

* * * bigger paychecks and * * * a healthier national economy * * *." Of course the minimum wage did not cause all of this to happen, although it has played a significant role in the bigger paycheck part of this for people at the low end of the wage scale. But the fact that we are enjoying this continued economic boom, with increased employment at the lowest end of the wage scale, directly contradicts what the Republican Party made its official doctrine during the debate on the minimum wage, and Mr. Shields is right to document the glaring disparity between what they said and reality.

THE GOP'S CHICKEN LITTLES
(By Mark Shields)

When it comes to economic forecasting, conservative Republicans on Capitol Hill give a new respectability to astrology.

Consider the matter of the federal minimum wage. Last summer Congress voted to increase the minimum wage, effective last Oct. 1, from \$4.25 an hour to \$4.75 (it will rise again next Sept. 1 to \$5.15 an hour). Democrats almost unanimously favored the increase, and Republicans almost unanimously opposed it.

But many Republicans did more than merely oppose the hike, they were prophets of doom and gloom: Chicken Little and Gloomy Gus rolled up into a single morose caucus.

House Republican Whip Tom DeLay (R-Tex.) was his usual direct self in panning the increase: "The Democrat party is to job creation what Dr. Kevorkian is to health care; a job-killer cloaked in kindness." A little less restrained was Rep. Jack Kingston (R-Ga.), who accused House Democrats, whom he referred to in floor debate as the "comrades on the other side," of failing to understand that a minimum-wage increase would destroy jobs, adding, "The folks over there are simply economically ignorant."

But the Cassandra award belongs to Rep. John Shadegg (R-Ariz.), who declared: "Raising the minimum wage will put one out of every four minority workers between the ages of 17 and 24 who are out of school and working out of work."

What was being voted on then was a modest proposal that simply would guarantee that a worker in America who labors 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, would earn about what a member of Congress is paid every three weeks.

Republicans were wrong. The economy, almost eight months after the minimum-wage increase became law, is much better, not worse. The nation's unemployment is at its lowest point in 24 years. The proportion of the population with jobs is the highest in American history. The stock market continues to set new altitude records.

But what about the dire GOP predictions concerning lost jobs? Minimum-wage opponents emphasized that job losses would be heavy in the eating and drinking industry, where nearly one out of three private-sector minimum-wage earners is employed. In the first four months after the minimum wage was raised, employment in eating and drinking businesses grew at a rate four times faster than it had in the year before the increase.

And wait, there is still more good news for the workers this hike was intended to help. Teenage unemployment is measurably lower than where it stood just last September, before the wage increase. In a soon-to-be-released study, the Economic Policy Institute finds that not only has unemployment for teenagers and young adults not been adversely affected in the first eight months following the wage increase but that the bene-

fits have primarily gone to low-income working families.

Minimum-wage workers, contradicting the myths spun by foes of the federal wage law, are not typically the spoiled stepson of the investment banker just picking up gas money for his BMW convertible. Instead, 35 percent of the workers who benefited from the increase are the sole breadwinners in their families. Three out of five of them are women. Seven out of 10 are 20 or older.

That's why it's encouraging to learn that the increase has had its biggest impact upon the earnings of black and Hispanic teens. The benefits of the wage increase have gone overwhelmingly to low-income working families. Nearly 56 percent of the families that have benefited from the wage increase are in the bottom 40 percent of American income.

With no adverse effect on the employment of young workers, with bigger paychecks and with a healthier national economy, about all that's left to say to those pessimistic, it's five-minutes-to-midnight conservatives is, "Cheer up, fellas, eventually things will get worse."

GEORGE PATRICK MACRIS—
GUAM'S SMALL BUSINESS PER-
SON OF THE YEAR

HON. ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 18, 1997

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of Dr. George Patrick Macris, recipient of the State Small Business Person of the Year Award. He was recently honored for his work as president of the Harmon Doctor's Clinic at a luncheon hosted by the U.S. Small Business Administration on June 3, 1997.

Dr. Macris holds a degree in zoology from Rutgers University and a medical degree from Rutgers University Medical School and New Jersey Medical School. He also served as a medical officer in the U.S. Naval Reserve for several years before settling down to private practice in Anchorage, AK.

Since 1991, Mr. Macris has been practicing in Harmon, Guam, where he operates the Harmon Doctor's Clinic, serves as commander in the Naval Reserve, and sits in numerous hospital committees. Moreover, he has been an advocate of health care reform and is currently the Governor appointed and elected chairman of the Guam Health Coordinating Council and a staff member at Guam Memorial Hospital and the U.S. Naval Hospital, Guam.

The Harmon Doctors' Clinic, for which Dr. Macris received his award, is a unique health care facility which provides comprehensive services to both health care professionals and patients. In 1996, it became a designated Immigration and Naturalization Service [INS] Civil Surgeon Center and received Communicable Disease Control [CDC] vaccine approval—travel clinic. Currently, the clinic offers medical/health care services in general/internal medicine, diving/hyperbaric medicine, school physical, vaccination and travel clinic, cardiopulmonary diseases, urgent care, x-ray, OSHA/preventative medicine physical and laboratory. Moreover, Dr. Macris intends to expand services to include the only privately owned and operated decompression chamber and cancer treatment center. He has already

received positive responses from the American Cancer Institute in establishing a cancer treatment center on Guam.

The clinic has also been successful administratively. It generated revenues in excess of \$900,000 and anticipates a 12-percent growth in 1997. The patient base has also grown from 30 to over 11,000 member patients. The clinic employs 17 persons under the direction of Dr. Macris.

Again, I congratulate Dr. Macris for his outstanding leadership in the medical field. His exemplary service and innovative thinking are certainly assets to Guam. Not only have they garnered him recognition from the Small Business Administration, they have also won him Guam's respect and admiration.

FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS
TO CHINA

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 18, 1997

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, a few days from now, Members will be asked to vote on one of the toughest issues they will face this year—whether to renew China's most-favored-nation trade status.

I recently had sent to me a copy of a report of a study tour to China by a delegation of former Members of Congress.

I am taking the liberty of reprinting the summary section of this report in the RECORD, in the hope that it may be of some use to Members as they consider the issues involved in the MFN debate in the days ahead.

REPORT OF STUDY TOUR TO CHINA

A delegation of members of the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress traveled to China during the period September 1-10, 1996 at the invitation of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress. The trip included meetings in Beijing, Xian, Shanghai and Guilin. The delegation was led by the President of the Association, former Representative Louis Frey, Jr. (R-FL) and included: former Senator Daniel B. Brewster (D-MD); former Representatives John N. Erlenborn (R-IL), who is Treasurer of the Association; Beverly B. Byron (D-MD); Lawrence J. Hogan (R-MD); Elizabeth Holtzman (D-NY); John W. Jenrette, Jr. (D-SC); Philip E. Ruppe (R-MI); Richard T. Schulze (R-PA); Carlton R. Sickles (D-MD); and the Executive Director of the Association, Linda A. Reed. Also on the trip were: Marcia Frey; Judy Brewster; Kirk Walsh, husband of Beverly B. Bryon; Mary and Elizabeth Ruppe, daughters of Philip E. Ruppe; Nancy Schulze; and H. Thomas Collins, husband of Linda A. Reed. The members of the delegation paid their own international transportation costs; all expenses in China were covered by the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Prior to the trip, members of the delegation received briefings from personnel in the Office of Chinese and Mongolian Affairs at the Department of State and staff of the House International Relations Committee, and had the opportunity to review hundreds of pages of background material on China prepared by the State Department, the Congressional Research Service and the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations.

In Beijing, the delegation was given a welcoming banquet by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress,