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[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** Varga. All right. Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the Wisconsin Laborers Training Center. My name is Sarah Varga, and I'm a proud apprentice and member of the Liuna Local four six, four.

[00:00:51] **Unidentified** Growing up in Janesville, I was always.

[00:00:53] **Speaker 1** Outdoors, either helping my dad work around the house or at a local rink playing ice hockey. After a couple of semesters of college playing ice hockey in track and field, I decided that college wasn't offering what I wanted to do with my life. I talked with my dad, who's a union plumber. I asked him if he likes what he does, and he said he loved it. I found a contractor who then connected me with the Wisconsin Labors Apprenticeship Program. Sorry. I have found my home at Edgerton Contractors and within my union family I local 464 here in Madison, Wisconsin. Working as a union laborer has taught me that I do not need a college degree to have a good paying family supporting job with great wages, health care and a pension. The work that I do on Wisconsin's infrastructure has helped myself and my fellow union brothers and sisters in our union way of life. And there has been no greater friend than President Biden when it comes to creating more union jobs, building our roads and bridges, replacing lead pipes and building renewable energy and high tech manufacturing facilities. Thank you. President Biden is the best president in history for unions. And I am so proud and greatly honored to introduce to you the president of the United States, Joe Biden.

[00:03:20] **Speaker 2** If you have a seat, take one if you don't come up on stage with me. Well, thank you very much. You know. Got it over here. Hey, folks, How are you? Don't jump. Don't jump. Well, hello matters and lo laborers and a hello. Hello. Hello. Terry O'Sullivan, one of my best buddies in labor in my entire career. Think about Terry is whatever he says he does, even when circumstances change, a lot of the people say, I'll be there with you. And I say, Oh, I can't anymore. Things have changed. Whatever he tells you, he does whatever he tells you does. And we've been working together since he was 12 years old. I know I'm only joking, but, you know, every time I have a problem in Delaware, Gov. I just go across the river in New Jersey, make sure everything got squared away. You think I'm joking? This is the most reliable guy, one most reliable guys in labor or business. And I really appreciate it. So, look, I want to thank Sarah and the induction Boykins. She's will a mean hockey stick. I tell you I was in the back region. We were taking a little longer as I have a granddaughter is a hell of an athlete. She's going to graduate this year from college but she's she played lacrosse and in field hockey I'm excuse me, lacrosse and soccer all state in both subjects and both sports. And she went off to school. She said, I can't I can't work 40 hours a week in a field and still do well in school. So she decided to stay. I was hoping she'd go pro, but anyway, you know, but I was telling I was telling my producer. She reminds me very much of my granddaughter. She even looks like her. Any rate, Madame Mayor, thanks for the passport in the town. Appreciate it. Where? I see. And there you are. And Governor Evers, you're the you're a great partner, man. You've been a great partner. When All the way back when I was vice president. Even now, I can't tell you how much I appreciate your leadership. I really, really mean it. Thank you. Thank you. Reverend Mark Pocan, a great congressman, a friend, always fighting for working families. And you helped us get so much done for union members in the last couple of years. Look, you know, she couldn't be here today, but Tammy Baldwin, Tammy Baldwin. It's quite so damn hard for this state. If I do anything, it doesn't start all over the word Wisconsin. I get a note from Tammy. But all kidding aside, she's incredible. Before I get started, I want to take a moment to, on behalf of the American people, our thoughts and prayers go out to the people of Turkey in Syria. You know, the the death toll is rising is one of the worst earthquakes in that region in over 100 years. And we mourn the loss of so many lives and we offer our deepest condolences. You know, it's amazing watching these people try to pull out, pull out a monitor, this rubble, these terrible built buildings. But all the earthquake was incredibly powerful, significant aftershocks and a second quake. But you see dads or moms pull little babies out from underneath this rubble. So many people dying. And our thoughts are also with the survivors who have been torn apart by this tragedy. As I told President Erdogan and I called him immediately when the first quake hit that the United States was offering our full support, full support, rescue and recovery teams and our NATO ally deploying teams, the U.S. Agency for International Development drawing additional resources, including our armed forces in Europe, to assist Turkey's teams on the ground in Syria. The U.S. is supporting humanitarian partners who are responding with equipment and assistance and have been conducting urgent, urgent search and rescue missions from day one, even in the face of a staff members death and injuries in that first day. The United States is a leading donor, leading donor across all the areas of Syria. No matter who controls the territory, it's about saving human life. We remain steadfast in our commitment to supporting the people of Turkey and Syria in this time of need. Last night. Last night, I reported on the State of the Union. It is strong. It is strong. You're strong because of you. Because the soul of the nation is strong, the backbone of this nation is strong, and the people of this nation are strong. And I've said so many times, often told the Democrats and Republicans, we can actually work together. We actually work together. All the things we did were bipartisan, all the major initiatives. And besides, I signed over 300 bipartisan bills beyond the big ones. Folks, look, last night, I said if we couldn't work together last Congress, we could work together last Congress. There's no reason we can't get things done as well, this Congress. And, I mean, you know, people sent us a clear message. Fighting for the sake of fighting gets us nowhere. We're getting things done. It's always been my vision for this country. Today, I'm here to talk about one part of that vision, the economy that works for working people. This is a blue collar, blue change. We're seeing, you know, an economy where we're building, where we built more in the last two years since I've taken office than you can imagine. We've created 12 million new jobs. A half a million jobs just last month. We've created more jobs in two years. More jobs in two years than any president has created in a single four year term. Look, unemployment rate is 3.4%, a 50 year low. Gas prices are down more than a dollar 50. We're going to make sure the oil companies start playing their honest role is going to go down further. Inflation has fallen in six months straight. Inflation is coming down. Take home pay of workers is going up slightly. Manufacturing is rebounding at the fastest rate in almost 40 years. The economy is growing at a solid clip. Folks, I hate to disappoint them, but the Biden economic plan is working. It's working. But that's not news. Any of you laborers here in Wisconsin. Union workers across the country are seeing it firsthand because for the first time in a long time, we're building an economy from the bottom up in the middle, out the bottom, up in the middle, out with products made in America with union labor, not labor.

