Erma Bombeck's career as a columnist spanned an era when women began leaving the kitchen for the board room and experiencing corporate heartburn rather than labor pains. The message that we should ''have it all'' was everywhere. A heretofore-unknown body of womenhood was developing a thousand new and different dialects with no translator. There were new battlefields of full-time motherhood versus full-time personhood.

A grudging understanding and bridging of these gaps among women came about, partly through the written work of this clever lady and her sharp pen.

She spoke the language of women everywhere, a language of the heart. Every story she told seemed to reach a part of our sense and sensibility no matter what the topics. People saved the stories, underlined them, sent them to relatives, read them to friends over the phone.

And what made it all so effective was that this woman was a part of all of our families. She knew your mom, your Aunt Rose, your husband, your child.

Her stories were her own, but to me, as to other readers, it almost seemed as if the text were taken from a hidden camera set up in my own house—with words used verbatim.

In February, my daughter sent me a Bombeck columns as a valentine. The topic? ''Having It All.''

The content could have been taken directly from the life my two children and I experienced as I tried to be a 48-hour-a-day mom to them while still cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, car-pooling, shopping, pretending to be an intelligent life form, healing the sick, raising the dead—woman will understand. The last few lines of the column gave hope that someday the child will realize the mother-to-slave ratio and actually express gratitude, even if it is 20 years later.

And that's what my daughter did. She wrote at the bottom of the column, ''Thanks, Mom. I love you,'' Hallmark never said it better.

Coming as my twenty-something children are on their way to productive lives and I confront the ''what now?'' crisis, this column felt like a testimonial.

Erma, friend, I will miss you.

SMALL BUSINESS JOB PROTECTION ACT

HON. RICHARD J. DURBIN

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 1996

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Speaker, I voted in favor of the Small Business Job Protection Act yesterday because it provides several advantageous new tax benefits for small businesses and their employees. By creating simplified retirement plants, extending the tax exclusion for employer-provided educational assistance and encouraging employers to hire workers from economically and otherwise disadvantaged groups through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, this legislation can contribute to the vitality of small businesses.

Despite the positive attributes of this bill, two provisions trouble me. First, by repealing section 956A of the Tax Code, Congress is reinstating an incentive for U.S. companies to move operations and jobs to foreign tax havens, accumulate unlimited passive assets, and avoid paying U.S. income taxes.

Congress put section 956A in the Code in 1993 to curb the ability of controlled foreign corporations to accumulate excess passive assets and shelter them from U.S. taxation. By repealing this provision, we are giving yet another tax break to multinational corporate giants and a paid-for-ticket to run to tax havens. And oddly enough, we're doing it in a ''small business'' bill.

Secondly, I do not favor the wholesale repeal of the Section 936 tax credit which encourages economic investments in Puerto Rico. This action would have a detrimental impact on American citizens in Puerto Rico. I do endorse reform of the credit, focused on establishing effective mechanisms to foster and improve job creation, and using the projected revenue savings for social and employment and training needs in Puerto Rico.

I urge House conferees to carefully reassess these provisions and seek alternative revenue sources to pay for the valuable small business tax reforms in this legislation.

IN SUPPORT OF THE MINIMUM WAGE

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 1996

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of raising the minimum wage.

The minimum wage is a critical earnings floor for the working men and women of our Nation. I have supported the necessary periodic increase in the minimum wage since I was first elected to Congress, introducing my own bill for this purpose in 1986. In 1989, I voted in favor of adjusting the minimum wage to its current level of $4.25.

It is abundantly clear that $4.25 is no longer an adequate minimum wage. Since 1991, the wage has lost $0.50 in value. An individual working full time at this rate makes less than $9,000 per year—not nearly enough to support a family.

Even the proposed increase of $0.90 over 2 years will only compensate for half the value lost in inflation during the 1980's. However, it is a critical step.

Nearly 12 million workers across our Nation are working for minimum wage. Of these, close to 75 percent are over 20 years of age. Fifty-eight percent of these adults are women, many of them single mothers. In Wisconsin alone, about 9 percent of our workforce—over 200,000 people—is earning less than $5.15 per hour.

This is simply not sustainable. If we are going to reform welfare, cut the earned income tax credit, and reduce other benefits for the poor, we must guarantee them a livable wage. We cannot cut all the legs off the table and then wonder why it does not stand. The minimum wage is a crucial safety net for the working poor, ensuring that we do not return to the sweatshops of the past, where unscrupulous employers preyed upon the desperate.

I would also like to express my opposition to the Goodling amendments, which represent nothing more than a cynical attempt to scuttle the minimum wage increase. The first of these amendments would discriminate against new hires and tipped employees, two of the groups most likely to be earning the minimum wage. These provisions would allow employers to pay subminimum wage levels to these workers.

The second Goodling amendment would exempt small businesses with less than $500,000 in gross annual sales from minimum wage laws. This would effectively excuse two-thirds of all American businesses, employing over 10 million workers, from providing a modest wage floor. This is outrageous. I hope our colleagues in the Senate will recognize these provisions for the cynical ploy they are and reject them outright.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues in the strongest possible terms to vote in favor of increasing the minimum wage.

NEW BEDFORD STANDARD TIMES SUPPORTS SUPREME COURT'S COLORADO DECISION

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 1996

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to read in the New Bedford Standard Times, on Thursday, May 23, an excellent editorial in support of the recent Supreme Court ruling striking down the anti-gay and lesbian law in Colorado. As the editorial cogently points out, what the Supreme Court said is ''that this is still the United States of America, people are still entitled to equal protection under the law. All people. Even ones we may misunderstand or, as in the case of Colorado voters, despise. The Supreme Court understands that, even if many other people do not.'' I am very grateful to the editorial board of the New Bedford Standard Times for coming to the Supreme Court's defense on this important occasion when they have reaffirmed basic American constitutional principles. And I ask that this excellent, temperate, well reasoned editorial be printed here.

COURT'S RULING ON GAYS WAS STRICT READING OF CONSTITUTION

The U.S. Supreme Court made a profoundly conservative decision this week when it voted 6–3 to strike down a Colorado measure that sought to deny homosexuals any ''special treatment'' under the law.

That's always the charge when gays in the United States make any attempts to appeal to the government to stop people from discriminating against them. They're looking for ''special treatment'' that no one else gets.

But the Colorado constitutional amendment turned that logic on its head, giving homosexuals ''special treatment'' no American would want, and in the process ran afoul of the equal protection clause of the Constitution.

The six justices who made that conclusion haven't lost their minds. They haven't subscribed to some subversive liberal agenda. They merely read the words of the amendment in question and took them literally. And what they meant, literally, that one group of people was to be singled out for a single trait and systematically denied any specific civil rights protection in the State of Colorado.

''It is not within our constitutional traditions to enact laws of this sort'' was the tart understatement of Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, who wrote the majority decision. To better understand what he meant, try substituting the words ''black'' or ''elderly'' or ''handicapped'' for the word ''homosexual'' and try talking about denying those groups protection under the law when they have