

now say Congress can deal with the big issues our country faces. The majority of Americans also say Republicans are breaking down legislative gridlock and getting things done.

We are making history, and we all know why. In last November's election Republicans, and a lot of Democrats, too, heard what the American people wanted, and they offered a written Contract for America. Open Congress to public scrutiny, balance the Federal budget, the line-item veto for the President, a stronger national defense and removing unfunded mandates from the backs of local and State governments are just the beginning of the contract. It is real change, and it is starting to overcome America's cynicism about their government.

If anyone still needs proof that the Republican Party's Contract With America has given the American people hope, they need only look to the polls.

INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE SHOULD NOT BE A PARTISAN ISSUE

(Mr. RICHARDSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, Democrats finally have a defining issue, increasing the minimum wage, but it should not be a partisan issue. If Republicans want a cut in the capital gains tax for those most fortunate Americans, surely they can support a modest increase in the minimum wage for the average worker. We need to move Americans from the underclass to the middle class, and this is mainly a women's issue. Women are 60 percent of those receiving minimum wage, and many of these women are heads of households. They deserve better.

Mr. Speaker, the last election was about putting money in people's pockets, and what we are talking about is \$4.75 an hour the first year and \$5.25 the next year.

Let us stop the bellyaching about losing jobs, and let us do the right thing.

MOVING THE COUNTRY FORWARD WITH EACH CONTRACT PROMISE WE KEEP

(Mr. JONES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, what do 43 Governors have that President Clinton does not have? The answer: line-item veto.

By the end of the day Monday, President Reagan's birthday, this House will have approved a new power to help control Government spending that Democrats would not even give their own President.

With the line-item veto, Mr. Speaker, we cannot only cut wasteful spending,

but we can return some accountability to Congress, and, just as important, with each contract promise we keep, we not only move the country forward, but also help repair the bonds of trust between the people and their Representatives that has been so badly damaged over the last few decades. Politicians keeping promises will be greatly appreciated by the taxpayers of America.

IN SUPPORT OF A MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

(Mr. MASCARA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MASCARA. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to voice my strong support for the 90-cent increase in the minimum wage proposed by President Clinton.

As my colleagues know, I represent southwestern Pennsylvania, an area of the country that lost 200,000 jobs in the 1980's when the winds of change blew through the steel mills and the coal mines.

Many of my constituents are now left to subsist on \$4.25 per hour, or \$8,840 per year, hardly a living wage and no where near enough to raise a family.

The facts are that adjusted for inflation, the value of the minimum wage has fallen by nearly 50 cents since 1991 and is now 27 percent lower in buying power than it was in 1979.

Mr. Speaker, in 1989 President Bush proposed, and many of my Republican colleagues supported, a similar minimum wage increase.

Now that we are about to undertake welfare reform, a minimum wage increase could be the first step in cutting welfare rolls and giving people a chance at a decent wage.

If we are going to be fair to our workers and help the economy to continue to grow, we should pass this modest minimum wage increase now.

American workers are crying out for us to help them.

□ 1040

PASSAGE OF LINE-ITEM VETO EXPECTED TO FALL ON EX-PRESIDENT REAGAN'S 84TH BIRTHDAY NEXT MONDAY

(Mr. FORBES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, in his 1984 State of the Union Address President Ronald Reagan said, "As Governor, I found this line-item veto was a powerful tool against wasteful and extravagant spending. It works in 43 States. Let's put it to work in Washington for all the people."

Now, more than a decade later, President Reagan may get his wish. As Republicans continue to honor our Contract With America, we are finally close to the enactment of a line-item veto.

President Reagan communicated to us in ways that moved an entire nation. He painted pictures that emphasized our greatness, our heroes, and our hopes. His policies and his ideas were substantive, but he always had a knack for conveying a symbolism that helped Americans understand where he was taking us.

No one in this Chamber would ever try to compete with the style of President Reagan, but the symbolism of the vote on the line-item veto should not be lost. The House is scheduled to pass the line-item veto on Monday, February 6, Ronald Reagan's 84th birthday. We will deliver the Democrat President a budget-cutting device of surgical precision, a tool the Democrat Congress denied Ronald Reagan for 8 years.

MINIMUM WAGE RATE HIKE SEEN AS CRUCIAL TO WELFARE REFORM

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I was proud to join President Clinton and my Democratic colleagues this morning in announcing our plan to raise the minimum wage from \$4.25 an hour to \$5.15 an hour. I am proud because I believe that raising the minimum wage is the right thing to do.

Consider this: A family of three with a full-time minimum wage worker lives below the poverty level in America. By raising the minimum wage by 90 cents over the next 2 years, we can lift that family above the poverty line. People who are working full-time at honest jobs should be able to support their families.

More importantly, raising the minimum wage is crucial to welfare reform. We cannot ask people to move from welfare to work unless we make work pay again.

Mr. Speaker, it is time we value work again in this country. More importantly, it is time we value our workers. People who work hard and play by the rules deserve to make a living wage. Let us raise the minimum wage.

