

United States Marines, United States troops in Haiti twice in the last decade. It is a country that we need to care about. It is very important to us.

I thank the Chair. I thank my colleagues for including this provision. It is a provision that will make a difference. It is a provision that will save lives. I thank my colleagues for this.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.J. Res. 102, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 102) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2007, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I deeply regret that we will soon adjourn having adopted only 2 of the 12 fiscal year 2007 appropriations bills.

This year, the Senate Appropriations Committee reported all of the bills under its jurisdiction by July 20, the earliest that has been done in 18 years. These bills were all within the budget allocation, and the total funding appropriated was lower in real dollars than last year. I regret that the Senate was not allowed to consider these bills in time to complete action before the beginning of this fiscal year.

In this continuing resolution, which is now before the Senate, we have made sure that the Department of Veterans Affairs has sufficient resources to provide all the benefits veterans are entitled to receive under the law and that no veteran will be denied any benefit or receive anything less than the finest care available.

I urge the Senate to approve this bill.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, we are now 69 days into the fiscal year and only 2 of the 12 appropriations bills are public law. The Senate now has before it a third continuing resolution that funds

13 of the 15 executive branch Cabinet departments through February 15.

When it comes to funding bills for domestic agencies, the majority leadership is apparently satisfied with a restrictive continuing resolution. Eight of the 12 bills were never even debated in the Senate. When it comes to caring for our veterans, the education of our children, the health of our elderly, and the ability of our deteriorating infrastructure to sustain a growing economy, the majority leadership is satisfied with a rubberstamp continuing resolution, kicking the decisions down the road to the next Congress. This dismal performance is not the result of the work of the Appropriations Committee. The Appropriations Committee did its work and, on a bipartisan basis, reported all 12 of its bills by July 26. Chairman COCHRAN did an outstanding job in leading the committee.

Sadly, the appropriations process, once again, has fallen prey to politics.

Next year, the 110th Congress will have to complete the 2007 appropriations bills, a war supplemental, and the 2008 bills.

This will be a huge challenge. However, in the bipartisan tradition of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am committed to working with my colleagues to meet this challenge.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the continuing resolution we are considering here today has a 6-week moratorium on a cost-of-living adjustment for Members of Congress. I support this provision because we should not give ourselves a raise until we pass legislation raising the minimum wage.

It has been a decade since Congress last increased the minimum wage to \$5.15 an hour. Since then, the real value of the minimum wage has eroded by 20 percent, since—unlike Congress's pay raise—we did not increase the minimum wage to keep pace with inflation.

Twenty-nine States have answered the call and raised the minimum wage. Illinois is one of those States—it has a minimum wage of \$6.50, and in December the Governor is expected to sign recently passed legislation raising the minimum wage to \$7.50 in July.

But there are still 6 million Americans making \$5.15 an hour.

We have been trying for nearly a decade to get the attention of the Republican leadership that there are millions of Americans who go to work every single day and can't make enough money to provide decent day care for their kids, pay medical and utility bills, and provide food and other essentials that are just a part of every family's daily life.

A Low Income Housing Coalition study shows that, for the first time,

there was not one county anywhere in America in which a minimum wage worker could afford a one-bedroom apt. On average, workers have to make three times the minimum wage to afford a one-bedroom apartment in this country. So people who are working full time for minimum wage literally can't afford to keep a roof over their children's heads.

These hardworking Americans who work full time and make the minimum wage earn just \$10,700 per year—\$6,000 below the poverty level. In Illinois, \$6.50 minimum wage workers currently earn \$13,520. And now there are 37 million Americans in poverty—a 5.4 million increase since President Bush took office.

While the Republicans in this town refuse to raise the minimum wage to help millions out of poverty, Congress has seen its pay increased by \$31,600. Something is wrong here.

We hope to send a message to the Republican leadership in Congress that these hardworking families deserve a raise too, because it's time for a Congress that truly is sensitive to real family values.

Because one of those real family values is when you get up and go to work every morning, doing your best for your kids and your family, you deserve a decent pay check.

Democrats believe that, and that is why we support passing legislation raising the minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour over 2 years before we allow Members to receive a roughly \$3,000 increase.

While some people may say that the amount of the automatic raise Members are foregoing—\$350—is only symbolic, keep in mind that minimum wage earners only earn \$206 per week. To them, \$350 isn't symbolic, it is the equivalent of 68 hours worth of hard work.

Therefore, on behalf of 6 million Americans making the minimum wage, I urge Republicans to join with Democrats in passing a clean minimum wage bill in January before any automatic pay adjustment for Members takes effect.

Mr. COCHRAN. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 102) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

NOTICE

Today's Senate proceedings will be continued in Book II