

The common sense of the American people has to come into this situation. Millionaires want to be billionaires. Billionaires want to be multi-billionaires. It is greed totally out of control and greed that is going to be self-destructive. They are going to destroy themselves as well as the whole American economy.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, human rights is not just an international issue, something we should be concerned about happening in other countries. Human rights is a domestic issue, too. If someone does not have a job, if someone does not have decent wages, if someone cannot have decent benefits to protect their family's health, if people cannot get a good education, if they do not have rights on the job, their human rights are undermined. That is why these trade issues, GATT, NAFTA, most favored nation, all have relevancy to this country, because it is about our human economic rights in America.

We need to be, and it is good that we are, Congressmen and Congresswomen, standing up for the American people and for their economic rights and insisting that the human economic rights of the people in this country need to be protected, and we do that every time we raise questions, as we are doing this evening.

Mr. SANDERS. In terms of human rights what I get a kick out of is not so many years ago we were told that China was a Communist authoritarian society where people did not have any rights, where people did not have religious freedom. Unless I am not hearing what is going on, not only have things not changed, they have gotten worse.

The State Department last year announced that the situation in China in terms of human rights is worse. With over 1 billion people, they said there are no dissenters. In all of China, nobody, not one person, according to the State Department, is out on the street able to dissent against their authoritarian country.

But what has changed in America? What changed in America is corporate America has said, gee, maybe that is not such a bad place to do business. Hey, why were we attacking these people? No unions, no freedom to stand up and fight back? Sounds like a good place to do business.

So where 20 years ago we were told how terrible Red China is, suddenly these same corporations are now spending millions of dollars to convince us that it is really a very fine place and it is a wonderful place to do business. What better place can you have? You pay people 20 cents an hour. If they stand up and fight back they are fired, put in jail. You have slave labor over there in the prisons. What a good place to do business. Let us continue MFN with China, say our corporate friends.

Fortunately, some of us do not agree with that.

Mr. BONIOR. I thank my colleague. I think that is a good summation to end with tonight. I thank the Speaker for

his patience with us this evening, and his indulgence in the last minute or so. I thank all of my colleagues for coming this evening and sharing their thoughts. We look forward to continuing this debate.

REPORT ON H.R. 1757, FOREIGN RELATIONS AUTHORIZATION ACT, FISCAL YEARS 1998-1999, AND H.R. 1758, EUROPEAN SECURITY ACT OF 1997

Mr. DIAZ-BALART (during special order of the gentleman from New York, Mr. OWENS), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 195-115) on the bill (H.R. 1757) to consolidate international affairs agencies, to authorize appropriations for the Department of State and related agencies for fiscal years 1998 and 1999 and for other purposes, and for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1758) to ensure that the enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO] proceeds in a manner consistent with the United States interests, to strengthen relations between the United States and Russia, to preserve the prerogatives of the Congress with respect to certain arms control agreements, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

DESTROYING ORGANIZED LABOR AND MAKING WORKERS POWERLESS IN THIS COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. GIBBONS]. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] IS RECOGNIZED FOR 60 MINUTES.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make it clear that my colleagues are welcome to stay. The issue I am about to discuss is quite relevant and related to the previous issue.

Mr. Speaker, we are in a situation where, as I said before, there is a drive on to drive the workers' wages down to the lowest levels, and the process of globalization is being used to do that, where corporate powers are moving the jobs and their manufacturing processes to the areas that have the lowest wages, and there is a continual search that goes on and on perpetually for the lowest wages.

At the same time, we have a situation in our borders here in America where every effort is being made to destroy organized labor, to take away the power of the workers to speak for themselves and to drive the work force here down to lower levels at the same time you are taking away their jobs and forcing them to bargain for lower wages because of the globalization.

□ 2115

We have with the welfare, so called, reform. It was not welfare reform. It was welfare liquidation. We destroyed the entitlement, for that has been in the law for 65 years, that was not re-

formed. That is elimination, liquidation.

We gave to the States certain powers, and we give them money, but the right for a poor person to expect his government to help to keep him alive is gone. The welfare reform was driven by a call to put people to work. Work was a necessity in order for human dignity to be encouraged. Work was desirable and work was available. We insisted that the work was available in spite of the fact that we had high unemployment in all of those areas where you had a large welfare case load, large numbers of people are on welfare in the areas where you have the biggest unemployment problems.

So now we have a situation where we have pushed and are pushing people off the welfare rolls. We are insisting that there are jobs, and as we mobilize to put more and more people to work, what is happening is that we have created a situation where people are being forced to work for less than the minimum wage. And when accusations are made that this is a movement toward slavery, people are upset. They say how dare you use the word slavery.

Let us stop for a moment and consider the fact that on the plantation everybody had a job. There was no unemployment on the plantation. You might have great varieties in terms of fringe benefits in terms of housing provided or decent food, but everybody had a job. You can have a situation where everybody has a job, and you can take away the dignity of people through the job but not paying them a decent wage, you can drive down the wages to the point where we have a new class of people, what you might call urban serfs or suburban peasants.

Mr. Speaker, they are in a situation where they are locked into accepting whatever is given them, but it has nothing to do with the relationship with what they need and what the standard of living is in our particular society. So we are driving down wages now by introducing into the labor market a new class of people, putting them in jobs and paying them less than even the minimum wage which is totally inadequate.

