

this House? Who is it that our Republican majority is representing, and who is it that people who are fighting for a minimum wage increase are representing?

This is a cartoon from the National Journal. How long does it take to make \$8,840? Full-time minimum wage worker, it takes this poor woman one year, because most of them are women. And the average CEO of a large U.S. corporation? Half a day.

So we do need to raise the minimum wage.

Finally, I keep coming back to this poster, because it so accurately describes what is going on in Washington today with this new Republican majority. It says, "The 104th Congress may be the worst in 50 years."

And while we cannot get an increase, a vote on increasing the minimum wage, we learned that the GOP has decided that they want their committee Chairs to look into abuses of the Clinton administration and of labor organizations. This very well could go down in history as the worst Congress in 50 years.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. RIGGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

URGING BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise again to urge bipartisan support for the minimum wage increase and there is great precedent for such an effort. The last time the minimum wage was raised—in 1989—135 Republicans in the House voted for it, including Mr. GINGRICH, 36 Republicans in the Senate voted for it, including Mr. DOLE, and President Bush signed the bill into law.

Since that increase, according to the Center on Budget Priorities, "Inflation has eroded nearly all effects of this increase and the annual value of the minimum wage has returned to its 1989 level."

In other words, if we want our workers to have the same earning power in 1996 that they had in 1989, a modest, two-step increase in the minimum wage is required.

But, the bipartisan spirit from 1989 appears to be missing in 1996, at least among Republican leaders.

One Republican leader wants to abolish the minimum wage, another is quoted as saying that minimum wage families "do not exist," and a third has vowed to "commit suicide" before voting for the minimum wage increase.

Mr. Speaker, the American worker has not changed in 7 years—they still need a fair wage.

What has happened to the Republican Party?

Between 1979 and 1992 the number of working poor in America increased by 44 percent.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would not promote a policy to help the working poor if it was shown that such a policy would substantially hurt small businesses.

According to the best evidence I have seen, a modest increase in the minimum wage will help the working poor, without hurting small businesses.

A recent survey of employment practices in North Carolina after the 1991 minimum wage increase, found that there was no significant drop in employment and no measurable increase in food prices.

The survey also found that workers' wages actually increased by more than the required change.

In another study, the State of New Jersey raised its minimum wage to \$5.05 while Pennsylvania kept its minimum wage at \$4.25.

The researchers found that the number of low wage workers in New Jersey actually increased with an increase in the wage, while those in Pennsylvania remained the same.

In 1991, the increase enjoyed bipartisan support, with President George Bush signing the bill.

Since 1991, the minimum wage has remained constant, while the cost of living has risen 11 percent.

If the Republican leadership in the House would allow a vote, I believe we would pass the minimum wage increase—with a bipartisan vote.

It is the right thing to do; it is the fair thing to do.

I care about small businesses, and it will not hurt small businesses.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. BENTSEN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. BENTSEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

WHAT BUSINESS SAYS ABOUT MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. DICKEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DICKEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk in opposition to the minimum wage increase from the standpoint of what business would have to say about this. I do not know if that has been brought into this discussion.

Mr. Speaker, I am an employer, I am a restaurant owner, I own two different restaurants in Pine Bluff, AR, as well as being a politician. This is 100 percent politics that we are talking about here and not any of economy or not any from consideration of the people who are involved.

I first want to say that the people who pay the price of the minimum wage are the consumers. They do it in one of two ways. They either pay a higher price or they pay with less service when they go to purchase things and they go into the marketplace.

What people do not understand and what may need to be clarified in this discussion is what goes into the higher price. If you are in the restaurant business, you think, well, the labor that you have to pay is all that you would experience.

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There is the tax, the additional tax, the payroll tax that comes from the additional pay. But there is also another factor, and it kind of compounds, and that is that the lettuce that is bought from the store or brought in is going to be at a higher cost because of the minimum wage. The meat, the condiments, all of the things that go into making the product are going to be higher.

So the restaurant owner or the business owner is sitting, looking, and thinking, what is the consumer able to stand? The first reaction is that we need to cut the number of employees because we have got price as a barrier in so many instances. When that is the case, then they usually cut the most inexperienced employee, leaving the other employees more stressed and less able to handle the press of business.

If that does not work and then you start adding back the employees, then you are faced with facing the consumer with a higher cost of the item. Now, when that happens, the consumer then has to deal with one or both of these issues, higher price or less service, and they then make choices that most of the time will bring about less sales.

When you have less sales and you confirm that in an operation, and you do that on a month-to-month basis, you then start cutting employees because the sales are down. Now, that is what can happen, it probably will happen in this particular case, and it is not necessary.

