

school has improved with access to the Internet.

This is important because education experts and children alike tell us that we must continue to find ways to challenge our children, to engage their creativity, to expand their interests, and, frankly, to simply fight off boredom in the classroom. The use of technology helps do that.

Our bill, EdTEC, will continue the important Federal investment in education technology. It provides States and schools with important funds and guidance in formulating technology education plans while focusing on the integration of technology and curriculum and closing the digital divide. This new century and our new economy demands our children are experienced and equipped to use the technology that is all around us. EdTEC will help our schools continue to move in that direction and ensure that our children can learn at the speed of change in the 21st century.

Madam Speaker, I want to call upon my colleagues to take a close and serious look at this legislation as we move forward with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in this session of Congress.

INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, several weeks ago the House debated, and passed, a bill to increase the minimum wage. Unfortunately, I was unable to get to the floor to participate in the debate. But I want to revisit the issue today, so that I can share with you a constituent letter I received from a small business owner in Kinston, North Carolina.

Madam Speaker, Ken Moore is an example of an entrepreneur who, without interference from the government, started a business with a single restaurant in 1991, and now has 39 locations throughout Eastern North Carolina. And along the way, he has shared his success by extending opportunities to his employees.

When Mr. Moore learned that the House would be debating a minimum wage increase, he sent me a letter to share how the mandate would affect his small business and communities throughout Eastern North Carolina. I wanted to share part of his letter with the Congress.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Moore wrote, and I quote:

Congressman Jones:

I started Andy's in March of 1991 in Goldsboro, North Carolina. As of today, we have grown to 39 locations throughout Eastern North Carolina and have another six locations under construction.

The reason for our success has always been because we give our hourly associates the opportunity to own an Andy's restaurant. We have never looked for outside investors, preferring to train our people and give them the

opportunity to operate and eventually own their business. We call this "starting at the minimum and earning the maximum." We now have many success stories throughout our company achieved through this philosophy.

The unfunded mandate of minimum wage put in place by Washington will hurt our business, associates, and neighbors in Eastern North Carolina.

We conducted a survey of nearly 700 employees and found only two earning minimum wage that were the primary wage earners for their family. These happen to be single moms who already receive some government assistance.

Two out of the 700 makes a mockery out of the political line that families can't exist on minimum wage. The much-touted family of four making minimum wage and trying to subsist doesn't exist, at least not within Andy's.

We don't believe that America is about handouts, but is based on hard work and persistence. These are the values we strive to teach our associates.

An increase in the minimum wage will mean an increase in prices, something which I don't want to do. Minimum wage increases invariably cause us to lay some people off and delay hiring new folks. This is sad, but simply the truth.

I would like all politicians in favor of increasing the minimum wage to simply tell the truth. Increasing the minimum wage is a tax increase, period.

Madam Speaker, I will include the entire text of the letter in the RECORD.

Madam Speaker, Ken Moore is just one of thousands of small business owners across this country, who recognize the effects an increase in the minimum wage will have on their businesses, and their communities. I appreciate the opportunity to share Mr. Moore's story. Because I believe that his concerns are shared by many small business owners across the country.

THE LITTLE MINT, INC.,
Kinston, NC, March 7, 2000.

Re Minimum wage increase.

To: Walter B. Jones, Jr.

From: Kenneth K. Moore

I started Andy's in March of 1991 in Goldsboro, NC. As of today we have grown to 39 locations throughout Eastern NC and have another 6 locations under construction. The reason for our success has always been because we give our hourly associates the opportunity to own an Andy's restaurant. We have never looked for outside investors, preferring to train our people and give them the opportunity to operate and eventually own their business. We call this "starting at the minimum and earning the maximum." We now have many success stories throughout our company achieved through this philosophy.

Eastern NC is a rural area that has been through much during the past year. We have been rocked by hurricanes and floods during their aftermath. Our home is not a wealthy area. However, our people are the salt of the earth and work very hard to pay taxes and raise good children.

Eastern NC economy is predominately agriculturally based and with tobacco taking a beating in the press and in Washington many farmers have turned to pork production. Our state government has now placed a moratorium on that. At Andy's, we understand our neighbor's plight and have only raised prices in our stores twice in 9 years. Both times have been due to minimum wage increases. As you can tell, we are trying to do our part.

The unfunded mandate of minimum wage put in place by Washington will hurt our businesses, associates, and neighbors in Eastern NC. We conducted a survey of nearly our 700 employees and found only 2 earning minimum wage that were the primary wage earners for their family. These happen to be single moms who already receive some government assistance. Two out of the 700 makes a mockery out of the political line that families can't exist on minimum wage. The much-touted family of four making minimum wage and trying to subsist doesn't exist, at least not within Andy's.

Andy's has had very little employee turnover because we give people the opportunity to grow. Even the teenagers who comprise the vast amount of our minimum wage earners don't leave us. We have a yearly banquet at which we strive to inspire and motivate them to grow into solid citizens. We give scholarships and awards. We also continued to pay our minimum wage earners after the restaurants were flooded in the wake of Hurricane Floyd. All we asked them to do was to volunteer to help out in their local shelters. We teach our young people that there is already an increase in the minimum wage. It is called doing a good job!

We don't believe that America is about handouts but is based on hard work and persistence. These are the values we strive to teach our associates. An increase in the minimum wage will mean an increase in prices, something which I don't want to do. Minimum wage increases invariably cause us to lay some people off and delay hiring new folks. This is sad, but simply the truth.

I would like all politicians in favor of increasing the minimum wage to simply tell the truth. Increasing the minimum wage is a tax increase, period. The increase is simply another way for the government to make 15.6 cents on every dollar. If you truly want to help teenagers make more money, then waive the playoff taxes on the increase. If the truth be told the increase makes for great reelection material, doesn't it?

I remember a young lady who worked for me when I first started my business some years ago. She is now an elementary school teacher and a wonderful person. I saw her not long ago and we reminisced about a Christmas Party we had in my original location in 1993. I didn't have the money for Christmas gifts for my small crew, so I gave each one a card with a personal note. As I was reminding her of this she stopped me and reached for her purse, opening her wallet and produced the note from that night (6 years later). I wonder if she would have saved a pay stub with a minimum wage increase?

Folks, there is more to running a business than a lot of you may think. With an increase in wages, hiring will cease, and perhaps we will not be able to touch the life of some young person as I did years ago. I live and work in Eastern NC and I am proud to do business here. Please let me do it my way. Our friends, neighbors, and associates live in towns with names such as Beulaville, Kenansville, Mt. Olive, Kinston and Grifton, not Camelot.

Thanks,

KENNETH K. MOORE,
President/Founder.

THE CENSUS

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