



AMCHAM
GUATEMALA
AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

USA OUTLOOK

Weekly newsletter
March 28th to April 1th





Foto: The New York Times

Budget Highlights: Biden Says \$5.8 Trillion Plan Shows His Priorities

The president's proposed budget would raise taxes on billionaires and corporations as well as increase spending on the military and domestic priorities like affordable housing and supply chain issues.

President Biden proposed a \$5.8 trillion budget on Monday, a request that reflected the growing security and economic concerns at home and overseas, with billions set aside to invest in police departments and the military along with new taxes on the wealthiest Americans.

While the White House budget is simply a request to Congress, which controls the government's purse strings, it is a snapshot of a president's priorities and where an administration wants to direct its energies going forward.

Here are the highlights of Mr. Biden's 149-page budget:

- The budget would boost spending by 7 percent.
- To pay for it, he proposes increasing taxes on the rich and on corporations.
- Climate is a big theme throughout the budget, across all agencies.
- There is a new dedication to reducing the deficit.

Clinics, hospitals brace for end of cushion for uninsured covid care

Christina Paz was typing up notes about a patient she'd just seen at Centro San Vicente, El Paso's largest community health center, when an email from Washington showed up. "Lord," she thought as she read it at the clinic's nursing station. "Oh, my God."

The brief email told Paz, a nurse practitioner who is the clinic's chief executive officer, that at 11:59 p.m. on March 22 the federal COVID-19 Uninsured Program would stop accepting claims for testing and treating for the deadly virus on patients who had no way to pay their medical bills.

On the Wednesday afternoon when Paz opened the federal notice, that deadline loomed just six days away. For a clinic where nearly two-thirds of patients are classified as "unfunded," the \$252,000 the federal program has sent Centro San Vicente has been a lifeline as its staff treated more than 2,000 patients for covid and tested thousands more.



Foto: Yahoo! Sports



Foto: CNBC

Omicron subvariant BA.2 is now the dominant strain of Covid-19 in the US, CDC says

The highly contagious Omicron subvariant BA.2 is now the dominant strain of Covid-19 in the United States, causing an estimated 54.9% of all new Covid-19 infections last week, according to new data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday.

The new numbers come from the CDC's genomic surveillance. Based on its models, the agency says that BA.2 caused between 51% and 59% of all new Covid-19 infections in the US the week ending March 26, up from an estimated 39% of all new infections the week before.

The hardest hit region continues to be the Northeast, where BA.2 is causing more than 70% of all cases. The South and Mountain West are seeing the fewest cases in the US. BA.2 is causing slightly more than one-third of infections in those regions.

'We are not immune to what happens in Europe'

Though BA.2 is still just taking the stage in the US, it has had prominent runs in many other parts of the world, including Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific, and is winding down its European tour.

According to the World Health Organization, BA.2 is also the main cause of covid-19 globally, out-muscling two other omicron lineages, BA.1 and BA.1.1, to become the dominant strain. Since its takeover, international case counts -- which had been declining since the first week of January -- have been rising again.

U.S. sanctions will target Russian supply chains next

The next batch of U.S. sanctions on Russia will target yet another sector of the country's economy by zeroing in on supply chains, Deputy Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo said on Tuesday, Reuters reported.

Why it matters: In the wake of Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, the U.S. and its allies have instituted a slew sanctions against Russia, including those targeting Russian politicians and oligarchs and major Russian banks.

The big picture: By expanding the scope of its sanctions, the U.S. intends to undermine "the Kremlin's ability to operate its war machine," Adeyemo told an audience at a London think tank event, per Reuters.

- "In addition to sanctioning companies in sectors that enable the Kremlin's malign activities, we also plan to take actions to disrupt their critical supply chains," he said.
- "Our goal is to use an integrated approach that includes export controls which will bite over time and sanctions that will bite immediately."
- Adeyemo added that the sanctions would also target alternative military suppliers used by Russia, per Reuters.



Foto: Yahoo News



Biden administration plans in May to end pandemic border restrictions blocking migrants, sources say

Foto: CNN

The Biden administration is planning to end Trump-era pandemic restrictions on the US-Mexico border by May 23 that have largely blocked migrants from entering the US, according to three US officials.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is finalizing its assessment of the public health authority, known as Title 42, according to CDC spokeswoman Kathleen Conley, and is expected to announce a decision this week on whether to repeal, modify or extend the authority.

The Biden administration has been under mounting pressure from Democrats and immigrant advocates to end the public health authority, which critics say was never justified by

science and puts migrants in harm's way.

Former President Donald Trump invoked the authority at the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, a move that was immediately met with skepticism by immigrant advocates, public health experts, and even officials within the administration who believed it to be driven by political motivations. Yet the Biden administration continued to lean on Title 42 despite objections from its allies.

According to US Customs and Border Protection data, there have been 1.7 million migrants sent back to Mexico or their origin country since March 2020.