

## **The President's Weekly Address**

*April 26, 2014*

Hi, everybody. In my State of the Union Address, I talked about pizza. [*Laughter*] More specifically, I talked about a pizza chain in Minneapolis, Punch Pizza, whose owner, John Soranno, made the business decision to give his employees a raise to 10 bucks an hour.

A couple of weeks ago, I got a letter from a small-business owner who watched that night. Yasmin Ibrahim is an immigrant who owns her own restaurant, Desi Shack, and plans to open another this summer.

Here's what she wrote: "I was moved by John Soranno's story. It got me thinking about my . . . full-time employees and their ability to survive on \$8 an hour in New York City." So a few weeks ago, Yasmin put in place a plan to lift wages for her employees at both her restaurants to at least \$10 an hour by the end of this year.

But here's the thing. Yasmin isn't just raising her employees' wages because it's the right thing to do. She's doing it for the same reason John Soranno did: It makes good business sense.

Yasmin wrote: "It will allow us to attract and retain better talent—improving customer experience, reducing employee churn and training costs. We believe doing so makes good business sense while at the same time having a positive impact on the community." Yasmin's right. That's why, 2 months ago, I issued an Executive order requiring workers on new Federal contracts to be paid a fair wage of at least \$10.10 an hour.

But in order to make a difference for every American, Congress needs to do something, and America knows it. Right now there's a bill that would boost America's minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour. That would lift wages for nearly 28 million Americans across the country—28 million. And we're not just talking about young people on their first job. The average minimum wage worker is 35 years old. They work hard, often in physically demanding jobs.

And while not all of us always see eye to eye politically, one thing we overwhelmingly agree on is that nobody who works full time should ever have to live in poverty. That's why nearly three in four Americans support raising the minimum wage. The problem is, Republicans in Congress don't support raising the minimum wage. Some even want to get rid of it entirely. In Oklahoma, for example, the Republican Governor just signed a law prohibiting cities from establishing their own minimum wage.

That's why this fight is so important. That's why people like John and Yasmin are giving their workers a raise. That's why several States, counties, and cities are going around Congress to raise their workers' wages. That's why I'll keep up this fight. Because we know that our economy as a whole works best when it works for all of us, not just a fortunate few. We believe we do better when everyone who works hard has a chance to get ahead. That's what opportunity is all about.

And if you agree with us, we could use your help. Republicans have voted more than 50 times to undermine or repeal health care for millions of Americans. They should vote at least once to raise the minimum wage for millions of working families. If a Republican in Congress represents you, tell him or her it's time to give the politics a rest for a while and do something to help working Americans. It's time for "10–10." It's time to give America a raise.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:55 a.m. on April 18 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on April 26. In the address, the President referred to Gov. Mary Fallin of Oklahoma. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 25, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on April 26.

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*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Fallin, Mary; Ibrahim, Yasmin; Soranno, John.

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