

Before serving in the current position of District Judge of the 14th Judicial District of Oklahoma, Greg Frizzell had a long and distinguished legal career and ample Federal experience. After graduating with a law degree from the University of Michigan, he clerked for Judge Tom Brett—Tom Brett is now in retirement and there is no one who has a better reputation than he, and he has praised Greg Frizzell time and time again. Ralph Thompson, a prominent senior judge serving on the Federal bench in Oklahoma, has also praised him.

After clerking for Judge Brett, Frizzell became an associate at an Oklahoma law firm and then ran his own private legal practice until he was selected to be general counsel to the Oklahoma Tax Commission. After serving for a period of time at the Tax Commission, he was then appointed to his current position as Judge of the 14th District of Oklahoma.

Not only has Judge Frizzell proven an effective and fair legal professional, he is a devoted husband and loving father of six children.

Getting back again to Mr. Wohlgemuth, he recalls an incident where Judge Frizzell, had to work late one night doing work and he brought all six kids to spend time with them into the late hours—anyone who can handle six kids while doing his judicial work, I think can handle this job.

So, Judge Frizzell is a man of great moral integrity who has proven his character in both his private and public life. I cannot say enough about him and his qualifications to be the next U.S. District Court Judge for the Northern District of Oklahoma and I urge my colleagues to confirm his nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, a brief comment on Gregory Frizzell. He was born in Wichita, KS, which is a great note of distinction, being it is my birthplace. I debated against his father in high school. So I have a little more enthusiasm in asking my colleagues to support his confirmation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Gregory Kent Frizzell, of Oklahoma, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Oklahoma?

The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 99, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 41 Ex.]

YEAS—99

Akaka	Domenici	McConnell
Alexander	Dorgan	Menendez
Allard	Durbin	Mikulski
Baucus	Ensign	Murkowski
Bayh	Enzi	Murray
Bennett	Feingold	Nelson (FL)
Biden	Feinstein	Nelson (NE)
Bingaman	Graham	Obama
Bond	Grassley	Pryor
Boxer	Gregg	Reed
Brown	Hagel	Reid
Brownback	Harkin	Roberts
Bunning	Hatch	Rockefeller
Burr	Hutchison	Salazar
Byrd	Inhofe	Sanders
Cantwell	Inouye	Schumer
Cardin	Isakson	Sessions
Carper	Kennedy	Shelby
Casey	Kerry	Smith
Chambliss	Klobuchar	Snowe
Clinton	Kohl	Specter
Coburn	Kyl	Stabenow
Cochran	Landrieu	Stevens
Coleman	Lautenberg	Sununu
Collins	Leahy	Tester
Conrad	Levin	Thomas
Corker	Lieberman	Thune
Cornyn	Lincoln	Vitter
Craig	Lott	Voinovich
Crapo	Lugar	Warner
DeMint	Martinez	Webb
Dodd	McCain	Whitehouse
Dole	McCaskill	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Johnson

The nomination was confirmed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider the votes on the nominations are considered made and laid on the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will return to legislative session.

FAIR MINIMUM WAGE ACT OF 2007

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2) to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide for an increase in the Federal Minimum Wage.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I wish to speak on another matter.

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

IRAQ

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, the verdict is in on the President's plan to send more American troops into Iraq: 68 percent of the American people are opposed to it; 62 percent of Active-Duty military officers are opposed to it. Top military leaders have voiced skepticism about whether an increase in troops will succeed in suppressing the sectarian violence that has consumed Iraq. The evidence is in. The voice of the people, the American people—voix populaire—is clear. It is time to turn around. Unfortunately, this administration seems to have no intention of heeding that call from the people.

Last week, the Vice President talked about the "enormous successes" that have been accomplished in Iraq. Enormous successes? I ask, enormous successes? The Vice President's definition of "enormous success" is, apparently, different from mine.

