dignity, and I demand you do that too. So thank you. (Applause.)

Mayor Wu, thank you for the passport into this city. I don't know where you're sitting. I know I just had my picture taken with you. But, Mayor — back there; there you go, Mayor. Thank you very much. I appreciate it. (Applause.) You're a great champion for the working people of Boston. (Applause.)

And, Governor Baker, thank you for your partnership over the years.

I said to the Gov — I hope it doesn't hurt your reputation, Gov — but, you know, what — when I got started, we all used to be like you and I: actually get along, cared for each other, treat each other decently. We may disagree, but just straight up, we got to return to that kind of politics. We got to return that kind. (Applause.)

And I tell you what — what a congressional delegation. Holy God. (Laughter.) I can't do anything without checking in on the delegation. You know what I mean? It's the most powerful and most talented delegation, I think, in the country: Senator Elizabeth Warren and Eddie Markey; you know, Representatives Clark, Lynch, Keating, Moulton, Pressley. You know, and — and, Lori, I think you may be the best of all, based on the kids. (Laughter.)

But at any rate, I just think that — and — and — and, Jake, you know, Auchincloss, is — you've done a good job. And the problem is you're too young. (Laughter.)

I remember Teddy came down to help me the very last event we had when I was running for the United States Senate. True story. And he came down to Delaware, and we had this great big thing in a — an old center they were about to tear down, but it was — it was the largest group we had. It was two days before the election. There were, I don't know, six, seven thousand people assembled at St. Anthony's. And he stood up and he said, "I like Joe Biden a lot. I like him a lot. He'll be a good — he'll be very good in the United States Senate. The

problem is I think he's a little too young." I was 29 at the time. And the Wall Street Journal ran straight story: "Kennedy says Biden too young to be in the Senate." (Laughs.)

Any rate, but Teddy was a great friend.

Along with Jim McGovern and Richie Neal, who you made possible today with your support of the Infrastructure — we wouldn't be here without you guys. We wouldn't. And many more, but wouldn't have gotten this done.

And I want to thank you to the Massachusetts Port Authority. Lisa, thank you very much for welcoming me to the Logan Airport today. (Applause.)

And I'm here to talk about the historic investment we're going to make at Logan and in airports all across the country.

For too long, we've talked about having the best economy in the world. We've talked about asserting American leadership around the world with the best and the safest roads, railroads, ports, airports. But now — now we're finally doing something about it. We're finally getting it done.

We're turning "Infrastructure Week" in — from a punchline that my — that was my predecessor, into an "Infrastructure Decade" on our watch.

Last year, I signed into law a once-in-a-generation investment in our nation's roads, highways, bridges, railroads, ports, airports, water systems, high-speed Internet, et cetera.

It's called the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and it's the most significant — this is a fact — the most significant investment since President Eisenhower's Interstate Highway System. The most significant investment. (Applause.) And your members of Congress got it done.

And Mitch Landrieu, from Louisiana, from New Orleans — he — former mayor — I put him in charge of making sure this investments from this transformative law get to the right places quickly and that they have the right impact. Mitch, as the Mayor of New Orleans, following in the footsteps of his dad, Moon Landrieu — a great man who just recently passed away.

Mitch understands how important this kind of investment is for our cities and our towns across America because he's done it. And — and it matters here at Logan Airport.

In 2019, 42 million people flew through this airport. Before the pandemic, it was the 16th largest [busiest] airport in the United States. And it's more than an airport, it's an economic engine.

In 2019, \$17 billion worth of exports and imports flowed through here. The airport supports 162,000 jobs across the region and hundreds of small businesses, not to mention the 18,000 people who work right here at Logan.

It was first built 100 years ago. It's critical to our economy and to your economy. But it needs a significant upgrade to accommodate the passengers flying in and out from all over the world and to support — and the support of international trade.

Three hundred thousand metric tons of cargo move through this airport annually, most of it shipped internationally. This airport also is part of a system that moves goods and services for key industries in the area, like medical supplies, technology products, and seafood. And, folks, it really matters. And that gets me — it gets us to the terminal we're standing in today.

Terminal E, here at Logan, first opened in 1974. It's the terminal serving international flights.

When it opened in 1974, there were 1.4 million international passengers a year passing through the gates. Today, 50 years later, there's over 5.6 million passengers moving through, four times as many the number that came through initially.

It means crowded gates, longer taxi times, airplanes full of passengers just waiting, all of which is causing congestion and flight delays.

For travelers passing through, it means missed connections, lost baggage, long lines. For businesses, it can mean delayed orders, spoiled products, and very unhappy customers.

The traffic jam of planes taxiing on the runway caused unnecessary air pollution in neighboring communities in East Boston.

