

smokescreen that flies in the face of reality, an attempt to mask a 40-year record of voting for policies that have actually lowered family incomes.

The truth is that most minimum wage positions are either part-time jobs that are held by students, entry-level jobs for young people who are just trying to get into the work force, or second jobs held by men or women whose spouse is the primary breadwinner.

Raising the cost of doing business by raising the minimum wage is probably going to mean even fewer of those jobs. Some statistics say as many as 600,000 of those jobs will be lost, killing work opportunities for young people and those families who depend on that second income.

Besides artificially inflating salaries by hiking the minimum wage, it ignores the real concerns of many working Americans, working Minnesotans. Yes, they want better jobs that pay better salaries, but they have told me repeatedly that what matters most is not how much you earn but how much of your own paycheck you are allowed to keep after the Federal Government has deducted its taxes.

We have debated the issue and put the issue of minimum wage to rest by passing that legislation yesterday. Yet, the issue of tax relief for families has been virtually ignored in the Democrats' ideas recently in their recently released blueprint for their 1996 campaign season that they have entitled "Families First."

They are billing their plan as a roadmap for the future of their party. Congressional Democrats have not created an agenda for change but have instead produced a byproduct of some ambitious political polling. They say that they are in favor of education, in support of welfare recipients working, and helping families and helping children. In other words, if a majority of Americans told the pollsters they liked it, then according to the Democrats, they like it, too. "Some people say it is a tiny agenda, it is too modest or too bland * * * and my answer is that whatever it is, it is what people told us is their concern now." And these are the words of House Minority Leader RICHARD GEPHARDT, in what really was a surprisingly forthright nod to the power of election-year polls.

Let me say again what RICHARD GEPHARDT said. He said, "Some people say it's a tiny agenda, it's too modest or too bland * * *." Mr. GEPHARDT went on to say, "and my answer is that whatever it is, it's what people told us is their concern now."

Again, the results of their polling.

This tiny agenda, however, comes with a massive price tag. Paying for the families-first promises could cost American taxpayers an additional \$500 billion over the next 6 years. While the document is so intentionally vague that computing a precise cost estimate is next to impossible, it is clear that the cost would be enormous, especially

if you add that new cost onto the \$265 billion tax hike imposed by President Clinton and the Democrat-controlled Congress in 1993.

If the families first title sounds familiar, well, it ought to because back in 1994, Republicans in the U.S. House championed a proposal we called "Putting Families First," which I introduced along with Congressman TIM HUTCHINSON of Arkansas.

We introduced the families-first bill in 1993; and in 1994 it became the Republican alternative; and in 1995 we worked it into our first balanced budget that we sent to the President last year. So the families first title is not new.

Unlike the Democrats' families first, however, it was not a political statement, it was not a statement that we conjured up to coax voters in an election year. Our plan, our families-first version, was a well-reasoned alternative budget proposal that was specifically crafted to create new opportunities for working Americans, to give them those job opportunities and the better pay that they are talking about.

The heart of our plan was a \$500 per-child tax credit that would benefit 529,000 Minnesota families. Nearly \$50 million a year in tax savings would go just to the residents in my State of Minnesota. That is far more than the 12,000 heads of households in Minnesota who would be eligible for the boost in the minimum wage, according to data compiled by the Joint Economic Committee.

So what would have done more good? It would have been better to pass some of the tax relief that we have advocated and called for rather than a smokescreen of just a small portion in the minimum wage. Putting families first sought to further strengthen families by reforming the broken welfare system, combating crime through new get-tough initiatives, by offering sensible health care reform while reducing the deficit by \$150 billion. Republicans in both the House and the Senate embraced it as our alternative to the big taxing, big spending budgets of the past.

As a potent prescription for dramatic change, putting families first offered a strong defense of the American family. The Democrats' version of families first is a placebo, a lackluster concoction that will masquerade as some new medicine, but in reality it offers no cures.