The Vice President said that talk of failures and blunders in Iraq was just hogwash—his word, "hogwash"—and the Vice President asserted that whatever Congress votes on in relation to Iraq, "it won't stop us." Hear me now. Hear me. This is the Vice President talking. He asserted that whatever Congress votes on in relation to Iraq, "it won't stop us."

Now, listen to me, you people out there in the hills, in the valleys, across the mountain ranges, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, that is a slap in the face to you. Our constituents voted for change in the last election. They asked their elected representatives—us—to chart a new course in Iraq. This administration continues to disregard the will of the American people, it continues to disregard the people of the Nation, the authority of the Constitution. The administration believes it can continue to ignore the message that is coming—yes—from the American people, loudly and clearly: Bring our sons and daughters home.

That is why the bipartisan resolutions we will be debating are so important. That is why they are so important. We have a duty as the elected representatives of the people of the United States to be their voices and to speak the truth. And the truth is that sending more American troops into Iraq would be a continuation of the mistakes that brought us there in the first place. The truth is that many of us in both parties deeply, deeply disagree with the President's decision to increase our commitment in Iraq rather than to decrease it. The truth is that the American people are fed up with having our—our—soldiers caught in the crossfire of a civil war.

It is important to send that message from the people to the President of the United States. But it is not enough. The American people are asking us to send a message, but they are also asking us for answers. What is our strategy? What is our strategy in Iraq? I am not a Johnny-come-lately on this question. I was against sending American troops into Iraq in the first place. I said so, and I voted so.

So what is our strategy in Iraq? Why are we there? When can our sons and daughters and grandchildren come home? When can our sons and daughters come home? This President has had almost 4 years to articulate answers to those questions. Unfortunately, he has failed at every opportunity. And so it falls to us—us, you Senators and me, and Members of the other body—to find a way forward out of the mess he has created. That is why I will be introducing, within the coming days, a resolution that is a new approach to the war, a resolution that is

fully supportive of our troops, while laying out clear—clear; as clear as the noonday Sun in a cloudless sky—benchmarks for concluding U.S. military engagement in Iraq.

This administration has claimed that debating the President's plan will undermine the troops. Can you believe that? Debating—debating—debating the President's plan will undermine the troops? Hogwash—h-o-g-w-a-s-h—hogwash. Only 38 percent of the Active-Duty U.S. military forces support sending more troops into Iraq. To imply that the American people and the American troops are somehow incapable of hearing and participating in debate about this war is utterly ridiculous—ridiculous—hogwash.

War—hear me now—war and the escalation of war is not something to be decided in some backroom corridor far from the madding crowd, far from the light of day. We have a duty—yes, a duty—and a responsibility to deliberate, to discuss, and to offer advice. That is the way democracy works, and that is the system established by our Founding Fathers. You better believe it.

Some have claimed that by putting forward these resolutions, we are only offering criticism—well, what is wrong with that in the beginning—and, they say, not alternatives. But criticism is only the first step. That is all right. Criticism is only the first step. It is critical to send a consensus message to this President that he is moving us in the wrong direction. The next step is to show the President the right direction. That is why my resolution is so important and why we should be allowed to debate it and to vote on it quickly. We must show the President the way forward. We must send a light in a binding resolution that cannot be ignored.

The American people want a fundamental change in the administration's policies toward Iraq. The American people elected Congress—you, you, you, and me—to make those changes. We must demonstrate that the Congress can take and is prepared to take action to compel the President to create a strategy that is not simply more of the same.

The resolution I will be introducing will do exactly that. You may not agree with it. The resolution will do exactly that. This resolution reflects the will of the American people that the war in Iraq must be brought to a close in a responsible way. It will establish provisions to bring to a close the U.S. military engagement in Iraq based not upon dates but based upon conditions.

It will restore to Congress—Congress; that is us, the people's elected representatives in the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate—it will restore to Congress its constitutional war-making power by adding conditions that would terminate the original 2002 use of force resolution. I was against that resolution. I spoke against it. I voted against it. I was against it.

