

from West Virginia, could become the mecca. This could become a boon to the hotel and catering industries. But the reality is that this bill is not good for West Virginia and it is not good for voters across the country. This is not reform.

#### VACATION OF SPECIAL ORDER AND GRANTING OF SPECIAL ORDER

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF].

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

There was no objection.

#### ATTACK ON THE AMERICAN PATENT SYSTEM

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

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Madam Speaker, during election years we hear a lot of people who are steamed on this issue or that issue. They are very upset about it. The fact is that many times it is just because it is an election year, and we have to remember that.

For example, the other party did control both Houses of Congress and the Presidency for 2 years just prior to when Republicans took control of both Houses of Congress. During that 2-year time period, if indeed it had been important for the Democratic Party to pass an increase in the minimum wage, they would have passed that increase in the minimum wage because they had control of both Houses of Congress and the Presidency, but they did not.

If, indeed, there is something where Republicans in the Senate are holding back on an increase in minimum wage in order to get something else that they want, I think we have to remember that if we call that holding it hostage, the liberal Democrats who controlled both Houses of Congress and the Presidency must have held the minimum wage hostage for 2 years because they had all the power in the world to do what they wanted to do.

Also, when we hear about other aspects that seem to be important now to the people on the other side of the aisle, campaign reform, for example, it should not be any surprise to anyone who is really paying attention that they could have also passed any type of campaign reform they wanted. After all, they did control both Houses of Congress and the Presidency. But they did not do that. Maybe they are upset now because they are suggesting that they want to do something that they did not do when they had the power to do it. That is sort of confusion.

Well, I would like to talk about something that I talked about long before it was a political year, something

that really does cross political boundaries, because on this particular issue there is widespread bipartisan support from people who are sincerely concerned about an attack on a fundamental building block of American prosperity.

Both Democrats and Republicans have signed on to a bill that I have to restore the guaranteed patent term to Americans. I know this sounds like a yawner of an issue. I mean, patent law, after all. But what is happening right now, and most Americans do not understand it, is that there is an absolutely despicable underhanded attack on the American patent system. We have multinational corporations that are engaged in an effort to change the fundamental law that has permitted America to be the No. 1 technological power in the world.

Yes, patent law is such a yawn. Who is concerned about patent law? Well, long ago our economic adversaries and, yes, our military adversaries figured out what America's greatest strength is. It is not that our people work so hard, because our people do work hard, but people all over the world work hard.

But our people when they work, or our defenders when they defend our country, have superior technology. That gives us our edge. It always has. We have the technological edge. That is what has secured our country's security and has secured us a standard of living that has been admired and envied all over the world.

Is it any surprise, then, that our economic adversaries and countries that do not like the United States would look for our Achilles heel? What is it that gives us that power? What gave Samson that strength but his long locks? Our secret is the fact that we have had the best technology, and we have had the best technology because we have had the strongest patent system in the world.

Now, there is an underhanded effort, an effort that has been going on for about 2 years to try to change the fundamental patent law of this country so that it will undermine America's ability 10 years down the road to outcompete our economic adversaries.

Some people, of course, who are supporting the patent changes are doing so perfectly well-intentioned, and perhaps they bought into this or that argument. The fact is, what is the driving force behind those who want to change our patent law? The driving force is an idea that we should globalize all patent law, so all of the laws should be the same, and Americans who have had the strongest guaranteed patent rights of any people in the world will just have to live with fewer rights because we need a global harmonization of law.

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Well, that concept may appeal to some people. It certainly appeals to multinational corporations and big businessmen. But that is a threat to

the American well-being. H.R. 3460 is about to be put to this floor, and it would steal America's technology. It should be defeated and the Rohrabacher amendment put in its place.

#### THE MINIMUM WAGE AND HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. GREENE of Utah). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I am here today to talk for 5 minutes about 2 issues that I think are really crucial to the American people and that have a real chance of passing in this House and in the Senate and be signed into law by the President, if only the Republican leadership would allow the legislation to be voted on in, to be brought to the floor and voted on in a fashion that most Members agree on, whether they happen to be Republican or Democrat.

