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Inside C2

Monday, August 15 2022

U.S. House gives Biden a win with massive bill on climate change, drug prices

WASHINGTON, Aug 12 (Reuters) - The Democratic-led U.S. House of Representatives approved a \$430 billion bill on Friday that is seen as the biggest climate package in U.S. history, delivering a major legislative victory for President Joe Biden ahead of the Nov. 8 midterm elections.

The legislation to fight climate change and lower prescription drug prices aims to cut domestic greenhouse gas emissions. It will also allow Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices for the elderly and ensure that corporations and the wealthy pay the taxes they owe. Democrats say it will help combat inflation by reducing the federal deficit.

The House voted 220-207 along party lines to pass the measure titled the "Inflation Reduction Act" and send it on to Biden to sign into law. The Senate approved the legislation on Sunday after a marathon, 27-hour session. read more

Democrats hope the legislation will help them at the polls in November, when voters decide the balance of power in Congress ahead of the 2024 presidential election. Republicans are favored to win a majority in the House and could also take control of the Senate.

"It is a resounding victory for America's families," Pelosi declared just before the vote, describing the legislation as "a robust cost-cutting package that meets the moment, ensuring that our families thrive and that our planet survives."

Biden plans to travel across the country to tout the bill along with a series of other legislative victories at a time when many voters have soured on him amid soaring inflation. read more

About half of Americans support the climate and drug pricing legislation, including 69% of Democrats and 34% of Republicans, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted on Aug. 3 and 4. read more

Business groups have had a mixed reaction to the legislation, which offers the prospect of higher tax bills for some companies while at the same time giving protections to the fossil fuel industry.

Republicans oppose the legislation, warning it will kill jobs by raising corporate tax bills, further fuel inflation with government spending and inhibit the development of new drugs.

"Democrats more than any other majority in history are addicted to spending other people's money, regardless of what we as a country can afford," House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy said in a floor speech.

The bill has been more than 18 months in the making. It represents a final version of Biden's



original sweeping Build Back Better plan, which had to be whittled down in the face of opposition from Republicans and key legislators from his own party.

The fossil fuel protections disappointed progressives but posed no barrier to Democratic support.

Investors looking to pour cash into clean energy prod-



ucts can expect at least a decade of federal subsidies through long-term tax credits for wind and solar and new credits for energy storage, biogas and hydrogen. Developers who use U.S.-made equipment or build in poorer areas will have additional support. read more

But the bill does not leave the U.S. fossil fuels industry out in the cold. Some provisions allow the federal government to authorize new wind and solar energy developments on federal land only when it is also auctioning rights to drill for oil and natural gas.

"We don't support the expansion of fossil fuel leasing," said Representative Pramila Jayapal, who heads the Congressional Progressive Caucus. "But critically ... independent analyses show that their impact will be far outweighed by the bill's carbon pollution cuts."

A \$7,500 tax credit to encourage U.S. consumers to buy electric vehicles could not be used for most EV models on the market, according to major automakers, who warn that the legislation will put achieving U.S. EV adoption targets for 2030 in jeopardy.

To be eligible for the credit, vehicles must be assembled in North America, which would make some current EVs ineligible

as soon as the bill takes effect. read more

The bill's main revenue source is a 15% corporate minimum tax aimed at stopping large, profitable companies from gaming the Internal Revenue Service code to slash their tax bills to zero.





LOCAL NEWS

China to use effective investment, not flood-like stimulus, to boost economy, state media report

BEIJING, July 29 (Reuters) - China will use effective investment to help the economy recover and will not resort to flood-like stimulus, state media said on Friday, following a cabinet meeting chaired by Premier Li Keqiang.

The world's second-largest economy narrowly avoided contraction in the second quarter due to widespread pandemic lockdowns. Analysts said Beijing's full-year growth target of around 5.5% had been looking increasingly unattainable under Beijing's strict zero-COVID policy.

To spur demand, China urged local governments to speed up the use of special bonds for infrastructure that are mature and profitable, but such bonds should not be used for land reserves or to make up the gap between local fiscal revenue and expenditure, state media said.

