



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 150

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2004

No. 125—Part II

Senate

ENDORISING THE MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, in the Bush economy, minimum wage workers are falling farther and farther behind. But every time Democrats in Congress have tried to raise the minimum wage, the Republican leadership has refused even to allow a vote on it. Three times in the 108th Congress, the Republican leadership has brought down a bill rather than allow an up-or-down vote on the minimum wage first on the State Department bill, then on the welfare bill, and, finally, on the class action bill.

Now, 562 prominent economists including four Nobel Prize winners in economics and seven past presidents of the American Economic Association have endorsed the increase to \$7 an hour. I ask unanimous consent that a copy of their letter be printed in the RECORD, following my statement.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. KENNEDY. In today's economy, corporate profits are surging, but workers' wages are stagnant. Minimum wage workers are hardest hit, because they haven't had an increase in the minimum wage for 7 long years. That is why so many of us continue to fight for the Fair Minimum Wage Act, which will raise the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7 in three moderate steps to \$5.85 60 days after enactment; \$6.45 1-year later; to \$7 1-year after that.

It is long past time for Congress to approve an increase in the minimum wage. No one who works for a living should have to live in poverty.

EXHIBIT 1

IT'S TIME FOR A RAISE

Hundreds of economists support a minimum wage increase

The minimum wage has been an important part of our nation's economy for 65 years. It is based on the principle of valuing work by establishing an hourly wage floor beneath which employers cannot pay their workers. In so doing, the minimum wage helps to

equalize the imbalance in bargaining power that low-wage workers face in the labor market. The minimum wage is also an important tool in fighting poverty.

The value of the 1997 increase in the federal minimum wage has been fully eroded. The real value of today's federal minimum wage is less than it has been in 46 out of the last 48 years. Moreover, the ratio of the minimum wage to the average hourly wage of non-supervisory workers is 33%, its lowest level in 55 years. This decline is causing hardship for low-wage workers and their families.

We believe that a modest increase in the minimum wage would improve the well-being of low-wage workers and would not have the adverse effects that critics have claimed. In particular, we share the view the Council of Economic Advisers expressed in the 1999 Economic Report of the President that "the weight of the evidence suggests that modest increases in the minimum wage have had very little or no effect on employment." While controversy about the precise employment effects of the minimum wage continues, research has shown that most of the beneficiaries are adults, most are female, and the vast majority are members of low-income working families.

As economists who are concerned about the problems facing low-wage workers, we believe the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2004's proposed phased-in increase in the federal minimum wage to \$7.00 falls well within the range of options where the benefits to the labor market, workers, and the overall economy would be positive.

Twelve states and the District of Columbia have set their minimum wages above the federal level. Additional states, including Florida, Nevada, and New York, are considering similar measures. As with a federal increase, modest increases in state minimum wages in the range of \$1.00 to \$2.00 can significantly improve the lives of low-income workers and their families, without the adverse effects that critics have claimed.

Henry Aaron, The Brookings Institution; Rebecca Blank, University of Michigan; Ronald G. Ehrenberg, Cornell University; Clive Granger, University of California—San Diego; Lawrence F. Katz, Harvard University; Lawrence R. Klein, University of Pennsylvania; Frank Levy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Lawrence Mishel, Economic Policy Institute; Paul A. Samuelson, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Robert M. Solow, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

552 OTHER ECONOMISTS AGREE

Economists supporting increase in minimum wage

Frank Ackerman, Global Development and Environment Institute—Tufts University; Irma Adelman, University of California—Berkeley; Randy Albelda, University of Massachusetts—Boston; Robert J. Alexander, Rutgers University; Marcus Alexis, Northwestern University; Sylvia Allegretto, Economic Policy Institute; Gar Alperovitz, University of Maryland—College Park; Teresa L. Amott, Gettysburg College; Alice Amsden, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Bernard E. Anderson, University of Pennsylvania; Robert M. Anderson, University of California—Berkeley; Eileen Appelbaum, Rutgers University; Robert K. Arnold, Institute of Regional and Urban Studies; David D. Arsen, Michigan State University; Enid Arvidson, University of Texas—Arlington; Michael Ash, University of Massachusetts; Glen Atkinson, University of Nevada—Reno; Alice Audie-Figueroa, United Automobile Workers.