One is the minimum wage increase and the other is health care reform legislation that was originally sponsored in the Senate by Senator KASSEBAUM and Senator KENNEDY, again on a bipartisan basis.

The minimum wage hike is long overdue. I know that my colleague from California on the other side said, well, why did not the Democrats do it 2 years ago or why did not such-and-such do it whenever. I am not really concerned about the past.

The reality is that we know there are an overwhelming majority in the House and in the Senate, both Democrats and Republicans, that would vote for this very simple minimum wage hike if they were given an opportunity to do so. And once again, this week in the other body, in fact, there was a vote, and efforts by the Republican leadership over there to try to put in what I would call poison-pill amendments that would have delayed implementation of the minimum wage hike or would have excluded small businesses so that half the people who now benefit from the minimum wage would not have gotten the increase. Those amendments were defeated overwhelmingly, again, on a bipartisan basis.

The only thing that is holding up this bill right now is because the Republican leadership in the other body has decided that they will not appoint conferees and links the appointment of conferees to conferees being appointed on the health care reform bill, the other bill I mentioned today.

Well, some of you may, my colleagues certainly know but I am not sure that the public knows what we mean when we talk about appointing conferees. This is when there is basically a meeting or negotiation between the two Houses on different bills. If you do not appoint the conferees and you do not bring the bill to the floor, the bill does not pass.

That is what we face now. A concerted effort on the part of the Republican leadership in the other body to not let these two bills come to the floor and be passed. It is a shame.

The American people, those who are on the minimum wage need a hike. They have not had one for a long time. Many people would benefit from the Kennedy-Kassebaum health insurance reform because it would provide portability, the ability to take your health insurance with you when you lose a job or when you transfer jobs.

It would also allow for people to buy health insurance who now cannot because they have a preexisting medical condition.

Now, it is time for this legislation to move and be passed and be sent to the President. We only have a short amount of time here. I do not know, there is maybe 25, 30, possibly fewer legislative days. If the Republican leadership continues to put a hold on these bills—

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair must interrupt to repeat her earlier admonition concerning reflections on the Senate.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I just wanted to, if I could, in the time that remains to me, point out that the minimum wage right now is \$4.25 an hour, which adds up to about \$8,800 a year. It is a disgrace that someone in America can work a 40-hour week for 52 weeks a year and only earn \$8,800. How can we as a country that was founded on principles that we all have the same opportunity to improve our quality of life to pull ourselves up from bootstraps only to deny those dreams to our working poor.

Every day that the Republican majority delays the vote to increase the minimum wage, another American dream is essentially shattered. The Republican leadership has talked about family values for many years, but I think its mere rhetoric when it comes to minimum wage. Minimum wage workers are forced to leave their families far beyond the 8-hour day just to provide a balanced meal for their children.

If a minimum wage earner worked a 16-hour day, they would only earn \$68 for that day. Under the Democratic proposal, which again is really a bipartisan proposal, they would take home over \$82 a day for their efforts, an extra \$14. That means that maybe they can go out and buy a meal for their children or a healthier meal.

Right now many who live on the minimum wage do not have health insurance. They do not have the ability, basically, to provide for their family. My point is that if we increase the minimum wage, we make it possible for a lot of these people to not be so dependent upon government subsidies.

Again, there is going to be a bill coming to the floor next week on welfare

reform. I think most of us on a bipartisan basis would like to see some kind of welfare reform. How can you have welfare reform if you do not have an increase in the minimum wage? You have to provide an incentive for people to get off of welfare, for people to not need government assistance.

If they do not make a fair-share wage that will not be possible. I want to point out that in my own State, on a State level we passed a minimum wage increase a few years ago somewhat similar to the one proposed on the Federal level. The result was that more jobs were created.

There was a study done by two Princeton University economists recently for New Jersey and basically what it pointed out was the minimum wage workers take that extra money and they go out and buy things, whether it is food or whatever it is that they need as basic necessities of life. That creates more jobs. It actually helps the economy. I know some have suggested that raising the minimum wage is going to lose jobs, but that is not the case. It actually increases economic activity. I urge that this bill move in both Houses and go to the President.

