

Health System, was a man of honor and genuine character. For 5 years, he has boldly led Wellstar, a renowned health system of five hospitals in northwest Georgia. Under his leadership, the Wellstar Kennestone Hospital recently gained an open heart surgery program and an expanded 84-bed patient care tower. Moreover, he has worked to attract world-class physicians to the entire five-hospital system.

Before moving to Atlanta, Dr. Lipson obtained his medical degree from Tulane University, and then he served his country for 2 years in the United States Army. When he moved to Cobb County, he began his 25 years of practicing internal medicine at Kennestone Hospital, and it was my good fortune to meet him then, and we became close friends and colleagues, often caring for each other's patients.

When Dr. Lipson saw the great need for primary care physicians in his community, he decided to leave his lucrative practice and put together the Wellstar team. There, he helped build the Wellstar Physicians Group, which currently is comprised of 250 physicians who are responsible for nearly a million annual patient visits in Northwest Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Lipson will also be remembered as a prolific philanthropist. He was known for his generous spirit, always willing to support charities that needed his help. And due to the financial success of the system he led, he was able to give back compassionately to the community.

Dr. Lipson was also an esteemed amateur photographer, with his art being most recently displayed at Kennesaw State University in Cobb County. And admirers of his work describe the photographs as, and I quote, "awe inspiring," and him as a remarkable talent.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot say enough about this fine man, a man who did more in his too-short 60 years than many can aspire to in a much longer lifetime. Dr. Lipson is survived by his gracious wife, Livvy; his daughter, Dr. Rachel Lipson, who is a practicing neonatologist in Boston; and his son, Aaron, who specializes in health care law. His family meant so much to him, and I want to offer my sincere condolences to them during this time of their profound loss of a loving husband, a devoted father and devoted grandfather.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ELECTION DAY PRIORITIES

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take Mrs. MCCARTHY's time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. OWENS. On election day, Mr. Speaker, there was one message that was sent that seems to be ignored, one very positive message. Six States had on their agenda referendums on the minimum wage. They wanted to raise the minimum wage at the State level. In all six States those provisions passed. The voters have sent us a message. I think they spoke in those six States for the sentiment right across the entire Nation.

People are a little upset about our refusal to govern here, our refusal to raise the Federal minimum wage above the present level of \$5.25 an hour. They want to see action. They are taking action at the State level. And I think one of the things that we should do here, one of the first things we should do when we return in December, is vote to raise the minimum wage. We ought to send that positive message.

While there are debates and speculations on a number of other things that the voters said to us, while there is a great deal of debate about redeployment, about a pull-out of troops in Iraq, while there are still people who want to accuse us of cutting and running; all those things will be happening for a while, but it is a simple matter that we have not raised the minimum wage in 9 years. It is a very simple matter. The Members of Congress have enjoyed increases which amount to more than \$30,000 over that same period.

We have heard again and again what the consequences are about not raising the minimum wage. We know that a family on minimum wage is earning \$10,200 a year. If they work every day, 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, they come out with a little more than \$10,000 a year on the minimum wage. They say there are not many people still on the minimum wage, but the statistics show differently. The statistics show that families also depend on young people, who also go into the work force and are earning a minimum wage. They need to earn more also.

We made a lot out of boasting about the fact that America has now reached the point of our population being 300 million. We have pointed out that we are the third largest nation in the world, and that is something to be proud of. I think it is. But let us take a look at that 300 million in terms of people who are able to be productive, people able to contribute something to society, people able to take care of themselves. That is the way I define the middle class.

The middle class consists of people who can take care of themselves because they have the capacity to earn income to take care of themselves, and

they also have the capacity to make some contributions to the larger society. We need a middle class. We need more middle class folks.

It is said that the whole nation of Japan is middle class. They do not have a poverty class. I do not know whether it is true or not, but there is a whole lot to it in terms of income levels in Japan. All other nations still have problems with different stratifications in society. In the case of America, 300 million we are, but stop and think about the fact that, in China, with 1.2 billion people, in 2 or 3 years, they expect one-fourth of the Chinese to enter the middle class. They have a rapidly growing middle class. That means, in 2 or 3 years, China will have a middle class which is 300 million, as large as the entire population of the United States. And India has a similar population, and the dynamics of the economy at work in India are similar to those in China. They will have a middle class of 300 million people.

Three hundred million people is about the number of the European common market also. Three hundred million people is the number of people of African descent across the world who speak English. So 300 million people, let us look at it in the perspective of, if we are going to maintain our leadership in the world in a competitive global environment, then we will need all 300 million of our Americans to become productive citizens. That means they ought to be brought into the middle class.

The minimum wage is just a small step forward. You have to also improve education. You have to also take away the burden of having to pay for health care. All those things have to happen. But the simplest thing we can do, the thing we should do when we come back in December, is send a message to the American people that we are going to raise the minimum wage. We are going to move in that one small way toward the creation and the sustenance of a middle class, people who will be able to send their children to college and people who will be able to make a contribution to the global competition that we are going to find ourselves in.

Unfortunately, recent reports by the Associated Press show that certain minorities are lagging behind. Latinos and blacks are lagging behind whites, and Asians are also lagging behind whites in terms of the income gap. The income gap is growing instead of shrinking. So we have work to do, and step one is let's pass the minimum wage as fast as possible. Let's move it up to \$7.25 an hour. That is the least we can do before the end of the session.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)