

passed unanimously in the Senate, became law, back in 1996 when we passed the model legislation to ease the impact on small businesses with respect to the Federal bureaucracy creating rules and regulations. That legislation that became law was intended to ensure that the Federal Government and all of the agencies consider the impact to small businesses of these proposed rules and regulations.

One of the most important provisions of this act was a requirement that Federal agencies work to produce compliance assistance materials to help small businesses satisfy their regulatory obligations. Unfortunately, the GAO has discovered that Federal agencies have ignored these requirements or failed miserably in their attempt to satisfy them. GAO also discovered that the language of the act is unclear in some places about what is actually required of small businesses. Consequently, small businesses were forced to figure out all these complicated regulations on their own. Obviously, this makes compliance that much more difficult to achieve. So my amendment is drawn specifically and directly from the GAO. It clarifies when a small business compliance guide is required, how a guide shall be designated, how and when a guide shall be published, and that the agency make the guide available on the Internet. These are commonsense, good government reforms, which will provide major relief for small businesses at virtually no cost to the Federal Government.

I think it is very important that this amendment be adopted because all too often we have discovered—as underscored by GAO in their recent report—that the agencies find ways or discover loopholes to circumvent the requirement. It is that much easier because they don't want to have to bother to help small businesses comply with regulations, and they use the rationale—or the excuse, I might say—of the ambiguity in law that doesn't allow them to be clear or to provide the assistance directly to small businesses. So we want to remove the ambiguity and we want to be sure that the amendment as represented here today, which would be translated into the statute, will be abundantly clear and specific in terms of how the agencies are going to allow small businesses to comply with these regulations, with the assistance that could be provided by these agencies as well.

I think it is also important to stress that this amendment does not place any additional arduous requirements on small businesses. There are no additional enforcement measures. We are just saying that this is important to clarify, so that agencies don't have an excuse for avoiding compliance with this regulation and also providing assistance to small businesses, and doesn't undercut an agency's ability to enforce its regulation to the fullest extent they currently enjoy.

Furthermore, this amendment was introduced in the form of a bill that en-

joyed broad bipartisan support. It was also included last year in the Small Business Reauthorization Act that was unanimously reported out of the Senate Small Business Committee in the 109th Congress. This isn't any new ground. It is straightforward. It will help small businesses, which are doing so much to create jobs in our economy. Frankly, we ought to do more for small businesses. I think this is a sector of our economy which we have overlooked and ignored.

There are so many resources that we could make available to small businesses for a minimal cost that I think could leverage job creation throughout this country. I know, in working with the new chair of the Small Business Committee, Senator KERRY, that we are going to look to the future to see what kind of programs we can build upon, what kind of efforts we can make that can help small businesses thrive and flourish and create the jobs that so many parts of our country desperately need and require.

I am looking forward to working with Chairman KERRY in that regard, also with Chairman BAUCUS and the Senate Finance Committee because the underlying bill includes some very significant tax relief measures. Unfortunately, they will expire in the future. In the short term, in some cases, such as small business expensing, I think we have to consider ways to make that expensing requirement permanent because small businesses clearly deserve to have continuity of that provision and the certainty that it is going to be there.

I applaud Chairman BAUCUS for undertaking this initiative as the first action as chair of the Finance Committee in the markup, and it clearly is going to go a long way toward helping to bolster a very significant part of our economy, and that is, of course, small business growth.

We want to do more, we should do more, and we can do more.

Again, I urge Members of the Senate to support this amendment.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

FAIR MINIMUM WAGE ACT OF 2007

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2, which the clerk will report.

The bill 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.

Pending:

Reid (for Baucus) amendment No. 100, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell (for Gregg) amendment No. 101 (to amendment No. 100), to provide Congress a second look at wasteful spending by estab-

lishing enhanced rescission authority under fast-track procedures.

Enzi (for Snowe) amendment No. 103 (to amendment No. 100), to enhance compliance assistance for small businesses.

Sessions amendment No. 106 (to amendment No. 100), to express the sense of the Senate that increasing personal savings is a necessary step toward ensuring the economic security of all the people of the United States upon retirement.