#### TRAGEDY IN CHECHNYA

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, yesterday's headline was "Russia pounds Chechens as election truce unravels." Today's headline tells us the "Chechen war escalates once more." Report after report details a growing number of casualties. Many people, both military and civilian, are being killed each day. No one seems to know exactly how many but the total is growing. So is the number of refugees trying to stay one step ahead of the fighting and destruction; moving like the tide, first here, then there. Fleeing, leaving the fighting and danger behind only to reencounter it up ahead.

The Russian military has taken off the gloves now that Boris Yeltsin has been safely reelected. With tough talking ex-General Alexander Lebed in his corner, President Yeltsin has unleashed an awesome array of brutal military might on tiny independent-minded Chechnya. The apparent goal is to crush the life out of any desire for independence, no matter what the price. The most recent down payment was the death of Russian Maj. Gen. Nikolai Skripnik and a number of other soldiers on one side and guerrilla fighters and innocent civilians on the other. The numbers grown each day now. And no one seems to have the will to stop this carnage.

Certainly no one in our White House. This administration continues to sit on its hands regarding Chechnya. It has not spoken out to condemn the brutality and the havoc. The Clinton policy on Chechnya has been to remain silent. Deathly silent. Webster's defines genocide as "the deliberate, systematic destruction of a group." Chechnya is a textbook example of genocide and we say nothing.

This administration—this President—has walked away from human rights at every turn.

China, for example, where President Clinton delinked human rights from MFN trading status. After resounding denouncements of President Bush's policy to elevate trade matters above concerns for human rights Bill Clinton advanced the identical notion to the point where there are no longer even discussions on human rights with the Chinese. National Security Adviser Anthony Lake just returned from a round of high level talks with China. The topic of human rights was conspicuous by its absence from the agenda.

In Russia itself, anti-Semitism is cropping up more and more. Anti-Jewish rhetoric, if not commonplace, is at least being voiced by some mainstream officials. Presidents Carter, Reagan, and Bush condemned anti-Semitism and antihuman rights policies to every turn. Today's White House remains silent—to offend no one and thereby offend us all.

I visited Chechnya last year, met the people, Russian and Chechen, soldier and civilian, and saw first hand the results of this horror. I saw the burned out school of Shamanski. Heard about the grotesque and unspeakable acts drug-crazed soldiers committed on old men and women. Since returning, I have urged the President time and again to speak out against this war. I have asked him to offer to help by making available a high level person experienced and wise in diplomacy and negotiation to help both sides search for common ground. To search for a more humane way out. But this administration did nothing. This administration does nothing to advance human rights or to condemn the horrors taking place in Chechnya.

Here are copies of my exchanges of ideas with the President; with the administration. I insert these in the RECORD at this time.

My point in standing here is to advance the notion that America stands for something important. Like it or not we are the sole nation of sufficient stature, strength, and compassion which can, in the world court of public opinion, speak on the side of those with no voice. If we do not, they will not be heard. More will die and suffering will intensify.

But we remain silent. Mr. Speaker, we call on the President to condemn Russian brutality in Chechnya. Condemn those who ignore the basic human rights of others. And urge Vice President GORE to carry this important word to his Russian counterparts during his visit there next week.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, July 10, 1996.

Hon. ALBERT GORE, Jr.,  
The Vice President, The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. VICE PRESIDENT: As you prepare for your meeting with Viktor Chernomyrdin this weekend in Moscow, I wanted to share with you the correspondence between the administration and myself on the brutal war in Chechnya. I also have enclosed an op-ed by Georgie Anne Geyer from the Washington Times with which I strongly agree.

It is time for the administration to publicly denounce the fighting in Chechnya and find a fair, honest mediator to help work out the differences between the two sides. The Russian people, the Chechens and, indeed, the world is waiting for a public statement of condemnation from the United States. While I believe it is way overdue, you now have the opportunity, at this, your first post-election meeting with your Russian counterpart, to make such a statement.

Mr. Vice President, this is your opportunity to publicly stand for human rights