It's frustrating. It's inconvenient. And it's bad for the environment. And there's simply no reason for it. This is the United States of America, for God's sake. This is who we are? This is not — this is not what we should be doing. But we're finally going to do something about it.

The Governor and the legislature have moved to try to do as much as they can, but through the Infrastructure Law, we're investing \$62 million here at Logan. It's the largest grant for airport

terminals in the country thus far and one of the largest federal investments ~~in airports~~ [the airport] ever. Ever. (Applause.)

This project is going to create 5,900 jobs — union jobs — where people make a decent salary. (Applause.) It'll go to expanding capacity by adding more gates, baggage claims, ticket counters.

It's going to increase accessibility by adding ramps, rails, elevators, wheel-chair accessible shuttles and buses. A new HVA[C] system and electric-powered gates are going to make it more energy efficient. Less idling time for planes will mean fewer emissions.

We're creating a modern terminal worthy of America's city on the hill.

Folks, because — (applause) — because of the significant decline in revenues and travelers due to the pandemic, this project was going to be scaled back. But thanks to the Infrastructure Law that your members of the House and Senate really got done — they were the engine behind it — we're full steam ahead. We've already have — we — well, we'll have a first-class airport here in very short order.

Folks, America invented modern aviation, but we've allowed our airports to lag behind our competitors. Today — today, not a single, solitary American airport — not one — ranks in the top 25 in the world. The United States of America, not one airport ranks in the top 25 in the world. What in the hell is the matter with us?

It means commerce. It means income. It means security. And we don't even rank in the top 25. Not one single airport.

I remember when I was Vice President, I was flying into New York on Air Force Two. We landed at LaGuardia. And as I got into the terminal, there was an escalator — this is the God's truth — going up to the gates. And it said, quote, "Out of order. Will be fixed in two months." LaGuardia. "Out of order. Will be fixed in two months." With all the international passengers flying through LaGuardia taking a look.

We wonder why — we wonder why folks in China and others think we're a spent economy. "Will be fixed in two months." And I thought to myself, "This is the United States of America."

The good news is LaGuardia is changing, with a multi-billion-dollar investment that's turning it into a world-class airport again, just like you're going to do here.

Just imagine walking in here when the construction is done — a bright, modern terminal. You'll know you're in the 21st century in the greatest country in the world and one of the finest cities in the country.

And we're not only doing this here in Boston. With this new law, across the country we're investing \$25 billion — \$25 billion to modify our airports, from airports serving small towns like Turners Fall Airport in Western Massachusetts to major cities like Boston. It matters.

And, by the way, my administration is also cracking down on the airlines to get passengers fairer treatment.

Last month, if your flight was canceled or delayed, no top airline guaranteed covering your cost of hotels and meals; only guaranteed — one guaranteed free booking, even when the delay or cancellation was the airline's fault. Well, then Secretary Buttigieg, at my request, called them out.

And guess what happened? As of last week, airlines now cover hotels — eight of them; nine [cover] meals; nine rebook for free. (Applause.) And that's progress. And we're going to get more rules in the works to protect airline passengers even further.

Folks, for most of the last century, we led the world in a — by a significant margin because we invested in our people and we invested in our infrastructure. We invested in ourselves. But, along the way, we stopped.

We used to be ranked number one in the world in investment and research and development as part of our GDP. Number one in the world. Now we rank number ~~eight~~ [nine]. China used to be ranked number eight, and now — ~~nine~~ [eight], excuse me — and now they rank number two in the world.

The risk — we risk losing our edge as a nation to China and to the rest of the world. It's catching up.

That stops now with investments like we're celebrating here today.

We've already announced \$2 billion in funding from the Infrastructure Law spread throughout the commonwealth.

We're investing \$190 million in Massachusetts to improve bus service, including \$116 million to replace dirty diesel buses right here in Boston with electric buses.

This will reduce emissions coming out of those buses, lowering air pollution along the bus routes.

We're spending \$20 million in Roxbury to allow for faster and safer commutes by adding protected bus lanes, sidewalks along some of the neighborhood's busiest streets, like Warren Street.

We're investing \$20 million in Lynn to make the community more bus, bicycle, and pedestrian-friendly. We're reducing congestion by undergirding the — the Lynnway, the city's main north-south corridor.

And when you see these big projects in your hometowns — cranes going up, shovels in the ground — I want you to feel the way I feel: pride. Pride in what we can do; pride in what we can do when we come together.

Now, the Infrastructure Law is just one part of the economic plan.

We're working to grow the economy from the bottom up and the middle out. I've never — my family never got much from trickle-down economies. And by the way, when we work from the bottom up and the middle out, the wealthy do very, very well. The poor have a shot, and the middle class, as my dad would say, have a little bit of breathing room. A little bit of breathing room. Building an economy that finally works for working families.