Sessions amendment No. 107 (to amendment No. 100), to impose additional requirements to ensure greater use of the advance payment of the earned income credit and to extend such advance payment to all taxpayers eligible for the credit.

Sessions amendment No. 108 (to amendment No. 100), to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to study the costs and barriers to businesses if the advance earned income tax credit program included all EITC recipients.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

AMENDMENT NO. 103, AS MODIFIED

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, if I can have the attention of the Senator from Maine, what I would like to do now is to ask that the amendment be modified with the modification that is at the desk, if that is agreeable with the Senator.

Ms. SNOWE. It certainly is.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, the amendment is modified.

The amendment (No. 103), as modified, is as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ ENHANCED COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (5 U.S.C. 601 note) is amended by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following:

“(a) COMPLIANCE GUIDE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—For each rule or group of related rules for which an agency is required to prepare a final regulatory flexibility analysis under section 605(b) of title 5, United States Code, the agency shall publish 1 or more guides to assist small entities in complying with the rule and shall entitle such publications ‘small entity compliance guides’.

“(2) PUBLICATION OF GUIDES.—The publication of each guide under this subsection shall include—

“(A) the posting of the guide in an easily identified location on the website of the agency; and

“(B) distribution of the guide to known industry contacts, such as small entities, associations, or industry leaders affected by the rule.

“(3) PUBLICATION DATE.—An agency shall publish each guide (including the posting and distribution of the guide as described under paragraph (2))—

“(A) on the same date as the date of publication of the final rule (or as soon as possible after that date); and

“(B) not later than the date on which the requirements of that rule become effective.

“(4) COMPLIANCE ACTIONS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Each guide shall explain the actions a small entity is required to take to comply with a rule.

“(B) EXPLANATION.—The explanation under subparagraph (A)—

“(i) shall include a description of actions needed to meet the requirements of a rule, to

enable a small entity to know when such requirements are met; and

“(ii) if determined appropriate by the agency, may include a description of possible procedures, such as conducting tests, that may assist a small entity in meeting such requirements, except that, compliance with any procedures described pursuant to this section does not establish compliance with the rule, or establish a presumption or inference of such compliance.

“(C) PROCEDURES.—Procedures described under subparagraph (B)(ii)—

“(i) shall be suggestions to assist small entities; and

“(ii) shall not be additional requirements, or diminish requirements, relating to the rule.

“(5) AGENCY PREPARATION OF GUIDES.—The agency shall, in its sole discretion, taking into account the subject matter of the rule and the language of relevant statutes, ensure that the guide is written using sufficiently plain language likely to be understood by affected small entities. Agencies may prepare separate guides covering groups or classes of similarly affected small entities and may cooperate with associations of small entities to develop and distribute such guides. An agency may prepare guides and apply this section with respect to a rule or a group of related rules.

“(6) REPORTING.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007, and annually thereafter, the head of each agency shall submit a report to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate, the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives, and any other committee of relevant jurisdiction describing the status of the agency’s compliance with paragraphs (1) through (5).”

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 211(3) of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (5 U.S.C. 601 note) is amended by inserting “and entitled” after “designated”.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I will take a moment or two to thank the Senator from Maine and thank the Senator from Wyoming. If one will take a few moments and look through this amendment and the modification, they will understand what the good Senators have been talking about. It talks about posting to make sure the information is going to be available to small businesses. It talks about distribution, to make sure there is going to be a generous distribution. It talks about a timely distribution, so we are not going to have a final date, and then the Agency is going to delay in terms of posting and distribution.

It explains what is necessary for small businesses to be able to comply with the rules and the regulations. It doesn’t affect those regulations that have been set and established. And it makes the requirement that it be put in plain English language so that any person is able to understand what is intended and what the rule is covering, and then it has the provision to inform Congress, the appropriate committees, as to what they have done over previous years.

This makes a lot of good sense. I commend the Senator from Maine and the Senator from Wyoming, and my colleague, Senator KERRY, who has been involved in this effort, and Sen-

ator LANDRIEU as well. I am very grateful to all of them for working with us. This is a very useful and extremely important and valuable addition to the legislation.

