

student or the aggregate expenditures of a State required by subparagraph (A) for the 3 preceding fiscal years shall be decreased by the same percentage as the percentage decrease in the amount so made available.”; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking “fiscal effort” both places the term appears and inserting “average fiscal effort”.

SEC. 203. VOLUNTARY SELECTION AND PARTICIPATION.

Section 214 (as redesignated by section 201 of this Act) is amended by striking “vocational” both places the term appears and inserting “career”.

SEC. 204. LIMITATION FOR CERTAIN STUDENTS.

Section 215 (as redesignated by section 201 of this Act) is amended by striking “vocational” and inserting “career”.

SEC. 205. AUTHORIZATION OF SECRETARY; PARTICIPATION OF PRIVATE SCHOOL PERSONNEL.

Part A of title II (as redesignated by section 201 of this Act) is amended—

(1) by striking section 217;

(2) by redesignating section 218 as section 217; and

(3) in section 217 (as redesignated by paragraph (2) of this section)—

(A) by inserting “principals,” after “for vocational and technical education teachers,”;

(B) by inserting “principals,” after “of vocational and technical education teachers,”; and

(C) by striking “vocational” each place the term appears and inserting “career”.

SEC. 206. STUDENT ASSISTANCE AND OTHER FEDERAL PROGRAMS.

Section 225(c) (as redesignated by section 201 of this Act) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking “VOCATIONAL” and inserting “CAREER”; and

(2) by striking “vocational” both places the term appears and inserting “career”.

SEC. 207. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Section 1(b) (20 U.S.C. 2301 note) is amended to read as follows:

“(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:.

“Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

“Sec. 2. Purpose.

“Sec. 3. Definitions.

“Sec. 4. Transition provisions.

“Sec. 5. Privacy.

“Sec. 6. Limitation.

“Sec. 7. Special rule.

“Sec. 8. Authorization of appropriations.

“TITLE I—CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION ASSISTANCE TO THE STATES

“PART A—ALLOTMENT AND ALLOCATION

“Sec. 111. Reservations and State allotment.

“Sec. 112. Within State allocation.

“Sec. 113. Accountability.

“Sec. 114. National activities.

“Sec. 115. Assistance for the outlying areas.

“Sec. 116. Native American program.

“Sec. 117. Tribally controlled postsecondary career and technical institutions.

“Sec. 118. Occupational and employment information.

“PART B—STATE PROVISIONS

“Sec. 121. State administration.

“Sec. 122. State plan.

“Sec. 123. Improvement plans.

“Sec. 124. State leadership activities.

“PART C—LOCAL PROVISIONS

“Sec. 131. Distribution of funds to secondary school programs.

“Sec. 132. Distribution of funds for postsecondary career and technical education programs.

“Sec. 133. Special rules for career and technical education.

“Sec. 134. Local plan for career and technical education programs.

“Sec. 135. Local uses of funds.

“PART D—TECH-PREP EDUCATION

“Sec. 141. State allotment and application.

“Sec. 142. Tech-prep education.

“Sec. 143. Consortium applications.

“Sec. 144. Authorization of appropriations.

“TITLE II—GENERAL PROVISIONS

“PART A—FEDERAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

“Sec. 211. Fiscal requirements.

“Sec. 212. Authority to make payments.

“Sec. 213. Construction.

“Sec. 214. Voluntary selection and participation.

“Sec. 215. Limitation for certain students.

“Sec. 216. Federal laws guaranteeing civil rights.

“Sec. 217. Participation of private school personnel.

“PART B—STATE ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

“Sec. 221. Joint funding.

“Sec. 222. Prohibition on use of funds to induce out-of-State relocation of businesses.

“Sec. 223. State administrative costs.

“Sec. 224. Limitation on Federal regulations.

“Sec. 225. Student assistance and other Federal programs.”.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to strike all after the enacting clause of S. 250 and insert in lieu thereof the text of H.R. 366 as passed by the House.

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

There was no objection.

The Senate bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed.

The title of the Senate bill was amended so as to read: “To amend the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 to strengthen and improve programs under that Act.”

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON S. 250, VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE ACT

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the House insist on its amendments to the Senate bill, S. 250, and request a conference with the Senate thereon.

