

The average minimum wage worker brings home half of his or her family's earnings, and about 40 percent of this Nation's minimum wage workers are the sole bread winner of their family. A full-time minimum wage worker makes \$8,500 a year. It is less than what people on welfare do get today in this country.

Think about it. An increase in the minimum wage would help working men and women who are providing the only source of income for their families, and we could honor their hard work. These are the ordinary folks, average people, waiters, waitresses, people who wash the dishes. They are struggling everyday.

Do you know that when the Government shut down in December, the Members of this body, Members of Congress who make over \$130,000 a year, they got more in that period of shutdown than a full-time minimum wage worker makes in an entire year?

It is wrong. Raise the minimum wage. Let us do it now. Let us bring this up for a vote.

TRIBUTE TO DORIS PIKE, VOLUNTEER AND LAWMAKER'S WIFE

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

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because earlier this week the world got just a little bit dimmer with the passing of a wonderful woman from Riverhead, Long Island, by the name of Doris Pike.

Mr. Speaker, many people remember Doris Pike as the very pleasant, engaging wife of former Congressman Otis G. Pike, who so ably served Long Island in this body from 1961 to 1979.

But Doris Pike in her own right was a woman of note. She was an educator, somebody who devoted over 25 years as a volunteer, teaching immigrant students English. For 25 years she took those immigrant students, those with various different languages, 14 different languages, I believe, and she taught them English at Patchogue-Medford High School and later Riverhead High School.

She was married to a distinguished Member of this body who in his own right was extremely popular and had a dynamic and strong personality. But Doris Pike herself developed her own persona among the people of Long Island. They came to know and love her because of her many acts of charity, her volunteer work, her great sense of humor.

As her husband Otis Pike said, she was a most unpretentious woman. He recalled an evening when they were invited to the White House, for example, when she wore a beautiful long evening gown and decided that with that gown she was going to wear her bedroom slippers. When questioned by her husband, she said nobody looks at your feet anyway. As the Congressman re-

membered, in fact, they went to that White House affair, and indeed nobody looked at her feet anyway.

Otis Pike, I join with him and his daughter Lois and his sons Doug and Rob, in mourning the passing of this most generous and wonderful woman, Doris Pike. She was a long-time trustee of Dowling College, and she so believed in the value of education that she set up on her own Doris Pike College Fund, in which she attempted each year to fund the tuition expense of one student.

In her office at home, she had a sign that said "A teacher affects eternity. She can never tell where her influence stops."

My colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, Doris Pike was a woman of great stature, and she in her own way has affected eternity, and we will mourn her and we will miss her.

TIME TO VOTE ON A MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. GENE GREEN, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in just a few minutes we will be going to the budget agreement that I want to congratulate not just the majority Members, but also the whole Congress, because we finally have a budget agreement that, and I know I have heard this morning a lot of my colleagues on the Republican side talking about how it saves the tax dollars, and it does, and that is great. But it also restores a great many of the devastating education cuts that we have been talking about on this floor for months and months.

What it does is it shows us we can have a balanced budget in 7 years, just like the President talked about, and still have investment in education and job training and those issues that we know are not just for today, that they are for next year and 5 years from now.

But the reason I asked for 5 minutes this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, is to talk about it is time to have a clean vote on the minimum wage increase.

Working Americans support an increase in the minimum wage. In fact, the latest poll I saw showed that 83 percent of Americans support an increase in the minimum wage. In fact, just today I see reported that we are not going to have a vote on this floor on a minimum wage increase. I think that hurts not only the Congress, but the majority, but I also think it hurts a lot of good, hard-working people in our country who are trying to struggle on \$4.25 an hour.

Americans know the real value of the minimum wage has declined in the past 15 years and the minimum wage earners have not seen an increase since April 1, 1991, 5 years ago, Mr. Speaker. During that time, with inflation 3 percent a year on the average, we see that percentage increasing.

We have a bipartisan bill that has been introduced by some of my majority Republican colleagues, 20 Members I understand, and I am a cosponsor of that bill, to increase the minimum wage. Yet we see that we are not going to have a vote on it. I know some Members on the majority Republican side are disappointed just like those of us on the Democratic side.

There is a proposal though, not the bipartisan bill, but there is a proposal we heard about, and again in speeches today from the majority, that the minimum wage would remain at \$4.25, but we would continue to talk about a Federal Government subsidy for employees with families. So what we are seeing is an increase in this big Government in Washington. We have heard now for over a year, a year and 4 months, how we need to not have big Government in Washington. Yet we are going to, instead of businesses who can earn, who are depending on those people making \$4.25 an hour to produce a product, we are going to subsidize them from this big Government in Washington.

It is like the world turned upside down, Mr. Speaker. I just do not understand it, just being a Member from Houston and understanding that the minimum wage, typically you earn that. We do not need any more subsidies for people who have families. We want a decent wage for a decent job being done, and to get these people off welfare.

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The biggest problem I think we have, and the majority has to explain, is how a person making \$4.25 an hour working 40 hours a week is still eligible in my district for welfare benefits. What we need to do is, if we increase the minimum wage to \$5.15 an hour, a person working 40 hours a week would then no longer be eligible for welfare. They would actually be able to work their way off of this subsidy that they may be receiving and the expanded subsidy I hear the majority party may be talking about.

That is what is wrong. We need to make sure that they can earn that money to keep themselves, get themselves off welfare. And that is why it is amazing to me that instead of just increasing the minimum wage to where businesses will pay their employees a minimum wage reasonable enough to get them off of welfare, that we are coming up with ways that the government can subsidize it and say, well, we really need to do even more on an earned income tax credit, or do even more for providing for these families.