I know the Senator from Pennsylvania is desirous to address the overall issue. Mr. President, as I understand it, under the previous order, at noontime, we are going to vote on this amendment; is that correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is no order to that effect.

Mr. KENNEDY. As I understand, shortly, there will be, I expect. At the appropriate time, we will ask for the yeas and nays. We intend to have the vote, for the information of offices, at that time.

I see both the Senator from New Hampshire and the Senator from Pennsylvania are here.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

AMENDMENT NO. 112

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside, and I call up amendment No. 112 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection? Without objection, the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Hampshire [Mr. SUNUNU] proposes an amendment numbered 112.

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prevent the closure and defunding of certain women’s business centers)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ RENEWAL GRANTS FOR WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTERS.

Section 29 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(m) CONTINUED FUNDING FOR CENTERS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A nonprofit organization described in paragraph (2) shall be eligible to receive, subject to paragraph (3), a 3-year grant under this subsection.

“(2) APPLICABILITY.—A nonprofit organization described in this paragraph is a nonprofit organization that—

“(A) has received funding under subsections (b) and (1); and

“(B) is not eligible under the programs under such subsections for the first fiscal year after the end of the period of financial assistance under subsection (1).

“(3) APPLICATION AND APPROVAL CRITERIA.—

“(A) CRITERIA.—The Administrator shall develop and publish criteria for the consideration and approval of applications by nonprofit organizations under this subsection.

“(B) NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the deadline to submit applications for each fiscal year, the Administrator shall approve or deny any application under this subsection and notify the applicant for each such application.

“(4) AWARD OF GRANTS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Administrator shall make a grant for the Federal share of the cost of activities described in the application to each applicant approved under this subsection.

“(B) AMOUNT.—A grant under this subsection shall be for not less than \$90,000 and not more than \$150,000, for each year of that grant.

“(C) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share under this subsection shall be not more than 50 percent.

“(D) PRIORITY.—In allocating funds made available for grants under this section, the Administrator shall give applications under this subsection priority over first-time applications under subsection (b).

“(5) RENEWAL.—The Administrator may renew a grant under this subsection for additional 3-year periods, if the nonprofit organization submits an application for such renewal at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Administrator may establish.”

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, this is an important debate and important discussion, especially in regard to the points made by Senator SNOWE of Maine; that is, if we raise the minimum wage, we need to understand both the potential impact on small businesses and recognize those small businesses are creating most of the job opportunities in our country. They fuel our economy. Over the long term, as those smaller entrepreneurial firms grow, they provide support for a growing wage base, for benefits, and for support for the families who depend on those small businesses for their jobs.

I welcome her amendment that deals with small business regulation. It is an important step in the right direction, and I certainly hope it continues to receive bipartisan support in the Senate. I think many of the provisions that are in the substitute that deal with support for small business will receive bipartisan support.

Senator SNOWE also mentioned the importance of tax treatment for small business investments and capital spending, and that they be allowed to expense that, in turn, allowing them to find additional resources to continue that pattern of investment.

The amendment I have called up also deals with the issue of small business, entrepreneurship and job creation and a small, but important, program in our Government called the Women’s Business Centers. There are about 100 Women’s Business Centers across the country. There is one in Portsmouth, NH, that was among the very first created in the United States, and it deals with a range of issues from providing an incubator for women entrepreneurs just starting out a firm, to providing training and counseling, support for marketing services, information about Government procurement, so many of the issues that have already been addressed on the floor.

What this amendment does is to simply ensure that those high-performing Women’s Business Centers that have continued to serve a strong, important

clientele and have supported entrepreneurship and investment in their community continue to be eligible for funding.

Under the current restrictions, some of those centers, after 5 years of sustainability grants, lose the opportunity for additional funding. My amendment would create a new program within the WBC program that allows those centers to apply for a 3-year continuation of Federal funding, provided they continue to meet high standards, serve their clients effectively, and attract sources of funding from the community.

I think it is a reasonable approach, one that makes sense. Look at the great example that has been set in Portsmouth. With the limited amount of Federal funding and other community resources, in the past year, it has served over 1,300 individual entrepreneurs. That, as we like to say in Washington, is real leverage, real performance.