Republicans followed through on putting families first by passing budgets in 1995 and 1996, balanced budgets, that built on that strong foundation. We have pledged to continue to fight for the \$500 per-child tax credit, for additional tax relief to make it easier for businesses to be able to create those better paying jobs, and a balanced budget that will reduce interest rates and the amount that a family has to pay on their mortgage, on their car loans and student loans.

Minnesota families deserve solutions, not a lot of empty slogans. If the

Democrats are serious, if they are serious about trying to ease the tremendous burden faced by American workers, then they will drop the campaign theatrics and they will help join the Republicans in truly putting families first by turning our promises into law. I think they deserve nothing less than that.

I thank you, Madam President, and I yield the floor. If there are no other speakers, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, as I understand, morning business has expired.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. DASCHLE. I will use my leader time and only take so much time as may be required prior to the time we are prepared to go to the DOD bill, which I understand is imminent.

THE ACTION AGENDA

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I wanted to call attention to the fact that yesterday, as we passed the important piece of legislation dealing with minimum wage, one of the issues that I do not think got the kind of attention that I had hoped it would receive, and really deserves, has to do with pensions and has to do with the significant new contribution we made to pension reform in the package of amendments that we added to the minimum wage bill.

That legislation dealing with pensions has several categories, one of which is an issue which a number of our colleagues have expressed a great deal of concern about and are prepared to support in a series of amendments dealing with women's pension equity. There is a significant disparity among working people, between men and women, with regard to pension equity.

Senator BOXER and Senator MOSELEY-BRAUN, in particular, added amendments to this package which would begin to address that disparity, which would begin to close the gap, the chasm, really, between men and women when it comes to pensions. I want to publicly commend them for their leadership and their willingness to work with all of us to find a way with which to begin making the effort to close that gap and to provide the kind of equity that I know all of our colleagues would like to achieve. Senator BOXER's provision will make it more likely that surviving spouses—typically women—will be able to avoid significant cutbacks in the level of retirement income provided while their spouses were alive. Senator MOSELEY-BRAUN's provisions

will remove roadblocks that can prevent surviving spouses and former spouses from getting the benefits they are entitled to from both private sector pension plans and Federal retirement programs.

Beyond women's equity, we also dealt with the issue of pension portability. We have a very significant problem in this country that exists every time someone wants to leave their job to go to another job. Pension portability is almost as serious a problem as health care portability. We need to find ways with which our workers can take pensions with them and keep increasing retirement savings without obstacles or cutbacks as they move from one job to the next. This bill will expand the PBGC's missing participant program to help ensure that retirees who have lost touch with their former employer never find their benefits unexpectedly forfeited when the pension plan terminates. It will also make it easier for new employees to enter their employers' 401k plan immediately, rather than waiting to benefit.

Finally, there are a number of issues relating directly to pension security that have to be addressed. Security for pensions is something that increases in urgency for workers as they get closer to that date when they will retire. There is a pervasive sense of insecurity about pensions in retirement today. Working people, men and women, are very concerned about whether or not they will have the capacity to deal with the problems that they know they will confront with regard to their own income viability, their own ability to ensure some confidence that they will have the necessary means to live in some security and comfort during retirement. The way that we are going to be able to address that effectively is to put the kind of priority and attention on pension security that it deserves. We took an important step yesterday by increasing the guaranteed benefit provided to retirees from multiemployer pension plans that become insolvent.

Several months ago, we laid out our desire to see an action agenda addressed. That action agenda has four components. The first was personal security and the need to ensure that people are safe in their neighborhoods. The second was paycheck security and the real desire that working people have to earn more income. The third was health security. And the fourth is pension security.

Madam President, we are now at a point where we have been able to address all four of those security questions. We have been able to protect the cops on the beat program. We have made a downpayment in providing better personal security out on the street than we had before. Yesterday, we passed the minimum wage bill.

