

This extra pay may seem small but would mean 7 months of groceries, a year of health care costs, 9 months of utility bills or 4 months of housing.

In the State of Connecticut, 87,158 hardworking people earn between \$4.25 and \$5.14 an hour. Each one of those people would benefit by passing a minimum wage increase.

In the Republican Whip TOM DELAY'S State of Texas, 1.1 million people would benefit. That is 14.7 percent of the Texas work force, not an insignificant number.

But these hardworking Americans in Connecticut and Texas and their 12 million fellow Americans continue to wait for a boost in their wages because the Republican Party continues to find new ways to block the increase.

This is legislation that has passed both the House and the Senate and is now being held hostage by extremists, people who would rather protect special interests than to help ordinary working Americans. All the while, America's workers struggle and they scramble to pay their bills, to put food on their tables, to clothe their kids, to get them to school and to maintain their standard of living.

A minimum wage worker makes about \$8,500 a year. That is it. Two-thirds of these workers are adults and almost 60 percent are women. Over 40 percent are the sole breadwinners in their family. The Department of Health and Human Services estimates that the minimum wage increase could lift 300,000 families out of poverty, including 100,000 children.

A great American once said, and I quote:

No man can be a good citizen unless he has a living wage more than sufficient to cover the bare cost of living * * * so that after his day's work is done he will have time and energy to bear his share in the management of the community, to help in carrying the general load.

Which great American said that? Theodore Roosevelt. A Republican President of the United States. Unlike the Republicans in the Senate, President Roosevelt understood that Americans deserve to be treated fairly and to be honored for their work.

Day 3 of the Republicans holding hostage the minimum wage. Day 3, and the American people continue to wait for something they support overwhelmingly. Day 3, and the special interests continue to control the Republican agenda. It is time to free the minimum wage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington [Mrs. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. SMITH of Washington addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/WELFARE RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, we are all aware of the fact that domestic violence is at epidemic levels and rising.

What was not known until recently however, is the relationship between domestic violence and welfare dependency: namely, that for victims of abuse, the welfare system is often the only hope they have for escape and survival.

A recent study by the Taylor Institute of Chicago offers insights as to why so many women become trapped in the cycle of violence and dependency. The study found that 50 percent to 80 percent of women on AFDC are current or past victims of domestic violence.

It also documents how abusers keep women financially and psychologically dependent by deliberately sabotaging their efforts to succeed in education and job training programs. For example, the study found that abusers have been known to destroy their victims' books and homework, hide their clothing, inflict visible and embarrassing injuries, and engage in abusive behavior before important events such as high school equivalency examinations and job interviews.

These findings underscore the importance of ensuring that any welfare reform legislation enacted by Congress maintains this critical safety net.

Toward this end, Senator WELLSTONE and I have introduced resolutions expressing the sense of Congress that any welfare reform proposals shall not further endanger women and children who are victims of domestic abuse by denying them access to their last source of support and means of escape.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this important resolution.

VACATION OF SPECIAL ORDER AND GRANTING OF SPECIAL ORDER

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. MCINTOSH].

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

MESSAGE FROM THE VOTERS

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

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Madam Speaker, I am one of those Members of the freshman class in the 104th Congress, and I do believe that 2 years ago the American people sent a very clear message

and they sent 73 new Members to this Congress for a very important reason. In fact, I think there were three or four major things they wanted us to do.

First of all, I think they wanted us to put the Federal Government on a diet. Second, I think they really wanted us to pass term limits. Third, I think they want commonsense regulatory reform. And finally, and perhaps most importantly, I think the American people want us to change the way Washington does business.

Well, Madam Speaker, I think we have made real progress. As a matter of fact, we passed the balanced budget amendment out of this House. Unfortunately, it failed by one vote over in the Senate. We went on to pass the first balanced budget plan in over 25 years. We have eliminated over 270 programs and, as a matter of fact, we have saved the taxpayers, this Congress, over \$43 billion.

The budget is moving in the right direction, and we are moving towards balancing the people's books. On the very first day we began to change the way Washington does business, the way we work. We passed the Shays Act.

We said that Congress is going to have to live by the same laws as everybody else. That was a very important change. For many years Congress would pass new rules and new laws that everybody else had to live by, but at the bottom of that bill it would say something to the effect that nothing in this enactment requires the Congress or the Federal Government to live by the same rules.

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Also, on the first day we opened the committee meetings to the public for the first time. We ended proxy voting, and this Congress passed the toughest gift ban in the history of the United States.

Madam Speaker, there was one area where this Congress failed, and that is on the very important issue of term limits. We can dress it any way we want, but I think that is one thing the American people want from this Congress, and that is to limit our own terms. They have been too long where Members who have served for years and years and years are no longer accountable to them and they begin to believe that all wisdom emanates from here in Washington, rather than from back in the districts which they are supposed to serve.

Madam Speaker, I have held over 75 town meet meetings in my district. Frankly, at virtually every one of them the issue of term limits has come up.

Another issue that people are concerned about is the whole concern about congressional pensions. As a matter of fact, almost monthly we read about some Member of Congress who is receiving a six-figure income after they retire from this body. We have read recently, just in the last year, that a former Speaker, and I will not mention