This does not require additional funding. It is a straightforward way to ensure that an important need continues to be met and that this bill has the appropriate balance and support for the small business community.

I commend the work of the Senator from Maine, for her work on small business generally within the Small Business Committee. This is something they have tried to address before and the Senate has supported in the past. I hope it is something that will continue to receive bipartisan support.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, with regard to the amendment of the Senator from New Hampshire, it seems by both the explanation and a first look, this is something that will be very useful and valuable. If the Senator will work with us—I am not prepared, at this time, to recommend the amendment, but we will work on it with him and indicate what our position is in the very near future. But it certainly seems, trying to give some focus and attention to small businesses that are initiated by women, to make a good deal of sense, and it is subject to an authorization, so there is no point of order.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, I thank the chairman for his comments. Obviously, I just called up the amendment. I don't expect him to endorse it wholeheartedly. I think he will find he has supported it in the past and many in the Chamber have supported it in the past and it is worthy of our consideration.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona.

AMENDMENT NO. 115 TO AMENDMENT NO. 100

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I seek recognition for the purpose of laying down an amendment and not speaking to it.

I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be laid aside for that purpose.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I send to the desk an amendment that deals with extending some current provisions and adding additional provisions to assist small businesses to pay for a minimum wage increase, should one be adopted. I will speak to this later. I appreciate others allowing me to lay it down.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. KYL] proposes an amendment numbered 115 to amendment No. 100.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To extend through December 31, 2008, the depreciation treatment of leasehold, restaurant, and retail space improvements)

On page 4, line 21, strike "April 1, 2008" and insert "January 1, 2009".

On page 6, lines 5 and 6, strike "April 1, 2008" and insert "January 1, 2009".

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today in support of H.R. 2 which, as we know, will increase the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25 an hour. I thank my colleague, Senator KENNEDY, and the bipartisan work that went into developing this issue.

I speak today of an issue which I believe is one of economic justice. Those earning the minimum wage have not had an increase in 10 years. We should ask ourselves today not only about the information in the bill and the data, as important as that is, we should ask ourselves who are these Americans who have not had an increase in 10 long years?

Most, of course, we know are adults working full time. In fact, in my home State of Pennsylvania, 71 percent of the workers whose wages would be raised directly by an increase in the minimum wage are adults ages 20 and older.

Also, these Americans in many cases are women. Sixty percent of those who would be affected by an increase in the minimum wage are women, working every day to make ends meet, to support their children. In fact, if the minimum wage is raised, 6 million children will benefit.

Recently, the Children's Defense Fund reported that a single parent working full time at the current minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour earns enough to cover only 40 percent—just 40 percent—of the cost of raising children.

Those who earn the minimum wage are not people who are connected to

the wealthy and the powerful. They don't have high-paid lobbyists in Washington advocating for them. No, these people are Americans who lead quiet, triumphant lives of struggle and sacrifice, overcoming hardships and setbacks every day. They do hard work, very hard work, such as the waitresses we see every day carrying heavy trays, on their feet hour after hour, as they dream of a better life for themselves and for their children. And at the end of a long day, these Americans return to work and go home at the end of a long day often exhausted, often working not one job but two jobs or three, and the dignity of their labor gives meaning to their lives. We know, and they would tell us that if they were standing here today next to me. So that work they do gives meaning to their lives without a doubt.

But no one, no matter how hard they work, can keep pace with the avalanche of cost increases we have seen over the last 10 years. Let me take my colleagues through a couple of those cost increases.

Since 1997, congressional pay has increased 24 percent, about \$31,000. This has occurred while the value of the minimum wage has been eroded by 20 percent.

Let me say that again: Congressional pay up 24 percent, the value of the minimum wage down 20 percent. We cannot say that enough. The cost of living is up 26 percent, the cost of food up 23 percent, the cost of housing up 29 percent, the cost of gasoline up over 130 percent, the cost of health care up 43 percent. Families who are listening to this today know this. The average premium for a family of four costs over \$10,000, almost \$11,000, which is more than a minimum wage worker earns in a year.

The cost of raising a child since 1997 has increased 52 percent; the cost of educating those children has risen 61 percent; the cost of heating a home has increased by 120 percent.