We have had previous discussions about how inadequate the minimum wage is. It is going to go up to 5.15 an hour, it is now at 4.75. If you look at what it takes to maintain a family, you can make the minimum wage and work every eligible hour during the year, and still you are in poverty according to our own standards.

So I want to open the discussion in terms of the new threat, the additional threat in addition to most-favored-nation status for people for countries like China in addition to NAFTA and in addition to GATT. We now have a drive on within our own society to finish the job and it is not unrelated, what is happening to welfare recipients and workfare and the movement to try to force people to work for less than the minimum wage is not unrelated to the

total Republican attack on organized labor.

Unprecedented, an unprecedented attack has been launched in this Congress, the 105th Congress, a Congress that prides itself on seeking some new bipartisan options and wanting to be more civil. In no way is it acting civilly or behaving in a civil way toward organized labor. They have come out pushing very hard to destroy organized labor.

There is a thorny campaign on to promote union democracy which would take away the rights of labor unions to finance the political education of their own members. There are new ambushes of Davis-Bacon, the prevailing wage requirements, new ambushes that are being prepared, riders on bills unrelated to work force issues. There is the whole cash for overtime swindle where, instead of giving people cash for overtime, they are going to take it away and give them time off at the boss's discretion and convenience.

There is a continuing drive to gag the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. There is a continuing refusal to recognize ergonomics, what that means in terms of repetitive motion disorders to workers. There is a new drive to pass the union busting law called the Team Act, which allows the bosses almost to hand pick the shop stewards. And there is a new slashing of the budget for the National Labor Relations Board which is being threatened. And they are harassing the National Labor Relations Board. And then there is NAFTA, GATT, most-favored-nation treatment trading status for China that we have been talking about here previously.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS], who might want to comment on this, which is a continuation of what we were talking about before, the drive to push the wages of labor, of the working class down to the very lowest level.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. The issue that he is talking about is the most important issue facing our society, and that is that never before in American history, at least the modern history of this country, have the people on top had so much wealth and have had so much power. What they are doing with that wealth and power is using it to make themselves ever more rich while they are squeezing and shrinking the middle class and creating a new class, urban serfs.

Mr. OWENS. And suburban peasants.

Mr. SANDERS. What you are talking about are the millions and millions of people who are desperate, who have no place to go and that is what is going on in this country.

There is one point that I want to add to what my colleague was saying. And that is my very great fear that the American people are not reading or seeing on their TV's or hearing on their radios much about this reality, which is the most important develop-

ment that has taken place in modern American history. This is the story of the century, that the American middle class is shrinking, that the gap between the rich and the poor is growing wider, that people are working longer hours for low wages. But somehow when we turn on the TV in the evening, we do not see that story. We see O.J. Simpson and we see everything else in the world, but we somehow could not see that story. How come we do not see that story? It is tied into everything else that we are talking about.

Who do we think owns the media? When we talk about sweatshops in desperate Third World countries, when we talk about companies downsizing and throwing American workers out on the street, we are talking about companies like Disney who, among other things, owns ABC. When we are talking about companies going to Mexico to pay people substandard wages or going to China, we are talking about General Electric, who happens to own NBC. And Westinghouse happens to own CBS, and Rupert Murdoch happens to own Fox, multibillionaire who is extremely right wing.

So it is no great secret that the American people do not see the most important realities facing their lives on the television. They turn on the TV, they see everything else in the world except what is going on in their own lives.

I think one of the issues that I would add to the discussion is the need to tackle the very important issue of corporate control over the media. It is not just television. It has to do with newspapers as well. Let me mention a very wonderful book written several years ago by a former journalist named Ben Bagdikian, the Media Monopoly. Let me quote from Mr. Bagdikian or paraphrase what is going on in newspapers in America.

Eighty percent of the daily newspapers of this country were independently owned at the end of World War II. They were owned by people, not huge corporations. Today, 80 percent of daily newspapers are owned by corporate chains. Just 11 companies control more than half of the dailies, half of the Nation's daily newspaper circulation. And then we wonder when we have this NAFTA debate, gee, is it not a great shock that every major newspaper in America ends up being pro-NAFTA. In fact, 98 percent of the daily newspapers in America have a monopoly as the only paper in town. You have a one-newspaper town.

Although there are more than 11,000 magazines published in the United States, today just two corporations control more than half of all magazine revenues. When you go to the newspaper stand and you see all of those magazines, what you end up finding out is that these magazines, many of them are owned by a relatively small number of corporations. Although there are 11,000 local cable television systems, only 7 companies have a ma-

jority of the 60 million cable TV subscribers.

Three companies own more than half the television business, four companies own more than half of the movie business, five companies rake in more than half of all book revenues.

So there is a reason why people do not feel engaged in the political process. There is a reason. My colleague mentioned, I think very perceptively, what has been going on politically around the world in the last month. The change in England with the victory of the Labor Party, the change in France with the victory of the Socialist Party, the fact that the NDP did very well in Canada. What we are seeing is people all over the world saying, no, we do not have to deal with the absurdities of the global economy which lower our wages. But in this country it is very hard for people to learn about what is going on because of corporate control over the media. I think that is one of the reasons why we end up having by far the lowest voter turnout.