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

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. GEORGE MILLER OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct conferees.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. George Miller of California moves to instruct the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the bill S. 250 to include in the conference substitute recommended by the committee of conference the following: In section 3(2) of the bill, after the phrase “high wage” insert “(in no case less than \$7.25 an hour)”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gen-

tleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. McKEON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise as we consider going to conference with the Senate on the Vocational Education Improvement Act, something that I think we should do and which I support and have been working with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle in the House and in the Senate to bring that conference to a successful conclusion, but I also rise not just in support of going to conference but also in support of a motion where we will have the ability to stand up for the dignity of 6.5 million workers in the United States making the minimum wage or near minimum-wage pay.

This motion instructs the conferees to make it clear that when the bill states its purpose is to prepare students for highways jobs, that in no event should those jobs pay less than \$7.25 an hour. The minimum wage today is just \$5.15 an hour, and for nearly 10 years the Republican leadership has stood in the way of a raise for America's lowest wage workers. That is a shame, it is an insult, and it is a moral outrage. This is the year when Members of Congress from both parties should come together and show how serious they are about raising the minimum wage and that they are serious about valuing hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind my colleagues that the Fair Standards Labor Act, containing the minimum wage, was passed in 1938 to alleviate poverty. Yet now the minimum wage condemns workers to a life of poverty for themselves and for their children. That is what we do when we fail to raise the minimum wage. We put the Federal stamp of approval, the congressional stamp of approval, if you will, on the wages of those individuals, so that even though they go to work every day, every week, every month, and all year long, they will not be able to raise themselves out of poverty.

That is just unacceptable for this Nation, which is the beacon to the world about economic opportunity, which is the beacon to the world about understanding what it means to have every citizen participate in our society. If they work those 52 weeks a year, they will only earn \$10,700, which is \$5,000 per year below the poverty line for a family of three. The current minimum wage will not even support a single worker and a single child above poverty. Raising the minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour will mean an additional \$4,370 a year to help minimum-wage earners support their families.

I don't have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, because I know you support this act, but here are the facts. Here are the facts. Those workers today are stuck at 1997 wages. By Federal law, their

wage is \$5.15 an hour. That wage was secured by the Congress of the United States on a bipartisan vote to raise that wage to \$5.15. Since that time, the Republican Congress has refused to entertain an increase in that minimum wage.

Now, what do we have here? We have the fact that the price of milk since that time has gone up 24 percent, bread is up 25 percent, college is up 77 percent, health insurance is up 97 percent, and regular gasoline is up 136 percent. The fact of the matter is that this minimum-wage worker, after 1 hour's work, cannot stop alongside a gas station and get a gallon of gas and a gallon of milk at the same time. Their wages simply will not support that.

That is the problem that we have, is that we have people stuck at a federally mandated minimum wage from the year 1997. None of us are in 1997 today. This is 2006. And the fact of the matter is that these people who have made a conscious decision to go to work every day are so badly disadvantaged that they cannot raise themselves above the poverty line.

Now, I know that this Republican conference is led by Mr. BOEHNER, a very good friend of mine, and he is proud of this statement: "I have been in this business for 25 years, and I have never voted for an increase in the minimum wage. I am opposed to it, and I think a vast majority of our conference is opposed to it." Well, that may be true, but I do not believe that a vast majority of this Congress is opposed to it. And what we have been asking is to have a vote on the floor on the minimum wage.

If this Congress continues to listen to Leader BOEHNER, and the fact is he has always been opposed to it, so if they had listened to him workers would be back to wages set in 1973. They would be working for \$3.35 an hour as the minimum wage and paying 2006 prices for bread and for milk and for gasoline and for health coverage and all the rest of that. That is why this is imperative.

This is not a simple economic decision. This is a decision of values. This is a decision about our country and about these people, about 6 million people, many of whom are supporting children, many who are making major contributions to the total income of their families. This is about whether or not we value their work and we value them as full participants in American society.

This is also about understanding that you cannot build a strong and rich country on the backs of poor people. It simply will not work. Around the country we see where democracy flags and lags because of the fact there is such a disparity in those countries between rich and poor. We know. We have charted it. And when you get to the levels of disparity that America is starting to approach now between rich and poor, basic fundamental democracy is threatened. That doesn't mean it will disappear in America, but we have

to understand what it does to the institutions of freedom and liberty and democracy when people aren't full participants in our society.

Again, these people have made the decision that they are going to go to work every day and they are going to try their darnedest to support their families, to support their children and to meet their needs. It has been said for a long time by business that if you do this, you will kill jobs; that you will hurt the people you are trying to support. Well, let us again remember what we are doing here. We are trying to bring a wage that is stuck in 1997 forward to 2006, and we are going to do it over a 2-year period.

