

## Build Back Better: The First 100 Days of the Biden Administration, and Beyond

**Kelly Hyman**

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*Build Back Better is a useful overview of President Joe Biden's first months in office.*

In her political science book *Build Back Better*, political strategist Kelly Hyman compares President Biden's campaign promises with his actual accomplishments during his first 100 days in office.

The book asserts that modern media and partisan bickering place great importance on a president's first 100 days: if the president does not work fast enough, they are deemed a failure, regardless of the political challenges and realities they deal with. This, the book argues, is counterproductive and can obscure a president's true impact. So the text separates hype and personality from policy to discuss what President Biden has done, what his administration is still working on, and what effects his actions have on the people who need help most.

This organized work goes through President Biden's agenda issue by issue, with information about the environment, pandemic responses, and beyond. With each topic, it reviews President Biden's campaign promises, discusses what actions he took to meet them since his inauguration, and supports this work with a wide range of reliable sources. This work assumes minimal prior knowledge of political figures and policies; it is accessible and attuned to the fast pace of current events. Still, some of its statements and predictions—for example, those concerning vaccine distribution—are already out of date.

Hyman expresses optimism about America's future under the Biden administration. She acknowledges the many difficulties that President Biden, and America as a whole, face, but still sees signs that the country has a chance to "build back better." Her book's upbeat tone and straightforward prose are appealing; absent from both are negativity and partisan accusations.

Among its back matter, the book includes summaries of President Biden's executive orders, proclamations, and cabinet confirmations, making it easy to see what has been accomplished—and to seek out more information about his particular actions. It does not, however, include information on how such orders were carried out, or examinations of whether they had the intended effects. In the course of such summaries, "accomplishment" is ill defined: a major infrastructure bill is included as an "accomplishment," for example, even though it had not yet passed at the time the text was written. Further, some quotes have undergone minor changes compared with their source material; the sources of other quotes are not clear.

Evaluating him based on policy, not party or personality, *Build Back Better* is a useful overview of President Joe Biden's first months in office.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (August 4, 2021)

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