

# Protect of Care: Mayors From Milwaukee and St. Petersburg, teacher, small business owner highlight benefits of American Rescue Plan for American families

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WASHINGTON, DC — [On a call](#) this afternoon with Protect Our Care's Coronavirus War Room, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and St. Petersburg Florida Mayor Rick Kriseman marked the anniversary of the Coronavirus pandemic shutdown by highlighting the [overwhelming](#) benefits of President Biden's landmark American Rescue Plan that will get relief to millions of Americans.

They were joined by Cindy Soule, a 4th grade teacher from Maine and Jessie Green, a small business owner from Pennsylvania who discussed how the American Rescue Plan will provide direct relief and health care benefits for essential workers and small business owners like themselves.

"President Biden and Michigan's Congressional Democrats have delivered critical aid to the people of Michigan and Americans nationwide with this investment in our families, communities, small businesses, and children," **said Governor Gretchen Whitmer.** "This bold bill will, among several other pieces, send \$1,400 stimulus checks to 90% of households, extend \$300 weekly unemployment benefits through September 6th, expand the Earned Income Tax Credit for working families, vastly increase the child tax credit, and offer much needed support for America's small and mid-sized businesses, including a dedicated restaurant relief fund."

"I've been involved in public life for over thirty years, and this is the most significant piece of legislation that I have seen pass Congress in the last generation," **Mayor Tom Barrett said.** "Fortunately, we now have a Federal government that has responded to the needs of the people who have been affected in a negative way by this pandemic."

"It is comforting to have a leader in Joe Biden who recognizes the pain this pandemic has inflicted on everyday Americans, essential workers, Main Street, and local governments," **said St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman.** "Mayors like me are especially appreciative of a plan that

not only helps to restart our economy, but helps to protect our people from this deadly virus by speeding up vaccine distribution.”

“While it is amazing and beautiful that our communities have come together and demonstrated unprecedented humanity during the pandemic, the inequity that existed pre-pandemic for our most vulnerable community members, including students of color, English language learners, and students with special needs, was exacerbated,” **said Cindy Soule, a 4th grade teacher with the Portland Public Schools.** “At the Portland Public Schools, Maine’s largest and most diverse school district, the ARP will provide necessary critical support to aid us as we work to benefit all students and advance equity through learning recovery and a full transition back to in-person learning.”

“My husband and I are self-employed, and that means we’ve relied on the Affordable Care Act for our health care coverage since the program was launched,” **said Jessie Green of Lebanon, Pennsylvania.** “We do not qualify for subsidies, so the new cap on premiums at 8.5% of income that is part of the American Rescue Plan will go a long way in making our health care coverage more affordable.”

#### **American Rescue Plan Background:**

The ARP is a [wildly popular](#) relief plan that will [provide](#) critical public health funding to fight the virus along with financial support for the American people. The measures in the bill [include](#):

- Boosting direct stimulus payments to \$2,000; extending the \$300 weekly federal unemployment benefit until September 6th and providing a tax break on \$10,000 in unemployment benefits; providing paid leave to American families;
- \$137 billion for investing in vaccines and their distribution, establishing community vaccination clinics, investing in testing and sequencing, expanding the public health workforce, investing in the Disaster Relief Fund and shoring up domestic supplies;
- Providing \$30 billion in housing assistance including rental assistance for struggling families and helps individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless; extending a federal moratorium on evictions;
- Allocating \$170 billion to K-12 schools and institutions of higher education to facilitate the safe reopening of schools and avoid lay-offs; providing \$40 billion to child care providers;
- \$105 billion to expand health care access including increasing and expanding ACA subsidies and subsidizing COBRA coverage through September;
- \$143 billion in progressive tax breaks including increasing the child tax credit and the earned income tax credit;
- Providing \$350 billion in funding for states and local governments, and supporting businesses and essential workers on the front lines;
- \$25 billion to provide grants to restaurants and bars that lost revenue due to the coronavirus;
- Creating a \$10 billion infrastructure program to help local governments.

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