It has gotten to such a point that the business community is starting to be divided on this. Here you have the largest employer, I believe in the United States, Wal-Mart, and not a company that I am used to quoting, but Wal-Mart has said that America needs a raise in the minimum wage for these people who are earning too little; so little that even shopping at Wal-Mart, at every day low prices as they advertise, these people cannot purchase the basic necessities for their families. They are unable to do that. That is the kind of economic situation these people find themselves in.

Again, they do not find themselves in that situation because they are working at a minimum wage that was increased in the year 2000 or 2003, 2004, or 2005, and now we want to update it to 2006 and 2007. This is a minimum wage which these people are earning which was set in 1997.

So that is the reason that I make this motion to instruct the conferees, because vocational education is becoming an ever more important part of a pathway for students to career opportunities, to increased earnings opportunities, and in the Senate bill we can make sure that the purpose of this bill is to achieve high wages. In the House bill we have no such language, and I am asking that we instruct that there be language that what we mean is that in no event should this lead to wages that are less than \$7.25 an hour, which would be the case if the bill that was voted on in the Health and Human Services Appropriation Act, offered by Mr. HOYER and Mr. OBEY, if that became law, because then in two jumps we would get to \$7.25.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I guess it is no secret we are in an election year. As we just saw in the debate just before this debate, a lot of talk about the minimum wage. The motion before the House today is nothing but a political ploy. Nothing in the Vocational Education bill before us has anything to do with the minimum wage, nor has there been any discussion of the minimum wage among the conferees, because this is neither the time nor the place to consider an increase.

Let me just talk a little about what we have done.

□ 1200

A little over a year ago, the House passed the vocational education reauthorization bill, a bill that has been a law for 30 or 40 years. And the process is that a bill is introduced, it is brought before the subcommittee, the full committee, and finally passed by the House. The Senate passed a similar bill. We have been meeting with the Senate for almost a year trying to work out, resolve the differences between the bills so we can get a bill finally passed and to the President's desk.

Today, we are naming conferees so we can get this bill finalized and finished up. And about 15 minutes ago the Democrats gave us this motion to instruct conferees that says: "In section 3(2) of the bill, after the phrase 'high wage' insert '(in no case less than \$7.25 an hour)'."

Let me read what we have agreed on. "Building on the efforts of the States and localities to develop challenging academic and technical standards, and to assist students in meeting such standards, including preparation for high-skill, high-wage or high-demand occupations in current or emerging professions."

Now that is a good thing that we should be working on. That is what we should be trying to do, educate our young people and prepare them for high-skill, high-wage and high-demand occupations.

If we took this motion to instruct that they are giving us, we would change that to say, in meeting such standards, "including preparation for high-skill, high-wage, \$7.25-an-hour, or high-demand occupations in current or emerging professions."

So it sounds like they are talking about minimum wage, but what they are doing is defining a high wage as \$7.25 an hour. I have a little disagreement with that. I don't think that \$7.25 an hour is a high wage, but that is what they are wanting us to do.

The Democratic leadership is trying to play politics with what, to this point, has been a bipartisan effort to craft a strong bill that benefits millions of Americans. The vocational education reforms that we include in our bill will help students and workers build their academic and technical skills and equip them with the knowledge to proceed with postsecondary education or pursue other opportunities that will pay them much more than \$7.25 an hour.

I am disappointed that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would, at the 11th hour, actually 11th hour and 45 minutes, or 11th hour and 55 minutes, just before we walk onto the floor, give us something that changes the definition of high wage to \$7.25 an hour and ends up tainting good work with bad politics.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

I would just say, only my Republican colleagues would think that \$7.25 an hour is a high wage for working people. In fact, in the motion to instruct he knows it is "not less than \$7.25 an hour."

My colleague has also said that this is neither the time nor the place. We haven't been able to find out since 1997 where is the time and where is the place to raise the minimum wage for 6 million American workers. That is what the American public wants to know, that is what the American public supports our doing, but we have been unable to find out from the Republican leadership. All we get from the Republican leadership is "no."

When it passed in the Appropriations Committee, the bill has not come to the floor because it has the minimum wage in it. Then when those same people had to vote in another Appropriations Committee, the Republican leadership got them to change their votes against the minimum wage.

Our committee has had no hearings and they are not reporting the bill. Where is the time and where is the place? Where do these 6 million poor workers, where do they go to make their case to this Republican Congress? Where is that time and where is that place?

