

Meet Bianca Orejel: Our New Organizer!

The Fresno County Democratic Party has an energetic new organizer, Bianca Orejel. A graduate of Fresno Pacific University, she was previously a field organizer for Rep. Josh Harder (D-Turlock) during his successful 2020 reelection campaign. She brings her savvy and expertise to Fresno now to recruit precinct leaders and increase volunteer engagement as we head into the 2022 midterm election cycle.

Bianca says that it's important for precinct leaders to have important conversations with voters in a way that voters won't be overwhelmed to share what's at stake in the midterm elections.

Initially, she and her volunteers will reach out to people who have been precinct leaders in the past to see if they'd like to continue in that capacity. As precinct leaders are recruited, they'll be trained in how to approach voters to have conversations about the issues that are most important to them.

Bianca has scheduled several community outreach events in December: Trivia Night Thursday, the Covid Booster Shot Phone Bank and the Build Back Better Round Table. In addition, she is revamping our social media.

Contact Bianca at 530-341-2043 or borejel@fresnocountydemocrats.org.

The Build Back Better Act and the San Joaquin Valley

On Nov. 19, as many Fresno County Democrats were beginning their day, the U.S. House of Representatives passed President Biden's Build Back Better Act (BBBA), on a vote of 220-213, with all Republicans voting against it, and one Democrat—Jared Golden of Maine—joining the Republicans.

The narrow vote came after a quixotic and laughable eight-and-a-half-hour floor speech by House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Bakersfield), which was packed full of lies about the BBBA.

By most accounts, the nearly \$2 trillion package (smaller than its original estimated \$3.5 trillion price tag) is described as "transformative," perhaps the biggest piece of domestic legislation since President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty and Great Society initiatives.

Although Democratic Rep. Jim Costa (D-Fresno) was one of nine moderate Democrats in the House who had objections to the package a month ago, he ultimately voted for it. Throughout the sausage-making process, the Progressive Caucus held firm in its desire to prevent many of its initiatives from being stripped from the package.

Although you might be inclined to do an "end zone dance," here's the reality: The bill still needs to pass the Senate, where every Democratic vote will matter. The holdouts are the usual suspects: Senators Joe Manchin (D-W.V.) and Krysten Sinema (D-Ariz.), who, at press time, had yet to explicitly endorse it.

Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) has expressed confidence that the bill will pass the Senate and be on President Biden's desk by Christmas.

Democrats assert that the BBBA lowers costs and fights inflation because it is fully paid for by making big corporations and wealthy Americans pay their fair share. No one making under \$400,000 will pay a penny more in taxes.

According to Rep. Costa's office, here is a rundown of what the BBBA would mean for central California:

Quality Healthcare

- Creates 4,000 new Medicare-supported graduate medical education slots in 2025 and 2026. This will increase the number of healthcare professionals in communities such as Fresno that need them most.
- Invests \$500 million in funding for schools of nursing in underserved areas, such as the San Joaquin Valley.
- Provides \$500 million for the Nurse Corps, which offers nursing students financial assistance in exchange for committing to work in areas with a critical shortage of nurses.
- Closes the coverage gap in the Affordable Care Act to allow up to 4 million uninsured Americans to get coverage.
- Provides 12 months of continuous Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) eligibility to postpartum women and children already enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP.
- Expands access to home- and community-based care, including raising the wages of caregiving jobs.
- Lowers prescription drug costs, caps insulin prices at \$35 per month and imposes tax penalties if drug companies increase their prices faster than inflation.
- Creates a new, out-of-pocket cap in Medicare on prescription drug costs at \$2,000.

Families and the Middle Class

- Makes the Child Tax Credit (CTC) permanently refundable.
- Extends for one year the CTC with payments of \$300/month per child under age six or \$250/month per child ages 6-17.
- Provides access to childcare to more than 2.2 million young children in California per year, while ensuring families pay no more than 7% of their income on high-quality childcare.
- Expands rental assistance, supplies housing construction and rehabilitates nearly one million affordable housing units nationwide.
- Expands up to four weeks of paid leave for new parents, workers dealing with serious medical conditions and workers who need to care for a loved one with a serious medical issue.

Education

- Provides universal, high-quality, free preschool for every three- and four-year-old in America.
- Invests \$10 billion in proven child nutrition that will bolster the fight against child hunger.
- Invests in training programs that will prepare workers for high-quality jobs in public health, childcare, manufacturing, IT and clean energy.
- Increases Pell Grant awards by \$550 and supports Hispanic-serving institutions such as Fresno State, UC Merced, Merced College and Fresno Pacific University.
- Provides an additional \$300 million to the Emergency Connectivity Fund to ensure students, school staff and library patrons have devices to connect to the Internet remotely.

Agriculture and Water

- Invests \$28 billion to expand environmental incentives and promote conservation efforts.
- Provides \$12 billion in debt relief and loan modification for farmers in need.
- Invests \$2 billion in agricultural research to advance the American food and agriculture system.
- Provides \$1 billion in investment for the new Rural Partnership Program, grant funding for rural communities to support job growth.
- Provides \$600 million to the Maritime Administration to support more sustainable port infrastructure and supply chain resilience.

Climate Change

- Invests \$26.95 billion in forestry programs to ensure public and private lands can combat wildfires and extreme weather conditions.
- Creates a new Civilian Climate Corps to help conserve our public lands, bolster community resilience and address climate change.
- Invests \$1 billion in zero-emission vehicle infrastructure.
- Invests \$5 billion in replacing certain heavy-duty vehicles, such as refuse trucks and school buses, with zero-emission vehicles through a new grant program at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- Provides \$5 billion through the EPA for states, municipalities and Indian tribes to develop and implement plans to reduce climate pollution.

Immigration

- Provides temporary protections and work permits for 7 million undocumented individuals, including Dreamers, Temporary Protection Status (TPS) holders, essential workers and one million farmworkers.
- Individuals must pass a background check and have lived/worked in the United States for more than 10 years.

Call to Action

Trivia Night Thursday

Dec. 2 & Dec. 16, 6 p.m.

Sign-ups: mobilize.us/mobilize/event/426575/



Covid Booster Shot Phone Bank

Dec. 7, 6 p.m.

Sign-ups: mobilize.us/mobilize/event/427493/



Build Back Better Round Table

Dec. 8, 6 p.m.

Sign-ups: mobilize.us/mobilize/event/427253/



Participate at the Democratic Party HQ (1033 U St.) or via Zoom.

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