What we are talking about here is an issue, indeed, of economic justice. Raising the Federal minimum wage will give our workers more than \$4,000 per year. Let's consider what that could buy for a family in America. You can buy almost 2 years of childcare with over \$4,000, full tuition at a community college, 2 years of health care, 1 year of groceries, 1½ years of heat and electricity, and 8 months of rent. That is how we affect, in a positive way, people's lives, the lives of hard-working men and women in America today.

Those who argue against an increase in the minimum wage will say that an increase will hurt small business and/or the economy. I do not agree with that because if you look at the data, when the minimum wage was increased in 1997, what happened in the aftermath? Millions and millions of jobs were created and raising the minimum wage did not slow that down one iota.

Recently, over 650 economists issued a statement calling for an increase in

the minimum wage. We do not have time today to go through that, but it is an important statement from leading economists in America. With an increase in minimum wage, employers will get a lot in return: higher productivity they will get with an increase in the minimum wage; lower turnover; and, of course, increased worker morale.

Mr. President, you know as well as I do that more than 28 States now have increased the minimum wage, including my home State of Pennsylvania. In July of this year it will increase to \$7.15 an hour, as a result of State legislation. That should not have had to take place. The Federal Government long ago—we are years overdue on this—should have taken the responsibility for increasing the minimum wage, but that did not happen here in Washington. There were other priorities, other interests, more powerful interests that took precedence.

More than 400,000 Pennsylvanians will be affected positively by an increase in the minimum wage. I am thinking of them today as I am of families across America who will be affected positively by an increase in the minimum wage. Yes, I do believe that small businesses across Pennsylvania and America do need help. However, in my judgment, based upon the people to whom I have spoken in my State, the No. 1 priority or the No. 1 burden faced by small business owners, men or women, is the cost, the crushing cost of health care. We need to deliver health care relief to those small businesses, and that as well is long overdue, because those small business owners and their workers deserve the same kind of economic justice I talked about today.

I fervently urge support for this legislation, and I appreciate this time.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Pennsylvania for speaking in favor of this minimum wage amendment. This was an issue, I know, out in the State of Pennsylvania during the course of the campaign. Senator CASEY was resolute in his commitment to the working families in his State and I am very grateful for his comments and strong support for this issue.

As I understand it, we expect Senator GRASSLEY is going to speak to the Senate, and my friend and colleague from Hawaii, Senator AKAKA, is going to address the Senate. We are working out the consent agreement for the time for the vote. It had initially been set tentatively for noontime. Now, I want to tell our colleagues, it is going to be after the caucuses. We are working out the final time and we will make that announcement in a very few moments. But for the information of our colleagues, and their schedules, we will not be voting prior to the caucuses. We will be voting after the caucuses and we will be more precise in a very short period of time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to address two aspects of this legislation because they are necessarily connected. One is, obviously, the increase in the minimum wage. The other one is the small business tax provisions that have come out of the committee Senator BAUCUS chairs and on which I am the ranking member, the Finance Committee. I want to deal with the minimum wage part of this issue first.

Popular support for raising the minimum wage is based on a number of widely held beliefs: First, that no one can support a family at \$5.15 an hour; second, minimum wage earners will not get a pay raise unless Congress gives them one; and third, raising the minimum wage helps millions of poor workers and hurts no one.

Unfortunately, these popular beliefs are in some cases misleading and in some cases outright wrong. First, minimum wage earners are not trying to support a family—or you might argue a small percentage of them are trying to support a family, but I want to say why most are not. Those who are, of course, can get additional benefits through Government programs to supplement family income; thus, no one has to rely solely on the minimum wage to support a family.

Second, minimum wage jobs are generally entry level jobs. Most workers who start at the minimum wage quickly earn more. Few workers remain stuck at the minimum wage for very long and, unfortunately, those who do are most at risk of losing their jobs from a minimum wage increase.

Third, the benefits of a minimum wage increase do not go exclusively to poor families. Only 15 percent of the proposed minimum wage increase would go to those living below the poverty level, as an example. Increasing the minimum wage would result in higher prices for consumers of minimum wage products, higher unemployment among the least skilled minimum wage workers—and that particularly affects minority groups within our country—increased poverty among minimum wage families, and in some cases it could be a combination of these three things I mentioned.