To spur consumption, China will extend an exemption on purchase tax on "new energy" vehicles, following a cut to the car purchase tax.

China "will promote consumption to be the major economic driver continuously," state media reported.

As shoppers tighten their belts, policymakers have found it harder to revive retail consumption this year – a sector that contributes more than half to the economy and a major source of employment.

In the first half of this year, retail sales dropped 0.7% from a year earlier as many consumers were confined at home amid strict anti-virus measures.

The economy is in the "critical window" of stabilisation and recovery, and the third quarter is "vital", according to a Wednesday meeting of the country's top economic planner.

"(We should) seize the time window of the peak season for construction in the third quarter, improve work efficiency" and "help create jobs for local people nearby as much as possible," said a Friday statement of the meeting by the National Development and Reform Commission.



Customers dine at a restaurant in a shopping area in Beijing, China July 25, 2022. REU-TERS/Tingshu Wang/File Photo





Editor's Choice



Teachers, health workers, retirees and public employees march in protest against the government of Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro, in Caracas, Venezuela. REUTERS/Leonardo Fernandez Viloria



A dead fish lies on the bank of Oder River on the German-Polish border, in Brieskow-Finkenheerd, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany. REUTERS/Annegret Hilse



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz sits in a car on the day of a summer news conference in Berlin, Germany. REUTERS/Christian Mang



General view during the warm up before the Men's Park Qualification at the European Championships. REUTERS/Michaela Rehle



An EMS responder carries 10 year old migrant Ashely, from Honduras, to an ambulance after she suffered a seizure at a staging area for asylum seeking migrants who crossed into the United States from Mexico during a heat wave, in Roma, Texas. REU-TERS/Adrees Latif



A woman using an umbrella takes photographs of a road that was flooded after torrential rain, at a traditional market in Seoul, South Korea. REUTERS/Kim Hong-Ji

Southern Make Today Different

Covid-19 Public Health Emergency Has Been Extended In The U.S.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



Last Friday the Biden administration extended the Covid-19 public health emergency for another three months. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra officially renewed the declaration, extending it through October 13, 2022. The emergency declaration has been in place since January 2020, and the latest renewal comes as the Omicron offshoot BA.5, the most contagious variant yet, continues to stake its claim in the US. Daily case rates, though vastly undercounted, are the highest they've been in months, as are Covid-19 hospitalizations and deaths.

Data published this week by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that more than half of the country's population lives in a county with a "high Covid-19 Community Level," where the health care system is at risk of becoming overburdened and universal indoor masking is recommended.

"The Public Health Emergency declaration continues to provide us with tools and authorities needed to respond to the highly transmissible COVID-19 subvariants that are currently circulating around the country," a Biden administration official told CNN. "The PHE provides essential capabilities and flexibilities to hospitals to better care for patients, particularly if we were to see a significant increase in hospitalizations in the coming weeks."

Indeed, ensemble forecasts from the CDC published this week do predict that hospitalizations in the US will rise over the next month. It's the first time in weeks that the forecasts have predicted an increase in hospitalizations, instead of a stable outlook



Without the PHE in place, we would be limited in our ability to provide broad and equitable access to life-

saving treatments through our Test to Treat initiative, for example, which relies on flexibility for telehealth and operations," the official said. "Not renewing the PHE would leave us with fewer tools to respond and mean more Americans would get severely ill and end up in the hospital."

The public health emergency declaration allows many Americans to obtain free Covid-19 testing, therapeutic treatment and vaccines. Once it ends, people could face out-of-pocket costs depending on whether they

are covered by Medicare, Medicaid or private insurance. But vaccinations would generally continue to be free for those covered by Medicare and private insurance, while state Medicaid programs would determine whether to continue covering vaccinations for their

Also, Medicare has relaxed the rules governing telehealth so that many more beneficiaries can access such services during the declaration. Telehealth services are no longer limited just to those living in rural areas, and enrollees can conduct visits at home, rather than having to travel to a health care facility, and they receive a wider array of services via telehealth. These flexibilities will end for most beneficiaries after the emergency



rolling residents from Medicaid during the declaration, in exchange for receiving more generous federal matching funds. As many as 14 million people could lose Medicaid coverage after the emergency ends, according to separate projections by Kaiser and the Urban Institute.

