

today than it was at that particular time.

Mr. President, this chart shows what is happening. The Dow-Jones average, inflation adjusted, goes right up through the roof. Here it is. It breaks through the roof. This is what is happening with the stock market, the Dow-Jones average, right up through the roof. The real minimum wage, inflation adjusted, the small increase here with the 90-cent increase, right back down again. And what we are talking about with this amendment would be a 90-cent increase over the next 2 years.

Mr. President, as has been pointed out, these are the individuals who are affected—16 to 19 years is 31 percent; over 20 years of age, 70 percent. We are talking about adults; 70 percent of the individuals are over 20 years of age.

Mr. President, this is an indication, again, as I mentioned briefly, about who in our society is going to be impacted. Men represent 40 percent of the wage earners from \$4.25 to \$5.14. These are the wage earners that would be impacted by this increase. Again, 60 percent would be women. Many of them are single women. Many of them have children. That is why I believe that this is not just—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield myself the final 30 seconds.

Is not just a workers' issue; it is a women's issue and a child's issue.

Mr. President, we will have the opportunity to go on and show about what the impact has been on inflation and employment since the end of World War II. We are glad to debate this issue, to take on issues and go through them and let the Senate vote its will.

So, Mr. President, I hope that we will have that opportunity when the legislation is going to come up under what was agreed to last evening to be recognized. We will offer this amendment. We hope that we will be able to work out an agreeable format so that we can have a real debate on the issue and then have a final vote, find out who is on the side of working families in this country.

My time has expired. I understand the remaining time will be available to the Members of the other party and we will be back here at 2:15 to continue this debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Washington.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I did not come to the floor for the purpose of discussing this issue, but having listened to this discussion, I do want to remark on the bizarre nature of an argument which emphasized so strongly the outrage of the last three Senators in not being permitted to debate an issue which they were, of course, debating, on which they will place an amendment, when each of those three Senators has been visibly engaged in the last 4 weeks in preventing the Sen-

ate from voting on an appropriations bill for the District of Columbia with all of the positive impact that has on poor people, law enforcement, and education in the District, and by foolishly engaging at the same time in filibustering an attempt to bring to conclusion—to extend and bring to conclusion—the Whitewater investigation. We have not been permitted to debate these issues on their merits or to vote on their merits. For the life of me, I do not understand how that differs from the objection they are making today, particularly since they will, of course, be able to bring up such an amendment and have a debate on it.

I also point out, they neglected to state that all of their examples relate to some 10 or 15 percent, a very small percentage, of minimum-wage people who are the primary supporters for their families, and that a proposal that would obviously benefit that small handful of people will have a terribly damaging effect on first jobs for teenager and welfare recipients attempting to build new lives and living for themselves.

The compassion for those people, at the beginning of their careers, seem to be remarkably absent in the debate we have heard so far.

#### RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE IS A BAD IDEA

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to some of the statements that were made by our colleagues from Massachusetts, who said we should increase the minimum wage. I will make a couple of editorial comments because I do not know that we need to debate it at this time, but I feel a need to respond to some of the statements made on the floor of the Senate.

The implication was that if we do not increase the minimum wage, we do not care about low-income people. I find that to be offensive. That attempts to show that maybe those of us who oppose raising the minimum wage are not only insensitive, but we do not care about poor people or something. I disagree with that. Maybe we should turn that argument around. Maybe those of us who care more about poor people should increase the minimum wage to \$10, \$15, or \$20 an hour. I would like for everybody in America to make \$20 an hour. But is the proper way to do it to pass a law that says it is against the law for you to have a job if you do not make that? That is what our colleagues from Massachusetts are doing. They want to offer an amendment that says it is against the law for you to have a job unless it pays \$5.15 an hour. They do not care if the job is in rural Missouri or Oklahoma. Maybe every job in Massachusetts pays that much. I do not care if the State of Massachusetts passes a minimum wage law for any figure. That is their prerogative. But to pass a law that makes it effective in my State and all across the country and says it is against the Fed-

eral law to have a job that pays less than \$5.15, I think is a serious mistake.

