

President Biden signs massive climate and health care legislation

Required Annotations		Student-Created Annotations		Summary / Questions / Reflection	
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President Joe Biden signed Democrats' landmark climate change and health care bill into law on August 16, delivering what he has called the "final piece" of his pared-down domestic agenda, as he aims to boost his party's standing with voters less than three months before the midterm elections.

The legislation includes the most substantial federal investment in history to fight climate change — some \$375 billion over the decade — and would cap prescription drug costs at \$2,000 out-of-pocket annually for Medicare recipients. It also would help an estimated 13 million Americans pay for health care insurance by extending **subsidies** provided during the coronavirus pandemic.

The measure is paid for by new taxes on large companies and stepped-up IRS enforcement of wealthy individuals and entities, with additional funds going to reduce the federal deficit.

In a triumphant signing event at the White House, Biden pointed to the law as proof that democracy — no matter how long or messy the process — can still deliver for voters in America as he road-tested a line he will likely repeat later this fall ahead of the midterms: "The American people won, and the special interests lost."

"In this historic moment, Democrats sided with the American people, and every single Republican in the Congress sided with the **special interests** in this vote," Biden said, repeatedly seizing on the contrast between his party and the GOP. "Every single one."

The House on August 12 approved the measure on a party-line 220-207 vote. It passed the Senate days earlier with Vice President Kamala Harris breaking a 50-50 tie in that chamber.

"In normal times, getting these bills done would be a huge achievement," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a Democrat from New York, said during the White House ceremony. "But to do it now, with only 50 Democratic votes in the Senate, over an intransigent Republican minority, is nothing short of amazing."

Biden signed the bill into law during a small ceremony in the State Dining Room of the White House, sandwiched between his return from a six-day beachside vacation in South Carolina and his departure for his home in Wilmington, Delaware. He plans to hold a larger "celebration" for the legislation on September 6 once lawmakers return to Washington.

The signing caps a spurt of legislative productivity for Biden and Congress, who in three months have approved legislation on veterans' benefits, the semiconductor industry and gun checks for young buyers. The president and lawmakers have also responded to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and overwhelmingly supported NATO membership for Sweden and Finland.

With Biden's approval rating lagging, Democrats are hoping that the string of successes will jump-start their chances of maintaining control in Washington in the November midterms. The 79-year-old president aims to restore his own standing with voters as he contemplates a reelection bid.

The White House announced Monday that it was going to deploy Biden and members of his Cabinet on a "Building a Better America Tour" to promote the recent victories. One of Biden's trips will be to Ohio, where he'll view the groundbreaking of a semiconductor plant that will benefit from the recent law to **bolster** production of

such computer chips. He will also stop in Pennsylvania to promote his administration's plan for safer communities, a visit that had been planned the same day he tested positive for COVID-19 last month.

"In the coming weeks, the President will host a Cabinet meeting focused on implementing the Inflation Reduction Act, will travel across the country to highlight how the bill will help the American people, and will host an event to celebrate the enactment of the bill at the White House on September 6th," the White House said in a statement.

Republicans say the legislation's new business taxes will increase prices, worsening the nation's bout with its highest inflation since 1981. Though Democrats have labeled the measure the Inflation Reduction Act, **nonpartisan** analysts say it will have a barely perceptible impact on prices.

Senate Minority Whip John Thune, a Republican from South Dakota, on August 16 continued those same criticisms, although he acknowledged there would be "benefit" through extensions on tax credits for renewable energy projects like solar and wind.

"I think it's too much spending, too much taxing, and in my view wrong priorities, and a super-charged, super-sized IRS that is going to be going after a lot of not just high-income taxpayers but a lot of mid-income taxpayers," said Thune, speaking at a Chamber of Commerce event in Sioux Falls. The administration has disputed that anyone but high earners will face increased tax scrutiny, with Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen directing the tax agency to focus solely on businesses and people earning more than \$400,000 per year for the new audits.

The measure is a slimmed-down version of the more ambitious plan to supercharge environment and social programs that Biden and his party unveiled early last year.

Biden's initial 10-year, \$3.5 trillion proposal also envisioned free prekindergarten, paid family and medical leave, expanded Medicare benefits and eased immigration restrictions. That crashed after centrist Senator Joe Manchin, a Democrat from West Virginia, said it was too costly, using the **leverage** every Democrat has in the evenly divided Senate.