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding me time, but even more for bringing this issue to the floor.

Yes, where is the time and place?

Since 1997, the minimum wage has been frozen and millions of people have been stranded. I don't know of a better word to use. During that time we have seen congressional pay increase by several times the total amount that a minimum-wage earner would earn in a year. We have seen CEO compensation raised many times what a minimum-wage earner would earn in a year. I mean, the increase is that much.

Mr. MILLER talked about the 6 million people who are stranded. It is more like 15 if you consider all of the people who are indirectly affected by this also. The chairman said that there has been no discussion of minimum wages, and so why should we bring it up with this bill at this time. That is right, there has been no discussion. We are trying to find a place to have that discussion.

Indeed, \$7.25 is not a high wage. In fact, if the minimum wage were to be paid at the purchasing power that it used to have, it would be \$9.05, still not a high wage, but considerably better than the minimum wage of \$5.15.

The chairman says this is a political ploy. Try to tell that to someone who is trying to buy gas, to buy food. You know, since the minimum wage was pegged, the price of bread has gone up, oh, at least 25 percent. The price of

milk, at least 25 percent, the price of gas a couple hundred percent. The price of health care 100 percent, but I am not sure why we are discussing health care because no one on minimum wage can afford it.

This is not a political ploy; this is about the ability of people to make ends meet and to feed their families. Yes, we are talking about families. The other side often says minimum wage, that only applies to kids on summer jobs. Try to tell that to the millions of people who are trying to feed families, children, pay for rent and buy gas to get to work.

I ask the majority party, who has not found a time or place to discuss the minimum wage: Have they no imagination? We are supposed to be Representatives here. One of our challenges is to put ourselves in the shoes of the hundreds of thousands of people whom we represent. Have they no imagination? It shouldn't take much imagination to figure out how difficult it is to get by on today's minimum wage. Do they think that we don't have time to discuss it here on the floor? Of course, we do.

They will say it is going to kill jobs. There is no evidence of that. In fact, the best evidence we can find, and this goes back to the days when Henry Ford increased the wages for his workers, the best evidence we can find is that increasing the salaries of hourly workers helps the economy. In States that have higher minimum wages, they have better job creation.

So don't give us that, that this is going to hurt the economy. No, what it is going to hurt if we don't raise the minimum wage is 15 million people.

We have the opportunity with this motion to instruct because the Vocational Improvement Act has the purpose of creating high-skill, high-wage jobs. All we are saying is that there ought to be a floor. If you are going to talk about wages, there ought to be a floor. For more than half a century, for three-quarters of a century almost now, it has been deemed appropriate for the Federal Government to set that floor. That is what we are asking to do now, to set it at least at a barely humane level rather than the inhumane level at which the minimum wage now stands.

I urge support of the Miller motion to instruct.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I compliment the gentleman on his eloquent speech on the minimum wage. However, this bill before us is not a minimum-wage bill.

As I said earlier, what it does is change high-skill, high-wage to \$7.25 an hour. That is what I read from their motion to instruct.

One of the things I would like to say is that I appreciate Mr. CASTLE, chairman of the Subcommittee on Education Reform, for his leadership in producing a good House bill in support of educators and supported by nearly every Member of this Chamber.

I would also like to thank the committee and the subcommittee ranking members, Mr. MILLER and Ms. WOOLSEY, for working with us in a bipartisan manner both on the House bill and in our preliminary discussions with the Senate to get us to this point. Their willingness to work with us toward our mutual goal of improving and modernizing our career and technical education programs has allowed us to get to this point today.

I am confident that our negotiations with the Senate will produce a measure that will be widely supported by Members of the House on both sides of the aisle. I would like to see us move forward quickly to get to conference to finalize this bill so we can have a vote on it before we adjourn for the summer recess.

Again, I thank all those who have worked so hard to bring us here today, and reemphasize again, aside from all of the rhetoric about the minimum wage, this is not a vote on the minimum wage bill, it is a vote on reauthorizing the Vocational Education Act.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and I thank Mr. MILLER for his motion to instruct.

With all due respect to the chairman, the Miller motion to instruct establishes in the language that in no case shall the wage be less than \$7.25 an hour. It is not a cap. It actually establishes a floor, not a ceiling.