Plus, many low-income families are receiving en-

hanced food stamp benefits thanks to the declaration,

though some states have ended their own public health emergencies and stopped the beefed-up allotments. A senarate emergency declaration allows for the emergency use authorization of testing, treatments and vaccines. Its end date will be determined by the secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services. Its end date will be determined by HHS, and the agency has committed to provide at least 60-day notice before any change. (Courtesy cnn.com)

Related Bill Gates Hopes World Leaders Will Fund A Global Health Team To Prevent The Next **Pandemic**

Bill Gates wants world leaders to create a Global Epidemic Response and Mobilization team — or GERM, for short, to help prevent future pandemics. In a video interview from the Kirkland offices of his private investment firm, he said that for an estimated \$1 billion a year, with the U.S. likely chipping in \$250 million, the team would be "the best bargain you'll





Bill Gates envisions a global health team to prevent the next pandemic.

BUSINESS

"More Americans died in [the pandemic] than Americans died in all the wars put together," Gates said. "This thing was, you know, superbad." Compared to the cost of addressing climate change or opioid abuse, for example, "the sums involved here are actually pretty modest.'

Gates' proposed team is a key idea in his book. "How to Prevent the Next Pandemic," which was published in May with the intention of prompting debate - not just about GERM, but also about improving testing, speeding vaccine and treatment development, and shoring up health systems worldwide

Yet Gates — whose fortune and foundation, cochaired with ex-wife Melinda French Gates, give him an outsized influence on public health - said discussion about the team "has started out a little bit slower than I expected."

Pandemic prevention is "not a huge topic in the Congress, or even in the executive branch, right at the moment," he said. Related

COVID-19: Highlights Of The Coronavirus Pandemic This Week



1. How COVID-19 is affecting the globe

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 have passed 549.1 million globally, according to Johns Hopkins University. The number of confirmed deaths has now passed 6.33 million. More than 12.09 billion vaccination doses have been administered globally, according to Our World in Data. The US Food and Drug Administration has recommended that COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers change the design of their booster shots to tackle the currently dominant Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 COVID-19 subvariants.

Pfizer is seeking full US approval for its oral COVID-19 antiviral treatment, which is currently under emergency use authorization. It comes as Pfizer and BioNTech announced that they've signed a new \$3.2 billion deal with the US government for 105 million doses of their COVID-19 vaccine.

Russia is ending all COVID-19 restrictions, it said on 1 July. However, it did not rule out re-introducing measures if required.

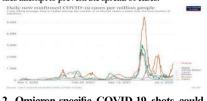


COVID-related travel advice for China, India and 32 other countries, changing it from "do not make non-urgent

trips" to "travel with caution". A fresh wave of COVID-19 cases in France should

peak towards the end of July, according to the government's top scientific advisor. Bhutan will reopen to international tourists in September for the first time since the start of the pandemic. Spain expects tourist arrivals to hit 90% of pre-pandemic levels this summer.

Macau SAR, China, has begun a new round of COVID-19 testing for its 600,000 residents, as authorities attempt to prevent the spread of cases.



2. Omicron-specific COVID-19 shots could increase protection

Omicron-specific COVID-19 vaccines can improve protection when used as a booster, global health regulators say. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) says that regulators have agreed on key principles for updating COVID-19 shots to respond to new variants. While the existing coronavirus vaccines continue to provide good protection against hospitalization and death, the regulators say, vaccine effectiveness has taken a hit as the virus has evolved. As such, an Omicron-specific or bivalent booster - meaning a vaccine that includes the new strain and the original coronavirus strain – could "increase and extend" protection, an EMA statement says