In England, I think they were disappointed. Their voter turnout was perhaps 70 percent. They were disappointed. It was a low turnout. Canada, it is usually above 70 percent. My guess is in the next congressional elections, probably 35 percent of the people will vote. Low-income people, working people have given up on the political process. One of the reasons I would suggest is that, when they read the papers and they read the magazines and they see the television, their lives and the pain of their lives is not being reflected in what they are observing. I think that is an issue we have to discuss.

Mr. OWENS. I think the fact that the British economy in general was performing very well, they say we have prosperity. What the common ordinary people in Britain understood was that more and more people at the top were getting more and more of that economy, and they were getting less and less. The great shock was they swept overwhelmingly, they swept out a party at a time when prosperity, so called, was very much in motion there.

Mr. SANDERS. If the gentleman will continue to yield, the gentleman raises an interesting point, because there are strong similarities between the economy in England and the economy in the United States. And that is our unemployment. England's unemployment is lower than western Europe, but what they forgot to tell us was interesting. Do you know what the wages in England were compared to Western Europe? They were, according to the New York Times, 40 percent less, 40 percent lower. So what they sacrificed were decent wages, and they created a whole lot of low wage jobs, which is what we are doing in this country.

In this country, 20 years ago the United States led the world, we were No. 1 in terms of the wages and benefits, highest wages in the world, we were No. 1. I know that we do not see it on CBS too often. Rupert Murdoch

does not talk about it too often, but today we are 13th in the world. German manufacturing workers make 25 percent more than our workers. These people have 6 weeks paid vacation. They have a national health care system. Their kids can often go to college for free. We do not talk about that too much.

Mr. OWENS. We have traded places with Great Britain where the gap between the rich and poor used to be the greatest. We are now, democratic America has now the greatest gap between the rich and the poor. It is the phenomenon that has taken place. It has nothing to do with capitalism *per se*. The argument about capitalism and what it does to an economy is an argument, I think, that is just about over.

It appears that humankind prefers a capitalist system. It seems to be compatible with the way human beings are built. We are not talking about capitalism automatically creating this kind of condition. Capitalism can be compassionate. Capitalism can be more creative. They have a capitalist system in Sweden. They have a capitalist system in a number of other places. Norwegian workers do very well. There are a number of places where they choose to use their resources in certain ways and they choose to throttle the runaway spirit of greed which creates more and more billionaires and multi-billionaires. We ought to see ourselves differently.

Mr. Speaker, President Clinton has said that America is the indispensable Nation in today's global society. I agree. I think capitalism has, in fact, demonstrated that perhaps capitalism is an indispensable economic system of humankind. There are all kinds of capitalism. Chinese capitalism uses slave labor in prisons, and we are buying into a system with China where we are willing to buy the products of slave labor.

More and more of those products are flowing into this country. We have an enormous trade deficit with China. It took over a very short period of time. The Japanese deficit grew slowly over the years, but the deficit, by deficit I mean we are buying so much more from China than China is buying from us. If you want to know what these deficits are about, a trade deficit is when you are buying so much more from one country, from a country than they are buying from you. We are buying many products that should be manufactured in our own country. We are buying products that our workers here used to make. We are buying those products from the Chinese. We are doing all of that in terms of the globalization that we talked about in the previous hour, driving down the wages by moving from one country to another to find the lowest wages.

□ 2130

But here in this country the attack on organized labor is an attack which seeks to drive down the wages of the

workers. And the latest development is the fact that we have had new low-wage workers introduced into the labor pool via welfare recipients.

In my city of New York, workfare they call it, is expanding. We have one of the biggest workfare programs in the country, where welfare workers go to work for city agencies. Now, we also have one of the biggest reductions in the number of workers on city payroll at the same time. They say, well, this is being done by attrition. After all, the mayor of the city is running for reelection this year. He is not laying off anybody. But they are not hiring anybody. They have not hired anybody for the last 3 years. And they had a process of encouraging workers to retire in various ways, pressing them to take packages to retire.

So the civil service work force in New York has been reduced while the workfare work force has gone up. The workfare people, who are welfare recipients while they are on workfare, are working for less than minimum wage. They have to work a certain number of hours in order to get their grant. And if we divide the number of hours into the grants, we will find the amount of money per hour is lower than minimum wage. Add to that that there are no fringe benefits attached to that work. Of course, they are still on welfare so they are fortunate enough to be able to continue to get Medicaid for health care.

So we have a situation where from within the country pressures are now on to drive down the wages by forcing more and more low-wage workers into the market. The White House has reached to call for a minimum wage in workfare plans. They say we must pay welfare workers a minimum wage. That set off a whole chain reaction. That chain reaction, we understand, may culminate in a bill on the floor of this House very soon.

There is one rumor that Ways and Means is preparing it now, which will make it clear that by order of this government, people must work for less than minimum wage. We are going to put that into a law. There is a great deal of alarm about it. We have been meeting today among members of the Congressional Black Caucus. We want to call this to the attention of our fellow members of the Democratic Party, we want to call it to the attention of all of the Members of the House and to the attention of the American people.