Much of the popular support for the minimum wage is based on a fallacy, that the Government can help the poor without hurting anyone else. But if the Government can increase wages with no ill effects, then why stop at \$7.25, as is currently proposed? Why not make it \$10.25? Why not make it \$20.25, or even more? The fact is, this does have limited impact and it does have some negative consequences, so that is why these occasional increases are justified.

Popular support for increasing the minimum wage is tempered by the fact that virtually everyone agrees that there is some level at which the minimum wage would produce obvious negative effects. In the past, policymakers

have attempted to mitigate any negative effects by limiting the size of the minimum wage increase, providing tax credits to employers who hire at-risk workers, and providing tax or regulatory relief to business generally, particularly small businesses.

However, additional research in recent years has cast some doubt on the effectiveness of these previous efforts. First, research suggests raising the minimum wage does not reduce poverty among minimum wage earners. Instead, it most likely increases poverty.

Second, legislative action by various States to adopt their own higher minimum wage has led to significant differences within our 50 States.

Third, research shows that the earned income tax credit could provide a cost-effective way to help poorest workers and be more effective than even increasing the minimum wage.

I am pleased that over the last few years we have enhanced the earned income credit for many families by making the child tax credit refundable. That is through the work of the Senate Finance Committee.

Before I go on to my next point I would say parenthetically there are studies that have been updated quite frequently over the last 20 or 25 years, where economists have followed people in quintiles: the lowest, the second, you know, for five quintiles from the lowest income up to the highest income. Following people over a period of years, they have been able to study the mobility of the American worker. In other words, once you are in the workforce, most people work themselves up the economic ladder—some way up, some part way up. But we find that only about 2 percent of our population seems to be stuck in the lowest quintile of income for long periods of time—a very small percentage. But other people go from the second quintile—from the first to the second to the third, and we also find that there is a larger percentage of our population that moves up from the lower two quintiles into the third or the fourth quintiles—a lot more rapidly and with a lot more mobility than we find people moving from the fourth to the top. While there are some people moving down from the highest to a lower quintile, history proves the mobility of the workforce in America is very much upward.

Despite some serious policy concerns, public support for increasing the minimum wage remains strong. That is why the Senate is taking up a minimum wage increase. The political reality is a majority of Senators support a minimum wage increase.

So a lot of economists would make an argument that you should not have any increase in the minimum wage at all and that the mistakes, going back to the 1930s, were mistakes; that you should not interfere with the marketplace. But Congress has decided for 70 years to do that. We are in the process for doing it. Regardless of the economic arguments, as long as this is a

political issue, without a doubt, from time to time it is going to be raised and I suppose you could make an argument that, as long as it is political it ought to be raised, or else you should not even have a minimum wage.

Now I would go to the tax incentive portions we hope stay in this bill when it goes to the other body. Tax incentives targeted to small business and other businesses impacted by a minimum wage increase have been linked to the minimum wage legislation. We have done this in the past decade. Democrats have at times joined Republicans supporting this language.

I would quote from two former chairmen on this committee in their opening remarks on the conference agreement on the last piece of legislation that went through this body to raise the minimum wage. Senator Roth, then the chairman of the committee, described taxes as the sand that grinds the gears of small business. So he saw merit in small business tax relief as a separate matter. Senator Roth went on to say:

[We will] proceed to the legislation on the minimum wage and small business taxes. We're anxious to move ahead on the small business tax legislation.

Senator Moynihan, who at times was chairman of the committee and at times the ranking Democrat, said, at the same time Senator Roth was speaking:

My distinguished chairman, as always, has so stated the facts. But there is a small semantic issue here. Some call this a small business relief act; others on this side call it the minimum wage bill. But we will not resolve that tonight, nor need we.

Now, the next time the Senate deals with this, about 8 or 9 years since we last dealt with it, it is still the same issue. Senators Roth and Moynihan were right then, and if they were still living today, I would tell them they are right now.

