

The high-profile envoy would also address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the role of Hezbollah and Syria in Lebanon, and Iran's rising influence in the region. The aim would not be necessarily to solve these problems, but to prevent them from getting worse and to show the Arab and Muslim world that we share their concerns about the problems in this region.

Madam Speaker, the President's plan has not worked. Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result is, as we all know, a definition of insanity. It is time to try something new. It is time for change. It is time for a new direction.

FAIR MINIMUM WAGE ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. LEE TERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 10, 2007

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favor of lifting people out of poverty by giving them the means to succeed. I rise today to speak against the Democrat's raise in the minimum wage.

No American wants to see their fellow person live in poverty. There are ways to continue to help Americans have all the means necessary to not only survive, but to thrive. However, the Democrat's bill to raise the minimum wage is nothing more than a Band-Aid on a broken little toe. While their intentions may be good, and I believe they are, their philosophical approach is economically and socially flawed. In reality, this plan will create an economic hardship for the employers who provide millions of Americans the opportunity to participate in our economy.

Some of my colleagues would have you believe that the right thing to do is mandate unto all businesses, small, family-owned, and corporate alike, that the business cannot determine the wage worth of an employee. They would have you believe it is the job of the government to do so. I believe in a market system without an intrusive, dictating government that will likely minimize potential employment opportunities for lower skilled workers.

I and many of my fellow free-market thinking colleagues believe that the correct action to take to help these individuals is two-fold.

First, on the macro-level, we must have a strong, growing economy from which highpaying jobs are available and competition for employees. Facts show that lowering taxes is an economic motivator. In the past 5 years, Congress has passed and or extended the following tax cuts: marriage penalty relief, accelerated the increase in the child credit, accelerated the expansion of the 15 percent rate bracket for married couples, reduction in individual income tax rates, reduction of other regular tax rates, increased the alternative minimum tax exemption, reduce individual capital gains rates, and accelerated depreciation.

These tax cuts have helped grow our economy here in the U.S. to the point where we are now in a time of economic prosperity with Americans enjoying the benefits. Since August 2003, when the 2001 tax extensions were passed, the American economy has added over 7 million new jobs—this is more than all other major industrialized nations combined—

and posted job gains for 39 straight months. We have also attained an impressive 4.5 percent unemployment rate. This economy is most conducive to producing higher paying jobs.

Secondly, on the micro-level, these individuals who are making minimum wage most importantly need advancement in skills and education. I have had many conversations with a gentleman named Fernando "Butch" Lecuona III. Butch is the commissioner of Labor for the Nebraska Department of Labor and is the head of the Department of Labor in Nebraska. Butch also adheres to the philosophy and will be the first one to say that education is the key to lifting people from poverty.

In December of 2006, we in the House passed a tax credit for businesses who hired individuals in the Welfare to Work program, which provided a tax credit to employers when they hire individuals who have received public assistance for 18 months or who have exhausted their benefits. In addition to the Welfare to Work program I also supported the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, WOTC, when employers hire individuals from eight "target" groups—such as families receiving public assistance, high-risk youths, ex-felons, qualified veterans, and food stamp recipients under the age of 35. This is an example of the proper roll of government to help individuals succeed.

While doing my research for this vote, I attempted to find the number of people that are the bread-winners for their families working at or below minimum wage. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Nebraska has roughly 1 million people in our workforce pool. Nearly 60 percent of our workers work for an hourly wage. In the United States, 1.5 percent of hourly workers aged 25 and above make at or below minimum wage; 1.5 percent of our hourly workers in Nebraska equals about 8,000 people. Of the total 17,000 minimum wage workers in Nebraska, more than half of those are aged 16–24. These are not typically the breadwinners of the family.

The best tool to battle poverty is a free market with an educated workforce. We have the tools in this Nation to continue to provide Americans with the opportunities for which we are known. Increasing the minimum wage does nothing to help an individual better themselves, their family, or their community.

This is why I will not be supporting the minimum wage increase and I urge my colleagues to join me.

TRIBUTE TO GENERAL JAMES L. JONES

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, let me take this opportunity to recognize the long and distinguish career of GEN James L. Jones. General Jones just completed his assignment as Supreme Allied Commander, Europe and Commander, U.S. European Command.