[00:10:27] **Unidentified** Union labor. I made it.

[00:10:36] **Speaker 2** My American plan, My economic plan is for the middle and working class Americans to get up every morning and go to work. Buster next is trying to get an honest living. You know, my dad used to have an expression. He wasn't a college guy. He regretted never got to go to college. But my dad worked like hell. My dad used to say, I mean this sincerely, and all the kids in the family know it is a joke. A job is about a lot more than a paycheck. It's about your dignity. It's about respect. Despair. Better to look your kid in the eye and say, Honey, it's going to be okay and mean it and mean it. Look. I've said many times Wall Street did not build this country. The middle class, both the country and unions, built the middle class.

[00:11:28] **Unidentified** That's a fact.

[00:11:34] **Speaker 2** Ferrell It's said God's truth. And by the way, now you're rebuilding the country. I signed a once in a generation investment in putting Americans to work rebuilding our national infrastructure. It was bipartisan. Republicans signed on to it, too. Not all of them, but enough to get it passed. And by the way, I told them, even those who didn't vote for it, call and say we need to project my district is, okay, good. We'll do it. See the groundbreaking, You know, for really, I'm president for all of America. You know, at the Port of Green Bay, we're helping turn an old water plant site into a new port terminal, going to create thousands of jobs over time. This is big deal. You know, we're just up the road in Columbia County, just up the road. Funds from the infrastructure are going to replace the Wisconsin River Bridge here in Madison. The mayor can tell you we're using the funding to buy 46 electric busses, replacing dirty diesel busses that are bad for the environment. Each of these projects means jobs for laborers, plumbers, pipefitters, electricians, carpenters, cement masons, ironworkers and so many more. These are good jobs, jobs you can raise a family on. And most don't require a college degree. Jobs where people don't have to leave home in search of an opportunity. But they do require at least four years of trade apprenticeships, which is one of the reasons the United States has the best trade workers in the world. Like you.

[00:13:14] **Unidentified** By the way.