3. Cities in eastern China tighten COVID-19 restrictions

Cities in eastern China have tightened COVID-19 curbs after new cases emerged. Wuxi, a manufacturing hub in the Yangtze Delta on the central coast, has halted operations at many public venues located underground, including shops and supermarkets. Dine-in services in restaurants have been suspended and the government has advised people to work from home. Si county in Anhui province locked down its 760,000 residents and suspended public traffic as it reported 288 COVID-19 cases on Saturday. And Yiwu, China's export capital for small commodities, has cancelled flights to Beijing for an unspecified period. The moves are part of China's strict approach to tackling COVID-19 outbreaks, but lockdowns have taken

"A Red Alert For Child Health" UN: 25 Million Kids Missed Routine Vaccinations Because Of COVID

their toll on the country's economy. (Courtesy https://

www.weforum.org/)



Hazel Harris, 4, sits in the arms of her mom, Heather, after she got her COVID-19 vaccination at Children's Hospital New Orleans,

Tuesday, June 21, 2022. Children under five can now receive the vaccination. (Photo/Chris Granger/The Times-Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate via AP)

GENEVA — About 25 million children worldwide have missed out on routine immunizations against common diseases like diptheria, largely because the coronavirus pandemic disrupted regular health services or triggered misinformation about vaccines, according to the U.N. In a new report published Friday, the World Health Organization and UNICEF said their figures show 25 million children last year failed to get vaccinated against diptheria, tetanus and pertussis, a marker for childhood immunization coverage, continuing a downward trend that began in 2019.

"This is a red alert for child health," said Catherine Russell, UNICEF's Executive Director.

"We are witnessing the largest sustained drop in childhood immunization in a generation," she said, adding that the consequences would be measured in lives lost. Data showed the vast majority of the children who failed to get immunized were living in developing countries, namely Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Nigeria and the Philippines. While vaccine coverage fell in every world region, the worst effects were seen in East Asia and the Pacific. Experts said this 'historic backsliding" in vaccination coverage was especially disturbing since it was occurring as rates of severe malnutrition were rising. Malnourished children typically have weaker immune systems and infections like measles can often prove fatal to them.



of a hunger crisis with a growing mmunization gap hreatens to create the conditions for a child survival crisis." the U.N. said.

Scientists said low vaccine coverage rates had already resulted in preventable outbreaks of diseases like measles and polio. In March 2020, WHO and partners. asked countries to suspend their polio eradication efforts amid the accelerating COVID-19 pandemic. There have since been dozens of polio epidemics in more than 30 countries. "This is particularly tragic as tremendous progress was

made in the two decades before the COVID pandemic to improve childhood vaccination rates globally," said Helen Bedford, a professor of children's health at University College London, who was not connected to the U.N. report. She said the news was shocking but not surprising, noting that immunization services are frequently an "early casualty" of major social or economic disasters.

Dr. David Elliman, a consultant pediatrician at Britain's Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, said it was critical to reverse the declining vaccination trend among children.

"The effects of what happens in one part of the world can ripple out to affect the whole globe," he said in a statement, noting the rapid spread of COVID-19 and more recently, monkeypox. "Whether we act on the basis of ethics or 'enlightened self interest', we must put (children) top of our list of priorities." (Courtesy ocregister.com)

Southern Make Today Different

BestBridgeToHeart Raises \$2,000 For Children's Education

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



By Alyssa Wang

It was a sunny Saturday at the Sugar Land Memorial Park. Groups of volunteers were gathered around the pavilion laughing, eating, and having a good time. But this was no ordinary party: this was a BestBridgeToHeart fundraiser organized by teens dedicated to improving the



education of all youth in their community.

BestBridgeToHeart is a youth-led nonprofit organization based in the Houston area whose mission is to support and promote the education and future of children of low-income families. As a member, I am proud to say that our organization has accomplished amazing things. We have hosted book drives, donated PPE to healthcare providers, provided healthcare information sessions, taught online and at local schools, and volunteered monthly at food and book drives.

