

INCREASE IN MINIMUM WAGE WILL MEAN 500,000 JOB LOSS

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, today the Democrats say goodbye to 500,000 jobs, according to the Federal Reserve, which is what the impact of increasing the minimum wage will be. That is no problem, though, because most of those folks will get on public benefits, which is exactly where the Democrats want them, right under the thumb of the Government so they can create dependency on the Government.

Do my colleagues know who is on minimum wage? Sixty-six percent of the people are part-time workers. Thirty-nine percent of them are teenagers. Two percent are over 30 years old. And those who start with a minimum wage are making \$6.05 an hour within 1 year. It is an entry-level wage.

I started at minimum wage when I was 16 years old. I have worked minimum wage in the restaurant and the construction business. I learned skills, and as I learned them, I was paid more. That is how the private sector, the capitalistic free enterprise system, works.

I am sorry there are so many people who lean with socialistic tendencies to government solutions to every possible problem that is out there. I say let the private sector get out there and compete. Let us save the jobs and cut out the talk about increasing the wage.

AMERICANS DEMAND A CLEAN MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to follow my colleague from Georgia talking about that. If he had his way, we would still be 25 cents an hour from 1938. That was the first minimum wage.

After months of blocking attempts to increase the minimum wage, the House Republicans are finally going to allow us to have a vote. But my colleagues should not be fooled by this sham. It is not an increase, it is actually a cut. It is exempting millions of workers from the minimum wage.

This bill only will attach special interest provisions to exempt those millions from minimum wage. Eighty percent of the American people support an increase in the minimum wage, but the Republicans want it without the gimmicks of the exemptions for restaurant workers, the exemptions for computer operators, the exemptions they are providing.

They are actually taking people off the minimum wage benefit. That is what this sham is about. They do not really want a minimum wage. Just continue to listen to them. They do not want an increase in the minimum

wage. They do not want a minimum wage. They want everybody to work for a quarter an hour.

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WELFARE REFORM

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

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, as I speak, literally millions of Americans are trapped in a cycle of dependence known as the modern welfare state. It is a system characterized by drug abuse, fatherlessness, violence, and the wholesale destruction of the family. The welfare state encourages teen pregnancy and destroys the work ethic.

People have literally lost their freedom and their self-respect because of the so-called compassion of Washington's liberals.

When he ran for the Presidency, Bill Clinton said that he would end welfare as we know it. Instead he vetoed commonsense welfare reform, not once, but twice. As we've seen in so many other instances, his word cannot be trusted. Bill Clinton is playing politics with the lives of millions of Americans. His broken word guarantees the survival of the failed welfare system.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to reforming welfare, our President is the great pretender.

THE MINIMUM WAGE

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, today the House takes up increasing the minimum wage, and, in what amounts to little more than a political dance, the Republican majority has designed the debate to ensure that we take one step forward and two steps back. By coupling an increase in the minimum wage with an amendment exempting companies with less than \$500,000 annual gross sales, the Republicans have assured a minimum wage increase that is unfair and is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, if the amendment passes, 10 million hard-working Americans will be excluded from the increase, and millions more Americans already covered will lose their coverage.

The gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY] was not kidding when he said he would, and I quote, resist an increase in the minimum wage with every fiber of his being. By increasing the minimum wage and making it less available, the Republican leadership is dancing around an issue that 80 percent of the American people support. In words that DICK ARMEY can understand, a country music song goes: One step forward, two steps back; nobody gets too far like that.

AMERICANS WANT WELFARE REFORM

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, welfare reform is something that the American people want. Both parties have promised to reform our current broken-down system, but I believe Republicans have delivered. This Republican Congress sent a strong welfare package to President Clinton, and he vetoed it.

Today Republicans are going to try again. We are introducing a strong welfare reform bill that concentrates on family and individual responsibility. Our package lifts families out of the destructive welfare cycle of poverty and despair. It stresses work, and allows States the flexibility to design programs that fight their residents' needs.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that this time around the President keeps his promise and signs a strong welfare reform package. His record on this issue has not gone unnoticed by the American people. It is time to reform welfare. Let us do it now.

REPUBLICANS AND THE MINIMUM WAGE

(Ms. MCKINNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, finally, after months of prodding and pleading with the Republican leadership, we are going to vote on increasing the minimum wage.

Not too long ago, Mr. Speaker, members of the Republican leadership were saying things like, and I quote,

I will resist an increase in the minimum wage with every fiber of my being.

Or,

I'll commit suicide before I vote on a clean minimum wage bill.

While the vote on increasing the minimum wage will only be an amendment to another bill, the fact of the matter is that the votes that we're taking today are neither clean nor real. NEWT GINGRICH and the Republicans have found yet another way to feed the American people a pig in a poke. This Republican political sleight of hand will actually repeal the minimum wage laws and exclude workers from minimum wage protections.

Mr. Speaker, we all feared that the Republicans would go too far. We all feared that the Republicans would serve their rich fat-cat friends at the expense of the rest of us. But, by their offerings today, they've confirmed that our worst fears have indeed come true.

PRESIDENT CLINTON AND WELFARE REFORM

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