Robert Axtell, The Brookings Institution and Middlebury College; M.V. Lee Badgett, University of Massachusetts; Ron Baiman, University of Illinois—Chicago; Asatar Bair, City College of San Francisco; Dean Baker, Center for Economic and Policy Research; Benjamin Balak, Rollins College; Stephen E. Baldwin, KRA Corporation and George Washington University; Erol Balkan, Hamilton College; Laurence M. Ball, Johns Hopkins University; Brad Barham, University of Wisconsin—Madison; Drucilla K. Barker, Hollins University; David Barkin, Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana—Xochimilco; Christopher Barrett, Cornell University; Timothy J. Bartik, W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research; Laurie J. Bassi, McBassi & Company; Bradley W. Bateman, Grinnell College; Francis M. Bator, Harvard University; Sandy Baum, Skidmore College; William J. Baumol†, New York University; Steve Beckman, United Automobile Workers; Stephen H. Bell, Urban Institute; Dale L. Belman, Michigan State University; Michael H. Belzer, Wayne State University; Lourdes Beneria, Cornell University; Barbara R. Bergmann, American University and University of Maryland; Eli Berman, University of California—San Diego.

Jared Bernstein, Economic Policy Institute; Michael Best, University of Massachusetts—Lowell; Charles L. Betsey, Howard University; David M. Betson, University of

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Notre Dame; Carole Biewener, Simmons College; Sherrilyn Billger, Illinois State University; Melissa Binder, University of New Mexico; L. Josh Bivens, Economic Policy Institute; Stanley W. Black, University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill; Margaret Blair, Vanderbilt University Law School; Robert Blecker, American University; Alan S. Blinder, Princeton University; Barry Bluestone, Northeastern University; Peter Bohmer, The Evergreen State College; Roger Bolton, Williams College; James F. Booker, Siena College; Heather Boushey, Center for Economic and Policy Research; Samuel Bowles, Santa Fe Institute; James K. Boyce, University of Massachusetts—Amherst; Ralph Bradburd, Williams College; Katharine Bradbury, Gerard Bradley, New Mexico Department of Labor; Mark D. Brenner, University of Massachusetts; Vernon M. Briggs, Jr., Cornell University; Daniel W. Bromley, University of Wisconsin; Eileen L. Brooks, University of California—Santa Cruz; Annette N. Brown, BearingPoint, Inc.; Christopher Brown, Arkansas State University; Clair Brown, University of California—Berkeley; Michael Brun, Illinois State University; Neil H. Buchanan, Rutgers School of Law.

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*indicates Nobel Laureates. †indicates past presidents of the American Economic Association. Affiliations are provided for identification purposes only and should not be construed as the official view of any of the institutions listed.

APPRECIATION FOR BRIAN GREEN

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise today to express my appreciation for the outstanding service of Brian Green to me and to my fellow members on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Brian Green has been a professional staff member and staff lead for the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee for over 3 years. As the chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee for much of that time, I have had the opportunity to closely observe Brian. I can honestly tell you that Brian is an exceptional staffer and a tremendous human being.

As the staff lead for the subcommittee, Brian has helped me and the other members of subcommittee fulfill our responsibilities pertaining to the oversight of Department of Defense strategic, ballistic missile defense, and military space programs. His expertise and recommendations have proved critical time and time again during the Senate Armed Services Committee consideration of the annual defense authorization bill.

I can personally attest to numerous occasions when Brian provided the need information and proposals that made the difference in achieving the subcommittee's objectives. I cannot stress enough how much of a relief it was to know that Brian was always available to advance the subcommittee's policy goals and on guard to protect the subcommittee's interests.

During his time in the Senate, Brian also helped promote and protect our Nation's effort to develop and deploy a ballistic missile defense system. He

played a lead role in coordinating the opposition to proposed budget cuts to the program. Brian's ability to work with multiple offices, the National Security Council, and the White House was pivotal in the debate and eventually led to the restoration of funding.