BestBridgeToHeart has raised over \$25,000 in the mere four years since its founding. This money has been donated to schools, clinics, care centers, and other organizations

One partnership BestBridgeToHeart is especially proud of is its ongoing relationship with Legacy Community Health, a group of clinics that identify unmet needs in health-related services and develop medical programs targeting those needs. We have donated thousands of dollars to support Legacy in its mission as well as hundreds of books for its Little Readers program, which provides free books for all young patients and children on their visits to a Legacy clinic. The current fundraiser will help us raise

money to further support Legacy Community Health. On Saturday, August 6th, the members of BestBridgeTo-Heart gathered around at the South Meadow Pavilion in the Sugar Land Memorial Park for their fundraiser. This event doubled as a chance for members to socialize. spend some time outdoors, and enjoy the delicious food brought to the event.



Members wearing their BestBridgeToHeart T-shirt could be seen organizing the pavilion, selling products, and actively advertising. The tables were filled with food, drinks, as well as flower soaps—a soap that was crafted into thin flower petals which were then put together as a rose. This product came in exquisite packaging with various colors

Another popular item was the homemade milk tea and boba pearls, which were cold and refreshing on a hot summer day. The boba station had several volunteers that were preparing the drinks and handing them to customers One volunteer cooked the boba pearls, one prepared the milk tea, and two others prepared the ice, cups, and straws. The boba tea was very delicious, and cups of the drink could be found in almost every hand.

At the fundraiser, members were very busy. Two volunteers manned the front table at all times, collecting money as they sold the various items to people passing by in the park, as well as those that had come especially for this event. Others worked hard to prepare and organize the products and food items, and the rest helped advertise the event by greeting new customers and explaining to people what the event was for



A couple volunteers even started a game of volleyball, attracting a team of volleyball players to the fundraiser. Through our efforts, a huge crowd of people gathered around the pavilion as sales were made constantly. Generous donors also directly donated money to the organi-

Altogether, our organization raised almost two thousand dollars, a substantial amount that will be put to good use. We are thankful for all those who supported us in this fundraiser and other events that we have hosted. We hone that more will join us in our journey to make an impact



been such a success, and we hope to plan more events like this in the near future. About BestBridgeToHeart

BestBridgeToHeart is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2018 by a group of high school students in the Greater Houston Area.

Mission

BestBridgeToHeart is dedicated to enhancing and supporting the education and quality of life of low-income

BestBridgeToHeart is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and promoting the education and future of children of low-income families. In order to accomplish our mission of assisting those in need, our organization raises money through a variety of activities such as collecting and selling donated artwork, and in turn, with the collected funds, we are able to give back to the community and allow those struggling to lead better lives.

We are helping underprivileged kids by building, expanding, and refurbishing libraries in order to promote literacy and an equal access to education and opportunity. We empower students from under-resourced, low-income communities to continue pursuing a higher education through college and have a successful future. Our organization, BestBridgeToHeart, was created to help these students learn, grow, and achieve their dreams.

Founders



Lauren Wang Co-Founder & Advisor Hamilton College

Derek Jiang

Co-Founder & Advisor

Board Of Directors



Lisa Ma Mike Wright **Upcoming Events** Book Drive - 8/2022-7/2023

Our goal is to collect another 5,000 books to help low-income families build home libraries as well as provide resources for expanding and replenishing existing libraries. As our organization continues to expand and our operations grow larger, we realized that the initial 10,000 books we raised through our first five book drives is not

The Little Reader's Program – 8/2022-7/2023

with the Legacy Community Health Center, an accredited Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) that drives healthy change in our communities. As a full-service non-profit, Legacy identifies unmet needs and gaps in health-related services and develops client-centered programs to address those needs. With 11 current locations and expanding. Legacy provides the much needed healthcare for underserved communities, including but not limited to pediatrics, vaccinations. HIV/AIDS care, dental and vision services, and adult primary care. On top of that, Legacy has a Little Readers program which gives back to the children of our communities by providing free books and other educational toys and services to help these students learn and grow. Because Legacy blends both health and education goals in one, we believe that it is the perfect organization to support.