We want to sound the alarm right now, let us not sit here in Washington and make laws which will create a new class of workers, urban serfs, suburban peasants, whatever we want to call it, people working for less than minimum wage. Minimum wage is already inadequate. We will not accept anything below the minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. The point the gentleman is making is that many people out there may say, well, that is too

bad, but it does not affect me. But it does affect us, because what is going on, if an employer can hire somebody for \$3 an hour, for \$3.50 an hour, that means all wages will go down as well. That is what this effort is about. It is not only to save money by hiring people below the minimum wage, it is to push everybody's wages down in exactly the opposite way that when we raise the minimum wage working people's wages will go up.

The gentleman before made an interesting point, and I want to pick up on that because, again, it is an issue that is not discussed very much on the floor of the House. He said, quite correctly, that the United States now has the most unfair and unequal distribution of wealth and income in the entire industrialized world. They used that dubious distinction that used to accrue to Great Britain, with all their dukes and queens and kings.

The point is that today the United States has claimed what England used to have and that we now have, the most unfair distribution of wealth and income.

When we talk about economics, ultimately, like a football game or a basketball game, it is about who wins and who loses. And what is going on in the United States today is that we know who is winning. We know the wealthiest 1 percent of the population now owns over 40 percent of the wealth, which is more than the bottom 90 percent. So we have 1 percent owning more wealth than the bottom 90 percent.

When we hear about the booming economy, we should know that between 1983 and 1989, 62 percent of the increased wealth of this country went to the top 1 percent and 99 percent of the increased wealth went to the top 20 percent. Meanwhile, the middle class shrank and poor people were working at lower wages than for many, many years.

And when we see the unfair distribution of wealth in general, we also see recently the outrageous situation that CEO's in the United States of America, the heads of large corporations last year had a 54 percent increase in their income while many working people saw a decline in their real wages. And CEO's now earn, on average, more than 200 times what the worker in their company earns, which is by far the largest spread in the industrialized world.

So I think when we talk about the state of the economy, it is important to understand who is winning and who is losing, and the reality is that the people on top have never had it so good, the middle class is shrinking, and working people all over this country are working longer hours for lower wages and barely keeping their heads above water.

Mr. OWENS. I thank the gentleman. The story is that we are the wealthiest nation that ever existed on the face of the Earth. The wealth of America is

constantly increasing and the wealth of wealthy people throughout the world is constantly increasing.

There is no reason why minimum wages cannot be provided. There is no reason why health care cannot be provided for everybody. There is no reason why we cannot have a totally different kind of society even within the structure of capitalism. There is no reason why it cannot happen. It is the blindness, the shortsightedness of the people in power and that have the money that continues this condition.

And the fact we went to great lengths to push people off welfare and with the myth that there were jobs out there, and now we are pushing them into the work force to undercut the lowest paid workers and compete with those that have jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Let me first of all thank the gentleman from New York for yielding. It is certainly a pleasure to join here this evening with the gentleman from Vermont and the gentlewoman from California as we discuss what I think is one of the most serious issues facing America.

It seems to me that right now, as we prepare to implement welfare reform, as it is being called, or as we prepare to implement the right for people to go from welfare to work, or the enforcement of people going from welfare to work, that rules are being changed.

We have just seen the rule changed in the meaning where volunteerism in one place means mandatory in another place. Now we see an attempt to change another set of definitions and another set of rules. Individuals who work have the right to be protected by Federal standards. Now we are being told, or it is being suggested, that individuals who may be welfare recipients and have the opportunity or get the chance to work under some Government-sponsored program, that they will not be defined as workers, they will not actually be defined as having a job because they will not have the same protection.

Well, work, to me, seems to be work. And so there is something sinister happening in America. There is something that is difficult to define. It seems as though we are bent on moving backwards rather than moving forward; that there are those who are attempting to take us back to the dark ages. And I think that if there was ever a message being sent to low-income people, if ever a message was being sent to individuals who have need for public resource, if there was ever a message being sent to the physically challenged, to those who suffer with disabilities in our society, then that message is to organize, to come together, to educate, agitate and activate, to stimulate real movement so that all of the forces that are being attacked will have an opportunity to protect themselves. There is unity in strength and there is strength when groups are unified.

So this is a time when all of America really should unify to protect the rights of those at the very bottom. I thank the gentleman from New York and yield back to him.

Mr. OWENS. I thank the gentleman from Illinois and I yield to the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I thank so much my dear colleague from New York and also my colleague from Vermont and from Illinois. I could not help but to come to this floor when I heard the gentlemen speaking about the issue of minimum wage.

Certainly I was one of those who cast a vote in favor of that last year, but as I look at an article in *The Washington Post*, and it speaks to one of our colleagues, Republican colleagues, who is suggesting that a solution with reference to persons being paid below the minimum wage would be to pass legislation that would say the minimum wage would not apply, and another would be to say that all of the benefits that people are receiving would count toward calculating the minimum wage.

