NO MAXIMUM WAGE FOR CONGRESS WITHOUT A NEW MINIMUM WAGE FOR AMERICA ACT OF 1995

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. GUTIERREZ] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, last week, our President issued a challenge to Members of Congress. He asked that this Congress take a stand for Americans who work and sweat and toil ever day, yet earn only $4.25 an hour.

And how have we responded to that challenge?

The majority of my colleagues—colleagues who make $64.40 an hour—have responded with a simple answer—$4.25 is enough; $5.15—the level the President has asked the minimum wage be increased to—is too much; and $5.15 an hour is too much to pay the millions of Americans who carry lunch pails to work every day, who sweep the floors of our hospitals, who crouch behind assembly lines putting together our appliances.

This decision means that more painful decisions will have to be made.

My legislation says that if we dismiss this increase from $4.25 to $5.15, my colleagues and I will feel a little bit of the pain as well. Just a little bit of pain. It isn't the pain that day laborers feel at the end of long hours of manual labor. It isn't the pain that young mothers feel at the end of a long day on the assembly line. It isn't the pain garment workers feel after a long day of piecing together our clothing. it isn't the pain of not having the means to support your family or feed you kids. Almost five months of sweat and toil in jobs that most people don't even want.

A Member of Congress has to work from January 1 until January 11 to make $3,500. Eleven days of work.

I am not suggesting that many of my colleagues are not dedicated, hard-working and conscientious leaders. However, many of those same conscientious leaders simply dismiss the necessity of paying our people a livable wage.

Well, that belief has real effects on real people. For many of my colleagues saying no to a livable minimum wage is simply a sound bite about economic policy and job creation. But for millions of Americans who work hard every day this decision is much more important than any sound bite.

My legislation calls for Member salaries to decrease by 2.6 percent every year until the minimum wage increases to at least $5.15.

Why 2.6 percent? That is the size of the cost-of-living increase Members of Congress were scheduled to receive in 1995.

If Americans earning $4.25 an hour—less than $9,000 per year—can live where their buying power decreases every time the cost of living goes up—then certainly members of Congress can survive it.

This 2.6 percent pay cut will save the U.S. Treasury almost $2 million. This 2.6 percent decrease comes to about $3,500. The average American earning minimum wage has to work from January 1 until May 18 to earn $3,500.

How easy it is for those of us with salaries that place us in top .5 percent of wage earners in this Nation, to say to millions of Americans who can only dream of someday making our salary—''You earn enough.''

Well, I would like to take my colleagues at their word, and issue a challenge of my own.

That is why, today, I introduced legislation tying the salaries of Members of Congress to the action—or lack of action—we take on minimum wage.

If $4.25—$4.25 that in real earning power is less and less every day—is enough for millions of hard-working Americans, then certainly $133,000 is too much for a Member of Congress.

My legislation is clear.

Until we have the courage to join our President and increase the minimum wage to $5.15, then I think Members of Congress should also see their buying power deteriorate.

Even today, 5 years after the last increase in minimum wage, $4.25 is still enough.

Even though the cost of living has increased by more than 10 percent since the last time the minimum wage was increased, we still believe that $4.25 is enough.

The price of homes has increased. The price of bread and milk and eggs has increased. The price of college tuition has increased. The price of rent has increased. The price of clothes has increased.

But the minimum wage has not increased.

And yet a great many of my $65-an-hour colleagues have responded to our President's challenge by saying that $4.25 is enough.

It's just a little bit of pain—pain that will be easily forgotten. Not the pain of working 40 hours a week, and still not having enough money to support your family.

I will be calling on my colleagues in the next few days to support my bill.

I hope every person who is listening tonight who is making $4.25 will call on their Representative to support my bill, because this bill is really about the value of work. The value of the American workers' sweat and sacrifice and pain.

I value the work of my colleagues. But I don't find it 15 times more valuable than that of the people who take care of our children, who tend to our sick, who clean our homes, and build our cities.

So, if my colleagues continue to say no to a livable minimum wage, then I will work to say no to our maximum salaries.

I encourage my colleagues to join me.

I include for the RECORD a copy of my bill.

H.R. —

Be in enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This act may be cited as the ''No Maximum Wage for Congress without a New Minimum Wage for America Act of 1995''.

SEC. 2. REDUCTION OF PAY OF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS PENDING INCREASE IN MINIMUM WAGE.

Notwithstanding section 601(a) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 31) or any other provision of law, the rate of pay of Members of Congress shall be reduced by 2.6 percent on the date of the enactment of this Act, and by 2.6 percent at the end of each one-year period thereafter, until the effective date of the first increase to at least $5.15 per hour in the minimum wage under section 6(a) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. On that effective date, the rate of pay of Members shall be restored to the rate in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act.

COMMUNITY POLICING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. OLVER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, 40 communities in my district got good news. They can hire more cops to fight crime, they can hire these cops because of the community policing program that President Clinton championed and we passed last year.

Community policing is not some new, untried approach. It has been used in many places across the country for some years.

□ 1920

Putting cops on the street makes people safer. Despite this success, or is it because of it, next this House will debate the part of the Republican Contract on America which eliminates the community policing program. Community policing puts police on our streets who know the neighborhoods and are trained to work with residents to prevent crime. Community police work as partners with citizens to make their neighborhoods safer. Community policing takes cops out from behind their desks where they are doing record-keeping and paperwork and puts them back on the beat downtown in the neighborhood where kids gather at night, wherever there could be trouble.

In my district in the small city of Fitchburg which has just over 40,000 people, a community policing program was started 4 years ago, and it reports dramatic drop in crime. Here is what happened after 4 years of community policing in Fitchburg: 25-percent decrease in assaults, 55-percent decrease in burglary, 55-percent decrease in weapons possession, 23-percent decrease in domestic violence, 67-percent decrease in disorderly conduct.

The mayor of Fitchburg told me, and he will tell anyone, there is no substitute for a consistent police presence