small businesses through consulting, education and business information. This program received $89 million in fiscal year 2006.

It is my expectation that the small business incentives proposed by the Senate Finance Committee will ultimately become law in legislation which increases the minimum wage.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of a minimum wage increase that provides American workers a raise with no strings attached. It has been nearly a decade since the minimum wage was last increased. We can no longer afford to delay action, and millions of hard-working Americans deserve better.

The Federal minimum wage today is only $5.15 per hour. Someone who works at this rate for 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year takes home less than $11,000 annually far below the poverty line for families.

Increasing the Federal minimum wage to $7.25 per hour would impact nearly 13 million Americans, the majority of whom are women, 59 percent, and people of color, 40 percent. Eighty percent of those impacted would be adult workers, and most are full-time employees.

The consequences of nearly a decade of inaction are clear.

Almost 40 million Americans live in poverty, 13 million of whom are children.

Increasing the Federal minimum wage to $7.25 would add nearly $4,400 to a minimum wage worker's annual income, representing, for many families, the difference between self-sufficiency or living below the poverty line.

For most Americans, the choice is clear. In the last election, voters in six States Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, and Ohio supported initiatives to increase their State minimum wages. In fact, 29 States, nearly 60 percent, have a minimum wage above the Federal level.

I am proud that my own State of California has one of the highest minimum wages in the country, at $7.50 per hour, increasing to $8.00 per hour next year. Many California cities and counties stipulate that workers must be paid a living wage, which in some cases guarantees an additional $3 or $4 per hour.

There are two options before the Senate today. This body can act swiftly and stand behind nearly 13 million workers, Or we can delay action, by modifying the legislation before us to include $8.3 billion in tax breaks for small businesses.

Packaging the minimum wage bill with these tax cuts is disadvantageous to businesses and minimum wage workers. Adding a tax package creates procedural hurdles that could significantly delay implementation of this wage increase.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce opposes linking these small business tax breaks to this legislation because many of the tax provisions are only temporary extensions. They do not provide the long-term relief that businesses seek.

Considering the package of small business tax cuts separately would facilitate a more robust discussion of how small businesses the primary job creators in this country can receive genuine relief from the rising costs of operations.

Many small business owners would suffer no adverse impact if the minimum wage were increased. A recent Gallup Poll in the Sacramento Business Journal showed that 86 percent of small business owners surveyed do not believe that an increase in the minimum wage would harm their businesses.

Nearly 75 percent of small business owners thought that a 10 percent minimum wage increase would have no impact on their businesses at all. More than half of those polled thought the minimum wage should actually be increased.

The evidence shows that increasing the minimum wage does not adversely affect the economy. In fact, in Los Angeles and San Francisco, raising wages added stability to many businesses and the local economy.

In San Francisco, turnover for home-care workers fell by 57 percent after the city implemented its living wage policies.

The average job tenure of workers in fast food restaurants increased by 3.5 months.

In Los Angeles, businesses affected by a living wage ordinance had one-third less turnover among low wage earners, and absenteeism declined.

Higher wages improve worker loyalty and increase employee retention, while decreasing employee hiring and training costs.

Let me be clear: I support many of the tax cuts for small businesses. I think they should be considered, with the proper offsets, as part of a separate revenue-neutral tax bill. But they should not be included in this must-pass minimum wage bill.

Ensuring that all American workers receive fair pay for a hard day's work should not be a partisan issue. The House overwhelmingly passed this legislation by a vote of 315 to 116, with more than 80 Republicans crossing party lines to support this cause.

Congress has increased the minimum wage nine times since the enactment of the Fair Labor Standards Act, under both Republican and Democratic administrations. Only once, in 1996, was a minimum wage increase paired with tax cuts.

The purchasing power of the minimum wage is at its lowest level since 1955. The cost of living is up 26 percent since the last minimum wage increase in 1997.

It is unfair to punish hard working people and make them wait for an increase. We must not delay. We must not bog down this bill with procedural tactics.

American workers deserve better. I urge my colleagues to do what is fair and just: Pass a clean minimum wage bill. Let's provide immediate relief to those who need it most.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OBAMA). The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

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

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I desire to address the Senate at this time. It would be my hope that my colleague, the Senator from Nebraska, could follow me and, indeed, following the Senator from Nebraska, the Senator from Maine. I put that in the form of a unanimous consent request at this time.

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

(The remarks of Mr. WARNER, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. SALAZAR pertaining to the submission of S. Con. Res. 4 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CANTWELL). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

REQUEST FOR SEQUENTIAL REFERRAL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter addressed to me dated January 24, 2007, from Senator LEVIN.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, January 24, 2007.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR REID: Pursuant to paragraph 3(b) of S. Res. 400 of the 94th Congress, as amended by S. Res. 445 of the 108th Congress, I request that the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007, as filed by the Select Committee on Intelligence on January 24, 2007, be sequentially referred to the Committee on Armed Services for a period of 10 days. This request is without prejudice to any request for an additional extension of five days, as provided for under the resolution.

S. Res. 400, as amended by S. Res. 445 of the 108th Congress, makes the running of the period for sequential referrals of proposed legislation contingent upon the receipt of that