cautiously and thoughtfully implemented, providing full safeguards for beneficiaries. Recognizing the dependence of those receiving federal benefits on those benefits, the conferees direct that the Treasury Department limit automatic withholding of benefits above the $9,000 annual exemption to a reasonable percentage of those benefits, not to exceed 15 percent. Of course, debtors wishing to repay more would be free to do so by remittance or other voluntary means.

The conferees agree that it is particularly important to recognize that individual circumstances change and even an individual with a good repayment record could face a personal or financial misfortune that makes further repayment difficult, if not impossible. For example, the death of the family breadwinner, despite the payment of survivor benefits, could indicate a substantial loss of income to a family. To suddenly or excessively reduce a surviving dependent's benefits could further threaten an already precarious economic situation for the affected dependent.

CONTINGENT APPROPRIATIONS

The conference agreement does not include any appropriations which would have been available only on the enactment of subsequent legislation that would have credited the Committees on Appropriations with sufficient savings to offset these appropriations. The House bill and the Senate amendment both contained this type of contingent appropriations but in different amounts. In lieu of providing any such contingent appropriations the conference agreement includes regular appropriations and offsetting savings above the regular appropriations or offset amounts in either the House or Senate passed versions of the bill. The additional amount of offsets result in this conference agreement being within the designated spending limits.

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

The conference agreement does not include a separate title on environmental initiatives as proposed by the Senate. Instead these issues have been addressed in other parts of the conference agreement.

DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES BY FEDERAL GRANTEES

The conference agreement deletes a provision requiring disclosure of lobbying activities by Federal grantees as proposed by the House. The Senate amendment contained no similar provision.

DEFICIT REDUCTION LOCK-BOX

The conference agreement deletes a provision proposed by the House that would have reduced the Committees on Appropriations spending allocations when spending reduction amendments are adopted during consideration of appropriations bills in either body. The Senate amendment contained no similar provision.

CONFERENCE TOTAL—WITH COMPARISONS

The total new budget (obligational) authority for the fiscal year 1996 recommended by the Committee of Conference, with comparisons to the fiscal year 1995 amount, the 1996 budget estimates, and the House and Senate bills for 1996 follow:

New budget (obligational) authority, fiscal year 1995	$374,952,232,061
Budget estimates of new (obligational) authority, fiscal year 1996	404,545,750,093
House bill, fiscal year 1996	382,607,656,000
Senate bill, fiscal year 1996	384,492,162,999
Conference agreement, fiscal year 1996	380,684,327,000
Conference agreement compared with:	
New budget (obligational) authority, fiscal year 1995	5,732,094,939
Budget estimates of new (obligational) authority, fiscal year 1996	−23,861,423,093
House bill, fiscal year 1996	−1,923,329,000
Senate bill, fiscal year 1996	−3,807,835,999

VOTE ON THE MINIMUM WAGE

The Speaker pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, a vote on the minimum wage should no longer be blocked by the majority leadership. This last vote to prevent a vote on the minimum wage by this body is out of step with the American people. The American people want a vote—at least 8 out of 10 of them.

Democrats want a vote—some 119 are cosponsors of the minimum wage bill.

At least 23 Republican House members want a vote.

A vote on the minimum wage increase is unavoidable.

The majority leader continues to resist a vote, showing a lack a compassion and understanding for the plight of poor, working families.

Let's have a vote now.

Some 13 million American workers deserve an increase in the minimum wage because it is the fair thing to do—it is the right thing to do.

Minimum wage workers now earn about 50 cents less than they earned 40 years ago if the value of what they earned then is compared to the value of what they earn now.

It is discouraging, Mr. Speaker, for a citizen to work, full-time, and see their earnings go down, while corporate profits and executive salaries continue to go up.

It is even more disheartening when some in Congress are pushing for a tax break for these same wealthy executives, while pushing for a tax increase on America's workers.

Eliminating the earned income tax credit, which primarily benefits the working poor, while refusing to raise the minimum wage, is unfair and unjust.

The 117,000 minimum wage workers in North Carolina, and the millions of others throughout the United States, deserve better.