During the signing event, Biden addressed Manchin, who struck the critical deal with Schumer on the package last month, saying, "Joe, I never had a doubt" as the crowd chuckled.

Though the law is considerably smaller than their initial ambitions, Biden and Democrats are hailing the legislation as a once-in-a-generation investment in addressing the long-term effects of climate change, as well as drought in the nation's West.

The bill will direct spending, tax credits and loans to bolster technology like solar panels, consumer efforts to improve home energy efficiency, emission-reducing equipment for coal- and gas-powered power plants, and air pollution controls for farms, ports and low-income communities.

An additional \$64 billion would help 13 million people pay premiums over the next three years for privately bought health insurance under the Affordable Care Act. Medicare would gain the power to negotiate its costs for pharmaceuticals, initially in 2026 for only 10 drugs. Medicare beneficiaries' out-of-pocket prescription costs would be limited to \$2,000 annually starting in 2025, and beginning next year would pay no more than \$35 monthly for insulin, the costly diabetes drug.

Representative Jim Clyburn, a Democrat from South Carolina, a powerful political ally to Biden, noted during the White House ceremony that his late wife, Emily, who

battled diabetes for 3 decades, would be "beyond joy" if she were alive today because of the insulin cap.

"Many seem surprised at your successes," Clyburn told Biden. "I am not. I know you."

1 Read the two details from the article.

The bill will direct spending, tax credits and loans to bolster technology like solar panels, consumer efforts to improve home energy efficiency, emission-reducing equipment for coal- and gas-powered power plants, and air pollution controls for farms, ports and low-income communities. Medicare beneficiaries' out-of-pocket prescription costs would be limited to \$2,000 annually starting in 2025 and beginning next year would pay no more than \$35 monthly for insulin, the costly diabetes drug.

Select the option that BEST explains how these details develop a central idea of the article.

Both details provide information on how health care costs will be reduced for Medicare beneficiaries.

Both details give examples of how the impact of climate change will be reduced in the United States.

Both details contribute to the idea that Republicans are opposed to the bill because they believe it will increase inflation.

Correct Answer

Both details provide information on the two key points of the Inflation Reduction Act and how Democrats believe it will help the nation.

Read the summary of the article.

President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act into law on Tuesday during a ceremony at the White House. The bill, aimed at fighting climate change and reducing healthcare costs for millions of Americans, is a scaled-back version of the original and passed through Congress along party lines. Paid for by new taxes on large companies and increased IRS enforcement on the wealthy, Democrats hope the bill will serve as a catalyst to maintaining control of the government through November's midterm elections. Republicans fear the bill will worsen inflation and raised concerns over expansion of the IRS and the increase in taxes for people and businesses making over \$400,000 per year.

Is this an objective and accurate summary? How do you know?

Yes, it summarizes the main points of the article without subjective judgment.

Yes, it emphasizes the importance of tax increases in the Inflation Reduction Act.

No, it contains the main idea of the article but is subjectively written with outside opinions.

No, it gets factual information wrong about the bill being passed along party lines.

Read the sentence from the article.

President Joe Biden signed Democrats' landmark climate change and health care bill into law on Tuesday, delivering what he has called the "final piece" of his pared-down domestic agenda, as he aims to boost his party's standing with voters less than three months before the midterm elections.

Which sentence BEST emphasizes what the author means by "pared-down"?

The signing caps a spurt of legislative productivity for Biden and Congress, who in three months have approved legislation on veterans' benefits, the semiconductor industry and gun checks for young buyers.

One of Biden's trips will be to Ohio, where he'll view the groundbreaking of a semiconductor plant that will benefit from the recent law to bolster production of such computer chips

Republicans say the legislation's new business taxes will increase prices, worsening the nation's bout with its highest inflation since 1981.

Though the law is considerably smaller than their initial ambitions, Biden and Democrats are hailing the legislation as a once-in-a-generation investment in addressing the long-term effects of climate change, as well as drought in the nation's West.

Read the sentence.

That crashed after centrist Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., said it was too costly, using the leverage every Democrat has in the evenly divided Senate.

What does the verb "crashed" convey in the sentence?

the idea that Sen. Manchin was involved in a collision

the sense that passing the bill was an emergency to Sen. Manchin

the idea that the passage of the original bill was suddenly halted by Sen. Manchin

the sense that Sen. Manchin wished to slow the passage of the bill