Who does it hurt? I think it would hurt the very people they propose to help. It would be telling a lot of people who are low income, who have a job that maybe does not pay much, it pays minimum wage—by definition, that is not much, but at least they have a job—and we are going to say, unless that job pays at least \$5.15 an hour, we do not think you should have that job. As a matter of fact, it is against the law, against the Federal law for you to have a job unless it pays that amount. I totally disagree with that.

I just have to say that I do not understand the effort made to have this amendment on this bill. We have a lands bill up. We have a bill that deals with Presidio, deals with the land exchange in Oklahoma and Arkansas, and we have a bill dealing with Utah wilderness. It is a complicated bill. I compliment my colleague from Alaska, Senator MURKOWSKI, for his leadership on this bill.

What does the minimum wage amendment have to do with this bill? Nothing—except for politics. I will say it has something to do with politics. My colleagues said that we have not had an increase in the minimum wage since 1989—7 years. Wait a minute. The Democrats were in control of the Senate and the House and the White House in the years 1993 and 1994. Why did they not have the bill on the floor then? The majority leader, Senator MITCHELL, at that time could have brought it up. But he did not. Why? Well, they were trying to have a big increase in the minimum wage because they wanted to mandate a very expensive health care plan on America. Maybe they figured they could not do both. They controlled the agenda. The Senator from Massachusetts could have offered that amendment, and he did not do it. We did not have a vote in 1993 and 1994 when President Clinton and the Democrats were in control. But we are having one today.

I noticed a coincidence in today's paper, the Washington Post. The headline is, "AFL-CIO Endorses Clinton, Approves \$35 Million Political Program." They want to enact their agenda. This is on their agenda. My colleagues talked about special interests. I would say this is a pretty big special interest. I would say that all of their members make more than minimum wage. Maybe all of them do. There are a lot of people in rural Missouri or rural Oklahoma making minimum wage, and if you increase the minimum wage by a certain amount, you are going to be putting some people out of work. I do not know who, but I know there are some. I have been in rural areas that have grocery stores that are striving to stay alive because they had a big company come in, like Wal-Mart or somebody, a big competitor.

Yes, they were paying \$4.50 an hour or whatever the amount would be, and they are not making any money. But if

we mandate that they increase their minimum wage or whatever they are paying by 21 percent as proposed, you are going to be putting some of those jobs out, maybe put the business out.

And what are these jobs? A lot of them are starting level jobs. I worked for minimum wage 27½ years ago. It was when my wife and I were first married. I worked for it before then as well. But I remember that was the best job we could get. We both worked. At that time I think the minimum wage was \$1.60 an hour, and was it enough? No. Did I want more? Yes. Did I learn part of the trade? And that trade at the time was a janitor service. Yes. And I started my own.

So the minimum wage was not so much a minimum wage as it was a starting wage. It helped me learn a craft or business, and I was able to start a business. I employed more people and they made more than the minimum wage. But what we are doing, if we increase the minimum wage significantly, what we are going to be doing is telling all people if your job does not pay at least this amount, it is against the law for you to have a job, we are going to pull up the economic ladder. The Federal Government is determined if your job does not pay that amount, you should not have it; it is against the Federal law.

I think that is wrong. That is the heavy hand of the Federal Government coming in and saying we know best. We know you should be making more. Now, what is right in Boston, MA, may not be what is right in my hometown of Ponca City, OK.

So I just really disagree with this idea of big Government knows best; we are going to mandate, we are going to tell everybody what to do and act like there are no economic consequences whatsoever.

Sure, there are economic consequences. You are going to be pricing some jobs—maybe the job is pumping gas—out of the market. That is one of the first jobs that a lot of my group growing up were working at. You do not see that anymore. Most of the gas stations are self-serve. That may not be the greatest job in the world, but I would rather have that young person coming in and getting a start and maybe learning the fact this is not good enough; I cannot make enough money, so maybe I need to go back and complete high school or maybe I need to go into vo-tech or maybe I need to go get some additional training. That is all part of the educational process.

We say, "Oh, no. If the job doesn't pay over \$5.15 an hour, you can't have it; it is wrong." Or maybe the job is sacking groceries. You do not see many jobs like that. We used to have those jobs. The Federal Government is going to put people out of business and back on the streets, people who need that job training.

