of our entire system of criminal justice. We have to be clear that when we impose a sentence, we are going to carry it out, and that is why I hope every Member of this House will give serious consideration to the bill we will consider this afternoon that will limit the number of Federal appeals for convicted criminals.

RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, there has been much rhetoric in this House about helping working families. Yet that rhetoric rings hollow when there is vocal opposition to raising the minimum wage.

Where I come from, if you work full time making only $4.25 an hour, you are living in poverty. The current minimum wage offers little incentive to go off welfare and find a job.

Some say that increasing the minimum wage will cost jobs, but study after study shows that is just not true. The minimum wage is at its lowest real level in 40 years. But some in the majority seem out of touch with just how little the minimum wage buys.

If I were to propose that Members of Congress make only $4.25 an hour, people would call that proposal ridiculous. It is ridiculous. Members of Congress cannot live on $4.25 an hour, and neither can anyone else.

Have a heart, raise the minimum wage.

□ 1140

SUPPORT H.R. 729

(Mr. JONES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, last week the State of North Carolina executed Kermit Smith for the brutal kidnaping, rape, and murder of a college cheerleader in 1980. Because of the burdensome appeals process, the case dragged on for 14 years, going before 46 judges and the U.S. Supreme Court 5 times. The victim's family suffered each and every time the case was brought up for review.

Why must we penalize the victims and their families? Haven't they gone through enough. Honest taxpaying citizens question why criminals spend an average of 15 years on death row appealing their cases. They question the enormous cost of the appeals process. They question the amount of time courts spend hearing these cases, while in turn ignoring other pressing matters.

We, as Members of Congress, have the obligation and responsibility to streamline this process for the victims' families and the law-abiding citizen. The Effective Death Penalty Act is a step in the right direction. It sets time limits for the appeals process. We must support H.R. 729.

TRUTH NEEDED ABOUT SURGEON GENERAL NOMINEE

(Mr. MCINNIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, well, we have another issue boiling out there. It is the issue of the appointment of the Surgeon General, and this issue is about credibility, credibility, credibility, credibility.

This is how the story goes so far. The Surgeon General has the administration supply information to the chairwoman of the Senate committee which will hear the confirmation. That information is that he had only performed one abortion.

Later in the day that is revised by the nominee, who says, ''Well, it was not really one. I think it was less than a dozen.''

Now all of a sudden out there it was not one, it was not a dozen, it is 700.

What is the truth? I am very concerned that we will get a Surgeon General nominee out there who is going to draw away and distract from the real issues of health care in this country and make the focus his credibility. If he is not telling the truth, if the administration is not giving us the truth, he ought to step out and let somebody else in.

APPOINT OUTSIDE COUNSEL TO INVESTIGATE GOPAC

(Ms. ESHOO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, according to the Los Angeles Times a Wisconsin couple gave $700,000 to GOPAC between 1985 and 1993. That is a lot of money.

The cornerstone of Federal election law is disclosure, full disclosure. Within the past 5 years, GOPAC has raised more than $7 million. The American people should know where this money came from, did these donors get anything in return, and are there any conflicts of interest?

Mr. Speaker, these are important questions, but we cannot get answers because GOPAC refuses to provide a list of its past contributors and how much they contributed. What we know is that many of GOPAC's current donors have issues pending before the Congress. In light of these potential conflicts of interest, an outside counsel should be appointed to investigate these matters.

The time has come for the House of Representatives, especially the new majority, to live up to their own rhetoric and call for an outside counsel to investigate where GOPAC's money has come from and how it has been used. The American people deserve to know.

A NEW CONGRESS

(Mr. GANSKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, the eyes of the American people are on the House of Representatives, and for a change they like what they are seeking. Recent polls show that the job approval rating for Congress has more than doubled since we began work in January, and the operative word is ''work.''

The 104th Congress is working hard, keeping its promises, and making real changes. Congress matters again. The House of the people is getting on with the business of the people at a pace unprecedented in modern history.

But make no mistake, we are not confusing effort with results. Here are some of the things we have done: We have reformed the rules of Congress; we passed a balanced budget amendment; we passed the line-item veto; we passed the unfunded mandates restriction; and we are well on the way to passage of a vastly improved crime bill.

This is a new Congress, Mr. Speaker, a can-do Congress that is worthy of the people that we were sent here to serve.

MINIMUM WAGE NOT TIED TO MEXICO

(Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the Republicans talk about how they want us to be able to work, because I take that to mean that they will not try to bottle up the President's thoughtful, compassionate proposal to raise the minimum wage.

Now, I was a little concerned when I read the Speaker's opposition to it. I was especially puzzled when I saw that he said that one reason we could not afford to raise the minimum wage of American workers to a living wage, and it is well below that now, is that wages are so low in Mexico.

I am puzzled because when we were dealing with the question of an American guarantee for Mexican loans, many of us on the Democratic side felt that we should address in that context wages in Mexico, and we made the point that we wanted to insist on mechanisms in Mexico that would no longer arbitrarily depress the wages of Mexican workers, but allow them to rise. We were told that that was really none of our business.

But now the Speaker tells us that precisely because Mexican wages are so low, he cannot support giving American workers $5.15 an hour. This is validation of the point we made with regard to Mexico, and it is further argument for raising the American minimum wage.