We started with the American Rescue Plan. That's taken us from economic crisis to economic resurgence. Jobs and incomes are up. People are back to work. And that progress has continued in recent months, even as economics around the world — economies around the world have faced challenges, from Delta to Omicron to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

We're seeing hopeful signs of progress on inflation as well. The price of gas, when we said not — what I was doing wouldn't many any difference — well, guess what? It's down \$1.30 since the start of the summer and continues to go down. (Applause.)

Inflation eased in July.

I said last spring that our top economic priority was to bring down inflation without giving up

on all the gains American workers made in the last year. But there's more to do — a lot more to do. The American people should have confidence that we are on the right track, that we're seeing real progress.

We've worked to make sure our economy recovers, to lower costs for families, but we aren't stopping here.

I ran for office to build America, not just to get us back to where we were before the pandemic. So we launched a once-in-a-generation effort to invest in America to come out better than we went in: our infrastructure, our clean energy future, our innovation economy.

I signed the Infrastructure Law that's upgrading this airport and investing in communities around the country.

I signed the Inflation Reduction Act that's going to mean American jobs. And it'll make sure American-led industries are leading the world in building a clean energy future.

I want to pay special tribute to Ed because I — without him, we would've never gotten it passed, because he said, "Let's get what we can." And we got 362 billion — -69 billion dollars. We didn't get the 518 I was looking for. (Applause.)

And, by the way, when you hear your Republican friends or anybody else tell you, "Boy, they're spending a lot of money," guess what? We cut the budget [sic] \$350 billion last year. (Applause.) We cut the deficit — I mean the deficit. We cut the deficit this year by over \$1 trillion this year. (Applause.) Listen, we know how to grow and reduce the burden as well.

Folks, look, I also signed the groundbreaking CHIPS and Science Act that's going to ensure that technologies and jobs of the future are made here in America. It invests billions of dollars in research and development, workforce training, manufacturing incentives to bring the semiconductor manufacturing back to America, where it began. We invented the damn chip — the United States. (Applause.)

I'm serious. Think about it. Think about it. Just think about it. And think about anything that matters to you in terms of your daily life that doesn't require a computer chip. I'm not joking.

The biggest reason for inflation last year was the cost of automobiles, because there weren't the chips available to build the automobiles. That's the reason.

Well, look, the fact is that there's a lot — a lot we can do, a lot we have to do. You know, the fact is that, right now, with this Infrastructure Law, America is really getting on the move again.

Let me close by saying that we're moving, and your life is going to change for the better. You know, as I said, when you think about who we are and describe — like, think about — go back to the way your mother or father would explain to you what America was like 50 years ago. There's no question there wasn't a damn thing we couldn't do if we set our mind to it.

I'm heading from here to the Kennedy Library to talk about the President's Moon launch speech because I'm launching a similar initiative on cancer.

The American people, because of our failure to think big, in my view, have begun to wonder, you know, "Can we really do anything? How much can we do? Are there any things that are significant that America can do better than any other country in the world?"

We have the most qualified workforce in the world.

When I was speaking to the Japanese — excuse me, the South Koreans investing in ships — chips factories here with se- — \$100 billion, I asked, "Why are you investing in America?" He said, "It's the most secure nation in the world, number one. Number two, you have the most advanced workforce in the world. And number three, we can get anywhere in the world from America."

Folks, we got to remember who the hell we are. I'm not — I'm not joking when I say this. We kind of forgot. This is the United States of America. The United States of America. When have you ever heard your parents or grandparents talk about, "Well, maybe we can't do that; maybe we can't get that done"?

Folks, look, we're the United States of America, and investing the money we're investing in this Infrastructure Act, investing the money in the Inflation Reduction Act, we're — this means jobs. Jobs.

I can't think of any time we've ever given the American people an even shot that they haven't stepped up to the ball. I can't think of one single time when America is given an opportunity, they haven't taken advantage of it.

And so, folks, together, I really believe that we're building a better America, not because of Joe Biden, not because the Democrats, and not because — but because of who we are as a people.

We the people.

We are the most unique nation in the history of the world. That's not hyperbole. Every other nation in the world is based on geography, ethnicity, religion. We're the only nation in the world that was organized based on an idea. Not a joke. Think about it. The only one on an idea. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable..." We've never fully lived up to it, but we've never before walked away from it. Never before walked away from it.

It's about time we come back home and remember who the hell we are. Because we the people — we the people can do anything we want to do if we set our minds to it. And, folks, together, we're going to build a better America. (Applause.)

So just remember who we are: We're the United States of America, and there's nothing beyond our capacity. Nothing, nothing, nothing.

God bless you all. And may God protect our troops. Thank you. (Applause.)

12:45 P.M. EDT