Middle- and moderate-income Americans now feel the squeeze between profits and wages as much as the low income and the unemployed.

Almost half of the money in America is in the hands of just 20 percent of the people. That top 20 percent is made up of families with the highest incomes. The bottom 20 percent has less than 5 percent of the money in their hands. A modest increase in the minimum wage could help the bottom 20 percent, and, it will not hurt the top 20 percent.

The President has proposed such a modest increase in the minimum wage—an increase of 90 cents, over 2 years. Such an increase would mean an additional $1,800 a year for the working poor.

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 won't provide abundance, but it can raise working families out of poverty.

While the cost of bread, milk, eggs, a place to sleep, heat, clothing to wear, a bus ride, and a visit to the doctor has been going up, the income of low-, moderate-, and middle-income people has been going down.

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.

Let's bring minimum wages into the modern age. Let's support H.R. 940, a bill that will help create a livable wage for millions of workers by permitting a modest increase in the minimum wage.

This Congress should pass the minimum wage increase.

It is the right thing to do. It is the fair thing to do.

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to point out that I am one of those Republicans who strongly supports the increase in the minimum wage, believes that it ought to be coupled with welfare reform. I know the gentlewoman has been very outspoken in regards to her feelings regarding welfare reform, but I would certainly hope that we could pursue this issue on a bipartisan basis with the ultimate goal of making work more attractive than welfare.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I agree with the gentleman.

Mr. RIGGS. The principal reason that I support the increase in the minimum wage is so an entry-level minimum-wage job will ultimately pay more than welfare benefits do currently in the aggregate for those folks who want to make that difficult transition, with proper support and assistance from the Government and from taxpayers, from welfare to work. I wanted to point that out to her.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I welcome the gentleman's comment. I think we should make work pay. When we do not make work pay, we make work a burden, so those who are on welfare will want to stay on welfare if they cannot find enough to provide for their basics. Raising the minimum wage will allow for people to be self-supporting and to provide for their families, without the Government having to do it.

So it is not inconsistent. I think it is consistent with a good welfare reform system, a good minimum wage, so increase the minimum wage as we move people to work. I appreciate the gentleman's remarks.

ARMS EMBARGO IN BOSNIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. COX] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COX of California. Mr. Speaker, during his recent circumnavigation of the planet, President Clinton told the G–7 summit leaders that they should join with him in urging Russia to put the squeeze on Iranian mullahs who are shipping arms, in particular shipping arms to the Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon.

While the President was calling on our allies to pressure Iran, and while the President and the Clinton administration were calling the Iranian terrorists, quote, ''the main source of international terrorism,'' and while publicly condemning Iran's shipment of arms to the Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon, Bill Clinton was secretly and simultaneously conniving at even bigger Iranian arms shipments to Bosnia.

Let us look at the history of this. On May 30, 1992, the United States imposed an arms embargo on the former Yugoslavia. The United States supported it, and when spy photographs showed Iranian 747's unloading illegal arms shipments in Zagreb, our State Department told us and told the world that we raised hell.

That was the United States' policy that candidate Bill Clinton opposed. Candidate Bill Clinton said he supported lifting the arms embargo in Bosnia, not so that Iran could sell weapons to the Bosnian Moslems, but rather so they could receive support from United States allies like Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

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As President, he promised when he was a candidate, he would lift the unfair United Nations arms embargo against Bosnia. But once in office, Bill Clinton completely changed his mind. He broke that pledge, broke that promise, and opposed lifting the arms embargo.

He reversed his position because, he said, it would be wrong for any international arms shipments to go to Bosnia. It would ''Convert a complex ethnic war into an American responsibility. The United States must, therefore, oppose any international arms shipments to Bosnia.''

The Congress, however, voted to lift the arms embargo and sent the President a bill. It was not quite unanimous, but it was hugely bipartisan. Democrats and Republicans in the House and Senate sent the President a bill so that we could, through our allies, help the Bosnian Moslems to defend themselves. The President vetoed that bill. He said nobody, not Turkey, not Saudi Arabia, none of our friends, least of all the United States of America, could help arm the Bosnian Moslems.

