

The Fair Labor Standards Act of 2005 will provide a desperately needed raise in the minimum wage from \$5.15 per hour to \$7.25 per hour.

The members of the Congress that have denied a minimum wage increase while voting themselves seven pay increases worth \$28,000 should be ashamed of themselves.

On Tuesday, January 17th, 2006, Maryland became the 18th state in the Nation to enact a law that will make Maryland's minimum wage higher than the federal. Even in my home state of California, the minimum wage is \$6.75 an hour. The current minimum has not been raised in over 7 years!

The minimum wage was established to assure that people who work are not forced to live in poverty. Wage inequality keeps increasing in the United States, in part because of the declining real value of the minimum wage, yet this Congress refused to adjust the minimum wage even for inflation. If the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation since 1968 (when it was \$1.60 an hour) it would have been \$9.14 an hour in 2005.

Nearly 36 million people live below the poverty-line today—4.3 million more than when President Bush took office—and that number includes 13 million children. Among full-time, year-round workers, poverty has doubled since the late 1970s—from roughly 1.3 million then to more than 2.6 million today. And a report from the Children's Defense Fund shows that a single parent working full-time at the current minimum wage earns enough to cover only 40 percent of the cost of raising two children.

Today, the minimum wage is 33 percent of the average hourly wage of American workers, the lowest level since 1949.

Contrary to misinformation spread by opponents of the minimum wage, adults make up the largest share of workers who would benefit from a minimum wage increase. Forty percent of minimum wage workers are the sole breadwinners in their families. Moreover, despite what many opponents of the minimum wage say, there is no evidence of job loss from the last minimum wage increase.

A hike in the federal minimum wage is long overdue! We must restore the value of the federal wage floor in order to lift families out of poverty. An increase in the minimum wage is both humane and good for the economy because it would raise the standard of living of millions of Americans, while providing the economy with a needed boost by increasing the purchasing power of working families.

Seven and a half million workers and their families would directly benefit from the proposed minimum wage increase. An additional eight million workers would benefit indirectly, via resulting raises. Women and minorities would especially benefit. 61 percent of minimum wage earners are women and almost one-third of those women are raising children; And 35 percent of them are their families' sole earners! 19 percent of minimum wage earners are Hispanic American; and 15 percent are African American.

Women and minorities are disproportionately affected by the refusal of this Congress to pass a higher minimum wage. This issue shouldn't be a political debate. It should simply be about helping America's families. And that help won't come until workers in those low-wage occupations are paid more than poverty-level wages. I have always and will continue

to fight for a minimum wage that provides a future for America's families.

NATIONAL UNIFORMITY FOR FOOD ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN J.H. "JOE" SCHWARZ

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 8, 2006

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4167) to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for uniform food safety warning notification requirements, and for other purposes:

Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan. Mr. Chairman, the National Uniformity for Food Act deserves our full support. The issue is important to consumers and has achieved bipartisan support.

This act is consistent with our long tradition of prudent Congressional oversight of interstate commerce to protect American consumers. The act is simple. Its purpose is to provide equitable protection of consumers by requiring the States and the FDA to provide consumers with a single standard for food safety that is based on a consensus interpretation of all available science.

I believe the National Uniformity for Food Act is the best way to ensure that the safeguards we now have over meat, poultry, drugs, and many other products be applied to packaged food. Under the bill, States would retain their important functions such as sanitation, inspections and enforcement. The act contains mechanisms to review State food safety laws and consider them for national application.

This act provides important Federal protections, while retaining valuable input from States and coordination between State and Federal food safety experts. There is no better way to assure Americans that packaged food they find on our store shelves is safe for them and their families. I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting this important act.

COMMEMORATING THE SESQUICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2006

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the sesquicentennial anniversary of my hometown of La Crosse, Wisconsin. I cannot think of a better place to grow up, live, and raise a family. From the rolling bluffs to the lakes and rivers and the miles of hiking and biking trails, La Crosse truly is God's country. Its warm, generous, and adventurous citizens are examples of the best our country has to offer.

This beautiful river town was founded at the confluence of the Mississippi, the La Crosse, and the Black Rivers, an area first used by Native Americans as a passageway through the prairie lands of the Upper Midwest. The Native Americans were followed by French fur

traders, who established commerce with the Indians living along the river's edge. The traders named La Crosse after the Native American game played with netted sticks used to catch a ball. From the Native Americans and French fur traders to the vast grain barges of today, the movement of goods along the water keeps La Crosse thriving.