I am against it. I was right. I am right. And there are others who voted with me—yes, the people's voice.

Let me say that again. It will restore to Congress—the House and Senate of the United States—it will restore to Congress its constitutional war-making power. Do you believe me? I have it right here. I hold in my hand a copy of the U.S. Constitution. It will restore to Congress its constitutional war-making power by adding conditions that would terminate the original 2002 use of force resolution. Hallelujah. Amen. I was against that to start with. Not everybody agreed with me, which was their right. But this would restore—where it was and ought to have been in the first place—to Congress its constitutional war-making power by adding conditions that would terminate the original 2002 use of force resolution. I was against it. But that resolution was enacted, and it is still the law of the land. It is still the law of the land and will be the law of the land unless and until the Congress acts to terminate it.

The conditions can be summarized as follows: We have achieved our objective. We are no longer needed—or we are no longer wanted in Iraq. These are not irresponsible conditions that would prolong our involvement in Iraq, nor do they require a chaotic or dangerous withdrawal of our troops. These are reasonable conditions that, through the exercise of the article I, section 8 powers granted to the Congress, set limits on the Iraq war resolution, which currently has no sunset provision. Hear me. It has no sunset provision. It goes on and on and on—like Tennyson's brook—forever, on and on and on. Do we want that? That war resolution will continue to be in effect in perpetuity. Do you know what that means? Till Kingdom comes; in perpetuity, from now on, as far as the human eye can see and beyond that. That war resolution will continue to be in effect in perpetuity if the Congress does not act. And if Congress does not act, that is an abdication of the responsibility of the Congress—that is an abdication of the responsibility of the Congress—to be a steward, a good steward, of its constitutional power to declare war.

Additionally, as the bipartisan Iraq Study Group concluded, a clear message must be sent to the Iraqi Government that the U.S. commitment to the war in Iraq is not open-ended. The Byrd resolution will point the way toward concluding that commitment.

No Senator must set aside his or her views of the war in order to support the Byrd resolution. Those who support a rapid redeployment of our troops must realize that the Congress must first reassert the powers vested in this body by article I of the Constitution. Those who have supported the war but are now calling for benchmarks for progress by the Iraqi Government should understand that there can be no clearer call for benchmarks for

progress than by writing into the law of the land the conditions under which our presence in Iraq will end.

My approach is one that I believe should have wide bipartisan support. At the appropriate time, I will make the necessary motions to place my resolution, the Byrd resolution, directly onto the calendar, and I urge that the Senate schedule a debate on this proposal soon after this body completes action on the nonbinding resolutions. Although the President believes he can act without the support of the people, the Congress must not submit to such hubris. The work of the Congress must be the work of the people, and there is no more important issue—hear me, there is no more important issue—before our country today than finding a way out of the quagmire in Iraq.

Madam President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I support the bipartisan compromise legislation on Iraq. I urge my colleagues to support it as well. It is a stunning repudiation of the President's misguided strategy in Iraq, and it will put the Senate squarely on record in opposition to the surge. It is a clarion call for change and a vote of no confidence in the President's failed policy.

It was wrong for the President to take the country to war when we did, the way we did, and for the false reasons we were given. It is wrong to compound that mistake now by sending tens of thousands of additional American troops into the middle of a civil war now taking place.

The American people oppose this escalation. Many generals oppose it. A bipartisan majority of Congress opposes it as well. I especially commend our colleague, Senator WARNER, for his extraordinary service to the Nation and making this compromise possible.

Could our message to the White House be any louder or clearer? I intend, however, to press for binding action that will prevent the surge, unless the President changes course. If he doesn't, I will seek a vote at the first appropriate opportunity. It is wrong for the President to escalate this war and send more American soldiers into the cauldron of civil war.

We are very hopeful that through the course of the afternoon we are going to be finally able to get a vote on the increase in the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour. This is the 9th day we have been on this particular legislation. We have had over \$240 billion worth of increased tax preferences that have been suggested and recommended—always on the increase on the minimum wage.