The President assured not only Congress, but the American people and allies, like Britain and France, that he was staunchly opposed to lifting the arms embargo. And without telling even our own Joint Chiefs of Staff, it now develops the President secretly let it be known in Iran that the United States would not oppose huge, illegal arms shipments to the Bosnian Moslems.

Huge quantities of weapons, accompanied by Iranian intelligence agents and mujahedin rebels, were thus shipped into Bosnia, by a regime that the Clinton administration publicly was branding as the financier, the armorer, the trainer, the safe haven, and inspiration for terrorists. These are the people that the secret Clinton policy, that Bill Clinton himself, secretly was introducing to Europe.

As the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense was using those exact words I just quoted, the financier, armorer, trainer, safe haven, and inspiration for terrorists, the description of Iran, he was using those exact same words in his testimony to Congress. His boss in the White House, Bill Clinton, knew that up to eight cargo jets each month were taking off with Iranian arms bound for Bosnia. There can be no question that this was duplicitous.

Right now congressional committees are preparing to investigate this sordid matter, to determine whether laws were broken governing illegal covert operations and governing failure to report truthfully to the Congress.

But while it remains to be seen whether and, if so, which laws were broken, there is no question that the President broke his word to this Congress and to the American people. There can be no question that the President broke his word to France and to England. In briefs prepared for John Major and Jacques Chirac at the G–7 Summit, unknown to the President, they had incontrovertible proof that the President had lied publicly to them.

It is incumbent upon this Congress to take this matter with the utmost gravity and to investigate it so that we can restore the good word of the American people around the world.

HELPING WORKING AMERICANS THROUGH AN INCREASE IN THE MINIMUM WAGE

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, my Republican colleagues continue to refuse to allow a vote on the minimum wage. It was only minutes ago in this body that they once again rejected a democratic effort to bring the minimum wage increase to the floor for a vote. I might add that in that vote were 15 Republican colleagues who only days ago, along with a few others, who said that they were splitting with their leadership; they believed that we ought to pass a minimum wage, and that that vote ought to be brought up in this body. Fifteen of them, when they had the opportunity, they would have made the difference, they would have made the difference in the vote, so that the people's House, the House of Representatives, could have voted to raise the minimum wage a mere 90 cents.

As a matter of fact, because I was watching the clock, when there was about 220 votes, that is enough in order to defeat the opportunity to bring the vote up, several of them hung back, waited until it was lost, and then cast their vote against bringing it up. Talk about profiles in courage? Real courage. But it is nice to get the press accounts in the last few days of how you break with leadership and call for a minimum wage. And when you have the opportunity which this body afforded only a few minutes ago, they took a walk. I am sure that their constituents are going to take a hard look at this vote.

I have bad news for those who oppose a fair minimum wage. We are not done. We will be back, again and again and again, until we see the minimum wage increased in this country.

We will not give up, because there is a lot at stake in this minimum wage debate and in this vote. This debate is not about yet another way for my Republican colleagues to reward the rich and the powerful in this country. It is not another perk for those in power or a payoff to some special interest lobby. What is at stake here is whether or not this Congress will honor and reward hard work and tell the hard working men and women in this Nation that we care about what you do, we honor what you do, and we know what a difficult struggle it is every single week to scramble, to pay those bills, to make sure that your kids can go to college. And then, my God, after these years of work, that you can have a decent and dignified and secure retirement.

We will tell minimum wage workers that we respect that valiant struggle. The minimum wage is already at a 40-year low. It continues to plummet in value. And what we do is we discourage people from working. We say to people, go ahead, be on welfare.

That is crazy. We want to reward work in this country. That is what it is all about. That is what the people are about, that is what my folks are about. They worked hard. They worked hard to be able to send me to school. And people who are doing that ought to understand that those who they elect are going to reward that hard work.

Who are the typical minimum wage workers? The typical minimum worker is a woman. Almost two-thirds are adults, 20 years of age or older. Do not let them get away with saying the minimum wage workers are teenagers. They are not. That is not true.