

line! In this regard, what individual Marines are doing everyday counts far more than anything that is done in Washington. The standards of our Corps are not simply maintained by generals, colonels, and sergeants major, but, far more importantly, by leaders throughout the Corps, at every level. The Marine conviction that *Semper Fidelis* is a way of life, not just a motto, speaks powerfully to the citizens that we serve. It also unites us with our fellow Marines, past and present—inspiring us to push harder, to reach further, and to reject the very notion of failure of compromise.

Sustained and strengthened by the ethos of our Corps, you have accomplished a great deal during the past four years. I have been humbled to be part of your achievements and witness to your selfless devotion. Time and again, Marines distinguished themselves in contingencies around the world, across the spectrum of conflict. Marines from across the Total Force were the first to fight, the first to help and the first to show America's flag—consistently demonstrating our resolve and readiness to win when called to action. With the involvement of the Fleet Marine Force and input from the entire Corps, the Warfighting Laboratory has looked hard at the 21st Century strategic environment. Marines "stole a march" on change by testing new concepts and emerging technologies, exploring new tools for developing leaders and decision makers, and experimenting in the "Three Block War." Our recruiters, drill instructors, and small-unit leaders have implemented the Transformation Process and are recruiting, training, and developing the "Strategic Corporals" for tomorrow's conflicts. Led by Marines at the Combat Development Command, we have deepened our understanding of Operational Maneuver From The Sea (OMFTS), its enabling concepts and technologies, as well as its many challenges. The men and women serving in the many thankless billets at Headquarters Marine Corps and in the joint arena have developed and articulated our requirements for the future and have secured the resources to translate OMFTS into a reality. Our supporting establishment, at every post and station, has epitomized selflessness and dedication while providing for our readiness requirements. All these things are important—and they are the accomplishments of every Marine. None of them, however, are as significant as maintaining our hands on the twin Touchstones of our Corps.

The words of my father ring as true today as when he first wrote them over fifty years ago. "We exist today—we flourish today—not because of what we know we are, or what we know we can do, but because of what the grassroots of our country believes we are and believes we can do . . . The American people believe that Marines are downright good for the country; that the Marines are masters of a form of unerring alchemy which converts unoriented youths into proud, self-reliant stable citizens—citizens into whose hands the nation's affairs may safely be entrusted . . . And, likewise, should the people ever lose that conviction—as a result of our failure to meet their high—almost spiritual—standards, the Marine Corps will quickly disappear."

May God bless each and every one of you and may God bless our Corps!

#### CONFERENCE OF MAYORS ENDORSE MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, the United States Conference of Mayors re-

cently gave its ringing endorsement to an increase in the minimum wage. On June 15, at their annual conference in New Orleans, the mayors unanimously adopted a resolution calling for such an increase.

The resolution was sponsored by Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston, who is renowned for his leadership on behalf of working families in our city, and I commend Mayor Menino for this important and constructive initiation.

Thanks to the leadership of Mayor Menino, the Conference of Mayors has highlighted the needs and concerns of America's workers. The adoption of the Mayors' resolution makes it all the more important for Congress to act, and to act this year.

Mayors are on the front lines at the local level. They know the day-to-day realities of the lives of working Americans. They have seen firsthand how the decrease in value of the minimum wage leaves workers unable to support their families. By next year, the real value of the minimum wage will have dropped by \$2.50 an hour from its peak 30 years ago. For a generation, we have allowed the value of the minimum wage to decline unfairly at the expense of millions of hard working American men and women and their families.

The unfortunate reality is that in 1999, large numbers of Americans work 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, yet still can't support their families. Their wages don't enable them to put food on the table or a reasonable roof over their heads. A minimum wage worker earns \$10,712 a year—\$3,100 below the poverty line for a family of three.

Every day, working families across the country are forced to turn to emergency food assistance to supplement their diets, and then to emergency shelters for a place to sleep. A 1998 U.S. Conference of Mayors survey found that 61% of people requesting emergency food assistance were families—parents and their children. The majority of cities also reported an increase in requests for emergency shelter by homeless parents with children. As the Mayors' survey emphasized, these are working Americans, yet they are not earning enough to make ends meet.

The majority of minimum wage workers are adults struggling to achieve a decent standard of living. Instead of enabling workers to reach this goal that all families deserve, today's minimum wage tramples on that dream for a better life.

Now is the time to raise the minimum wage. The country's economy is soaring to new heights and setting new records for growth and prosperity. The economy is the best in decades, and yet millions of America's hardest workers are not sharing in this prosperity. The Dow Jones Average is touching 11,000. The highest compensated CEO in 1998 was paid \$117 million. But minimum wage workers still can't lift their families out of poverty.

Minimum wage workers deserve better. They serve our food, take care of our children, clean our office buildings, and perform countless other basic jobs. When hard working Americans put in a full day's work year round, they deserve a fair share of the nation's prosperity.

Over 11 million workers would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage. They should not have to rely on food aid or shelters.

Mayor Menino and mayors across America want action, Congress should heed their call to action and raise the minimum wage.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of Mayor Menino's resolution, adopted unanimously by the Conference of Mayors, be printed in the RECORD.

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

#### RESOLUTION No. 14

(Submitted by the Honorable Thomas M. Menino, Mayor of Boston)

#### FEDERAL MINIMUM HOURLY WAGE RATE ADJUSTMENT

Whereas, the current federal minimum hourly wage rate is inadequate to raise families out of poverty; and

Whereas, the real value of the minimum wage continues to fall short since its highest level in 1968; and

Whereas, the purchasing power of the minimum wage continues to fall short and fails to allow families to make ends meet; and

Whereas, millions of workers paid by the hour earn at or below minimum wage and the majority of minimum wage workers are adults; and

Whereas, the poverty line for a family of four leaves many minimum wage earners unable to survive and they are the sole breadwinners for their households; and

Whereas, the majority of the average share of household income is earned by a minimum wage worker; and

Whereas, the income disparities between the races have been widening, not narrowing; and

Whereas, the minimum wage is one factor in these wide income disparities, as minorities work disproportionately in minimum wage jobs; and

Whereas, these minimum wage jobs often lack medical, sick or vacation leave, other benefits and job security; and

Whereas, these minimum wage jobs are a major factor in the decision of millions of workers who would likely drop out of the labor force because they see no future in such employment, but there are no other alternatives to raise a family; and

Whereas, many citizens who cannot survive on minimum wage seek alternatives outside the traditional job market that may, at time, be destructive to them, their families, and the total society; and

Whereas, studies have shown that raising the minimum wage does not result in job losses.

Now, therefore, be it *Resolved*, That the federal minimum hourly wage rate should be increased to encourage significantly greater labor force participation and enable minimum wage job holders to support themselves and their families at income levels above the nationally defined poverty level.