

Over 80 percent of the American people believe that raising the minimum wage from the 1997 wage level of \$5.15 to, today, of \$7.25 an hour is, in fact, the right thing to do, the fair thing to do, and the moral thing to do. The only thing that prevents that from happening is the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives.

Even the Senate allowed a vote to take place, but only in the Senate can you pass something by a majority vote. It got 52 votes, a bipartisan vote, and it still does not pass because they say you have got to get 60 votes. But in the House you cannot even get that vote. You cannot even get that vote.

We had a vote in the Appropriations Committee on a bipartisan basis. The members of that committee voted to increase the minimum wage. Under the leadership of Mr. HOYER and Mr. OBEY, they voted to increase the minimum wage. Since that has happened, that bill has been prevented from coming to the floor of the House of Representatives where we could vote, up or down, on increasing the minimum wage. So, apparently, this time and place that the Republicans say they are prepared to go is a mystery to everyone.

Maybe we could have a national contest like they are doing for the Johnny Depp's pirates movie. We could bury the time and the place somewhere in the United States, and we could let people decide and play a game and try to figure out where it is. Where is that time and place? Is it in the gentleman's district in California? Is it in my district?

We all know where that time and place is. The time is now and the place is the House of Representatives on the floor of the Congress of the United States. That is where we are supposed to be doing the people's business.

There is nothing else in this country that is at 1997 levels, not gasoline, not bread, not milk. Do you know what else is not at 1997 levels, where the Congress found the time and the place?

Do you want to know what else is not at 1997 levels? Congressional pay. Because we found six times and six places to give ourselves the cost-of-living increase while we insisted that the lowest paid people in this country could not have more than \$5.15 an hour, the same wage they were making in 1997. Apparently, it wasn't good enough for Congress, so we increased our COLA.

I agree with that increase, but think about the message and the morality that you are reflecting when you cannot reach back, after we receive these COLAs, and say to these people who are struggling to support their families, Here, let us give you a hand, let us help you; you have made that decision to participate in the American economic system by going to work every day. But somehow this Congress just does not value their work.

We give tax breaks to CEOs. A guy at Exxon walks out after several years with \$400 million in guaranteed pension benefits, \$400 million. He made more

money brushing his teeth than people make on the minimum wage all year long.

What is the justice of this? What is the equity of this? What is the fairness of this? It cannot be what America is about, about the intentional decision by the Republican leadership that 6 million American people will simply be poor, and they will be relegated to the class of poverty and they will be there by edict of the Federal law. The Federal law will keep them in poverty.

We ought to also tell the taxpayers that when you make that decision, you are also making the taxpayers of this country part of their employment because when they work at those poverty wages, the taxpayers pay for the school lunches and they pay for the housing and they pay for the healthcare and they pay for the utility bills when it is cold and when it is hot. We end up subsidizing those employers who insist that they cannot make a profit unless they pay 1997 wages.

Let me tell you something about those employers. They are not long for this world because there is something very wrong with their business plan that they can only succeed if they pay 1997 wages. Think about that. Think about what you are embracing. You are embracing an economic model that says that success is dependent upon being able to pay forever 1997 wages to my employees. Have we lost our minds here? Do we understand the injustice of this?

Again, these are people working 40 hours a week every day. They drive mostly old cars that consume more gas that costs them more to commute to that job. They still do it.

America has already said it. It is just the Congress, just the Republican leadership. America says, give these people a raise. They know that struggle. They know that struggle. They know it themselves. Middle-class people know what it means to drive up to a station today and say, Fill it up. Most people do not say, Fill it up. They say, How much do I need to get to Friday? That is what they say to themselves.

Well, think about what poor people are thinking.

We value work. We changed the welfare laws to encourage people to go to work. Should we not encourage them to get out of poverty? Should we not help them to get out of poverty instead of sticking them at 1997 levels?

This is fundamental. This vote is fundamental. This debate is fundamental. And the time and the place to have it is now in the halls of the Congress of the United States. We cannot continue to have a Republican leadership that says, this is not right, that is not right, this is not the bill, this is not the subject matter.

Just bring us a bill. Let us vote up or down. You have the majority. You control it. Either you believe in the dignity of these people, in the dignity of their children, in the dignity of their work, or you don't, because you cannot

have that and then insist upon these wages.

I ask for an "aye" vote on the motion to instruct.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Ordering the previous question on H. Res. 906, by the yeas and nays; adopting H. Res. 906, if ordered; instructing conferees on S. 250, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2990, CREDIT RATING AGENCY DUOPOLY RELIEF ACT OF 2006

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the vote on ordering the previous question on House Resolution 906, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 223, nays 197, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 364]

YEAS—223

Aderholt	Boehlert	Camp (MI)
Akin	Boehner	Campbell (CA)
Alexander	Bonilla	Cannon
Bachus	Bonner	Cantor
Baker	Bono	Capito
Barrett (SC)	Boozman	Carter
Bartlett (MD)	Boustany	Castle
Barton (TX)	Bradley (NH)	Chabot
Bass	Brady (TX)	Choccola
Beauprez	Brown (SC)	Coble
Biggert	Brown-Waite,	Cole (OK)
Bilbray	Ginny	Conaway
Bilirakis	Burgess	Crenshaw
Bishop (UT)	Burton (IN)	Cubin
Blackburn	Buyer	Culberson
Blunt	Calvert	Davis (KY)