[00:13:22] **Speaker 2** The vast majority. Americans, though, know that we ought to tell them. Keep telling them every time I say, why is so pro-labor? Because you're the best workers in the world. And I say, How's that? Nobody decides. I want to be a laborer. I want to be a plumber. I want to be an electrician. It takes you four years. Busting your neck, basically going back to school to be able to become certified. That's why you're the best. You're the best educated in what you do. I really mean it. I spoke with members of the Business Roundtable, the big business guys. They ask, why am I so pro-labor? Because you save the money. What you do last, what you do lasts. And through the American Rescue Plan, we're funding workforce development programs, including 128 million Wisconsin dollars in Wisconsin. So American workers were prepared to compete in the economy. We're building. This is a blue collar blueprint to rebuild America. We're also doing something that for years people just talked about, we're going to buy American for everything we build. Last night. I announced, you are proposing new standards to require all construction materials used on federal infrastructure projects be made in America. American Lumber. American Glass. American Drywall. American Fiber Optics. American Roads. Bridges. Highways. Made with American products. My first two years in office, we've created 800,000 manufacturing jobs where I mean, essentially jobs you can live on. Where is it written? America can't lead the world in manufacturing. And I didn't see it written anywhere. Our economy, our economic engine has ignited a new manufacturing boom just outside of in Arrowhead Pharmaceuticals, going to hire 250 workers and a drug manufacturing facility. Georgia-Pacific is committed to a major expansion of the Green Bay paper production facility, bringing in 100 new employees and hiring 500 construction workers. For decades, we've imported project. We've imported products from abroad and sent jobs overseas because they thought it was cheaper to have the cheaper labor. Now America's exporting product overseas and creating jobs here at home. Well, I didn't come from a poor family. I came from a typical middle class families, but love a home for kids. A grandpop lived with us, one so private. My mom and dad. But we thought I was good. But all kidding aside. Typical middle class family. For decades, the backbone of America, the middle class had been hollowed out. It's been hollowed out. Good paying manufacturing jobs. Moved overseas production because it was cheaper there. When jobs move overseas, factories at home closed down. You saw it in Janesville, where Sara, a woman you just heard from, is from when the last assembly line was shut down in the GM plant two days before Christmas, 28 thousands of people lost their jobs at the plant and the surrounding businesses that the plant kept alive. Look, think about how many moms and dads had to have that conversation with their kids. Honey, I just lost my job. We got to move. Honey, I'm not sure where. We can't live here anymore. No job. Once thriving cities and towns became shadows. What they used to be. And when those towns were hollowed out, something else was lost. Pride, self-esteem. A sense of self-worth. But now we're going to turn that around. Or build an economy where no one's going to be left behind. My economic plan is about investing in places, people that have been forgotten. As part of that plan. I talked last night about things we're going to do for families just a little more breathing. Just give them and my dad just a little more breathing room at the end of the month when everything's paid, you have just a little more breathing room. We're going to lower the cost of everyday products for you all. And we're talking taking on what we call junk fees, those hidden surcharges businesses use to make you pay more. We're making airlines show just how the full price of the ticket cost up front, not after the fact. And refund your money if your flight is canceled. Reduce the exportation excuse me, the exorbitant bank overdraft fees, saving an American taxpayer $1,000,000 billion a year. Just those fees that were exorbitant for an overdraft. We're proposing to cut credit card fees by 75%. Now, the average if if if you're over, if you're late and a payment by day is 30 bucks. Guess what? It's going to be $8 now. I heard a commentator on the way flying out here on Air Force One and television was on talking about little things like junk feces. Why isn't Biden talking about important things, important issues? Well, next thing he's going to be talking about taking in your garbage. Well, let me tell you something. Junk fees may not matter to the wealthy people, but the matter that most folks like whom home I grew up in, they had hundreds of dollars. They had hundreds of dollars a month to make it harder to pay your bills or afford that family trip. I know how unfair it feels when a company overcharge you and think they can get away with it. It plays for suckers and it makes you angry. At least it does me. Frankly, it offends me to think about it. So I'm calling on Congress to pass a junk free prevention act so we can do more than crack down on these junk fees. For too long, workers have been getting stiffed. You know, 30 million workers, the vast majority of them on an hourly wage, had to sign noncompete agreements when they took their job. 30 million. These aren't trade secrets they're hiding. They are hourly wages. That's when a construction worker on a job site can't cross the street and take a job with another outfit to make a couple more bucks. We're banning these agreements for companies that will compete, won't compete. So they pay people a fair share. Why in God's name, you tell a worker, an hourly worker, that they have to