

at the starvation wage—the Federal minimum wage—of \$7.25 an hour. We must raise the minimum wage to a living wage. When we do that, we provide a pay raise for some 25 million Americans who today are struggling economically. And when we do that, we not only help them, but we also help the economy because, as I mentioned earlier, when these folks have money they can then spend some money.

We have to provide pay equity for women workers. It is not acceptable that women today earn 78 percent of what male workers earn who do the same job.

We have to deal with the scandal of overtime right now, where we have workers in McDonald's who make \$25,000, \$28,000 a year and who are "supervisors" and therefore are exempt from overtime regulations. So they may be working 50 or 60 hours a week making very little money, yet because they are "supervisors," they don't get time and a half. Ending that and raising that \$23,000 threshold to something like \$56,000 would provide a huge pay increase for millions and millions of workers.

We live in a very, very competitive global economy, and it makes no sense to me that in that economy we have large numbers of young people who are giving up on the dream of getting a good education and going to college or graduate school. Others are leaving school deeply in debt. We should learn from many of our competitors who say to their young people: You want to go to college? You can go to college, regardless of your income because tuition is free.

A few months ago, one of the States in Germany was the last State in Germany to do away with tuition. What one of their political leaders said was: Look. We believe all of our people have the right to go to college, and income should not be an impediment. I agree with that.

We need finally to do what I know is very, very difficult for many of the Members of this body, and that is take on Wall Street. We have a handful of huge financial institutions that have assets equivalent to 60 percent of the GDP of the United States of America. They issue half of the mortgages in this country and two-thirds of the credit cards in this country. I believe that is just too big. I fear very much about another too-big-to-fail scenario where we have to bail them out.

As we know, Republicans recently have pushed through language to take away some of the protections that taxpayers had in Dodd-Frank and once again leave them exposed to bailing out Wall Street when they engage in dangerous derivative speculation.

Lastly—and this is not just an economic issue, although it is; it is a moral issue—we have millions of senior citizens and people with disabilities in this country who are struggling with incredible courage every single day to buy the food they need and to buy the

medicine they need, and, in cold States such as mine in Vermont, to heat their homes. This is not just rhetoric. This is reality. There are—God knows how many—seniors who say: Well, I can't buy my medicine if I am going to heat the house. I can't heat the house if I am going to buy my nutrition. We know that all over the country the Meals On Wheels programs have waiting lines because it is a place for low-income seniors to get nutrition. Yet we have an effort right now on the part of Republicans to say that, well, yeah, we have millions of seniors trying to get by on \$12,000, \$13,000 a year, but we are going to cut their benefits. Well, they may make that effort, but I will do everything I can to stop it.

There are very simple remedies for the problems facing Social Security, and we should make a couple of things very clear. Despite a lot of the rhetoric that we hear, Social Security is paid for by the payroll tax and does not add to the deficit. So take that issue away.

The second issue is that Social Security is going broke. Well, the simple truth is Social Security is not going broke. Social Security has about \$2.6 trillion in its trust fund and can pay out about all the benefits owed to all eligible Americans for the next 19 years. If we want to make Social Security solvent—not for 19 years, because I think we have to extend that—if we want to make it solvent for 30 years or 40 years and if we want, as I believe we should, not to cut benefits but to expand benefits, and if we want to do the right thing for our parents and our grandchildren, then I think we defeat every effort out there to cut Social Security. I think we lift the cap on taxable income so that millionaires contribute more into the Social Security trust fund. I think we have that moral obligation to our parents and our grandparents.

Let me conclude by saying this. I think the evidence is overwhelming that trickle-down economics is a fraud. It works for the very wealthy; it does not work for working families. The job of this Congress is to protect the middle class and working class, and not just billionaire campaign contributors.

With that, I thank the Presiding Officer for your indulgence, and I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO LINDA GIBBONS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I am grateful for the opportunity to pay tribute to a wonderful staff member and dedicated public servant, Linda Gibbons. Linda will be retiring this week after 22 years of devoted service. I know I speak for everyone on my staff when I say she will be deeply missed.

As a member of my constituent services team, Linda helped thousands of Utahns who contacted my office seeking assistance. In serving constituents, she was always sympathetic to their needs and worked tirelessly to resolve

their problems. Constituent casework is difficult, often requiring hours of tedious research and coordination with Federal and State agencies. But Linda was always equal to the task, and I can say without reservation that she was among the best caseworkers I have ever had.

Linda was passionate about public service. Her work ethic always impressed me, and I was grateful for her willingness to assume new responsibilities. She is tenacious, honest, and always believes in doing the right thing.

Most importantly, Linda has a deep capacity to care for and love others. Both constituents and staff know this well. She has always gone out of her way to listen to and help anyone in need.

I will always be grateful for Linda's work in helping me nominate Utah's most talented young students to military academies. Military academy nominations can be laborious and cumbersome, but Linda always saw candidates through the process with a remarkable degree of efficiency and professionalism. In doing so, she mentored some of Utah's best and brightest. She also built strong ties between our office, the students, their families, and officials from military academies.

Although Linda has achieved much in her professional life, perhaps her greatest success has been in the home. Linda has been married to her husband, Phil, for over 40 years, and together they have three children and seven grandchildren. She loves her family dearly and looks forward to spending more time with them in her retirement. Her compassion and strength have shepherded them through some of life's most difficult challenges.

I am truly grateful for the tremendous service Linda has rendered to my staff, her community, and the great State of Utah. I will miss Linda greatly, but I know that this next chapter in her life holds many exciting and wonderful opportunities. I will be forever grateful for her dedicated service and loyal friendship.

SUBCOMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the list of subcommittee assignments for the Committee on Appropriations for the 114th Congress.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SUBCOMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Senator Cochran, as chairman of the Committee, and Senator Mikulski, as vice chairwoman of the Committee, are ex officio members of all subcommittees of which they are not regular members.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES

Senators Moran,¹ Blunt, Cochran, McConnell, Collins, Hoeven, Daines, Merkley²,