We are working on both sides of the aisle, hopefully, to resolve our differences in the Kennedy-Kassebaum legislation. I hope we can, at some

point, put that bill back before the Senate in an effort to resolve what remaining differences there are, in an effort to move it forward and to have a Presidential signature and, at long last, declare our victory with regard to the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill.

Health insurance portability is something we all ought to support, and, in fact, have supported. The Kennedy-Kassebaum bill passed by a vote of 100 to 0. There is no reason whatever that we cannot finish that legislation this month. I hope we can continue to keep our eye on the ball. Our eye on the ball in this case is clearly portability for health insurance.

All the other issues, as important as they may be, can be resolved, as well. But the important issue, the one matter that unites us all, is the need to have that portability. We ought to use this legislation to get that job done.

Now, finally, pension portability and pension security—it is critical we get that legislation passed. I am hopeful with the action taken yesterday that will happen.

This is part of a larger agenda the Democrats have laid out, having three components—security, which I have addressed, opportunity, and responsibility. We will have a lot more to say about those three components in the weeks and months ahead. I know that we are now prepared to go to the pending matter. For that, I yield the floor.
(Mr. DEWINE assumed the chair.)

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, we have now completed the process that was laboriously worked out to take up and consider the small business tax relief package, the House-passed package that included minimum wage and some tax considerations. Then we added to it the Finance Committee's work and the managers' bill. We completed that whole process yesterday, and we have now taken up and considered amendments to the TEAM Act. We have passed the TEAM Act.

In connection with all of that, earlier, we had caught up in that maze the taxpayers bill of rights II. I tried yesterday to clear that for unanimous consent because I believe there is overwhelming support for the taxpayers bill of rights bill. I know one of the principal architects of that legislation is Senator PRYOR from Arkansas. But there was objection heard to it because I understood maybe there were amendments that were being considered to be offered to that bill. I understand now that maybe that is not true. I know that Senator PRYOR, Senator FORD, and I think maybe Senator GRASSLEY, and others, are working to see if we can get agreement on that. That is something that we clearly should do to give the American people some further rights with regard to how they are dealt with by the Internal Revenue Service. That is something we should do, and it is long overdue. But there was objection.

Now, today, also caught up in the small business tax relief, minimum wage, TEAM Act, and gas tax act was another matter commonly referred to as the White House Travel Office. So I wish to seek unanimous consent that we could get that legislation taken up and acted on because, once again, it is clearly something that involves equity for the people involved. I thought that once we got all these other issues dealt with, this would be something we could move.

So I am going to continue to try to move bills that are pending before the Senate. Some have been pending for a long time. It is my intent to try to clear for a unanimous consent agreement the bill dealing with the Gaming Commission, which is not something I am particularly excited about, but there is a lot of interest in it, again, on this side from Senator LUGAR and Senator COATS of Indiana. I know that Senator SIMON is interested in that. My intent is to try to get it up and have it considered and deal with it, vote it up or down, but stop holding things up.

I am trying to develop a pattern here of moving legislation, certainly legislation that is not controversial, such as the taxpayers bill of rights, the White House Travel Office, and the Gaming Commission—although that could get to be controversial. If I find out that there will be a lot of amendments beyond what were agreed to in the committee, after consultation with the Democratic leader, we might decide not to bring that up if we are going to have protracted debate on that. We have work we need to do, such as the Department of Defense appropriations bill. The two managers are here and are ready to go. We need to get on with that. If we are going to have objections, then I guess we will not be able to proceed.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 2937

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 380, H.R. 2937, relating to the White House Travel Office. This provides for the reimbursement of attorney's fees and costs incurred by former employees of the White House Travel Office with respect to the termination of their employment in that office on May 19, 1993; further, that a substitute amendment, which is at the desk, offered by Senator HATCH, be offered and agreed to, the bill be deemed read the third time and passed, as amended, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DASCHLE. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President. We have not seen this amendment, to my knowledge. I do not know that anyone has shared it with us. I have not seen it. But I say that, beyond the issue of the Hatch amendment, there are Members