sign an agreement that they will not take a similar job in anywhere in the area? Look, one of my objective is to restore the dignity of work, to restore it. You know, we've made a lot of progress over the past two years. Many of you have seen we've had a spirited debate last night with my Republican friends, my Republican friends. They seemed shocked when I raised the plans of some of their members and their caucus to cut Social Security. And Marjorie Taylor grandmother stood up and said, Liar, liar, reminds me of a liar, liar, house on fire. Yeah, well, guess what? You know, I remind you that Rick Scott from Florida, the guy who ran the U.S. Senate campaign, has a plan. I got his brochure right here. I has a plan. Here's what he says in his plan. Let me get over it up here. I'll start. He says all federal legislation sunsets every five years. If the law is worth keeping, Congress can pass it again. Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid. And by the way, you have a senator named Ron Johnson. Ron Johnson on Social Security, Medicare. Quote, We should transfer everything so we have to consider everything every year. Come on, man. And then. And then we found there is a you know, there's a senator named Mike Lee who was also yelling, you know, liar, liar, house on fire kind of stuff last night. Well, I didn't even know this, but they played a video showing him, he said and I said they weren't there. I didn't say the whole part. I said. Republican leading Republicans want to cut Social Security, Medicare. And so they played last night, something I don't even know existed, a video of him saying, I'm here right now to tell you one thing. You're probably never heard from a politician. It'll be my objective to phase out Social Security, pull it up by a ruse, get rid of it. Then he had I'm quoting this now, Medicare and Medicaid are the same sort. They need to be pulled up. Sounds pretty clear to me. How about you? But they sure didn't like me. Call them on it. Look, a lot of Republicans, their dream is to cut Social Security, Medicare. Well, let me just say this. It's your dream, but I'm going to my veto pen. Make it a nightmare. But here's. But here's actually the good news. There's a lot of good Republicans. I found it interesting that when I called them out on it last night, it sounded like they agreed to take these cuts off the table. Remember I said, no, I'm serious. Remember I said, I said, so you said you're not going to cut it, huh? No. I said, okay, we got a deal. Well, I sure hope that's true. I'll believe it when I see it in there. But just lay down with the cuts they're proposing. But it looks like we negotiated a deal last night on the floor of the House of Representatives. Seriously? You see them all standing up saying, we're not going to cut you. Well, that's good, because, by the way, we got a lot of good bipartisan stuff done in the previous year. Why can't we do it again? Here's the bottom line. All of you pay into the system every single paycheck you've had since you started working. These benefits belong to you, the American worker. You earned it. And I will not allow anyone to cut them. Not today, not tomorrow, not ever, Period. You know, some of Republicans in Congress are even threatening to have America default on its debt if I don't agree to the cuts they want. Democrats have never, ever done that, by the way. Now, let's talk about what our national debt is. Everybody thinks it's like what we spend this year versus last. The national debt is a total debt and interest accumulated over 220 years. Hear me 200 over 200 years every single year. We that we went and spent more than we took in it added up. So the federal debt you're hearing about is not the yearly debt. It's 220 or so years of accumulated debt. Democrats, Republicans, everybody. But here's the deal. Our credit has been good. We've never missed a payment as a nation on the debt we have. Why in God's name would America give up the progress we made for the chaos theory suggesting this nation has done gone through too much? We've come too far to let that happen. I won't. Not on my watch. And while there's more work to do, it's clear our plan is working because of the. Because of the grit and resolve of the American worker. I'm not trying to just be nice to have been saying this my whole career. We're going to keep lowering costs for families. We're going to keep putting shovels in the ground to rebuild our infrastructure, our supply chains, and manufacture more here at home. You know, in the communities across the country that were too easily written off for dead, we're going to see not only jobs and economic opportunity return, but a sense of pride. I'm from Scranton, Pennsylvania. I was raised in a little steel town called Claymont, Delaware. There's no more steel be made in Scranton because of coal. Everyone is from Scranton. And just like you're going to see here in Wisconsin, we're going to make sure that what we do is we rebuild these communities because of this. I've long said it's never been a good bet to bet against America. Not a joke. That's what I've told all I've been doing foreign policy for a long time. I know every major world leader for the last 35 years know that face to face. I did it for a previous president, my President, Barack Obama. And I'm doing it now. I can say honestly, as I stand here today, I have never, ever been more optimistic about America's future than am today. We just have to remember who in God's name we're are. We're the United States of America. We're the best positioned nation in the world to lead the world in the 21st century. There's nothing nothing beyond our capacity if we work together. And it's my hope we're going to find enough Republicans who want to do that. God bless you all. And may God protect our troops. Thank you.