We all understand that for many people even \$7.25 may not be enough, but the Miller amendment creates some progress in an area where the American people haven't seen much progress. Think about it. Do you know, if the minimum wage had kept pace with increases in corporate executive compensation over the last dozen years, do you know what the minimum wage would be today? It would be over \$16. That is how far and fast the top executive salaries have gone up.

But those people who provide the service for those executives and for all of us, those people who work in restaurants, who work in hotels, those people who are humble working people, \$5.15 an hour, and it has been frozen there while the cost of everything keeps going up.

My constituents talked to me over the July 4 break about the high cost of gasoline. If you are making \$5.15 an hour and gasoline goes up to \$3 or more a gallon, what does that do to your family budget? We have some practical considerations we need to look at here and we are not looking at them.

That is why I am rising in support of the Miller motion to instruct conferees, because vocational education and training are vital parts of workforce development in America, and they help to provide the highly trained, skilled workers that our Nation needs.

But you can get training and you can get education, but that doesn't assure

you of a decent wage. That is because full-time, year-round, minimum-wage earnings of \$5.15 an hour leaves a family of three 31 percent below the poverty line.

We are all told in this country that if you work hard, you will get ahead; if you get a good education, you will get a decent job. What is happening in America, people are working hard and they are not getting ahead. They are getting an education and they are not getting a decent job, they are not getting decent pay. Seven million Americans have been frozen at this \$5.15 minimum wage.

How do people survive? How do they feed their families? How do they have health care? How do they pay the rent and the mortgage on \$5.15 an hour?

There is a moral dimension to this as well. How can we, in a country which has such enormous wealth, turn our backs on our brothers and sisters who are frozen at \$5.15 an hour and say, No, no, you can't have more money to feed your family. No, you can't have more money to pay the rent. No, you can't have more money to pay for gasoline. No, you can't have more money because if we give you more money, the whole economy is going to be in trouble. Come on, we all know that is not true.

We all know that America has the capacity to create even more wealth, but there is a maldistribution of the wealth, and the proof of the fundamental maldistribution of the wealth is the fact that we are not able to raise this minimum wage to a level that presents a living wage.

It is estimated that over 7 million workers would receive an increase in their hourly wage if the minimum wage were raised to just \$7.25 an hour as Mr. MILLER's legislation, the Fair Minimum Wage Act, proposes. An additional 8.2 million workers earning up to a dollar above the new minimum wage would also benefit.

This country has always been about our aspirations to lift everyone up. When we stop doing that, we become less than America. When we forget those who have less, what does it matter who we are? The Scriptures command us, Whatever you do for these, the least of our brethren, you do for the Lord.

Whose work are we doing here? Are we doing the Lord's work when we turn around and cast out those who are the humble workers in our society? No, we are not.

It is time to remember where we came from as a Nation. It is time to remember our higher aspirations. Vote for the Miller amendment.

□ 1215

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, again I want to congratulate my good friend from Ohio for his very eloquent speech on the minimum wage.

Let me again remind those who are watching what we are debating today,

and that is the reauthorization of the Vocational Education Act, their motion to instruct changes the language about building on the efforts of the States and localities to developing challenging academic and technical standards to assist students in meeting such standards, including preparation for high-scale, high-wage, or high-demand occupations. And they are saying after "high wage" insert the language "in no case less than \$7.25 an hour."

And again, I think that when we are saying high-wage, high-demand jobs we are looking at a lot more than \$7.25 an hour.

I came from a business background when I came here, and we were in the retail business and we hired a lot of people, and in most cases they would start out at the minimum wage and after a short period of training they moved up quickly to high paying jobs.

Minimum wage is not a cap. It is an entry level job. And again, though, we are not here to debate that. We are here to talk about the vocational education bill, and we want to go to conference so we can get this bill finished up with the Senate, get it to the President and move on.

This bill enhances the Perkins program by ensuring both secondary and post-secondary students participating in the program will acquire rigorous academic technical skills and have the opportunity to transition into further education and/or successful employment.

I meet with lots of people having to do with education around the country. I met with the head of the Association of Truck Drivers school. He says, we could provide 40,000 truck drivers a year if we could get the people. There is lots of demand for high paying jobs, and we can't get people trained.

We need to get this bill passed and get it so that the President can sign it into law and move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for joining us in the debate on the minimum wage. And with that I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY), a member of the committee.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank Representative MILLER for offering this motion and for his continued leadership in fighting for America's workers.