I think this is absolutely deplorable. As I looked at my colleagues last year, those who voted on this minimum wage, I was encouraged that perhaps we were moving forward, as the gentleman from Illinois said. But then as I went back home to my district of Watts and Willowbrook, Compton and Lynwood, Wilmington, and had to meet the welfare recipients of my district to tell them of a welfare bill that was passed that said that they had to move from welfare to work, though they were discouraged, they thought, well, maybe, just maybe, jobs can come where we can get off of welfare. They do not want to be there. Maybe, just maybe, job training will come that will allow us to go from job training to jobs and then have a job where the wages will be as such where we can sustain ourselves and our families.

So last year this body passed and the President signed this welfare reform bill that commanded welfare recipients to go to work. This bill did not tell them how to find a job, how to work, where to work, who would train and hire them, or how to get to work. The bill, nonetheless, ordered them to get out and seek employment. In essence, the bill commanded them to swim or sink.

If there was an upside to that legislation, it was the fact that early in the session, as I said, we voted to raise the minimum wage in this country from \$4.25 an hour to \$5.15, giving the low-wage earners in this country, many of whom are welfare recipients and former welfare recipients and current welfare recipients, a much needed lift.

When I cast my vote in favor of raising the minimum wage, which was supported by over 80 percent of the American public, I was under the impression that I was doing so for all Americans, including welfare recipients. We are not creating new laws, but rather ap-

plying current laws to those employees who are making the transition from welfare to work. So how can some Republican Members of this body demand that a citizen of this country leave the welfare rolls and go to work, then in the same breath deny them the minimum wage for an hour of work?

Workfare employees not only should but need to be treated the same as any other employee. To do otherwise is unfair to them and the employees they work with. Welfare recipients in workfare programs should be entitled to the same protections under Federal labor and antidiscrimination laws as other employees. The work participation rules of the new welfare law require a single parent to be engaged in a job activity for 20 hours per week in fiscal year 1997.

□ 2145

For an adult in a two-parent family, 35 hours a week are required, and a single parent is required to work 25 hours in fiscal year 1999 and 30 hours in fiscal year 2000. How can a mother afford child care for her children in addition to the basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing with an income well below the minimum wage?

Mr. Speaker, I think it is deplorable. I ask my colleagues, why are we doing this to persons who recognize that they must leave welfare to go to work and yet they are being told that now, if they should find a job, there is a possibility that they will not get minimum wage?

I do not know where we are going in this country, because the very fundamental rights are being stripped from the people, not only those whom I serve, but all of us; and yet, we have some of our Republican colleagues who do not share our beliefs of opportunity and fairness.

Under the proposal that I have just read, they plan to introduce workfare participants with a plan that may deny the same minimum wage that is provided to other workers, may be required to perform the same work as other employees, including hazardous work, at a lower rate of pay and without any OSHA protection, have no title 7 protection against sexual harassment or racial discrimination, and would not be entitled to the provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act. It is preposterous.

I am concerned about how this proposal will affect the State of California and my district, the 37th Congressional District. One in twelve Californians receive welfare benefits, and 10 percent of Los Angeles residents receive welfare benefits. The only way to make the transition from welfare to work is through obtaining quality job skills and minimum wage.

The State grants under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Family Programs are set at the 1994 levels. Caseloads have fallen to 4.1 million, yet the States receive funding for 5 million families. This difference creates the opportunity to pay workfare

workers at the minimum wage they deserve and need.

I say to my colleagues, I am ready for the fight. I cannot believe that anyone in this body would now try to slip not only the rug from under people but the very basic principles of fairness and opportunity. Providing minimum wage to workfare employees is not only the fair and right thing to do but the necessary step to end welfare dependency.

Mr. Speaker, I am with my colleague on whatever he proposes. I am here for the fight and the long haul to ensure that fairness to my constituents and to all constituents throughout this country who are trying their best to move from welfare to work get the respect, the fairness, and the opportunity they deserve.

Mr. OWENS. I want to thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD], and say that she is ready to fight. And I want her to know there are a number of other people in this country who are now quite alarmed by what is happening and they, too, are ready to fight.

There has been a recent set of mobilizations proposed by the religious community. They think this is immoral, that we cannot talk about welfare reform, meaning the people must go to work and we start defining jobs as something less than a job.

When we operate in America, we operate under the Fair Labor Standards Act. A job must pay minimum wage, must provide benefits, must protect you from discrimination, it must give you safety. Everything under the Fair Labor Standards Act must be there in order for a job to be a job in America.

And the people are upset. A coalition of 18 of the Nation's most prominent civil rights, labor and welfare and civil advocacy groups have urged President Clinton to grant welfare recipients rights to a broad array of legal protections against discrimination and unjust treatment on the job. The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and 17 other groups asked President Clinton in a May 15 letter to make the civil rights and economic security of low-income individuals and families a higher national priority as States implement the new welfare law.

The Lutheran services in America have issued a proclamation that in none of the various organizations where they employ people or that they are affiliated with that employ people may any organization pay welfare recipients less than the minimum wage or provide less than fringe benefits that are provided to other workers.

So we should sound the trumpet. I think the Congressional Black Caucus have made it quite clear that we intend to appeal to our colleagues in the Democratic Party here in the Congress, we intend to make appeals to the entire Congress, Members of both parties.