Brian came to the to the Senate after serving 4 years as a professional staff member on the House Armed Services Committee. While in the House, Brian played a crucial role in developing the House-version of the National Missile Defense Act of 1999 and the creation of the National Nuclear Security Administration in the Department of Energy.

It is not just his achievements that cause Brian to stand out. He has been utterly committed to his job. Brian works until the job is completed and completed well. He has an innate ability to find solutions to difficult problems, including those that might have considerable political implications. Perhaps most significantly, Brian is a team player and approaches his job without pretense. Members and staff alike have always appreciated Brian's willingness to work with them on even the most minute policy or budget issue.

It is disappointing to lose Brian to the private sector. We will miss his diligence, his integrity and his expertise. At the same time, I am grateful that Brian was able to serve the Senate for so long and so faithfully. I congratulate Brian on his new position and wish him the best in the future.

I yield the floor.

CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE ANESTHETISTS

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, I commend military certified registered nurse anesthetists, CRNAs. CRNAs are advanced practice nurses who administer anesthesia. Today, CRNAs administer approximately 65 percent of the anesthetics given to patients each year for all types of surgical cases in the United States.

Nurse anesthetists have been the principal anesthesia providers in combat areas in every war in which the United States has been engaged since World War I. In World War II, there were 17 nurse anesthetists to every 1 physician anesthetist. In Vietnam, the ratio of CRNAs to physician anesthetists was approximately 3 to 1. During the Panama strike authorized in 1989, only CRNAs were sent with the fighting forces. In addition, the vast majority of anesthesia providers deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom has been CRNAs. Nurse anesthetists are again carrying the load by providing 80 percent of the anesthesia requirements in Iraq and Afghanistan. We rely heavily on CRNAs to accomplish wartime missions and our need for their services will only increase in the future.

In all of the uniformed services, maintaining adequate numbers of Active Duty and Reserve CRNAs is of ut-

most concern. For several years, the number of CRNAs serving on active duty has fallen somewhat short of the number authorized by the Department of Defense. This lag in recruitment has been further exacerbated by a strong demand for CRNAs in both the public and private sectors. One reason the military has difficulty retaining CRNAs is that a large pay gap exists between annual civilian salaries and military pay.

I am deeply concerned about retention of these CRNAs, particularly in the Army Nurse Corps. It has come to my attention that within the next 3 years, the Army Nurse Corps could lose up to 50 percent of its current complement of CRNAs. A recent survey of Army CRNAs revealed that despite overall satisfaction with their anesthesia practice, dissatisfaction with pay and frequent deployments are the primary reasons for leaving active duty.

One strategy that is proving effective in increasing overall satisfaction is the Army Surgeon General's 180-day rotation policy. I urge continuation of this policy. However, this is not enough to ensure that we meet our mission. I am quite certain that another remedy to prevent further losses would be an across-the-board increase in incentive speciality pay for all CRNAs, regardless of Active-Duty service obligation. I trust that the Department of Defense is also concerned and actively pursuing measures to address this very important issue.

PARDONING "JACK" JOHNSON

• Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to express my support for S. Res. 447, which asks the President to pardon posthumously John Arthur "Jack" Johnson for Mr. Johnson's racially-motivated 1913 conviction.

As a huge fan of the sport of boxing, I admire the great achievements of Mr. Johnson in his too short career. But I feel a greater need to recognize and pardon Mr. Johnson for the great injustice he suffered. Although it is too late to properly rectify what was done to Jack Johnson, I hope in some small way we can call attention to his remarkable achievements and repair his good name.

Jack Johnson was the first African-American boxer to win the heavyweight title. While this was a landmark achievement for African-Americans, Johnson's achievements unfortunately had the effect of escalating racial tensions and his subsequent victories provoked racial rioting. The effort to dethrone him brought about the search for the "Great White Hope" during his 1908-1915 reign as heavyweight champion.

The consensus is that while Johnson was not defeated in the boxing ring he could be stopped by trumped-up criminal charges. In 1913, Johnson was found guilty of violating the "white-slavery" Mann Act for taking his future wife