Thirty-eight years ago I was a single, working mother with three small children. In fact, my children were 1, 3 and 5 years old at the time. Receiving no child support, earning just above the minimum wage, even though I was working, I was earning so little that my family was forced to go on Aid for Dependent Children, welfare, to provide for the child care, the health care and the food that we needed to make ends meet. Even though I had a good education and I had good job skills, I still wasn't earning enough from my job to

fully support my children. And believe me, I worked hard and I worked full time.

My personal story bears repeating because too many families today are in the exact same predicament I was in 38 years ago. So this Congress, if it wants to, can do something to seriously address poverty in this country. And we can do it by increasing the minimum wage, paying working parents enough to support their families and enough to take care of their kids. But increasing the minimum wage is absolutely, absolutely necessary in getting that going.

The Bush administration continues to repeat that profits are up. They may be up, but working Americans aren't experiencing this benefit. They don't see it in their daily lives because their wages are stagnant. In fact, the Federal minimum wage has not been increased since 1997.

You know, a rising tide should lift all boats, not just the yachts. Mr. Speaker, it is time for American workers to share in the fruits of their labor, and it is time to raise the minimum wage.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, I want to thank the gentlewoman for her great talk on minimum wage, and remind people that that is not what we are talking about today. We are working on going to conference on passing the vocational education bill.

The emphasis on academics in this bill will be assessed through an alignment with No Child Left Behind and through enhanced accountability, which strengthens the bill, which makes it better for us to be able to help people train for good, high paying jobs. The House-passed bill strengthens accountability by requiring that locals establish adjusted levels of performance to complement the State-adjusted levels of performance already in current law. In turn, the State agency will evaluate annually whether the local recipient is making substantial progress toward achieving these goals. This, along with many other things, strengthens the Vocational Education Act and helps us to train young people for good, high paying, high wage jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA).

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call for a vote on raising the minimum wages. I thank Mr. MILLER for being an advocate on behalf of the poor, disadvantaged and trying to equate equality and job opportunities and wages.

I just heard from the leader on the other side talk about leave no child behind. But we want to make sure that no child is left behind, and that every child has an opportunity to progress and advance, and that means employment and an opportunity. When you

leave a child behind, that means that you have not given them the appropriate wages to go to school, to obtain wages to pay for the schools.

Right now we see in America today the cost of health has increased. Energy, college are rising. People can't even afford to buy homes. We have two or three or four or five different families that are working. We have individuals that have two or three different kinds of jobs. Why? Because the minimum wages have not increased.

It is time that we look at working families and provide them with that opportunity. Across America we need this minimum-wage increase. Don't complain about immigration and then refuse to pay the American families a living wage. The minimum wage is not only for teenagers in summer jobs or working families. It is for all Americans. Adults over the age of 20 make up the largest share of workers who would benefit from minimum wages increase, and many parents are with children under the age of 18. We are talking about under 18. Forty percent of minimum-wage workers are the sole breadwinners in their families. Too many working families in my district have had to turn to minimum-wage jobs after Norton was closed and Kaiser closed. And we don't have major industries such as some of our cities in the urban communities like us. We depend on those jobs that give them those kind, whether it is a McDonald's, whether it is a commercial store, whether it is an industrial store. It is important that they have those minimum wages increased because they also need to put food on the table.

In this country, in the United States, many people are starving right here. Yes, they are literally starving. They can't put food on the table. They can't afford to pay for their gas prices that continues to go up. You fill a tank of gas and it costs you anywhere between 50 to 60 to \$75. We need to increase the minimum wages so therefore they can afford to buy gas, go to work and have something to provide for their families.

I ask that we support the minimum wage. It is time that we deal with the American people here in the United States and we take care of them. We owe it to them.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my good friend from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT), chairman of the Science Committee.

(Mr. BOEHLERT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, I am watching with a great deal of interest this debate, and I notice the previous gentleman in the well was talking about the need to increase the minimum wage.

Guess what? He is exactly right. And I refuse to cede the issue to one side or the other. There are a lot of us who have looked at that and realized that we haven't had an increase in the minimum wage in 9 years.

Consider the purchasing power of the minimum wage. It is inadequate. We ought to increase the minimum wage. And I am proud to say that I have sponsored a bill that has been in the hopper for 2 years now to increase the minimum wage. It would go up to \$7.15 an hour in January of 2007. We should do it. That is not a one-party or another party's issue. It is an issue that makes sense for all thinking Americans.

