Between 1980 and 1992, income for the top 20 percent increased by 16 percent. During that same period, income for the bottom 20 percent declined by 7 percent. For the first 10 of those 12 years, between 1980 and 1990, there were no votes to increase the minimum wage. Without an increase in the minimum wage, those with little money end up with less money. That is because the cost of living continues to rise.

□ 1920

By 1993, families in the top 20 percent had an average income of $104,616. Families in the bottom 20 percent in America only had an average income of just $12,964. That is a gap of more than $90,000.

Mr. Speaker, that amount of money makes a big difference in the ability of families to buy food and shelter, to pay for energy to heat their homes, and to be able to clothe, care for, and educate their children. That amount of money makes the difference between families with abundance and families in poverty.

An increase in the minimum wage will not provide abundance, but it can raise working families out of poverty.

As income dropped for low-income families during the decade of the 1980's, costs escalated. The earnings of the bottom 20 percent of families dropped by nearly $1,000 during that period. At the same time, the income of the top 20 percent of families climbed by almost $14,000. This gap cannot continue.

While the income for the bottom 20 percent was declining, the rate of inflation for food, shelter, heating fuel, clothing, transportation, and medical care was increasing.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, the cost of bread, milk, eggs, a place to sleep, heat, clothing to wear, a bus ride, and a visit to the doctor went up, as the income of poor people went down. The rate of inflation for each of those items increased, on average, 60 percent, with a low of 31 percent and a high of 117 percent.

Despite these spiraling prices, Congress took no steps to increase the minimum wage, and poor people—the bottom 20 percent—became poorer. That deep valley remains with us today.

The bottom 20 percent of our citizens can have a full-time employee in the family, working at least 40 hours a week, and still not be able to make ends meet—still living in poverty.

At least, they can be working 40 hours and still not be out of poverty. Their earnings from those families have not gone up, and they need to go up and we need to reward work, not make it a penalty. Work is a burden when, despite an individual's best efforts, 40 hours of work, they find themselves paying more for the necessities of life and yet earning less as income.

Other nations around the world have lessened that gap, have been faced with the same gap, but found ways to reduce that gap between those who lived at the top and those who are on the bottom.

We pride ourselves on being competitive with France and Germany and Japan, but we are not really competitive in giving people a decent wage. The gap is much closer there than it is here. Additionally, a recent survey indicated job growth in America is the lowest where the income gap in the widest. When we have a wide gap, we really do not have a strong economy. So having a wide gap hurts our economy. Closing that gap helps everybody, and especially it helps those of the lowest. We should be about the record of establishing that we believe that all Americans have the right to a decent salary if they are willing to work.

Mr. Speaker, New Jersey had such an experience. They raised the minimum wage and the States around them did not. At the same time, they saw jobs increase where their neighbors' jobs decreased.

Mr. Speaker, we should be about raising the salary of those who work. The minimum wage is the least we should do. It is about being fair to citizens. It is about being fair to our economy, closing the gap between the upper 20 percent and the lower 20 percent.

Mr. Speaker, we need to support the minimum wage.

I urge all of my colleagues to at least do that.

A CLARIFICATION OF THE RECORD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HANSEN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah [Mr. ORTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ORTON. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, during floor debate on H.R. 2 and consideration of my amendment to extend line-item veto to contract authority, an exchange between myself and Mr. SHUSTER, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, occurred which I would like to clarify.

During debate, I made the following statement: I want to share with my colleagues a telephone call which I received from a mayor in my district. The mayor called to question my amendment and express concern over funding for a highway project in the city. The mayor stated that staff of Chairman SHUSTER had let it be known that they are looking at transportation projects in my district, and if I offer this amendment there will be retaliation. It was suggested that we would neither get any further contract authority nor authorization for appropriations for future funding of projects in my district. That statement is accurate.

After my statement, Mr. SHUSTER sought recognition and made the following statement: My good friend mentions projects in his own district and a mayor calling him. Well I am a little surprised. I am told the gentleman has five projects which were in ISTEA.

And later at the end of debate, Mr. SHUSTER again took the floor and made the following statement: My friend from Utah made the allegation that a member of my staff called the mayor of Provo, UT, to pressure him to get him to withdraw this amendment.

I have not only talked to my staff, I have just gotten off the phone from talking to the office of the mayor of Provo, Ut. No one from my staff spoke to the mayor of Provo, Ut.

I am sure my good friend in the heat of the moment made an honest mistake, but I would simply like to RECORD to reflect that.

Mr. Speaker, tonight I have taken the floor to clarify the record.

In my statement, I made no reference to which mayor contacted me. There are several cities in my district with transportation projects, including Salt Lake City, West Valley City, Orem City and Provo City among others.

Also, I did not allege that the mayor called to pressure me to withdraw my amendment.

Prior to making my statement yesterday, I spoke to the mayor and the lobbyist representing the city. This is what was reported to me: First, that a member of Chairman SHUSTER's staff informed the lobbyist representing the city that they were looking at transportation projects within my district and relayed a not so veiled threat of retaliation. Second, that the lobbyist conveyed the information to the mayor who then called me to express concern over funding for a project.

After explaining my amendment to the mayor, the mayor expressed personal support for my amendment, saying that this was not the message the lobbyist wanted delivered but that I should do what is right and let the chips fall where they may. There are witnesses to my conversations.

In closing, let me say that it appears to me that the information conveyed to me through the lobbyist and the mayor was accurate. Chairman SHUSTER referred exactly to the number of transportation projects in my district—and knew exactly which mayor to call, even though I have never referred to which city's mayor contacted me.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR ADMINISTRATION DECISION TO IMPOSE SANCTIONS ON CHINESE PRODUCTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express support for the Clinton administration's decision on Saturday to impose sanctions on Chinese products because of China's failure to protect and enforce intellectual property rights of United States companies and its failure to provide market access for intellectual property-based products and industries.