

## EducationCounsel Summary and Analysis of President Biden's 2024 State of the Union

On March 7, President Biden gave his third State of the Union Address to Congress, outlining policies to build the domestic economy and support working families. The address aimed to strike a contrast with Trump Administration policies, touting several of the Biden Administration's accomplishments and calling on Congress to work on bipartisan legislation to invest in American families. Specifically, the President focused on the Administration's efforts to strengthen the American economy through growing domestic manufacturing and increasing taxes for the wealthy and corporations, and added, "To remain the strongest economy in the world we need the best education system in the world." Regarding foreign policies, the President focused on the war in Ukraine, urging Congress to pass the Bipartisan National Security Bill which would provide support for Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan, as well as reform border security. The full text of President Biden's address is [here](#). Senator Katie Britt (R-AL) delivered the Republican response, and a transcript of her remarks is [here](#).

### **Key to know:**

- President Biden specifically highlighted the new investments and jobs created through two legislative accomplishments – the CHIPS and Science Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Noting the new domestic production of semiconductor chips, the President stated that the CHIPS and Science Act has created "tens of thousands of jobs many of them paying over \$100,000 a year and don't require a college degree." President Biden added that 46,000 new projects have been funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, "removing poisonous lead pipes so every child can drink clean water without risk of getting brain damage" and "providing affordable high speed internet for every American no matter where you live...urban, suburban, and rural communities."
- The President shared his vision for the economy, "a future where the middle class finally has a fair shot and the wealthy finally have to pay their fair share in taxes." President Biden stated that the "fairness" in these policies "must be delivered in a fiscally responsible way," detailing his approach to increase the minimum tax rate for corporations to at least 21% and for billionaires to at least 25%. He argued that a "fair tax code" would allow for investments in health care, education, defense, and more.
- In the Republican response, freshman Alabama Senator Katie Britt focused on American families and the impact of increased cost of living and illegal immigration. Senator Britt argued that families are seeking "secure borders, stable prices, safe streets, and a strong defense."

### **Highlights from the State of the Union related to Issues of Interest:**

- **Early Childhood Education and Child Care:** Continuing his remarks on education as essential for a strong economy, President Biden expressed, "I want to give every child a good start by providing access to pre-school for 3- and 4-year-olds," adding, "Studies show that children who go to pre-school are nearly 50% more likely to finish high school and go on to earn a 2- or 4-year degree no matter their background." The President also recognized the need for increased access to child care, stating, "Imagine a future with affordable child care so millions of families can get the care they need and still go to work and help grow the economy."
- **Child Tax Credit:** President Biden noted the direct impact of the Child Tax Credit, first passed as part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) in 2021, which "cut taxes for millions of working families and cut child poverty in half." The President urged Congress, "Restore the Child Tax Credit because no child should go hungry in this country!"
- **K-12 Education:** Addressing the need for increased literacy support, President Biden said, "I want to expand high-quality tutoring and summer learning time and see to it that every child learns to

read by third grade.” The President added his support for increasing teacher pay: “While we’re at it I want to give public school teachers a raise!”

- **Higher Education and Student Financial Assistance:** President Biden named multiple efforts his Administration is targeting to address the cost of higher education. The President remarked, “When I was told I couldn’t universally just change the way in which you dealt with student loans, I fixed two student loan programs that already existed,” referring to the income-driven repayment (IDR) and Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) programs. The President highlighted an increase in the maximum Pell Grant, and investments in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic- and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs). President Biden also noted that the immigration plan he proposed on his first day in office would “provide a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers.”
- **Career Pathways and Workforce Training:** The President raised the Administration’s efforts in career-connected learning, “connecting businesses and high schools so students get hands-on experience and a path to a good-paying job whether or not they go to college.”
- **Civil Rights:** President Biden recognized that the date of the address coincided with the 59th anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery marches. The President honored the work of former-Representative John Lewis, who marched in Selma, and urged Congress to pass the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, and to stop “banning books.”
- **School Safety:** Calling attention to school and community safety, the President acknowledged investments through the American Rescue Plan, including “more mental health workers.”
- **Artificial Intelligence:** President Biden briefly mentioned Artificial Intelligence (AI), calling on Congress to “pass bipartisan privacy legislation to protect our children online” and “harness the promise of AI and protect us from its peril.”

### **Highlights from Republican Response**

Senator Katie Britt delivered the Republican address, aiming to direct her message to families. Senator Britt claimed that President Biden is “out of touch” with the “hard decisions” families have to make, and expressed worry that “the next generation will have fewer opportunities than we did.” Recognizing that “hardworking families are struggling to make ends meet,” Senator Britt also stated that parents are struggling with “sky-high child care costs.” The rebuttal also noted the need for “secure borders,” as Senator Britt spent a significant portion of her remarks on illegal immigration. Senator Britt spoke about traveling to the southern border and called the “President Biden’s border crisis” a “disgrace” and “almost entirely preventable.” Senator Britt concluded her remarks acknowledging that “there is no doubt we’re at a crossroads” and made “a direct appeal ..to my fellow moms...to stand up...and protect the American Dream.”

For more information, please contact Elysa Cash  
([elysa.cash@educationcounsel.com](mailto:elysa.cash@educationcounsel.com))

---

**EDUCATIONCOUNSEL**