

Date: March 10, 2021

To: Federal Legislation Committee

From: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

Subject: **Legislative Proposals Under Consideration**

On March 11, 2021, the Federal Legislation Committee will review and consider support for the following federal legislative proposals: the American Rescue Plan Act, the Equality Act, the U.S. Citizenship Act, and the For the People Act. Attached for your information are briefing sheets for each proposal.

If you have any questions, please contact Tyler Bonanno-Curley, Manager of Government Affairs, at (562) 570-5715 or Tyler.Curley@longbeach.gov.

ATTACHMENTS

CC: MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CHARLES PARKIN, CITY ATTORNEY
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DEPARTMENT HEADS

Purpose

This briefing sheet provides an overview of House Resolution 1319, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Background

Congressmember Yarmuth introduced H.R. 1319 on February 24, 2021. On February 27, 2021, the U.S. House considered and approved the Act by a vote of 219-212. The U.S. Senate made several revisions to the provisions, including removing a provision to increase the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour, changes to Medicare, and phased-out eligibility for direct payments sooner than the original proposal. The U.S. Senate added a provision of \$10 billion for infrastructure purposes. The Senate voted on March 6, 2021 to approve the amended version of H.R. 1319, and on March 10th the House approved the Act. The President is expected to sign the legislation by March 14th.

Executive Summary

The American Rescue Plan Act aims to provide \$1.9 trillion in relief to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, State and local governments, individuals, and businesses. This is the first time the federal government will provide funding directly to cities which speaks to Congress' understanding of local governments' needs. As the first COVID-19 relief package of the Biden Administration, several of President Biden's first 100-day commitments are included.

The Act includes \$350 billion for State, local, tribal, and territorial governments to mitigate fiscal effects resulting from the COVID-19 emergency. This represents an increase of \$200 billion from the CARES Act. Funding for **local governments** will include \$65.1 billion for counties and \$65.1 billion for cities and towns. Funding will be allocated in two tranches: 50 percent within 60 days of enactment, and the remaining 50 percent after one year. The deadline to expend funds is December 31, 2024, and eligible expenditures include:

- COVID-19 response and economic recovery;
- Government services that have been impacted by revenue reductions due to COVID-19; and,
- Investments in water, sewage, and broadband infrastructure.

In addition to these direct local funds, the City will likely be eligible for other funding resources in the legislation outlined below.

The legislation includes \$8 billion in airport assistance. Recipient airports will be required to retain at least 90 percent of personnel employed as of March 27, 2020, through September 30, 2021.

The Act includes \$10 billion for the Treasury Department to make separate payments to states, territories, and tribal governments to carry out capital projects to support work, education, and health monitoring during COVID-19.

For **individuals**, the Act will provide stimulus checks of \$1,400 per individual making up to \$75,000 per year and phase out up to individuals earning \$80,000. Quantities are doubled for joint-tax filers.

Qualifying tax filers would benefit from an expansion to the earned income tax credit. This will apply to individuals age 19 and older to qualify, instead of 25-64 age range. The child tax credit would also be revised to provide up to \$2,000 per child under 18 years of age.

Building upon the CARES Act, the Act will extend tax credits to employer-provided paid sick leave through September 30, 2021. The Act would increase wages covered under the paid family leave to \$12,000 (from \$10,000) and cover 60 days (from 50) of paid family leave for self-employed individuals.

The Act also extends unemployment benefits through September 6, 2021 with payments of \$300 per week. Federal payments to non-profits and government agencies would cover 75 percent of unemployment benefit costs, increased from 50 percent.

For **businesses**, the Act will increase funding and eligibility for the Paycheck Protection Program. The Act allocates an additional \$7.25 billion, increasing the program's lending authorization to \$813.7 billion. The PPP would extend eligibility to tax-exempt groups such as labor organizations, religious educational groups, and social welfare groups.

Restaurants, bars, food trucks and caterers, including businesses in airport terminals, will qualify for the SBA's \$25 billion Restaurant Revitalization Fund. Small businesses owned by women, veterans, and socially or economically disadvantaged individuals will be prioritized during the initial 21-day award period. Funds could be used by December 31, 2021 for payroll costs, mortgage and rent payments, supplies, normal food and beverage costs, and paid sick leave.

Next Steps

City staff will communicate the final sources of funding the City will receive directly from H.R. 1319. City Council will consider the Proposed Long Beach Recovery Plan based on these and other funding sources on March 16, 2021.

Federal Legislative Agenda

The City's adopted Federal Legislative Agenda supports flexible funding for local initiatives. The City was included in advocacy efforts for H.R. 1319 through affiliation with the National League of Cities, U.S. Conference of Mayors, and Big City Mayors coalitions.