Throughout our partnership, we as an organization have volunteered to read, teach, and entertain kids at their centers multiple times, and we have also made various small contributions of books and money. However, we knew we could do more. In the past 4 years, we pulled together and donated \$20,000 dollars to Legacy Community Health in order to support their Little Readers Program. In June of 2023, we plan to donate another \$5,000 to further promote literacy for children. Ever since, we have seen the program only grow and expand to new heights, and we only hope to do more. We will continue to be partners with the Legacy Community Health Center and help assist those in need. The Little Reader's Program they have truly exemplifies what we stand for, and we hope that we will have the volunteers, books, and money to help contribute to the program's growth and success in all of Legacy's locations. This way, more underprivileged kids will have access to the resources they need to succeed in

The BestBridgeToHeart Scholarship Program -

We here at BestBridgeToHeart believe in fostering education, learning, and growth in our communities. For the 2022-2023 school year, BestBridgeToHeart will establish an achievement-based scholarship program at a deserving low-income elementary school in the greater Houston Area. Young students who achieve academic success (all course grades B- or greater), read 50 or more books per year in their pursuit of learning, and write a short response to a selected prompt will receive \$50 gift cards as well as recognition and support from our organization. BestBridgeToHeart hopes this scholarship program will provide a small but important difference in the lives of children as they continue their education and pursue their dreams.

E-library - 8/2022-7/2023

Another one of our plans is to provide the online resources for students in need to be able to bring their education to the next level. Partnering with the Fort Bend Cares Center, we have already donated upwards of \$3,500 to support 100 students to be able to install the Learning Upgrade® application, which allows students to learn critical subjects such as English and Mathematics anywhere they go. The Learning Upgrade® app has been shown to provide breakthrough growth by offering free access to 900+ lessons, giving 21 courses from kinder to adult, and providing personalized assessment reports and help for special needs. In this way, students will be able to learn at their own pace and develop the skills to pursue higher education. In 2023, we plan on supporting more students in their pursuit of education with installing and setting-up the app



Reading Libraries – 8/2022-7/2023 We want to increase the number of Reading Rooms we

have. Our first was at the Bunker Hill apartment complex, and we believe that we can continue to expand to 2-3 more and truly serve the community through increased involvement at these libraries. Inspired by Legacy's commitment to healthcare, these Reading Rooms could also be centers for events where we not only read to students, but also teach them about physical fitness, health, dental care, and various school subjects. We have already began constructing libraries at HuaXia Chinese School, the Airline Community of Great Houston, and various doctor and dentists' offices, and we now have volunteers go read to students and teach them about scientific topics every Friday to help these children thrive in the future.

HuaXia Learning - 8/2022-7/2023

BestBridgeToHeart cooperates with HuaXia School, providing ELA, Social Studies, and Science classes in person and virtual. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the online classes were a transition from the in-person volunteering reading and teaching classes we previously have done at HuaXia School. We are excited for this opportunity to continue supporting children's education.

Book Events – 12/2022

In December of 2022, BestBridgeToHeart will hold a book event with Legacy Community Health to support young children in need. On top of donating hundreds of books, notebooks, markers, and crayons, we will read books, teach, and play games with the little children, interacting in Spanish and English. At the end of the day, the children will be able to return home with new and high-quality school supplies as well as books to read. In the past, we have held multiple reading events with Legacy Community Health, including one on December 26, 2019, to commemorate the opening of their new building.

PLE online training – 3/2020-7/2022

BestBridgeToHeart partners with Princeton Learning Experience, a non-profit organization based in New Jersey, to provide free and easily accessible online courses over English and Science Olympiad. Members of our organizations started month-long classes designed to help students within and outside the United States to ensure they have access to supplementary education resources during the COVID-19 pandemic to learn about essential skills needed in their future.

COVID-19 Care Act - 4/2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of Best-BridgeToHeart's activities and planned events were unfortunately cancelled or postponed. However, with our leftover resources, BestBridgeToHeart purchased and donated 4,000 medical masks to hospitals, clinics, and fire stations throughout the Greater Houston area. These frontline workers have put their lives on the line to make our communities safe, and we feel it is important to honor their hard work and sacrifice as well as help them stay safe during these uncertain times.

To check additional events, go here: https://best-

© 2022 - BestBridgeToHeart, a non-profit organization promoting the education and the future of