This is not a very complex issue. We have not raised the minimum wage in over 10 years. The purchasing power of the minimum wage has gone down and down, and even with the increase now to \$7.25 an hour, it will only be restored to the purchasing power it had 10 years ago.

This is an issue of fairness. It is about people who work and work hard. It is about men and women of dignity who want to do a good job and also want to provide for their children. So I am very hopeful we will have a chance this afternoon to move ahead and vote. We, on this side, have been prepared to vote on that increase from the first day. The House of Representatives only took 4 hours. The Democrats were joined by 80 Republicans to increase the minimum wage.

But over here, we have had 9 days of debate on the minimum wage, with a host of different amendments and still, outside of cloture, we would have 96 amendments that would have been offered by our friends on that side.

I saw yesterday that the President of the United States went to Wall Street and made a speech about how good everything was in terms of the American economy. I noticed that. I read through the speech. He was very robustly cheered by Wall Street during his recitation of some of the facts of what has been happening in the American economy. But although the economy has worked very well for Wall Street—I don't know of anybody who is doubting that—it is a different situation on Main Street. We have seen and heard, during the course of this debate, from many of our colleagues who related many of the stories they witnessed firsthand as they campaigned in their States and as they supported the initiatives that took place in some six States across the country. Rather than jobs that were going to lift you out of poverty, they are ending up being jobs that keep you in poverty. A minimum wage job was never meant to keep you in poverty. That is what it is doing today.

To review what our situation is, looking at the growth of poverty in the United States, these are some of the figures that were not included in the President's speech yesterday. Between 2000 and 2005, 5.4 million more Americans are in poverty in this Bush economy. This is in the last 5 years, from 2000 to 2005. What is more distressing is the number of children who are now living in poverty. This is the other side of the economic coin. This is not Wall Street; this is what is happening in communities all across our country. These are census figures, as of August 2006. We have 1.3 million more children who are living in poverty. We have not seen a reduction in the number of children in poverty; we have seen an increase in the number of children in poverty. This has followed quite a series of economic policies that have brought us to where we are at the present time. We saw that between 1947

and 1973—to put this administration's economic policies in some perspective because I think it is useful to try to find out exactly what it is and to understand it better. Rather than taking one speech at a time, why don't we look at what has been happening to the economy over the period of recent years.

This chart reflects statistics from 1947 to 1973, over a 25-year period, and these indicators are the five different quintiles of income for the American economy, with the lowest at 20 percent. What we are seeing is that all of the different economic groups rose and moved together. Actually, the ones that rose the most were those at the lowest part of the economic ladder. But what this chart is saying is that the economy of the United States of America was working for everyone during this 25-year period. Everyone. Everyone across the board was benefiting from the expanding economy.

If we look at 1973 to 2000, we begin to see the growth of these great disparities. This is from the Economic Policy Institute, and these are figures from 1973 to 2000. It was interesting that in the President's speech he talked about where we were 25 years ago. Of course, 25 years ago is when President Reagan was President, and this is what we find, which is right in the middle of that period and when this major disparity started to grow. This would be, obviously, starting in 1980, and this is 1973 to 2000.

The previous chart showed them all about even, with the lowest growing the fastest. Now we are seeing the flow line and the top moving along the fastest. And if we break this out even further, between 1973 and 2000, we find this growth disparity starting under the Republicans. It is 1980. The President made the reference to 25 years ago, and that is when the growth of this disparity started, and that is due to economic policies. Economic policies. You just can't get away from it.

If we look from 2000 to 2004, this chart reflects what has happened. Take the line that goes right across, and we find out that low-income Americans are actually losing income and falling the fastest. This is a Census Bureau historical income table. These are the governmental figures. So this isn't a speech, these are governmental figures. It shows this extraordinary growth in these disparities, and the people who have suffered the most have been children and also those at the lower end of the economic ladder, who are the minimum wage workers. And that is what we are trying to change on the floor of the Senate, to give them a break and give them a raise to \$7.25.