A lot of people in Boston, a lot of people in different parts of the country need that first job. That first job

teaches them a lot more than just the dollar amount. And we should give them that opportunity. We should not be pulling the economic ladder up and saying, no, if it does not pay that much, it is not worth it; you go ahead and stay home. And, yes, so what if you are 16 years old and you do not have anything else to do, just stay home. And then what happens? A lot of those idle people say, well, I need some money. How can I make money? Maybe I can make money running drugs, maybe I can make money stealing things, whatever. A lot of people get into trouble because they have time on their hands.

That is a mistake. We should not price them out of the marketplace, and that is what is being proposed.

And then some of our colleagues say, well, there are no economic consequences whatsoever. This is not going to mean an increase in unemployment. I think it just defies the law of supply and demand. If there are no negative economic consequences by a 21-percent increase in the minimum wage, why not increase it 50 percent? Why not increase it 100 percent? Maybe we should have a perfecting amendment that says the minimum wage will be \$10 an hour?

That is all right. If you work 2,080 hours a year, that is \$20,000 a year. I think that would be nice. I would like for everybody to make \$20,000 a year. So maybe we should perfect this amendment. If you are not going to have any negative consequences by a 21-percent increase in the minimum wage, let us make it 100 percent, make it \$10 an hour. I just think that argument makes no sense whatsoever. Common sense would say, hey, this is going to cause some problems for some people and those some people are going to be the people on the lowest end of the economic scale that maybe are trying to crawl that ladder and we are going to pull the ladder up. We should not do that.

I wish to make a couple of comments. Yes, there are negative economic consequences. CBO said that this is an unfunded mandate on cities and counties and States and tribes of about \$1 billion over the next few years. They said it is an unfunded mandate on the private sector to the tune of over \$12 billion for the next few years.

The real problem is that this is going to be telling a lot of young people we are sorry; if you cannot find a job that pays this much, we do not want you to have a job; it is against the law for you to have a job. That is a mistake. I think that is a serious mistake. We should not do that.

So I will urge my colleague at the appropriate time to oppose this amendment if and when it is offered. It does not belong in this bill. Some people are kind of frustrated Congress does not get its business done, and on occasion I may join that frustration. But this amendment is for politics because the leaders of organized labor are in town,

because the leaders of organized labor are endorsing Clinton and promising record amounts, record amounts, \$35 million in political campaign contributions. This is special interest legislation and the real problem is the real people it will hurt will be low-income people who need jobs.

So I will urge my colleagues at the appropriate time to defeat this amendment.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. MURKOWSKI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I join with my friend from Oklahoma relative to his concern over what the minimum wage will do if there is an increase. And I believe the increase proposed by the Senator from Massachusetts is from \$4.25 to \$5.15. That is about 45 cents I believe over a 2-year period.

#### FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I have today a bizarre example of the unthinking impact of conflicting Federal regulations on other conflicting Federal regulations and the fact that so often our bureaucracy simply does not think out the consequences of what it does.

Recently, I was in the Tri City area of east central Washington and was discussing his business with the manager of a Unocal fertilizer plant in the city of Kennewick. He brought to my attention a fairly recent message that he had received from the U.S. Coast Guard. The Coast Guard has written to everyone with various kinds of facilities in ports from California through the State of Washington, warning them about potential terrorism, pointing out that the base of the explosive at the Oklahoma City courthouse disaster was fertilizer, and telling the manager of this fertilizer plant how important it was to guard against terrorism, to guard against outsiders getting into the facility and engaging in terroristic acts.

Well, it was oratory in nature and did not suggest any particular things to do. I do not think it suggested anything that the plant was not already doing. But at the same time, Mr. President, the Unocal plant was informed by the Environmental Protection Agency of a truly bizarre proposal on its part.

As a fertilizer plant, and because fertilizers do, under some circumstances, raise certain health risks and also certain explosive risks, this business is subject to widespread regulation on the part of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency. In fact, those regulations are so detailed in nature that 23 people out of 150 employees in the plant are devoted almost solely to abiding by various governmental regulations.