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USA

# Biden's State of the Union Turns from Neoliberalism to New Deal Liberalism

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**President Joe Biden's annual presidential state of the union address to both houses of the U.S. Congress, turned away from the neoliberal politics of his Democratic predecessors—at least rhetorically—and back toward the New Deal liberalism of President Franklin Roosevelt. In a surprisingly commanding performance, Biden proclaimed the successes of his first two years in office and laid out a “blue collar blueprint” for the country's future with promises to improve the lives of the country's working-class people. With this, Biden unofficially launched his campaign for reelection.**

Biden reported to Congress that “we have created a record 12 million new jobs, more jobs created in two years than any president has ever created in four years.” That, “Today, COVID no longer controls our lives.” And that “two years ago (a referenced to the January 6, 2021 insurrection at the Capitol) our democracy faced its greatest threat since the Civil War. Today, though bruised, our democracy remains unbowed and unbroken.”

“Unemployment rate at 3.4%, a 50-year low. Near record low unemployment for Black and Hispanic workers,” said Biden. “We've already created 800,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs, the fastest growth in 40 years.”

Biden listed dozens of programs passed during his presidency to improve the economy, deal with climate change, create jobs, protect consumers, and better the lives of veterans, the elderly, students, and children.

At one point, Biden baited the Republicans for proposals to abolish Social Security and Medicaid (which some have) until they shouted “No,” one even shouting “Liar.” Biden then debated them from the podium and ended saying, “Stand up for Seniors.” When the entire Congress was on its feet applauding, he said, “Sp we agree, “We will not cut Social Security. We will not cut Medicare.”

Looking to the future, Biden said, “...I'm so sick and tired of companies breaking the law by preventing workers from organizing. Pass the PRO Act because workers have a right to form a union. And let's guarantee all workers have a living wage.”

Biden called for higher taxes on corporations and the wealthy, many of whom pay little or none. “I'm a capitalist,” said Biden. “But just pay your fair share. Pass my proposal for a billionaire minimum tax.”

Regarding education, he proposed, “providing access to pre-school for 3- and 4-year-olds.” And, “Let's give public school teachers a raise.” He called for reducing student debt and more grants for working-class college students.

Biden introduced his invited guests the parents of Tyre Nichols, the young black man recently beaten to death by police officers, and talked about the need for, “Equal protection under the law; that's the covenant we have with each other in America.”

Turning to questions of gender he said, “Congress must restore the right the Supreme Court took away last year and codify Roe v. Wade to protect every woman's constitutional right to choose. Let's also pass the bipartisan Equality Act to ensure LGBTQ Americans, especially transgender young people, can live with safety and dignity.”

In terms of foreign policy, Biden talked about his success in uniting NATO to defend Ukraine and preparing the

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United States to better compete with China. But he also referred to the shooting down of the Chinese spy balloon—"if China threatens our sovereignty, we will act to protect our country. And we did." One can see an inter-imperialist conflict on the horizon.

Biden's remarkable performance virtually assures his nomination as the Democratic Party candidate for president and the content of his address, speaking directly to the needs of the country's working people, represents a shift to the left in direction for the party. This is not Senator Bernie Sanders' progressive agenda of free education in all public colleges, doubling the minimum wage, government health insurance for all, and one hundred percent renewable energy. And immigrant rights advocates criticized his lack of improvements in the immigration system. Still, Biden's agenda has for the moment taken the wind from the sails of the progressives.

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