



## President addresses the country after signing the American Rescue Plan

In a televised address about the American Rescue Plan (ARP) last night, [President Biden said he will direct every state to make the COVID-19 vaccine available by May 1 to every eligible adult](#). The dramatic move would make it possible for small family and friend groups to gather by Independence Day. After passing the Senate last weekend and the House on Wednesday, the \$1.9 trillion plan was [signed into law by President Biden yesterday](#). Americans could start seeing \$1,400 stimulus payments as early as this weekend.

Among the other provisions to help families, the American Rescue Plan increases the child tax credit to \$3,000 per child (\$3,600 for a child under age 6), significantly expands subsidies in the ACA marketplace to help people purchase health insurance, provides a 100% subsidy for COBRA coverage for those who lose their job and continue their employer-based health coverage, additional financial incentives for states like Tennessee that have not expanded Medicaid, and additional housing/rental and food assistance. The measure also includes \$70 billion for increasing vaccinations and for a testing, tracing, and treatment program; \$130 billion to help K-12 schools safely reopen; \$350 billion in aid to state and local governments; additional small business assistance including new targeted programs to restaurants; and more. Most importantly, the package is expected to [slash the child poverty rate in half](#) according to experts.

+ Jim [said](#), “The #AmericanRescuePlan is one of the boldest relief bills in our nation’s history. I’m glad the president signed it yesterday to immediately get help to Middle Tennesseans.”



## Jim appointed to House Intelligence Committee

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi appointed Jim to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) today. HPSCI is one of the most exclusive and important committees in Congress. The Committee is charged with the oversight of intelligence activities and programs of the United States Intelligence Community. Besides writing an annual intelligence authorization bill to fund the Intelligence Community, HPSCI members are required by law to be kept informed by the President of ongoing intelligence activities, including covert actions and any significant intelligence failure. Jim also sits and will retain his service on the House Armed Services; Oversight and Reform; and Budget Committees.

+Jim [said](#), “I am honored to be appointed to the Intelligence Committee and I take this very seriously. Nothing is more important than our duty to protect and defend America. I have

already been briefed on the intelligence issues related to our defense activities and nuclear, missile, and space arsenal for many years. I look forward to using that experience to help Chairman Schiff, the Caucus, and our great nation address all of the serious threats that America faces.”



### **PRO Act passes House**

[The House passed the Protecting the Right to Organize \(PRO\) Act on Wednesday.](#) The bill enhances the power of workers to organize and collectively bargain for better wages and benefits. The President has long supported the rights of workers to organize and has taken several pro-union actions since taking office. Labor rights have become a major issue as the pandemic has created job insecurity and workplace safety concerns. The bill faces significant obstacles in the Senate where it is staunchly opposed by Senate Republicans.

+Jim [said](#), “We need to protect the rights of workers. America gets stronger and our country moves forward when our workers can organize to get bigger paychecks, better benefits, and safer working conditions.” [#PROAct](#)

### **House passes bills to strengthen gun laws**

[The House passed two bills designed to strengthen gun laws.](#) One bill expands background checks to cover all purchases, including people seeking to buy or transfer ownership of a gun online and through gun shows. The second bill closes a loophole that would keep people from obtaining weapons when an FBI background check takes longer than 3 days. The issue is known as the “Charleston loophole,” since it was exploited by a white supremacist in obtaining a gun before murdering nine people at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Jim has been a long-time cosponsor of both bills.

+Jim [said](#), “The House just again passed two bills to expand background checks for gun purchases. Most Americans support background checks and it will help keep firearms out of the hands who should not be legally permitted to obtain them. I [#WearOrange](#) in support of these bills.”

### **More cabinet nominees confirmed by Senate**

[The Senate confirmed Merrick Garland as Attorney General](#) with a bipartisan vote of 70-30. In 2016, the Republican-controlled Senate refused to hold confirmation hearings on Garland’s nomination by President Obama to the Supreme Court. He served as a federal appellate judge for 24 years.

Ohio Congresswoman [Marcia Fudge was confirmed as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.](#) The vote was 66-34. She was a member of Congress for twelve years and was the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

[The Senate also confirmed Michael Regan as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.](#) Regan is the first Black man to run the agency in its 50-year history. He is the former North Carolina environmental regulator and is an air pollution expert. He will implement the Administration's aggressive plan to address the climate crisis.



### **One year of pandemic**

As of yesterday, [it has been one year since the World Health Organization \(WHO\) declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic.](#) Since that time, 29 million cases have been reported in the US, and 529,000 people have died as a result. Across the world, at least 118 million people have been infected and 2.6 million have died. The pandemic has ravaged the American economy, shuttering businesses, closing schools, and resulting in high unemployment. Last night President Biden addressed the nation to commemorate the anniversary and encouraged the American people to stay strong to beat the virus, promising to have [everyone eligible for vaccinations by May 1.](#)

### **Administration secures more Johnson & Johnson vaccine**

[The Biden Administration has ordered 100 million more doses of the one-shot Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine.](#) This order, along with the doses of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, means the country now has enough vaccines to inoculate every American. 100 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine have already been ordered and people are receiving shots. The additional doses will be delivered by the end of the year.

### **CDC and CMS release new guidance on nursing home visits**

[The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid \(CMS\) have released guidelines that ease restrictions on nursing home visits.](#) Citing increasing vaccinations and declining infection rates, the new rules allow for unvaccinated visitors and residents to meet in person indoors in most circumstances. However, the guidance recommends that visits should be limited in cases where an unvaccinated resident is in a county where the coronavirus positivity rate exceeds 10% and fewer than 70% of the facility's residents are fully vaccinated. They also caution against visits where there are residents who have a confirmed case of virus and residents are in quarantine. Last month, Gov. Lee removed all state level visiting restrictions, leaving Tennessee facilities to follow only CMS guidelines.

### **Confirmed COVID-19 cases, deaths, vaccinations in Tennessee**

Yesterday, the [Tennessee Department of Health](#) reported 1,512 new cases, bringing the total to 788,109 confirmed cases. More than 11,623 people have died, including at least 17 people Wednesday. There are approximately 683 people currently hospitalized with the virus statewide. There have been 6,944,400 tests statewide, more than 20,958 since the day before, with a

5.65% positivity rate. As of today in [Davidson County](#), there are 91,532 confirmed cases, and 858 deaths.



As of March 11, [1,795,720 vaccinations have been administered in Tennessee](#). About 16% of Tennesseans have received at least one dose of the Pfizer/Moderna and 8.9% have received a second dose or the single-dose Johnson & Johnson and are fully vaccinated. There have been [2,568,860 doses delivered to the state](#).

The federal government has delivered more than 131 million doses of vaccine and 98.2 million shots have been given nationwide. [Approximately 19% of Americans have received at least one dose of Pfizer/Moderna and 10% of Americans are fully vaccinated](#).

*Tennessee is currently vaccinating phase 1a, 1b, 1c, and all people over 65 years of age. To register for a COVID-19 vaccination and book an appointment at your county health department, visit [Vaccinate.tn.gov](#) or [covid19.nashville.gov](#) (615-862-7777). There are also hundreds of vaccination locations throughout the community available at [VaccineFinder.org](#).*



**APPLY FOR A  
SUMMER 2021  
INTERNSHIP  
IN NASHVILLE  
OR D.C.**

Summer Session I:  
May 18 - June 25, 2021

Summer Session II:  
July 6 - August 13, 2021

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Deadline to Submit Application:  
Monday, April 12, 2021