

Administration of Barack Obama, 2014

The President's Weekly Address

March 8, 2014

Hi, everybody. This week, I traveled to New England, where I was joined by four Governors who are working to raise the minimum wage in each of their States. And they've also joined me in calling on Congress to raise the minimum wage from \$7.25 an hour to \$10.10 an hour. Because it would give nearly 800,000 Americans in their States a raise and lift wages for about 28 million people across the country.

So these Governors aren't waiting for Congress to make up its mind. And in my State of the Union Address, I asked America's business leaders to go ahead and do what they could to raise their employees' wages too. And increasingly, it's not just large companies like Costco or the Gap that choose to pay their employees higher starting wages.

It's smaller businesses like Jaxson's, a family-owned ice cream parlor in South Florida. They answered the call and raised their wages so that more than 70 employees would earn at least \$10.10 an hour, without cutting back on hiring.

And 2 weeks ago, an Atlanta small-business owner named Darien Southerland wrote me to share a lesson his grandmother taught him: that if you treat your employees right, they'll treat you right. And Vice President Biden paid him a visit this week.

I agree with these business owners, which is why I issued an Executive order requiring Federal contractors to pay their employees a fair wage of at least \$10.10 an hour. It's good for our bottom line. And working Americans have struggled through stagnant wages for far too long.

A clear majority of Americans support raising the minimum wage because we believe that nobody who works full time should have to live in poverty. About half of all Republicans support raising the minimum wage too. It's just too bad they don't serve in Congress. Because the Republicans who do serve in Congress don't want to vote on the minimum wage at all. Some even want to get rid of it completely. Seriously.

That's why what business leaders and everyday Americans are doing to raise wages is so important. Because change doesn't come from Washington, change comes to Washington. I've always believed that, and it's true in this case too. Outside Washington, Americans are ready to put aside old political arguments and move this country forward. The American people are way ahead of Congress on this issue, and we've just got to let Congress know that. It's time for "10-10." It's time to give America a raise. And it's time to restore opportunity for all.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:44 p.m. on March 6 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on March 8. In the address, the President referred to Gov. Dannel P. Malloy of Connecticut; Gov. Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts; Gov. Peter E. Shumlin of Vermont; Gov. Lincoln D. Chafee of Rhode Island; and Darien J. Southerland, chief strategy officer, BG Ad Group. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 7, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on March 8.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Weekly addresses.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Chafee, Lincoln D.; Malloy, Dannel P ; Patrick, Deval L.; Shumlin, Peter E.; Southerland, Darien J.

Subjects: Connecticut : Governor; Government organization and employees : Federal Government contracting policies, reform; Labor issues : Minimum wage; Massachusetts : Governor; Rhode Island, Governor; Vermont, Governor; White House Office : Vice President.

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