General Jones received a bachelor of science degree from the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in 1966. He also attended the Basic School, the Amphibious Warfare School, and the National War College in Washington, DC.

General Jones was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps where he was ordered to the Republic of Vietnam in January 1967. After serving as a Platoon and Company Commander he was promoted to First Lieutenant. He returned to the United States in December 1968 where he served as a Company Commander at Camp Pendleton, CA. From May 1970 to July 1973, General Jones served at Marine Barracks, Washington, DC, as a Company Commander. Remaining in Washington, General Jones served in the Officer Assignments Section at Headquarters Marine Corps where he was later appointed to Major and soon after served as the Marine Corps Liaison Officer to the United States Senate.

After being promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, General Jones was assigned to Camp Pendleton, CA, and in August 1987, returned to Headquarters Marine Corps where he served as Senior Aide to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. He was promoted to Colonel in April 1988, where later General Jones would become Military Secretary to the Commandant.

General Jones was assigned as the Commanding Officer, 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit at Camp Lejeune, NC, where he participated in Operation Provide Comfort in Northern Iraq and Turkey. He was advanced to Brigadier General and was assigned to duties as Deputy Director, J-3, U.S. European Command, Stuttgart, Germany. During this tour of duty he was reassigned as Chief of Staff, Joint Task Force Provide Promise for operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia.

General Jones was advanced to the rank of Major General in July 1994, and was then assigned as Commanding General, 2d Marine Division, Marine Forces Atlantic, Camp Lejeune, NC. After serving as Director, Expeditionary Warfare Division (N85), Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, and then as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, Policies, and Operations, Headquarters Marine Corps, General Jones was advanced to Lieutenant General.

General Jones served as the Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, and on July 1, 1999 became the 32nd Commandant of the United States Marine Corps. He assumed his duties as the Commander of U.S. European Command on January 16, 2003, and Supreme Allied Commander Europe on January 17, 2003.

General Jones' has been awarded the Defense Distinguished Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Silver Star Medal, Legion of Merit with four gold stars, Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V", and the Combat Action Ribbon.

Madam Speaker, I know the Members of the House will join me in paying tribute to GEN James L. Jones for his commitment to the United States Marine Corps and the safety and security of America.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Madam Speaker, on January 9 and 10, 2007, I was absent and

missed rollcall votes 12–18. For the record, had I been present on January 9th, I would have voted: rollcall vote 12—“yea”; rollcall vote 13—“no”; rollcall vote 14—“yea”; and rollcall vote 15—“yea.”

Further, had I been present on January 10th, I would have voted: rollcall vote 16—“no”; rollcall vote 17—“no”; and rollcall vote 18—“yea.”

I support an increase in the minimum wage. The last time the minimum wage was increased was ten years ago and workers deserve to have the minimum wage increased to \$7.25.

I am pleased the House of Representatives passed the initial version of H.R. 2 and look forward to voting on its final passage in the coming weeks.

RECOGNIZING DAVID LEININGER
FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF
EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize David Leininger, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 495, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

David has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years David has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending David Leininger for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent David in the United States House of Representatives.

MOURNING THE PASSING OF
PRESIDENT GERALD RUDOLPH
FORD

SPEECH OF

HON. RALPH REGULA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 9, 2007

Mr. REGULA. Madam Speaker, I would like to comment on the life and legacy of President Gerald Ford.

I served with him in the House of Representatives and had the pleasure of working with him when he served both as Vice President and President of the United States. I will always think fondly on President Ford as a humble, genuine President and good friend.

The people of Ohio will always be extremely grateful for his leadership in creating Ohio's Cuyahoga National Park, one of the most visited in the 388 National Parks and other sites administered by the National Park Service.

President Ford's leadership and service to the Nation is well described in the title of his book “A Time to Heal.”

His wife Betty in her role as First Lady also was a wonderful role model for millions of American women, particularly her devotion to helping people in establishing the Betty Ford Clinic to help individuals with challenging personal problems.

Our Nation was enormously enriched by the leadership of President Ford and his wife Betty.

I would like to extend my sincere condolences to the Ford family. I pray that you are comforted by the kind words and admiration the country has shown for President Ford.