Remember that the minimum wage was a very popular issue in the last Congress, that there were people that said they would never permit it to

pass, that it would only pass over their dead body. But the American people let it be known, they thought it made sense. They thought it was the right kind of morality for America. They thought it was fair and just. Eighty percent of the American people said they wanted an increase in the minimum wage. We got an increase in the minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, I think what has to happen now is the American people, the workers out there, the people who belong to the caring majority and believe in doing the right thing, even though they are all right by themselves, they do not want to turn their backs on other people who ought to have a fair opportunity to earn a living under right working conditions with a minimum wage.

All that is in motion now, and I think we should go forward to see to it that nothing is passed on the floor of this House that begins to roll back the clock, that takes away the right of workers who happen to have been or are present welfare recipients. A worker means that you are under American FLSA, Fair Standards Labor Act, under all the added discrimination laws, under the OSHA laws for safety. That is what it means to be a worker in America.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is absolutely right.

I am encouraged, though, as we have read this information and this proposal is now being put into print, that the religious communities are coming forth now with us, educators, parents, college students. They have now seen the disingenuous nature by which this proposal is being brought forth.

I say to my colleagues that we will not stop the Congressional Black Caucus, and I am sure the Democratic Caucus and all other fair-minded people will not stop until we defeat this proposal. If we are going to insist that people move from welfare to work, we must do so in the fairest, the most sensitive way that we can.

I again thank my colleague so much for bringing this to the floor so early so that I can get my quest in and my position on this issue right up front. I will be meeting with people tomorrow, women's groups, religious groups, and I will not stop until we defeat such a very contentious proposal as this.

Mr. OWENS. I thank the gentlewoman from California. We do not know how late the hour is really. We may have on the floor this week or early next week an attempt to codify the denial of the payment of minimum wage and other worker benefits to welfare recipients.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. I thank my colleague very much, and that is why I think that the whole concept of eternal vigilance is so important. That is, we have to be watchful all the time. We also have to be real about the whole business of how many jobs are there

really, how many jobs are there really for many of the people that we are talking about, people who in many instances do not have the skills, have not been trained.

As a matter of fact, I am reminded of an incident that took place the other day where a fellow that I know went out looking for a job and he looked every place that he could possibly look. Finally, he ended up at the zoo. He talked to the zoo keeper, and he said, "I really do not have anything." Then he remembered. He says, "You know, my gorilla got sick. I have got a group of kids coming in. They want to see a gorilla. I will give you \$100 to be the gorilla." So the fellow said, "Look, I am from the west side of Chicago. For \$100, I will be anything you want me to be because I want to work, I want a job." He put the suit on. The kids came in, and he kind of beat his chest a little bit and the kids clapped. Then he jumped up on a trampoline and did a flip. The kids clapped again. So he decided to do a double somersault. And he flipped over into the lions' cage, fell on his back laying prostrate. The lion starts to come toward him, and he looks over at the zoo keeper and says, "Help."

The guy did not respond. The lion is still coming. He says, "Help." Still no response. The lion decided that he would then take advantage of the situation, so he got ferocious, began to growl and made a charge. The guy says, "Help." The lion says, "Shhh, you are going to blow both our covers."

And, so, my point is that the availability of jobs is not nearly what we are led to believe. I hear us talk about 4.9 percent unemployment. It is not 4.9 percent unemployment in inner city America. It is not 4.9 percent unemployment in the neighborhood and community where I live. And, so, we need economic policies that will also create jobs for which people can actually work and earn a decent wage, a livable wage. And there is only one way to do it, and that is to keep the action up, keep the heat on, keep pressing forward, keep moving. I believe that the American people will, in fact, respond.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that the problem of putting people to work on welfare and the problem of providing decent jobs and wages for workers is not unrelated to the overall scene here in this House.

The budget drives everything. We have certain developments in the budget which automatically take away job opportunities. We have a great decrease in the amount of public housing construction and repair. We have a great decrease in terms of money available for school repair and renovation. In fact, they took the whole Presidential initiative of \$5 billion, which would have gone into repair and renovating and building new schools, providing jobs for people in inner cities.

We had a big fight over the transportation bill which in the inner city communities would provide jobs for people

who work for mass transit and for the construction and repair of subways and bus systems, et cetera, as well as provide jobs for people who work on highways. So the job creation part of the budget is given away to tax cuts.

We have large tax cuts to the same categories of people that the gentleman from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS] was talking about earlier. They are already the richest people in America. Our budget is dedicated to giving them more to take capital gains cuts and inheritance cuts. They will get more, while at the other extreme we are cutting down on the transportation budget that would have provided jobs, on the school construction budget that would have provided jobs, and we are cutting programs like Medicare and Medicaid.

So our common sense here has gone out of the window. It is up to the American people, the voters out there, to bring back the leadership, bring the leadership here back to their senses. That budget was negotiated at the White House. I guess we have got to bring the President back to his senses too and have him stand up to that kind of negotiation, not agree to make those kinds of cuts in areas which create jobs, which take care of people, and at the same time you are bolstering the pocketbooks and the bank accounts of the people who need it the least.