La Crosse was founded in 1841, by a pioneer from New York named Nathan Myrick. Myrick established a trading post on Barron Island where he first traded with the Ho-Chunk Indians. Once Myrick extended his business to trading with steamboat passengers, settlers began targeting La Crosse for its rich farming potential. Soon thereafter, the lumber industry blossomed. Using the river as their natural transportation, lumberjacks floated logs downriver to be processed. By 1858, the railroad was built, bringing with it additional growth and development.

Having been born and raised in the city and traveled to other places around the world, I truly appreciate the solid Midwestern values and spirit of the people in La Crosse—values that emphasize kindness, honesty, family, and community combined with the can-do attitude of the town's founders.

Home to ten grade schools, two high schools, two universities, and one technical school, La Crosse highly values quality education for its youth. The city has adjusted to the changing times to remain an important center of transportation, commerce, and industry in western Wisconsin. La Crosse has succeeded in establishing a family- and business-friendly environment and will continue to thrive well beyond its next 150 years.

La Crosse's sesquicentennial provides an opportunity to commemorate the town's history, ancestors, and traditions. With its historic homes, commercial district, natural areas, museums, restaurants, and specialty shops, La Crosse provides residents and visitors with much to choose from. I enthusiastically invite all my colleagues, their families and friends to visit the Coulee Region and the city of La Crosse.

The people of La Crosse are committed to growth in their community while maintaining the harmony of the surrounding land, and I am proud to call this beautiful and friendly city my home.

CONGRATULATING PETER J. FORBES AS HE IS HONORED BY THE QUIET MAN SOCIETY OF SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2006

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to Mr. Peter J. Forbes, of northeastern Pennsylvania, this year's recipient of The Quiet Man Society's "Michael F. King, Jr. Armed Forces Veterans Award."

The award is presented annually to a local individual who, after serving in the Armed Forces, by their actions and involvement in community events, exhibited exemplary continued service to God, family and country.

The award was endowed by The Quiet Man Society in honor of Mr. King, a charter member of the Society, who was wounded twice in

World War II. He is best remembered for the countless hours he spent serving St. Paul's Church, Holy Rosary Church, Holy Family Residence, The Penn Ridge Club and the Irish American Men's Association.

Mr. Forbes served with the Australian Army in the Republic of South Vietnam in the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, in 1971 as a combat medic. He also served as a drum major and a piper.

Following a successful business career, Mr. Forbes settled in northeastern Pennsylvania where he currently serves as national commander of the Veterans of the Vietnam War, Inc., and the Veterans Coalition, which is headquartered in Pittston, Luzerne County.

Mr. Forbes has made it known that he will dedicate his award to the memory of three Scranton natives who served during the Vietnam War and are believed to have made the ultimate sacrifice and were declared missing in action. Their names are: Frederick Krupa, Wesley Ratzel and Lothar Terla.

To further honor the memories of these men, Mr. Forbes will present a synopsis of their service records to student representatives at each of Scranton's four high schools so the stories of their heroic service can be retold and so the present generation understands that they and all others who have died fighting for our country are gone . . . but not forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Mr. Forbes for his selfless service to military veterans. Those who serve to protect others deserve the best this grateful nation has to give. Mr. Forbes has spent many years advocating for veterans rights, a crusade that has improved the quality of life for all who have worn a uniform and volunteered to place themselves in harm's way.

TRIBUTE TO HARRY BERGER

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2006

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, in honor of the 90th birthday of Harry Berger, I am proud to share with my colleagues a tribute to this great American, lovingly written by his son Robert I. Berger. Clearly Mr. Berger is deserving of this recognition by the United States House of Representatives.

Harry Berger was born on March 26, 1916 in Hungary. During World War II, he and his family were forcibly removed from their homes and taken by the Nazis to live in a crowded Jewish ghetto. Not long after, my father, along with other men his age, were taken by German and Hungarian soldiers to work as slave laborers for the balance of the war. After my father was liberated by American soldiers, and unable to return to his home because it was then under Russian control, he obtained a temporary visa to live and work in Brussels, Belgium. It was there that my father met my mother, Helen Berger, a survivor of Auschwitz, with whom he will celebrate 58 years of marriage on February 28, 2006.