These families want to work and earn a living. They do not want the government to provide it, and that is why it is so important that we provide for a livable wage for the minimum wage. America's families are working harder than ever and we know that. We see the polls. We see what is happening.

The disparity between the highest paid people in our country and the lowest paid is getting higher and higher.

We need to respond to that as members of Congress, not just as Democrats but as a Congress, because we need to make sure that disparity is not there. The beauty of America has always been that we have a middle class and the hope for people to go into that middle class. And yet what we see is the disparity is getting bigger. The people who make the most are making more money and the people who make less are making even less.

Mr. Speaker, I understand we are getting ready to go to the budget, but I would hope we would also see sometime in the near future a clean vote on the minimum wage issue.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3019,
BALANCED BUDGET DOWN PAYMENT ACT, II

Mr. SOLOMON, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104-538) on the resolution (H. Res. 415) waiving points of order against the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 3019) making appropriations for fiscal year 1996 to make further downpayment toward a balanced budget, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 415 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 415

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 3019) making appropriations for fiscal year 1996 to make a further downpayment toward a balanced budget, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON] is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MOAKLEY], pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material.)

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, the rule before us will allow us to immediately consider the conference report on H.R. 3019. It is the Balanced Budget Downpayment Act II. The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and its consideration, and it provides that the conference report be considered as read.

Mr. Speaker, this is a day that has been a long time coming as we wrap up the remaining five regular appropria-

tions bills for fiscal year 1996 whereby we will have a full budget in place for this year. Notwithstanding all the short-term continuing resolutions and all of the long, hard, and tough negotiations on this bill, the wait has been well worthwhile, in my opinion.

This truly is a historic day when one considers that we are making this substantial downpayment toward a balanced budget that we promised at the beginning of this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, on any bill of this magnitude, with all of the complex and all of the difficult issues to be resolved, I think it is fair to say that no one is happy with every aspect of the final conference agreement, certainly not this Member. But I would strongly urge every single Member to come over here and keep their eyes on the big picture of what this is all about, and what this is all about is, make no mistake about it, reducing the size and the role of this Federal Government and putting this country once again on a second fiscal footing by taking the first big steps toward a balanced budget by the year 2002, and this bill today does just that.

The Congressional Budget Office recently projected that the fiscal year 1996 deficit would fall to \$144 billion. That is not million, that is billion dollars, and that is \$28 billion below last December's projection. And make no mistake about it, the Congressional Budget Office confirms that our actions on appropriation bills for this fiscal year have played a major role in bringing about this downturn in spending.

Mr. Speaker, our final action today on these remaining five appropriation bills will contribute even further to that deficit reduction effort. When this bill is signed into law, and the President is going to sign it, we will have saved \$23 billion from last year's spending levels alone. That is \$23 billion below last year's spending. Who would have ever imagined we could have made such substantial strides? Just our first full year? And that is added to another, and this is important to remember, we have already cut \$23 billion, but if we add that to the \$20 billion in savings that we made in fiscal year 1995, in savings and rescissions, when we add all that up, it means that we have saved some \$43 billion since we took control of this Congress in January of 1995, \$43 billion.

Mr. Speaker, one can say we even outdid ourselves when we consider that we have saved \$2 billion more than our budget resolution projected in discretionary spending, \$2 billion more than we even said we were going to. That, my friends, is a record of accomplishment which we can all be very, very proud. I know I am. And it is one which will benefit the American people, and it will benefit the economy of this Nation, which means jobs, jobs, jobs, jobs, jobs.

Interest rates will be lower than the CBO projected; the economy is growing faster than the CBO projected; and in-

flation has been lower than CBO projected, all because we have had the courage to stick by our convictions and our commitments and to make those hard votes on the floor of this Congress, and, ladies and gentlemen, they were hard, but that is the only way we get this kind of savings to put the fiscal house in order of this Government.

Mr. Speaker, what does all this mean? It means the \$43 billion in savings we have made in fiscal years 1995 and 1996 translates into money we will not have to borrow. It means we do not have to borrow another \$43 billion, it means less debt and it means less interest for our children and our grandchildren to have to pay, already \$5 trillion in debt requiring \$250 billion in interest payments alone annually. We are not going to add to that. It means an ever expanding economy with more opportunities for more jobs, better jobs, and better pay because we are reducing the cost of Government by bringing our own fiscal house in order.

Mr. Speaker, that is really what this whole debate today is all about. Yes, there has been a great deal of give and take between the President and the Congress in these difficult negotiations. That is all a part of the political process. It is the toughest part to learn sometimes when one is principled and believes very strongly in the things they believe in. But the art of compromise is something that Ronald Reagan taught all of us that we had to live by in order to accomplish anything.

But let me emphasize the fact that for all the areas in which some concessions have been made to the administration there have been offsets to pay for them, and we are going to hear during the next hour of debate all the restorations that were made, whether it was in education or the environment or in other areas. But every single dollar that was restored over what we wanted to cut has been offset with cuts elsewhere, so we have not given in one thin dime, and that is how we realize the savings we have today.

In the process of arriving at this mutually agreed upon budget we have managed to eliminate, and this is so terribly important because it also is what this debate is all about, we have eliminated, that means we have zeroed out, 200 programs, while still paying for emergency supplemental funding for such things as disaster assistance, and goodness knows we have had enough of that with all the disasters throughout the country lately, and also our troop deployment in Bosnia. That is all paid for and yet we still have realized these very significant savings.

Mr. Speaker, I especially want to commend the gentleman from Louisiana, Chairman LIVINGSTON, and his Committee on Appropriations for making the very hard choices and for sticking with our core values of providing a better future for this country by reducing the deficit and reducing that public debt.