

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.