We can see what has happened as a result of these economic policies of the recent past. These are the UNICEF child poverty figures, and we see across the industrial world that the United States has the highest child poverty rate, the highest child poverty rate of any industrial country in the world. So

we have this idea on Wall Street that we can say everything is hunky-dory and yet be a nation where we have the highest child poverty rate in the world. And Lord only knows that this weekend probably every person in this Chamber will be making a speech about how children are our future and we have to invest in them, all of which is absolutely true, but we have been failing in our responsibility to look after what has been happening to the children in our country.

One might say: Well, this is all very interesting, but what has the minimum wage got to do with any of this, Senator? It is interesting, but the increase in the minimum wage doesn't solve these issues. And I agree with the President that we have to do more in terms of education. We have to do more in terms of training and in health and in nutrition for these children. There is a great deal more we have to do for children. It all starts, obviously, in the home, but schools are next, and then communities. We all have to do a great deal more, but these are rather startling indictments.

Look at where the poverty rate is in the United States. In States that have a high minimum wage, they have lower poverty rates. This is directly related to the subject matter here.

We have talked generally about economic trends. We have talked about the growth in poverty and the growth in child poverty. So one might ask: What can we do about it? Well, one major step forward we can take is doing something about the minimum wage. Let's prove it.

Look at this chart. These are States with higher minimum wages. They are the States that have voted for an increase in the minimum wage over the Federal minimum wage. Again, these are the Census Bureau's figures. The national poverty rate we see is the red line, and the States that have a higher minimum wage than the national average have less child poverty. Less child poverty.

This chart reflects poverty rates generally, with the next chart reflecting lower child poverty rates. Here is the increase in the minimum wage, and it shows where child poverty is. The other chart showed families living in poverty. This is what happens in States with a higher minimum wage. Again, these are all Census Bureau figures.

So we can do something about child poverty by increasing the minimum wage. And there are many other things we can do, such as increase the earned-income tax credit, support the CHIP, Medicaid expansion, and other types of outreach programs. But one thing we know we can do, and what we have before the Senate this afternoon, is the issue of whether we are going to make progress in reducing child poverty. That is the issue. That is one of the significant outcomes of the vote this afternoon.

We are seeing at the present time, according to the USDA, that we have 12.4

million children who are hungry under the Bush economy. This particular line is left out of the speeches on Wall Street. We have 12.4 million children who are going hungry every single day according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. But here we see what happens with these 6.4 million children who will benefit from this increase in the minimum wage.

This is the spinoff from the increase in the minimum wage. We are going to get better attendance in our schools, better concentration, and better performance. We have seen that time and time again. We are going to get higher test scores and higher graduation rates; children with stronger immune systems, better health, fewer expensive hospital visits, and fewer run-ins with the juvenile justice system.

We should go back and look at the Perry preschool programs. The studies reflect that when we make these investments in children that we will see every one of these kinds of indicators come out in a positive way. And increasing the minimum wage, as I mentioned, will have an impact on 6.4 million children.

I will make just one final point, Madam President. We have 50,000 spouses of our military who are working today, 50,000 of them and their husbands, primarily husbands but also wives, who are serving in the Armed Forces of the United States of America, and many of them are in Iraq or Afghanistan or served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and they are earning \$5.15 or slightly more an hour today. So when we ask what can we do to indicate to our men and women in uniform that we have some respect for their families, well, we have important responsibilities to their families. We can't expect we are going to have top-notch fighting personnel if they are worried about the economic condition of their families. Any military leader will tell you that.

So we have a responsibility to them because they are part of our national security, but we have a responsibility to them also if we are interested in having the most efficient kind of fighting force. Yet we have 50,000 members whose families are out there earning \$5.15 or slightly more an hour. That can change. That will change. We can increase the benefits that reach these families.