From the employee's standpoint, there is another viewpoint that needs to be looked at. The employees who are there know that when they come in to work at a minimum wage, that they are coming at a training wage, and that this is something where they probably are more of a liability to a business or an industry than they are an asset at the early stages. So they work up.

When they work up and they try to progress in this area, they have to do it in relationship to other employees. So if you have an employee who is given a raise, that employee is compared to

others and there is kind of a standard that is set. If you have the Government coming in for the sake of politicians and just setting an automatic raise, you sort of disrupt all of that process.

It also gives the employee the idea that this is all I am going to make, so we take away the incentive that they have for improving themselves, which the minimum wage, as it stands right now as a starting wage, as a training wage, is in fact an indicator or a starting place for the employees.

So what I am really saying is no employer really wants his employees to stay on minimum wage. If they stay on minimum wage and they think that is all they are going to get until the politicians come and help them, they will not be committed to productivity, they will not be committed to improvement or achievement, and they will just sit there. When that happens, there is a staleness that takes place, and those employees that want to stay on minimum wage and they figure that is all they are going to do eventually need to be moved off the work force, because they are not responsive to the customer. Again, the customer is the king. He is the boss, and they are the people we are trying to please.

There is also the employee who is remaining when the cutbacks come. They have to work under more stress and confusion, and that hinders and hurts the operations.

Now, if you think through all of that and you assume all of that for the sake of this discussion as being true, coming from someone who is actually in the pits of working with consumers and with employees and trying to deal with all these forces, if those things are true, then what you have is a question of why in the world then do we do it?

I have finally concluded that the liberals, the liberal politicians, are using this as a front, using the emotionalism of this issue as a front to charge more taxes, to take more money away from businesses, and that is wrong also. That has an effect.

So these are the reasons for my being against raising the minimum wage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. MONTGOMERY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. WALKER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. WALKER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. METCALF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. NEUMANN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. NEUMANN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. MCINTOSH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. MCINTOSH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

THE CIVILITY PLEDGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. BLUTE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BLUTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. BLUTE. Mr. Speaker, we tonight gather for a special order of a different kind, not like many of the ones that deal with substantive issues that we hear every day here in this Chamber of the people's House of Representatives. Tonight we are going to deal with an issue that I think is very important with how we conduct our business here in the House of Representatives, and that is on the civility of the House debate as it has evolved over the course of our history, but also as it has evolved within recent years, which has caused many of us to be very troubled with the nature of the discourse here in the House of Representatives.

We are being joined with Members from both parties, in both the Democratic Party, the Coalition, and also with the Mainstream Alliance of which we are Members on the Republican side, Members who are commonly referred to as Blue Dogs, Blue Dog Democrats and Blue Dog Republicans, joining here together to talk about an issue that we think is very important, that we think the American people should understand why it is so impor-

tant that we conduct our business here, conduct our debates, in a way that brings credit upon us and upon this institution.

Thomas Jefferson once remarked that it was very material that ordered, decency and regularity be preserved in a dignified public body. Frankly, there have been too many incidents here in our body over the last few years that have brought, I think, discredit on the membership of this body and further eroded the public's confidence in the way we conduct our business.

After all, we pass the laws that the people have to live up to. If they do not respect the institution, then it becomes more difficult for them to respect the laws that we ultimately pass, which they think is very important.

Certainly some of the incivility we have seen in the House of Representatives and in our political cultures relates and emanates from the general society's growing trend toward incivility, toward lack of respect for one another. U.S. News & World Report had a cover story called "In Your Face, Whatever Happened to Good Manners?"

So we are a reflection of the larger society. We think it is important that we be responsible and address our own problem in this area. We think that by doing this, we can improve this institution's reputation with the American people.

We have authored, the Blue Dogs jointly, Democrats and Republicans, a civility pledge that some of the Members will talk about later, but basically it commits Members of the House of Representatives to treating each other in a respectful manner during our differences of opinion. We believe that one can have tremendous disagreements, that one can have a vigorous debate on the issues that our great country faces, the divisive issues we face, without the type of acrimony and the type of personal invective that we see all too often in this House.

We are making the effort tonight, we have been doing it for a couple of months, we have over 70 cosponsors, but we wanted to have this special order to bring focus to this issue, to try to get more support within the House for this effort, and we think ultimately if we are successful, we are going to return this body to the place where it really should be, the people's House, where we can disagree without being disagreeable.

At this time I would like to yield to someone who is a great leader of this House, he is someone who in his day-to-day conduct represents the kind of civility we are talking about, and that is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy and Power of the Committee on Commerce, Congressman DAN SCHAEFER from Colorado.

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for giving me this opportunity to speak to this body and to the American people very briefly on exactly what it is we are doing.