We got it all topsy-turvy, and that is why this country is the country that has the greatest gap between the rich and poor. Great Britain, with all its lords and aristocracy and very rich people and very poor people in the slums of London and various great cities, Great Britain used to be the place where you had the greatest gap between the very rich and the very poor. Now it is America, the home of the brave and the land of the free, the place where everybody assumed they had the opportunity to make it, and a lot of the creation of the world's modern economy was built on the backs of consumers, ordinary people, who had the money to go out and buy refrigerators and buy cars and buy homes. All that is being slowly squeezed to death by catering to the very people at the very top. It begins right here at the House of Representatives.

□ 2200

At the same time they are taking the money away from those who need help the most from their government.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Indeed as my colleague from Illinois just said, we hear all the time this 4.9 to 5 percent unemployment. They are not talking about our constituents. The unemployment rate in my district is close to 50 percent. Yet there are not any jobs. No jobs are rushing into my district. When this budget came to the floor and they had taken out the \$5 billion for school construction that would have provided jobs and create the type of climate where children can learn, that was taken out. It just appears to me that every day we see a group of

Members here who do not wish to foster an agenda that will help to move people from this welfare to work as so stated in their budget.

Also, the transportation provision of the budget was underfunded. That then parlays into the lack of our getting roads and highways built whereby we can advance international trade that creates the jobs in our district, that really boosts the economy.

Again, I say to the American people, watch this House. Because this is not a House that seems to suggest that we are fundamentally trying to move people from welfare to work in a fair and equitable way. I will suggest to those who are listening, call us, either the Members you see on this floor or your own Member, and share your thoughts on the proposal that is being presented, that persons whom we are asking to move from welfare to work should get below minimum wage. You call us and answer to whether that is a fair way and an American way and will be conducive to opportunities for those who are less fortunate. I think not. I will fight until we find the justice in this House that is supposed to be the people's House.

Mr. OWENS. I think it is important to point out that we are not alone, as the gentlewoman said before. The churches are mobilizing to take the facts to the American people and to try to get people to understand the unfairness in this whole attempt to push people out there, make them work for less than the minimum wage, with no benefits. The Washington Post and the New York Times and a number of other newspapers have come out in support of the President's position. I just want to read a couple of paragraphs from the Washington Post editorial that appeared on Monday, May 19.

"Wages of Welfare Reform", it is called.

The President was right to order that welfare recipients put to work under the terms of last year's welfare bill be paid the minimum wage. The objecting governors and other critics are likewise right when they say that his decision will throw the bill even further out of whack than it already was. What the President basically proved that in doing the right thing on the wage was how great a mistake he had made in caving in to election year pressures, some of them of his own making, and signing the bill to begin with. The problem with the welfare part of this legislation as distinct from the gratuitous cuts that it also imposed in other programs for the poor is the mismatch that exists between its commands and the resources it provides to carry them out. The basic command is that welfare recipients work, but that's not something that can be achieved by the snap of a finger or the waving of a wand or it would have happened long ago. A lot of welfare recipients aren't capable of holding down jobs without an enormous amount of support. Nor in many cases are there jobs enough in the private sector to accommodate them even if they could hold those jobs down.

That is just a section from an editorial that appeared in the Washington Post. There was one also similar in Newsday in New York which called for

supporting the President as he attempts to enforce the Fair Labor Standards Act in respect to welfare recipients.

I think I said before that one of the churches that has set an example is the Lutheran Church where they say that they will not allow any of their units that employ people to engage welfare workers for less than the minimum wage. There is a statement they issued on May 1, at the Workfare Media Conference of the Lutheran Services in America. I will quote just a few sections from that:

The Lutheran Services in America organizations spend \$2.8 billion serving 2 million people and includes over 3,000 locations across the United States. We employ workers at all levels and seek to serve those who are in need.

When Congress passed welfare reform legislation which was signed into law on August 22, 1996, we all knew that we would have to move beyond the rhetoric of personal responsibility to work opportunity and responsibility by the employer. If welfare reform is to happen in this country, then work opportunity that includes at the very least the minimum wage must happen. Rather than pitting personal responsibility and structural change against one another, we realize that both kinds of efforts are needed.

As employers, our umbrella alliance of service organizations has endorsed the fair work campaign so that workers have both sufficiency and sustainability in their lives. We know from our experience that work that is a job must include sufficiency which means adequate levels of income support so that people can live dignified lives. It must also include sustainability. Workers cannot live in fear of taking other people's jobs nor be treated differently than others by wages, benefits or personnel policies. Without sufficiency and sustainability, welfare legislation becomes nothing more than rhetoric.

Lutheran Services in America organizations face the same issues that every nonprofit and corporate employer in America faces. We are working within a budget and providing services for our clientele. We are well aware of what it means to be an employer and because of this we believe that workfare recipients need positive learning and training experiences as well as new jobs and that workfare recipients perform important work that should be valued fairly.

We in Lutheran Services in America challenge other employers to join us to be involved and become responsible in the opportunities we give to workers. It is reform for all of us and it requires all of us to become a part of this if we ever intend to see the face of poverty change.