My parents, together with me age 2½, arrived in the United States on January 6, 1952, and settled in the Albany Park neighborhood of Chicago. My sister Margaret was born in Chicago in 1954. My parents and I became

naturalized citizens in 1957. In 1964, my parents achieved the American dream and purchased their own home in the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago where they lived until 1992 when they moved to Lincolnwood, Illinois.

My father worked as a tailor at Broadlane Clothiers in the Uptown neighborhood of Chicago from the time he arrived in the United States until the store closed in approximately 1980. My father then worked for Lytton's and then Mark Shale on Michigan Avenue, where he was awarded Employee of the Year honors before retiring in 1995.

In addition to having worked hard to provide for his family, my father made time and worked tirelessly for many good causes in the service of others. My father served on the Synagogue Board and Men's Club Board of Congregation Ezras Israel in the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago and served two terms as President of the Men's Club and two terms as President of the Congregation. More amazing is that my father served as President of the Congregation when he was in his mid-eighties.

My father was also a Board Member and two term President of the Zionist Organization of Chicago (ZOC), the Chicago chapter of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA). The ZOA is one of the oldest and largest Israel advocacy organizations in the United States. Founded in 1897, to support the establishment of a Jewish state, past presidents of the ZOA include Justice Louis D. Brandeis. In 1996, the ZOC honored my father and mother with the State of Israel Award for their long-time commitment and service to the organization and to the State of Israel.

My father has also helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for the State of Israel. In 2001, my father and mother were honored at an Israel Bond Luncheon that raised over one half million dollars in Israel bonds. My father has supported many other Jewish charities including the JUF.

My father has lived in the United States for the past 54 years and has loved all of the ideals for which this country was founded. He has been an exemplary citizen, never taking for granted the freedom and opportunity that this country afforded him and his family. He has voted in every election, he has always kept informed of the issues facing America, and he has worked for candidates for various elective office. My father has lived the American dream. He came to this country a Holocaust survivor and refugee with a wife and young son and barely a penny to his name. He worked hard, bought a home, paid off the mortgage, raised two children, provided for his family, and has and continues to live a decent and productive life.

One of my father's great pleasures is sports. As a young boy in Hungary he loved to play soccer. In his new home, he came to understand and love baseball, football and basketball. He loves the White Sox, Cubs, Bears and Bulls, and would often take me to games on Sundays, his one day off of work. My father's joy was immeasurable when his beloved White Sox finally won the World Series this past Fall.

My father's 90 years, 54 of them in the United States, is an example of what Tom Brokaw called "The Greatest Generation." He provided for his family and found time and energy to help others. His life is to be celebrated and honored.

HONORING EDGERTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2006

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend congratulations to the Edgerton Public Library in Edgerton, Wisconsin, on the occasion of its grand opening celebration. Housed in the Carnegie building originally built in 1907, the library is an impressive tribute to the people of Edgerton.

A public library serves as the cornerstone of democracy. A library fosters intellectual freedom and makes available to all citizens an extensive information network. In a local setting, citizens have access to global resources of information. The educational importance of a public library is immensely important in improving the community by providing access to higher learning. A library is a requirement for a cultivated democratic society.

A public library allows citizens to perform their civic duties placed upon them in our noble democratic nation. It not only provides free worldwide access to information, but also is a place where residents can obtain information about their community, and where internet access, tax forms and voter registration forms are provided. The role of the public library is essential in supporting a democratic state. The Edgerton Public Library has gone beyond its civic duty in providing these services for the public.

In spite of the many challenges they faced, the people of Edgerton were committed to this important project. I am proud to recognize the efforts of a community that created a dream and followed through to success. I join the residents of Edgerton in celebrating the grand opening of the newly expanded and renovated Edgerton Public Library and wish them the best for many years to come.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA LEGISLATIVE AUTONOMY ACT OF 2006

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2006

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing the District of Columbia Legislative Autonomy Act of 2006, the second in a series of "Free and Equal D.C." bills to remove the remaining congressional statutes that impose discriminatory and unequal treatment on the District of Columbia as a U.S. jurisdiction, on its elected and public officials, and on its citizens. These bills are different from the No Taxation without Representation Act, which in addition to providing equal treatment, would remedy a major violation of basic human rights recognized under international law and treaties and, moreover, a human rights denial found only in the United States. Residents justifiably focus on this most basic of infringements, but our city can and must make more progress on other unnecessary requirements and denials that violate the rights of the tax-paying American citizens who live in the Nation's capital as well.