

guilty plea in the court, Singh said that in all such cases the Indian mission was answerable. Singh said then Indian Ambassador Siddhartha Siddhartha Shankar Ray had clarified the Indian mission's viewpoint and there was nothing much left to be added to that.

INDIAN EMBASSY CAUGHT RED-HANDED—FUND RAISER ADMITS ILLEGALLY LAUNDERING POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 14—Lalit H. Gadhia, a major political fundraiser in Maryland, has confessed that he laundered over \$46,000 in political contributions from the Indian Embassy to Members of Congress, Thursday's Baltimore Sun reported. Gadhia, 57, former campaign treasurer for Maryland Governor Parris Glendening and a Baltimore immigration lawyer, confessed to the scheme in the U.S. District Court in Baltimore, according to the report.

Under the plan, Gadhia used money provided by the Indian Embassy here to reimburse Indian Americans and Indians living in the United States for contributions they made to the candidates the Embassy supported. According to the report, the Embassy, through Gadhia, illegally gave \$31,400 to the Indian American Leadership Investment Fund, a Los Angeles-based political action committee, which then distributed it to candidates. It is illegal for noncitizens to contribute to U.S. political campaigns or for anyone to make a contribution in another person's name.

The Embassy officials in charge of the scheme, former Ambassador S.S. Ray and former Embassy staffer Devendra Singh, have both returned to India. Mr. Ray was a losing candidate for Parliament in the recent elections and Mr. Singh holds a high-ranking position with the Rajasthan state police. On February 19, 1995, Indian Foreign Minister R.L. Bhatia said at a press conference that "there is a strong anti-India lobby in the United States. We are spending large sums of money through Ambassador Ray to neutralize it." During the time that Mr. Ray was Governor of Punjab, Sikhs spoke of "the three Rs—Ray, Ribeiro, and Rajiv"—a very repressive trio. Julian Ribeiro was Director General of Police at the time. He and Mr. Ray are responsible for instituting the tactic of the fake "encounter" in Punjab. In a fake encounter, a Sikh will be killed by the police or while in custody, then they will report that he died in an "encounter," thus providing cover for the killing.

Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, the government in exile of Khalistan, confronted Mr. Ray in the hall of the Longworth House Office Building, calling him "the Butcher of Punjab." The confrontation was picked up by the media. Mr. Ray returned to India shortly after that confrontation. The new ambassador, Naresh Chandra, brought his brother, Girish Chandra Saxena, to the Embassy with him. Girish Saxena is a former head of India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), which infiltrated Sikh militant organizations before the "Operation Bluestar" attack on the Golden Temple and 38 other Sikh temples throughout Punjab, Khalistan, in June 1984 in which over 20,000 Sikhs were killed. Ambassador Chandra himself has recently been implicated in illegal smuggling of CFCs from India to the United States. CFCs have been banned in the United States since January 1. According to the Customs Service, CFCs are now the number two problem after illegal drugs.

"Mr. Gadhia's confession shows the moral bankruptcy of the Indian regime," said Dr. Aulakh. "India has been murdering Sikhs

and other minorities for many years. The recent payoff scandal that helped to bring down the Congress Party showed the world that in addition to being a brutal tyranny, India is corrupt and its claim to be a 'democracy' is hollow. This money-laundering campaign contribution scheme shows India's total disregard for democratic principles in other countries as well," Dr. Aulakh said. "Obviously, the regime believes that everyone is as corrupt as they are," he stated. "These practices are unacceptable, and I hope that Mr. Gadhia's confession will not be the end of the investigation. The Embassy is deeply involved in this scheme, and its involvement should be exposed and punished."

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

[Mr. RIGGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

THE MINIMUM WAGE

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

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of why I supported the increase of the minimum wage from \$4.25 an hour to \$5.15 an hour.

One of the basic reasons I supported raising the minimum wage in this house today was, there are about 112,000 reasons: The 112,000 payroll positions in West Virginia that will see a wage increase because of this vote, roughly 17 percent of our work force.

Mr. Speaker, this is important because it means it boosts their level of income. It makes them consumers. It makes them participants. The minimum wage has not been raised since 1991 when it finally reached \$4.25 an hour. Moses wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. The minimum wage is at an all-time buying low, 40-year buying low, and it is time that it be raised. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it was just a few years ago that in the 1950's, 1960's and early 1970's that the minimum wage was designed to be about one-half of the average manufacturing wage. Today it is somewhere around one-third of that amount.

So the minimum wage has steadily dropped, and I know, Mr. Speaker, we have heard the arguments about how much it is a job killer and less people will be hired. The studies do not seem to indicate that. But let me also suggest that we have heard that argument every time since the 1930's when the minimum wage was first raised. Time after time that has been trotted out. About 8½ million jobs have been created in the past 3½ years. So the minimum wage is certainly not a factor in job retardation.

Indeed, most of the jobs we are hoping to create are not minimum wage jobs. But for those people who have to work at 40 hours a week, trying to get by doing exactly what society asks them to do, I think it is not too much

to ask for a minimum wage increase. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I recall that when I was working my way through college, as a bunch of people in this country have done, I worked at minimum wage, and I remember that the only collective bargaining agent I ever had when I worked in that hospital carrying bed pans, and when I did other work along that line, the only collective bargaining agent I ever had was the Federal Government when it raised the minimum wage. That is the only way I was going to see a wage increase, and it was the only way that millions of others were.

Mr. Speaker, there were amendments that would have greatly stripped the minimum wage coverage. One of the amendments, the Goodling amendment, while it would have raised the minimum wage, would have also removed 10 million people from possible coverage by the minimum wage. That certainly would not have been much of a victory. We could have celebrated the seven people left who could still qualify for an increased minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, just a few days ago, this House passed legislation to repeal the gas tax for 7 months, a 4.3-cent-a-gallon gasoline tax for 7 months. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it ironic that that action takes place. We were able to pass the gasoline tax suspension for 7 months. That, incidentally, gets you through the election. I guess that is to enable people to get gasoline to drive to the polls.

The minimum wage increase is a real measure. It puts money into people's pockets. It gives them far more than the gasoline tax repeal for 7 months ever would have given them. It gives them an increase over a 2-year period to \$5.15, or 90 cents an hour. It is what permits that person to recognize some fruits of their labor.

We are asking a lot of people in welfare reform to get off of welfare, as they should, to go to work. What Kind of reward is there if you do not get a pay increase since 1991? I might add, I went to the supermarket the other night. Nobody stopped the food prices from increasing. Gasoline prices have been increasing. Everything else has been increasing since 1991. But wages of people who do a lot of the basic work in this country have not.

So my hope is that this can be the first step in improving the working conditions of a lot of middle-income working people in our country. No, this is not the only step. There is a lot that needs to be done to grow jobs. There is a lot that must be done in education. There is a lot that must be done building the public works, the roads, the bridges, the water and the sewer systems, the industrial parks. But making sure that people are paid a fair and adequate wage, raising the minimum wage for the first time in 5 years, raising it from the lowest point in 40 years in terms of buying power that it has had, I think that is a significant accomplishment.