THE LINE-ITEM VETO—A NEW TOOL TO FIGHT THE DEFICIT

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, every year someone invents a new term for the line-item veto. We have had enhanced rescission authority, we have had impoundment control, we have had expedited rescission, and other names too numerous to list. But while the names have changed, there is one factor that has remained the same. That is that the big spenders in Congress have always been opposed. That is because the big spenders know that the line-item veto by any name means less

spending and more cuts. It gives the President the ability to turn over the legislative rock and expose all the pork provisions and midnight deals to the light of day. Once exposed, they simply will not survive.

By enacting the line-item veto, we can trim billions of dollars off the deficit and restore accountability to the legislative process. Combined with the balanced budget amendment, it will force Congress to make those tough decisions we have avoided for years. It is one more tool in the fight against the deficit.

WORK SHOULD PAY

(Mrs. SCHROEDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, the message for today is that work should pay.

I proudly stood with the President of the United States when he said we must raise the minimum wage.

Right now, if you work on the minimum wage and you are lucky enough to have a job all year long and work 8 hours a day, you can bring home \$8,500. That is tough. Imagine how those people feel. And 60 percent of them are women trying to support their families. Imagine how they feel when they hear Congressmen making \$133,000 saying they cannot afford to live in Washington and they must live in their offices. Not only that, they get a tax advantage for living in Washington. Really this ought to be a bill that we pass by unanimous consent.

That is the least we can do for the working men and women of America. If we can raise this up, at least the average family will make \$10,500 for full-time work, and that is very important.

Make work pay. That is the message of the day.

CONGRESS KEEPING ITS WORD TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, America has a new Congress, new leadership, a new majority, a new direction, a new work ethic, and a new relationship with the American people. This Congress listened to the people and entered into a contract to make their voice heard.

What is also new is that this Congress is keeping its word. In bipartisan fashion, last week we passed a balanced budget amendment. This week another promise was fulfilled with the passage of the bill to stop unfunded mandates.

We signaled the end of the "Washington knows best" attitude of the Congresses that have preceded us. We ended the unprincipled, deceitful practice of Congress dumping expensive new laws and regulations on States and local communities and telling them, "Oh, by the way, you not only have to

do as we say, your taxpayers have to pay the cost of implementing them."

Mr. Speaker, in the process of reaffirming our faith in that system of government with the passage of these laws, I believe we also took another major step toward restoring America's faith in Congress.

SHOULD MINIMUM WAGE BE TIED TO MEXICAN WAGES?

(Mr. BONIOR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, at today's press conference, Speaker GINGRICH argued that the wages of American workers should not be raised because of the problems with the Mexican economy. Does the Speaker and the Republican Party really believe we should tie American wages, that the standard of living of American working families should be driven down to the standard of a living wage in Mexico?

It is time for us to stand up for working people in this country. People should be rewarded for their hard work. People who try to move from welfare to work should see that work pays. Yet a person on a minimum wage today who works hard, who works 40 hours a week, who takes responsibility for his or her action, who tries to raise a family finds that that family earns less than \$9,000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, that is below the poverty line. Ask yourself, how could you raise a family on less than \$9,000 a year?

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support the increase in the minimum wage.

TERM LIMITS

(Mrs. MYRICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleagues that hearings begin today in subcommittee on the most fundamental congressional reform issue we will face this session—term limits.

As these hearings begin, I ask my colleagues to join team 290—a bipartisan group of Members of Congress committed to passing a term limits amendment in the 104th Congress.

We are gathering commitments to support final passage of a term limits amendment this session. Please join us by signing the team 290 board in the Speaker's lobby today. If you can't join today, the board will be up from 9 to 5:30 daily.

Please join team 290 and show your commitment to true congressional reform through term limits.

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

(Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the President's decision to raise the minimum wage.

This bold action is an important step in helping to make the American dream a reality for millions of hard-working Americans.

Far too many Americans are working fulltime, only to face the cruel reality that they do not earn enough to support their families.

Today, the minimum wage is worth 27 percent less than it was in 1979.

To allow the devaluation of reward for honest work to continue without positive adjustment is a travesty which demeans the worker and the value of work he or she performs.

This devaluation has added countless individuals to the welfare rolls—individuals who would prefer to work, if only they could support their families by doing so.

I endorse the President's decision to recognize the American worker in this manner.

The increase is justified. Workers have earned it time and again through the honest sweat of their brow.

We must no longer allow their honest efforts to go unnoticed or unrewarded.

□ 1050

TERM LIMITS FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Joint Resolution 66, which is offered by a fellow Georgian, a colleague of mine, a Democrat, NATHAN DEAL. It has bipartisan support, and I think it solves the problem that we are having on term limits, which is a philosophical debate amongst members of the same philosophical family. That is to say, should we pass a 12-year term limit or 6 or 8 years.

What the resolution offered by Representative DEAL does is say we will pass a bill, a constitutional amendment, requiring a 12-year term limit as the outer parameter, but if States want to continue with their own term limits under that amount, they are welcome to.

For example, the State of Florida right now has a term limit of 8 years. I believe California has one of 6 years. They can continue having that, and yet there will still be an overall limit of 12. This will help 19 States that already have term limit laws below 12 years.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is in line with the Contract With America, it has bipartisan support, and I urge its passage.

ON RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE

(Mr. OLVER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1