To different groups of Senators, these topics carry their own benefits or burdens. Many on my side don't like the idea of second-guessing the labor market with a federally mandated minimum wage. I pointed out some of the related issues that should give us pause, arguments put forth by economists when considering this legislation, that it is not all positive.

Many on the Democratic side want a straight minimum wage hike and refuse to consider the burden that policy puts on employers and workers. Those Members do not want any linkage between the minimum wage policy and small business tax relief. As Senator Moynihan said, however, we don't have to agree now whether the upcoming legislation will be a minimum wage or a small business tax relief bill.

Some, mostly Democrats, will call it a minimum wage bill. Some, mostly Republicans, will call it a small business tax relief bill. Still others will call it both a minimum wage and small business tax relief bill. President Bush, like President Clinton, the last Presi-

dent who signed an increase in the minimum wage bill years ago, will recognize both parts of the package. If my friends on the other side review the statement made by President Clinton, they will see that he saw merit in small business tax relief.

Our Committee on Finance chairman, Senator BAUCUS, recognizes the linkage. I told him Republicans will insist on a small business tax relief package. He, in his cooperative way, as I hope I have been cooperative with him in the past, has heard us. Some in his caucus, their labor union friends and sympathetic ears of the east coast media, attacked Senator BAUCUS—which I don't understand—for recognizing a basic reality, as Senator Moynihan and Senator Roth worked together a decade ago to do, to see that there is some negative impact on small business from an increase in the minimum wage so you ought to offset that with some benefit to small business through the tax portions of the legislation.

Those folks who are criticizing Senator BAUCUS don't have the responsibility to find the middle ground and evidently think we can get a bill through the Senate that can get the votes without finding the middle ground. It can't be done.

Now, if I were chairman—and I am not chairman, and I am not crying about that—I would have tilted this package a little bit more toward the depreciation incentive and less toward the work opportunity tax credits. The reality is, Republicans don't have a majority on the Committee on Finance or in the full Senate, so chairman BAUCUS has struck a balance between majority Democrats and minority Republicans.

I will assist Senator BAUCUS in defending the tax relief package that goes for the offsets and the revenue-losing provisions. We should not disturb the core structure of this package. I am hopeful, however, that we will improve the package by enhancing the package on the depreciation side, as Senator KYL has suggested. It is important these incentives coincide with the time when the minimum wage increase will take effect. In seeking this objective we will need to find appropriate offsets, obviously. There may be other improvements.

The bottom line is the Committee on Finance package is a well-known set of small business tax relief measures, things we have done before—extending, mostly. These proposals have merit by themselves, but a minimum wage increase is not likely to pass the Senate without them. I hope everyone understands that.

As many know, I am a working family farmer. For farmers, fields look familiar because we work our fields every year. This linkage, then, to put a commonsense touch on it, is that the linkage between minimum wage and small business relief is a familiar feel. I can quote Roth and Moynihan ad infinitum

to prove it. It is not something new that is coming up with Baucus and Grassley. We have plowed this ground before. This is well-known common ground.

I referred to President Clinton in a signing ceremony about 10 years ago. That legislation was founded on a small business tax relief package twice this size. I emphasize it was twice the size of what people are complaining about now that we are presenting to the Senate. It was supported at that time by many seeking cloture on the bill that is before the Senate.

President Clinton singled out the work opportunity tax credit and the depreciation proposals in his remarks. My friend, Senator KENNEDY, attended the signing ceremony and was recognized by President Clinton for the great product they brought to President Clinton. And John Sweeney was recognized, the head of the AFL-CIO.

I ask unanimous consent the remarks be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE WHITE HOUSE,
OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY,
August 20, 1996.

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AT SIGNING OF
THE SMALL BUSINESS JOB PROTECTION ACT
OF 1996

The President: Thank you very much. Cathy, it may be your birthday, but I would say that everybody feels that you have given us a great gift today by reminding us about what this is all about. And we wish you and your fine children well. And I don't think being in the band will hurt them a bit. I'm glad you're going to do that. (Laughter.)

