

Administration of Barack Obama, 2014

The President's Weekly Address

October 11, 2014

Hi, everybody. For the first time in more than 6 years, the unemployment rate is below 6 percent. Over the past 4½ years, our businesses have created more than 10 million new jobs. That's the longest uninterrupted stretch of private sector job creation in our history.

But while our businesses are creating jobs at the fastest pace since the nineties, the typical family hasn't seen a raise since the nineties also. Folks are feeling as squeezed as ever. That's why I'm going to keep pushing policies that will create more jobs faster and raise wages faster, policies like rebuilding our infrastructure, making sure women are paid fairly, and making it easier for young people to pay off their student loans.

But one of the simplest and fastest ways to start helping folks get ahead is by raising the minimum wage. Ask yourself: Could you live on \$14,500 a year? That's what someone working full time on the minimum wage makes. If they're raising kids, that's below the poverty line. And that's not right. A hard day's work deserves a fair day's pay. Right now a worker on the Federal minimum wage earns \$7.25 an hour. It's time to raise that to \$10.10 an hour.

Raising the Federal minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour, or 10–10, would benefit 28 million American workers—28 million. And these aren't just high schoolers on their first job. The average worker who would benefit is 35 years old. Most low-wage workers are women. And that extra money would help them pay the bills and provide for their families. It also means they'll have more money to spend at local businesses, which grows the economy for everyone.

But Congress hasn't voted to raise the minimum wage in 7 years—7 years. And when it got a vote earlier this year, Republicans flat-out voted no. That's why, since the first time I asked Congress to give America a raise, 13 States, 21 cities, and the District of Columbia have gone around Congress to raise their workers' wages. Five more States have minimum wage initiatives on the ballot next month. More companies are choosing to raise their workers' wages. A recent survey showed that a majority of small-business owners support a gradual increase to \$10.10 an hour too. And I've done what I can on my own by requiring Federal contractors to pay their workers at least \$10.10 an hour.

On Friday, a coalition of citizens, including business leaders, working moms, labor unions, and more than 65 mayors, told Republicans in Congress to stop blocking a raise for millions of hard-working Americans. Because we believe that in America, nobody who works full time should ever have to raise a family in poverty. And I'm going to keep up this fight until we win. Because America deserves a raise right now, and America should forever be a place where your hard work is rewarded.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 10:50 a.m. on October 9 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on October 11. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 10, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 11.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Weekly addresses.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Subjects: Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment rate; Government organization and employees : Federal Government contracting policies, reform; Labor issues : Minimum wage.

DCPD Number: DCPD201400767.