Hopefully, we have had a good opportunity to talk about these issues. At earlier times in the debate we had questions about, well, what is going to be the impact on small business. We showed the charts where they had increased the minimum wage in some States and, actually, the numbers of small businesses and the expansion of small business and the profitability of small business had all been enhanced.

We had the question: Well, if we increase the minimum wage, will there be an increasing loss of employment? We demonstrated here the best answer to that is what has happened in the past. At other times, historically, when

we saw this kind of increase in the minimum wage, we actually saw the unemployment figures continue to strip downward and the employment figures continued to drift upward. Those are the statistics. We put them out here and we haven't been challenged on any of these figures.

We also hear, although not a great deal during the course of this particular debate but in other debates, that this action will be inflationary. So we put the chart up that showed if we provide an increase in the minimum wage, in terms of the payroll, that the increase is just one-fifth of 1 percent of total payroll in this country. So the idea that it is going to add to inflation is basically misleading. Of course, it doesn't compare to the kinds of increases we have seen in a lot of these corporate salaries. I wish we had heard complaints about some of that as we were talking about the pressures of increased payout.

The arguments in favor of the increase are compelling, they are overwhelming, and, hopefully, we are going to have an opportunity this afternoon to finally get, after 10 years, an increase in the minimum wage. We have been standing virtually in the same place for 10 years trying to get an increase. We had 16 days of debate on the increase in the minimum wage outside of the last 9 days. So that is 25 days of discussion on the floor of the Senate as to whether we are going to increase the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour over, basically, a 2-year period. It has taken us all that time to get the Senate of the United States to hopefully vote positively on that proposal, but I am very hopeful that will be the case later in the afternoon.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ALLARD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. ALLARD. Madam President, I further ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak as in morning business.

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

(The remarks of Mr. ALLARD and Mr. SALAZAR pertaining to the introduction of S. 472 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

CONGRATULATING MISS AMERICA CONTESTANTS

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, later today the Senate will approve a resolution commending Ms. Lauren Nelson, Miss Oklahoma, as having been named Miss America in the contest on Monday night. I certainly join all Members of the Senate in congratulating her.

I also wish to acknowledge my pride in Amanda Kozak, who finished as second runner-up as Miss Georgia. She is an equally beautiful and talented young lady.

I think it is appropriate that we memorialize on the floor of the Senate for the record the fact that one of our own was also in that contest on Monday night. I am very proud of Miss Kate Michael, Miss District of Columbia, who has worked in my office for the past 3 years. She is a talented, insightful young woman, dedicated to the betterment of mankind and committed to her country. She is a gifted professional dancer who has danced off-Broadway. She is a beautiful person on the outside, and she is equally beautiful on the inside. She is very bright. She graduated magna cum laude from the University of Georgia, and now, while pursuing the Miss America contest, working every day in the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee with me, at night she goes to Johns Hopkins to pursue a master's degree in government.

Truly, sometimes the media takes those sensational things that happen to young people that are always disappointing and elevates them to front-page news. Yet fine young women such as the ones we recognize in this resolution rarely ever get a comment once the crown is placed on their head. But I am very proud today to say how proud I am of Miss Kate Michael, Miss District of Columbia, my employee and an employee of this Senate, who performed masterfully and competed masterfully in the Miss America contest and is the winner of a crown with me every day of the year.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

AMERICA'S ECONOMIC HEALTH

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, earlier this week the President traveled to Peoria, IL, and yesterday to Wall Street and delivered speeches that painted a remarkably rosy picture of our economy. He praised current U.S. trade policy, applauding his evidence of success, the increase in global free-trade agreements since taking office. I have to say that I, along with millions of middle-class families in Ohio, in Missouri, all over this country, had to wonder what part of the country he was talking about. In my State of Ohio, in Steubenville, in Youngstown, Toledo, Columbus, and Dayton, more than 180,000 manufacturing workers lost their jobs in the time the President has been in the White House.

The President was right about one thing: Productivity is up, and that is a testament to our Nation's hard-working and skilled labor force. Far too