I think that is a forthright statement by the Lutheran Church and it is a challenge to all other religious organizations and nonprofit organizations and to corporate America. If we want to really move people from a situation of dependency into the mainstream and provide jobs, then let us define a job as being a thing that pays the minimum wage and has all the other benefits that go with being a worker in America.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. I might add that the Lutheran Church seems to be a very new group that is coming aboard now. It is very healthy that they do this. But I am sure that they see this, as we do, as a really

moral issue, an issue that smacks in the face of unfairness. We cannot afford to allow this type of proposal to come to American people who are trying their best to raise their families, to provide shelter for their children, and to provide an education for them. To move from a below-subsistence level to self-sufficiency, we must couch this as the moral issue it really is. For those who are spiritual-minded Members, for those who want to do the right thing, well, then fight with us to defeat this very egregious proposal that does not speak to the fundamental rights of this country.

Mr. OWENS. I am sure that both of my colleagues know well that phrase that they have heard repeated often, that in slavery everybody on the plantation had a job, because a job was then defined as work that the master wanted you to do. You did not get paid for it. For 232 years there was free labor. You did not get paid for it, but people had jobs. They were on the plantation and they had jobs. In order to satisfy those who again move out of racist motivations, when you say people should go to work and you create a situation through a bill you call welfare reform that pushes people off welfare and help from the government into situations where there are no jobs, no effort is being made to create those jobs. No effort is being made to create real jobs. So they want to push people into situations where they will work for something that is not a job. They will work for less than minimum wage. They will work under extraordinarily harsh conditions to do something that other workers were being paid to do before. So we are not only not creating jobs for welfare recipients, we are displacing workers who had jobs before.

As I said at the beginning, this is happening in no more evident way than it is happening in New York City. We have a large workfare program. The workfare program as it expands, we see the city employees, the municipal payroll, decreasing at the same rate as the workfare program is increasing, a definite correlation. You take away the jobs from the people who were being paid to do them before, with fringe benefits, with a retirement plan, all the things that go into a real job, you take that away and you put people to work who have nothing except to work off the cash value of their welfare grant, you get a lot of work done for very little. If you can institutionalize that and get it going full steam, you are back into a condition which is close to slavery because you are forcing people to work in a situation where it has no relevance to really what they need, you are not paying them, they are involuntary servitude. It is that bad. We are not exaggerating when we say that that is where you are going. If you rule out paying people what we call minimum wage and providing the benefits that we call a job, then you are creating something that is not a job. You are creating servitude and forcing people into that pattern of servitude.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. When the gentleman mentioned New York, I could not help but smile to myself and think of how fortunate the people of New York are that they have the gentleman as their advocate, that they have the gentleman working in their behalf. I want to thank the gentleman for organizing this evening and for giving us the opportunity to share it with the gentleman.

The last thing that I would want to say is the gentleman mentioned the whole business of slavery. I remember the words of the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass who suggested that if you would find the level of oppression that a people will accept, that is exactly what they will get. I do not believe that the people are going to accept this level of oppression. I certainly thank the gentleman for the opportunity.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. May I please add to those thanks, too. Because I thank the gentleman for taking the leadership on such a very important issue as this, early on, before we see this so-called proposal. But it is suspect to me that this is a proposal that is coming when I was told at the first of the year that we should not do anything about this welfare reform bill, to allow it to percolate for 1 year to see whether it really works. And now, before a half year is gone, here is a so-called proposal to revisit the minimum wage with the express consent to try to do something to harm those who are trying to move from welfare to work and to not give them a leg up.

I thank the gentleman. I agree with the gentleman from Illinois that New Yorkers are all the better because they have the gentleman to tout for them, to address their needs and to certainly bring very critical issues like this early on to the forefront. Again, I am ready for the fight.

Mr. OWENS. I thank my colleague from California and my colleague from Illinois for joining me.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me just say there is an effort to divide and conquer welfare recipients who are put over here and workers who are put over there. The workers of America must understand this is a threat to all of us. If you did not understand it before, I hope you understand it now, that whatever happens to one group of workers, welfare workers, is going to have an impact on the quality of life and standard of living of all workers. We must fight to protect all workers by stopping this effort to make welfare recipients work in conditions that are not conditions acceptable to other American workers.

□ 2215

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE FRANK A. LOBIONDO, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS) laid before the House the follow-

ing communication from the Honorable FRANK A. LOBIONDO, Member of Congress:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 3, 1997.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to formally notify you pursuant to Rule L (50) of the Rules of the House that I have been served with a subpoena issued by the Superior Court of New Jersey, Cape May County.

After consultation with the General Counsel, I will make the determinations required by Rule L.

Sincerely,

FRANK A. LOBIONDO,
Member of Congress.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. FARR (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT), for today, on account of a family emergency.

Mrs. CLAYTON (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT), for today and Wednesday, June 4, on account of family illness.

Mr. PICKERING (at the request of Mr. ARMEY), for today and the balance of the week, on account of a death in the family.

Mr. BACHUS (at the request of Mr. ARMEY), for today, on account of attending his son's high school graduation.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MCHALE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. POMEROY, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. HILL) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. HULSHOF, for 5 minutes each day, on June 4 and 5.

Mr. PAPPAS, for 5 minutes, on June 4.

Mr. SHIMKUS, for 5 minutes, on June 4.

Mr. PITTS, for 5 minutes, on June 4.

Mr. JONES, for 5 minutes each day, on June 4 and 5.

Mr. KINGSTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. NORTHUP, for 5 minutes, on June 4.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MCHALE) and to include extraneous matter:)