But I don't think this is the correct vehicle, the right bill to address that subject. I can just tell you, in my capacity as a chairman of a committee I meet on a weekly basis with the other committee chairmen and our majority leader, and I make it clear in no uncertain terms my very strong feeling. And it is not just me, or it is not just one Republican. There are a lot of us who are strongly in favor of increasing the minimum wage. And that is very much on the table, as it should be. It is the right thing to do for the right reasons. But this is the wrong vehicle to carry forward that battle.

And Mr. MILLER, for whom I have a high regard and I have worked with on a number of occasions over the years, sometimes to his detriment and mine, but this is the sort of comity that should be more prevalent in this institution. We are in general agreement on what we should do with the minimum wage. So let's get on with the debate on this very important legislation brought by a committee after thorough deliberation, dealing with a very important subject. Let's deal with this subject here and now, and let's reserve our effort on the minimum wage. And I am redoubling mine, and I am sure Mr. MILLER and his associates are redoubling theirs. We need it. We need it this year to be effective come January 1 of 2007.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I have the right to close. I have no further speakers.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments. And as you can see, there are supporters for minimum wage on both sides of the aisle. But that is not what we are talking about today. We are not talking about minimum wage. What the other side is asking that we do is put in a rate, \$7.25 an hour, in a Federal bill. We don't usually set wages in a Federal bill. What we do try to do in this bill is encourage the training, vocational educational training for young people so that they can qualify for good, high paying jobs and move on to a successful career.

One of the unique attributes of vocational and technical education programs is their ability to show students a path that could end in a certificate, a credential, employment, military service or post-secondary education. It opens up lots of opportunities.

The House-passed bill requires States to establish model sequences of courses to emphasize further student academic career and technical achievement.

These sequences of courses will incorporate a progression of both secondary and post-secondary elements, which would include academic, career and technical content. Local recipients of both the secondary and post-secondary level would adopt at least one model sequence of courses as developed by the State. I believe this will help drive program improvements by ensuring that States clarify the progression of academic, vocational and technical courses needed for post-secondary education and the training or employment of a student's choice.

The House version of S. 250 builds upon reforms made in past reauthorizations and seeks to enhance this popular program to ensure its success in years to come. As a result of changes in the House bill, S. 250 would help States, community colleges and other post-secondary education institutions and local school districts better meet the needs of the students participating in career and technical education.

I look forward to working with Members of both sides of the aisle in both Chambers to complete work on this critical legislation.

I just want to further emphasize so that everybody listening to this debate understands that this is not a vote on the minimum wage. This is a vote on going to conference on vocational education so that we can get this bill to the President's desk and take care of a lot of work that has been done to this point to make a good bill better.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, and Members of the House, we are down to a very critical point. We are down to a point whether or not this Chamber, the House of Representatives, the People's House as it is known, whether or not we will represent the people or whether we will represent narrow special interests that have a huge economic interest in keeping the minimum wage at the 1997 level of \$5.15 an hour.

□ 1230

That is a decision that we have to make.

We have been trying now for a number of years to force a vote on the minimum wage. I find it rather interesting that the Republicans, who control the Senate, control the House, control the White House, cannot find the time and the place, although apparently they are now sort of for it, to find the time and the place where we could have a vote on the minimum wage.

What is wrong with your leadership? Name the time, name the place. We will be there with our votes. And if your leadership will not cooperate, come on down and sign a discharge petition. Mr. BOEHLERT and others who are supporting the minimum wage, come on down and sign a discharge petition, and then we will be assured that the American people will get the vote that they strongly desire to have.

Over 80 percent of the American people believe that raising the minimum wage from the 1997 wage level of \$5.15 to, today, of \$7.25 an hour is, in fact, the right thing to do, the fair thing to do, and the moral thing to do. The only thing that prevents that from happening is the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives.

Even the Senate allowed a vote to take place, but only in the Senate can you pass something by a majority vote. It got 52 votes, a bipartisan vote, and it still does not pass because they say you have got to get 60 votes. But in the House you cannot even get that vote. You cannot even get that vote.

We had a vote in the Appropriations Committee on a bipartisan basis. The members of that committee voted to increase the minimum wage. Under the leadership of Mr. HOYER and Mr. OBEY, they voted to increase the minimum wage. Since that has happened, that bill has been prevented from coming to the floor of the House of Representatives where we could vote, up or down, on increasing the minimum wage. So, apparently, this time and place that the Republicans say they are prepared to go is a mystery to everyone.