EXTENDING CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE RETIRING DIRECTOR OF
THE JOHN F. KENNEDY SPACE
CENTER, JAMES W. KENNEDY

HON. DAVE WELDON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to extend congratulations to the retiring Director of the John F. Kennedy Space Center, James W. Kennedy, for his vast contributions to our Nation's space program. Jim's long and successful career has ensured that America's leadership in space exploration will continue well into the future.

Jim Kennedy was raised in my congressional district, on the Space Coast of Florida. In fact, he was in the first graduating class at Cocoa Beach High School. After graduation, he began his distinguished career with NASA in 1968 in the Aerospace Engineering Cooperative Education Program at Kennedy Space Center. He joined Marshall Space Flight Center in 1980 as an engineer in the Shuttle Projects Office, and in 1987, was named manager of the Shuttle Program Planning and Management Systems Office. Following that, he served as the manager of the Solid Rocket Booster Project Office.

Jim served as the Deputy Director of Marshall's Science and Engineering Directorate and was later named Director of the center's Engineering Directorate. In 2001, he was selected to serve as Deputy Director of the Marshall Space Flight Center, and just two years later, he returned to Florida and was named the Deputy Director of the Kennedy Space Center. In 2003, he became the eighth Director of the Kennedy Space Center.

Jim has received numerous awards during his illustrious career in our Nation's Space Program, including the National Space Club's Astronautics Engineer of the Year Award, the Marshall Space Flight Center Leadership Award, the Astronaut's own Silver Snoopy Award, NASA's Distinguished Service Medal, the Presidential Rank Meritorious and Distinguished Service Awards, and the NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal. Most recently, he received the Dr. Kurt H. Debus Award from the National Space Club's Florida Committee.

Jim oversaw the critical job of ensuring a safe “Return to Flight” of the Shuttle Program as well as the resumption of International Space Station construction. I watched with pride last July 4th as Jim's team at Kennedy Space Center performed a successful launch of Space Shuttle *Discovery*. This particular launch was a fitting tribute to Kennedy Space Center and a wonderful cap to Jim Kennedy's

career, as it proved that both our nation's Space Shuttle Program and the International Space Station Program were once again on firm footing. Jim Kennedy's leadership, and the fine professionals at KSC, gave our country renewed confidence that the goals of our Space Program would be realized. Because of the leadership and hard work of Jim Kennedy, America's premier space launch center proved that it is up to the task. Jim Kennedy's leadership has helped ensure our Space Program is on track for completion of the remaining Shuttle missions and continue the Manned Space Program which will include the return of Americans to the surface of the Moon, then Mars and beyond.

I should also mention that, as with most successful leaders, Jim Kennedy was supported in his NASA career by a devoted family that includes his wife, Bernadette, as well as his two grown children, Jeff and Jamie. I would like to extend our country's appreciation for the sacrifices they made during Jim's years with our Nation's space program.

Much of Jim Kennedy's career was devoted to launching mankind's most sophisticated and complex inventions. The Space Shuttles are truly the jewels of American technological prowess. Each successful launch overseen by Jim Kennedy lifted the spirits of all Americans and underlined our identity as the world's leading space faring Nation. As a representative from the Space Coast, I share deeply in this sense of pride in the promise of Kennedy Space Center and NASA and in Jim Kennedy's devoted service to our Nation.

IN HONOR OF JACK KAKIS

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Jack Kakis, a war hero who immigrated to the United States from his native Greece and created his American Dream.

Jack was born in Thessalonica in Greece in 1920. When his country was occupied by Italian and German troops during World War II, he served with the U.S. Office of Strategic Services, a precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency. Trained by British commandos in guerrilla operations, he was commissioned as an officer and led his men on horseback through Greece harassing the occupying armies. He received the Medal for Bravery Under Duress from his government, the National Medal of Greek Resistance, and was inducted into the Military Order of the World Wars.

After the war, he studied agriculture in Greece, working in that field until he was recalled to active duty because of the Greek Civil War, during which he attained the rank of major. In 1951, following that conflict he and his wife, Mirka, immigrated to the United States.

Jack arrived in this country with no English skills. He drove a flower delivery truck in New York City while attending night school. Eventually he earned a master's degree in horticulture from the University of Connecticut, also mastering English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and German. He arrived in