

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 12, 2007*

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, on January 4, 2007, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote numbered 6, on adoption of Title I of the Resolution.

Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall vote numbered 6.

## FAIR MINIMUM WAGE ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 10, 2007*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the name of fairness and justice. American families who rely on the Federal minimum wage are struggling to make ends meet. Over the last decade, our poorest-paid workers have faced rapidly rising costs in health care, energy, and college while the minimum wage has remained the same.

H.R. 2, the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007, would increase the Federal minimum to \$7.25 an hour. At \$5.15 per hour, the current Federal minimum, a person working 40 hours per week makes \$10,712 per year, about \$5,000 below the poverty line for a family of three. I ask you, can you imagine taking care of your family much less yourself with that? In addition, millions of workers paid just a dollar or two more than the minimum also live in poverty. An increase to \$7.25 will have a spillover effect that could raise wages for many of those workers. Ladies and gentlemen, the time for an increase is long overdue.

Critics claim that increasing the minimum wage will have a negative effect on the economy, but after the last minimum wage increase in 1997, the economy enjoyed its strongest growth in more than three decades. This Congress was elected in a large part because our economy has not benefited the working poor as much as those at the high end of the pay scale. H.R. 2 is a first step and I encourage my colleagues to support the bill.

## INTRODUCING THE SUNLIGHT RULE

**HON. RON PAUL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 12, 2007*

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis famously said, “Sunlight is the best disinfectant.” In order to shine sunlight on the practices of the House of Representatives, and thus restore public trust and integrity to this institution, I am introducing the sunlight rule, which amends House rules to ensure that members have adequate time to study a bill before being asked to vote on it. One of the chief causes of increasing public cynicism regarding Congress is the way major pieces of legislation are brought to the floor

without members having an opportunity to read the bills. For example, concerns have been raised that in the opening days of the 110th Congress, legislation dealing with important topics such as national security are being brought to the floor before members have had an opportunity to adequately study the legislation.

In past Congresses, it was all-too-common to see large Appropriations bills rushed to the floor of the House in late-night sessions at the end of the year. For example, the House voted on the Fiscal Year 2006 Defense Appropriations Conference Report at approximately 4 a.m.—just four hours after the report was filed. Yet, the report contained language dealing with avian flu, including controversial language regarding immunity liability for vaccine manufacturers, that was added in the House-Senate conference on the bill. Considering legislation on important issues in this manner is a dereliction of our duty as the people’s elected representatives.

My proposed rule requires that no piece of legislation, including conference reports, can be brought before the House of Representatives unless it has been available to members and staff in both print and electronic version for at least ten days. My bill also requires that a manager’s amendment that makes substantive changes to a bill be available in both printed and electronic forms at least 72 hours before voted on. While manager’s amendments are usually reserved for technical changes, oftentimes manager’s amendments contain substantive additions to, or subtractions from, bills. Members should be made aware of such changes before being asked to vote on a bill.

The sunlight rule provides the people the opportunity to be involved in enforcing the rule by allowing a citizen to move for censure of any House Member who votes for a bill brought to the floor in violation of this act. The sunlight rule can never be waived by the Committee on Rules or House leadership. If an attempt is made to bring a bill to the floor in violation of this rule, any member could raise a point of order requiring the bill to be immediately pulled from the House calendar until it can be brought to the floor in a manner consistent with this rule.

Madam Speaker, the practice of rushing bills to the floor before individual members have had a chance to study the bills is one of the major factors contributing to public distrust of Congress. Voting on bills before members have had time to study them makes a mockery of representative government and cheats the voters who sent us here to make informed decisions on public policy. Adopting the sunlight rule is one of, if not the, most important changes to the House rules this Congress could make to restore public trust in, and help preserve the integrity of, this institution. I hope my colleagues will support this change to the House rules.

## STEM CELL RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 11, 2007*

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3, the

Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007, introduced by my esteemed colleagues, Representatives DIANA DEGETTE and MICHAEL CASTLE. As a longtime champion of stem cell research and an original cosponsor of this legislation, I cannot stress enough how important this bill is to the future of medical research and to the health and well-being of Americans and people worldwide. Embryonic stem cell research holds unique promise for the treatment of illnesses such as Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, muscular dystrophy and many other degenerative conditions. We Members of Congress have the responsibility to ensure that this promise is realized.

The expansion of federally funded embryonic stem cell research is supported by a majority of Americans and by Members of Congress from across the political spectrum. Therefore, I was disheartened by President Bush’s decision to use his first and only veto to strike down stem cell legislation passed last year. However, I have fresh hope that we will see the enactment of this legislation this year. I am confident that we will pass this bill overwhelmingly today and that the Senate will do its part to secure final passage. I am also optimistic that President Bush will respect the wishes of the American public and will refrain from vetoing this important legislation yet again.

Countless lives could be saved with the passage of this legislation, and I therefore urge each one of you to vote with foresight, with optimism and with respect for life in favor of the Stem Cell Research and Enhancement Act of 2007.

## REINTRODUCTION OF THE SAFE COMMISSION

**HON. FRANK R. WOLF**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 12, 2007*

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, few are willing to admit—much less discuss—the looming financial crisis facing our country, but there is less than 1 year until the first baby boomer is eligible to retire.

On Wednesday, January 10, the Washington Post included an op-ed by Robert Samuelson which paints a poignant picture of the generational conflict approaching on the horizon. He makes a compelling case for why it is critical that Congress take action now to address the financial emergency facing the Nation with the retirement of the baby boomers.

That is why on Tuesday, Senator GEORGE Voinovich and I will reintroduce identical legislation to establish a national bipartisan commission that will put everything—entitlement benefits and all other Federal programs as well as our tax policies—on the table and require Congress to vote up or down on its recommendations in their entirety, similar to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) first created by former Rep. Dick Armey in 1988. This commission would be called the SAFE Commission, to secure America’s future economy.

I first introduced the idea of the SAFE Commission last summer. Since that time, the proposal has received strong support from across the political spectrum including the Heritage Foundation; the Concord Coalition; former