

FEBRUARY 13, 2023

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery by First Lady Jill Biden at Mesa Community College

Mesa, Arizona

Thank you, Lilly. What an amazing story. Congratulations to you and your dad on continuing your education and pursuing your ambitions.

Mayor Giles, we finally made this visit happen. Thank you for inviting me to join you in celebrating and supporting the Mesa College Promise. John, your leadership continues to make the difference, and it's my honor to be here today.

One of the best parts of serving as your First Lady is traveling with Secretary Cardona. Miguel is an amazing Secretary of Education who understands how vital education is to building the middle class from the bottom up and from the middle out. Thank you for your service, Mr. Secretary.

Governor Hobbs, it's wonderful to see how you are moving Arizona forward—the President needs partners like you. And, congratulations on hosting the Super Bowl—what a great game. Congressman Stanton, Dr. Robinson, Dr. Gonzales, and all the MCC leadership and students here today: Thank you for welcoming us. Two years ago, my husband, President Biden, made a promise

to rebuild the middle class. And you know what does exactly that?

Community colleges.

As Joe said in his State of the Union, community colleges provide the “best career training in America.” They are flexible and meet students where they are. And while community colleges can be a critical step towards a four-year degree, they also provide pathways to jobs that pay well. Joe and his Administration are working to make Registered Apprenticeships and affordable community colleges available for all American

When I was Second Lady, we launched College Promise to make community college tuition-free and help students cross the finish line. And Joe and I continued to support this work at the Biden Foundation. Now, at the White House, we are still working to make community college free, despite challenges from Congress. And I know that communities like Mesa and nearly 400 other programs throughout the United States aren’t going to wait.

This isn’t a Democrat or Republican idea. It’s an American idea, championed by leaders from both sides of the aisle. In fact, like your mayor, some of our biggest supporters have been Republicans.

For years, College Promise programs have transformed students’ lives. And now, we have something else to add to that equation: Millions of new jobs that Joe and his Administration have created. Jobs just waiting to be filled by students like ours—if we can build the pathways they need.

Your President and his Secretary of Education know we need pipelines that start in high school, provide access to two years of community college, and connect to great jobs. Because that’s the future of our workforce and our

economy.

And Joe is bringing together his entire Administration to make that future a reality. Across the country, we're seeing programs like this one bridging the gap between what students learn and the careers they will eventually find. And we need more communities to follow Mesa's lead.

Because when they do, every student, no matter their background, will have the chance to follow their passions and find a pathway to a great job. And together, we'll be able to fundamentally transform what it means to make a living and make a life here in America.

Thank you.