Maybe we could have a national contest like they are doing for the Johnny Depp's pirates movie. We could bury the time and the place somewhere in the United States, and we could let people decide and play a game and try to figure out where it is. Where is that time and place? Is it in the gentleman's district in California? Is it in my district?

We all know where that time and place is. The time is now and the place is the House of Representatives on the floor of the Congress of the United States. That is where we are supposed to be doing the people's business.

There is nothing else in this country that is at 1997 levels, not gasoline, not bread, not milk. Do you know what else is not at 1997 levels, where the Congress found the time and the place?

Do you want to know what else is not at 1997 levels? Congressional pay. Because we found six times and six places to give ourselves the cost-of-living increase while we insisted that the lowest paid people in this country could not have more than \$5.15 an hour, the same wage they were making in 1997. Apparently, it wasn't good enough for Congress, so we increased our COLA.

I agree with that increase, but think about the message and the morality that you are reflecting when you cannot reach back, after we receive these COLAs, and say to these people who are struggling to support their families, Here, let us give you a hand, let us help you; you have made that decision to participate in the American economic system by going to work every day. But somehow this Congress just does not value their work.

We give tax breaks to CEOs. A guy at Exxon walks out after several years with \$400 million in guaranteed pension benefits, \$400 million. He made more

money brushing his teeth than people make on the minimum wage all year long.

What is the justice of this? What is the equity of this? What is the fairness of this? It cannot be what America is about, about the intentional decision by the Republican leadership that 6 million American people will simply be poor, and they will be relegated to the class of poverty and they will be there by edict of the Federal law. The Federal law will keep them in poverty.

We ought to also tell the taxpayers that when you make that decision, you are also making the taxpayers of this country part of their employment because when they work at those poverty wages, the taxpayers pay for the school lunches and they pay for the housing and they pay for the healthcare and they pay for the utility bills when it is cold and when it is hot. We end up subsidizing those employers who insist that they cannot make a profit unless they pay 1997 wages.

Let me tell you something about those employers. They are not long for this world because there is something very wrong with their business plan that they can only succeed if they pay 1997 wages. Think about that. Think about what you are embracing. You are embracing an economic model that says that success is dependent upon being able to pay forever 1997 wages to my employees. Have we lost our minds here? Do we understand the injustice of this?

Again, these are people working 40 hours a week every day. They drive mostly old cars that consume more gas that costs them more to commute to that job. They still do it.

America has already said it. It is just the Congress, just the Republican leadership. America says, give these people a raise. They know that struggle. They know that struggle. They know it themselves. Middle-class people know what it means to drive up to a station today and say, Fill it up. Most people do not say, Fill it up. They say, How much do I need to get to Friday? That is what they say to themselves.

Well, think about what poor people are thinking.

We value work. We changed the welfare laws to encourage people to go to work. Should we not encourage them to get out of poverty? Should we not help them to get out of poverty instead of sticking them at 1997 levels?

This is fundamental. This vote is fundamental. This debate is fundamental. And the time and the place to have it is now in the halls of the Congress of the United States. We cannot continue to have a Republican leadership that says, this is not right, that is not right, this is not the bill, this is not the subject matter.

Just bring us a bill. Let us vote up or down. You have the majority. You control it. Either you believe in the dignity of these people, in the dignity of their children, in the dignity of their work, or you don't, because you cannot

have that and then insist upon these wages.

I ask for an "aye" vote on the motion to instruct.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Ordering the previous question on H. Res. 906, by the yeas and nays; adopting H. Res. 906, if ordered; instructing conferees on S. 250, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2990, CREDIT RATING AGENCY DUOPOLY RELIEF ACT OF 2006

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the vote on ordering the previous question on House Resolution 906, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 223, nays 197, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 364]

YEAS—223

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| Aderholt | Boehlert | Camp (MI) |
| Akin | Boehner | Campbell (CA) |
| Alexander | Bonilla | Cannon |
| Bachus | Bonner | Cantor |
| Baker | Bono | Capito |
| Barrett (SC) | Boozman | Carter |
| Bartlett (MD) | Boustany | Castle |
| Barton (TX) | Bradley (NH) | Chabot |
| Bass | Brady (TX) | Chocola |
| Beauprez | Brown (SC) | Coble |
| Biggart | Brown-Waite, | Cole (OK) |
| Billray | Ginny | Conaway |
| Bilirakis | Burgess | Crenshaw |
| Bishop (UT) | Burton (IN) | Cubin |
| Blackburn | Buyer | Culberson |
| Blunt | Calvert | Davis (KY) |