Purpose

This briefing sheet provides an overview of House Resolution 5 (Senate Bill 393), the Equality Act.

Background

When campaigning, President Biden named the Act's legislative proposal as one of his top legislative priorities during his first 100 days in office. Congressman Cicilline introduced H.R. 5 on February 18, 2021. On February 25, 2021, the U.S. House considered and approved the Act by a vote of 224-206. The Act was placed as a General Order on the Senate Legislative Calendar on March 2, 2021.

Under current Constitutional provisions, individuals may be discriminated against due to their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, childbirth, and/or related medical condition often rooted in sex-based stereotypes. Moreover, discrimination may relate to more than one basis. For example, discrimination against a pregnant lesbian could be based on her sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy status, or multiple factors. Individuals who are LGBTQ+, or are perceived to be LGBTQ+, have been subjected to a history and pattern of pervasive discrimination in both the private sector and government actors, including housing and public assistance. This discrimination inflicts a range of tangible and intangible harms, sometimes including serious physical injury or death.

Executive Summary

The Act would bestow equal Constitutional rights to the LGBTQ+ community. The Equality Act proposes to prohibit discrimination based on sex, including gender identity and sexual orientation. The Act would protect LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination in the workplace, financial market, housing market, health care, courtroom, and all other protected areas of society.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to monitor the Equality Act.

Federal Legislative Agenda

The City's adopted Federal Legislative Agenda includes items that support equal rights for the LGBTQ+ community. For example, the Agenda supports policies and legislation that will allow marriage equality for same sex couples, defend same sex civil marriages, and protect the fundamental liberties of all families

Purpose

This briefing sheet provides an overview of President Biden's U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021 presented in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate.

Background

In his first day in office, President Biden sent the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021 to Congress as part of his commitment to modernize the County's immigration system. The Act proposes to responsibly manage and secure the United States southern border, keep families and communities safe, and better manage migration across the Hemisphere. If the bill is signed into law, the benefits may take several months to implement to allow U.S. government agencies to incorporate new rules, forms, and processes.

Executive Summary

Most notably, the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021 introduces an eight-year pathway to citizenship for undocumented individuals, including a three-year pathway for undocumented individuals who entered the country as children (i.e. DREAMers). For undocumented individuals physically present in the United States on, or by, January 1, 2021, subject to other requirements, temporary legal status will be attainable through eligibility for permanent residence following five years of continuous residence in the United States and naturalized citizenship after three additional years.

The Act proposes to reduce barriers, wait times, and border separation for family-based immigration. President Biden plans to clear the existing backlog of visa applicants and expedite the immigrant visa process. The bill would allow families to remain united throughout the visa and permanent residence process.

Border security is proposed to be enhanced with technology to improve screenings at ports of entry. The Act includes funds for additional training and education for Customs and Border Protection Personnel to enhance detainee and border community relations. Also, terminology amongst all federal agencies will be modernized to remove dehumanizing terms such as 'alien.' The Biden Administration is also anticipated to implement a new Taskforce for New Immigrants, operated by Julie Rodriguez, Director of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to monitor the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021 and the Biden Administration's immigration plans.

Federal Legislative Agenda

The City's adopted Federal Legislative Agenda includes items in support of comprehensive immigration reform that will provide a dignified path to United States citizenship to strengthen the nation's workforce and the economy including qualifying undocumented youth with a conditional path to citizenship upon completion of a college degree or military service.

Purpose

This briefing sheet provides an overview of House Resolution 1, the For the People Act of 2021.

Background

Congressmember Sarbanes introduced H.R. 1 on January 4, 2021. On March 3, 2021, the U.S. House considered and approved the Act by a vote of 220-210. The Senate has not agendized the Act, and it does not seem likely the split Senate would be able to receive enough votes to pass it. President Biden has stated support for the proposal.

Executive Summary

The Act proposes several provisions to expand voter eligibility. For one, it would implement automatic voter registration and allow same-day registration. The Act would increase ease of voting by requiring each registered voter receive a mailed ballot and be able to vote early.

To better protect fair and equitable elections, the Act includes security measures such as sharing intelligence information with state election officials, supporting states in securing their election systems, developing a national strategy to protect U.S. democratic institutions, and establishing in the legislative branch the National Commission to Protect United States Democratic Institutions.

For enhanced transparency, the Act would require the President, Vice President, and candidates for these offices in general elections to disclose 10 years of tax returns.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to monitor the For the People Act of 2021.

Federal Legislative Agenda

The City's adopted Federal Legislative Agenda does not include an item relating to the provisions in the For the People Act of 2021. The City could take a position on the proposal under the direction of the City Council.