

them and their families, \$1,800 can and will make a significant difference in their ability to meaningfully participate in the American dream.

For an average family, \$1,800 is enough to buy 1 year of health-care costs. We in Congress have struggled with the difficulties and expense of providing adequate health care to those who cannot afford their own. We know the tax cost to individuals and businesses when government must step in to provide healthcare benefits to the needy. The minimum wage is part of the solution.

For the average family, \$1,800 is enough to buy 7 months of groceries. Businesses cannot prosper when their employees' productivity is impaired by malnutrition. Children will not learn in school if they are not receiving regular, healthy meals at home. The minimum wage is part of the solution.

For the average family, \$1,800 is enough to pay basic housing costs for almost 4 months. Is there anything which is more important to a family's well-being and dignity, and a workers' productivity, than adequate housing? The minimum wage is part of the solution.

At a 2-year college, \$1,800 is enough to pay for more than a full-year's tuition. The changes in the American economy over the last two decades have left no doubt that only through education and training can American workers hope to better the lot for themselves and their children. Only with a large pool of well-trained workers can American industry compete with foreign companies. The minimum wage is part of the solution.

Contrary to the disingenuous claims of minimum wage opponents, the typical minimum wage worker is not a teenager flipping burgers after school to earn a little extra money to spend at the mall. The typical minimum wage worker is an adult woman, working full-time, and supporting at least one child in her household. She is working increasing hours in her struggle to support her family and to avoid having to rely on the government for her child's next meal.

Recent studies suggest that 300,000 people would be lifted out of poverty if the minimum wage is raised to \$5.15 per hour. This figure includes 100,000 children who are currently living in poverty.

We have allowed the minimum wage to drop to its lowest value in 40 years. In 1979, the minimum wage was the equivalent of about \$6 per hour in 1996 dollars. It is now only \$4.25. We have allowed this decline to happen, not during a time when our economy is suffering, but during a time when corporate profits, executive salaries, and the stock market are at record highs.

A 90-cent increase can make the difference between a family living in dignity and a family living in poverty. It can make the difference between a family being able to afford adequate health care and a family having to rely

on woefully inadequate public health programs. It can make the difference between a family being able to improve its lot by participating in available educational opportunities and a family doomed to a downward economic spiral.

Henry Ford's philosophy of paying his workers enough to allow them to buy his products is still a good philosophy. America must pay its workers enough for them to be able to buy a dignified place in our economy.

I urge my colleagues to support raising the minimum wage to \$5.15 an hour. Millions of hard working Americans who deserve a better life will appreciate our leadership.

#### ERMA BOMBECK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized during morning business for 2½ minutes.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, while I am all in favor of raising the minimum wage, I take the floor today to salute a wonderful woman whose loss I will certainly, certainly feel, and I think all American women will, whether they are getting the minimum wage or whether they are working at home with no wage. Erma Bombeck's loss will really go to the heart of all of us. The laughter that we will lose because of her death really seems very sad.

Mr. Speaker, Erma Bombeck made us laugh about all of the things that we live with every day: husbands' socks having so much fuzz on them you have to shave them, the green fuzz in the refrigerator that people kept asking about and then you were clearly trying to grow your own penicillin, all the problems you have with children who get dressed in the morning in some outfit that really looked more like a costume and you were afraid that somebody would think the child had been drinking before they even got to school.

The problems and the advice that she had for all of us that were so terribly important. She taught me one thing that was very critical; that was never loan a car to anyone you gave birth to. That was very good advice. And you should never have more children than you have car windows in an automobile. It prevents so many fights.

She also went on to tell us all the things about men and watching football. She really thought that there should be a law in this country that, if men watched more than 16 consecutive quarters of football, they should be declared legally dead. I think that there was some accuracy in that, too.

Yes, Erma Bombeck was a person who, even though she became very, very ill and her transplant finally got her and claimed her life, she never stopped laughing. She never stopped making us laugh. She saw the beautiful

wit and wisdom in everyday life. So many of us sometimes try to escape everyday life, but she showed us the poetry in it, the philosophy in it and the fun we should all have with it every single day. So her incredible uncommon wit will be missed by every single one of us. How very much sadder the planet is going to be without her penning away about her life as a domestic goddess in Phoenix, AZ.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the House stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

#### □ 1400

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. UPTON] at 2 p.m.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

With praise and adoration, with thanksgiving and gratitude, we offer our prayers to You, O God, and place our petitions before You. We pray for our world and our Nation, for our communities and the people of every background and tradition, for family and friends and for ourselves. We place before You, gracious God, our needs that are both great and small, those supplications that we hold in the secret places of our own hearts, asking that You would forgive us where we are weak or selfish, and strengthen us to do those good works that do justice and mercy. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. TRAFICANT] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TRAFICANT led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.