I want to thank the members of our administration who are here—Secretary Reich, Small Business Administrator Phil Lader and others. I want to thank all the members of Congress who are here, especially Senator Kennedy who, himself, probably broke the wage in hour laws by working so hard to pass this bill. If we'd been paying him by the hour we'd be underpaying him in the last year. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

There are a lot of people who worked hard on this bill who aren't here—Senator Daschle, Congressman Gephardt, Congressman Bonior, Congressman Clay, in particular did. I want to join with others and thank the countless labor unions who have championed this bill, led by the truly tireless John Sweeney. (Applause.)

I'd like to remind the American people of something, because sometimes our unions are criticized for looking out for their members too much. There are very few unions in America that have minimum wage workers. Most of these unions did this because they thought it was the right thing to do. They spent their time and their money and their energy trying to help other people who do not belong to their organization, and I thank you for that. (Applause.)

I'd like to thank the religious groups, the economists, the business people who have made this their cause of concern. Again, I thank the members, including members of both parties, who supported this legislation.

I'll say more in a moment about the rest of the bill, but let me just begin by saying this is a truly remarkable piece of legislation. It is pro-work, pro-business and pro-family; it raises the minimum wage; it helps small businesses in a number of ways that I will

explain in a moment, including retirement and incentive to invest; and it promotes adoption in two very sweeping ways that have long needed to be done in the United States. This is a cause for celebration for all Americans of all parties, all walks of life, all faiths. This bill represents the very best in our country.

It will give 10 million Americans, as Cathy said, a chance to raise stronger families and build better futures. By coming together across lines that have too often divided us and finding common ground, we have made this a real season of achievement for the people of America.

At its heart, this bill does reaffirm our most profoundly American values—offering opportunity to all, demanding responsibility from all, and coming together as a community to do the right thing. This bill says to the working people of America: If you're willing to take responsibility and go to work, your work will be honored. We're going to honor your commitment to your family, we're going to recognize that \$4.25 an hour is not enough to raise a family.

It's harder and harder to raise children today and harder and harder for people to succeed at home and at work. And I have said repeatedly, over and over again to the American people: We must not force our families to make a choice. Most parents have to work. We have a national interest in seeing that our people can succeed at home where it counts the most in raising their children, and succeed at work so they'll have enough income to be able to succeed at home. We must do both, and this bill helps us achieve that goal. (Applause.)

These 10 million Americans will become part of America's economic success story. A success story that in the last four years has led us to 900,000 new construction jobs; a record number of new businesses started, including those owned by women and minorities; a deficit that is the smallest it's been since 1981, and 60 percent less than it was when I took office; 10 million new jobs; 12 million American families who have been able to take advantage of Family and Medical Leave; almost 4.5 million new homeowners and 10 million other Americans who refinanced their homes at lower mortgage rates. And, most importantly of all, perhaps, real hourly wages, which fell for a decade, have finally begun to rise again. America is on the move. (Applause.)

But our challenge, my fellow Americans, is to make sure that every American can reap the rewards of a growing economy, every American has the tools to make the most of his or her own life, to build those strong families and to succeed at home and at work. As the Vice President said, the first step was taken in 1993 with the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Law and with the Earned Income Tax Credit, which cut taxes for 15 million working families. Today, that earned income tax credit is worth about \$1,000 to a family of four with an income under \$28,000 a year.

Well, today, we complete the second half of that effort. Together with our tax cut for working families, this bill ensures that a parent working full-time at the minimum wage can lift himself or herself and their children out of poverty. Nobody who works full-time with kids in the home should be in poverty. If we want to really revolutionize America's welfare system and move people from welfare to work and reward work, that is the first, ultimate test we all have to meet. If you get up every day and you go to work, and you put in your time and you have kids in your home, you and your children will not be in poverty. (Applause.)

We have some hard working minimum wage people here today supporting Cathy.

Let me tell you about them. Seventy percent of them are adults, six of 10 are working women, and for them, work is about more than a paycheck, it's about pride. They want a wage they can raise their families on. By raising the minimum wage by 90 cents, this bill, over two years, will give those families an additional \$1,800 a year in income—enough to buy seven months of groceries, several months of rent, or child care. Or, as Cathy said, to pay all of the bills from the utilities in the same month.

For many, this bill will make the difference between their ability to keep their families together and their failure to do so. These people reflect America's values, and it's a lot harder for them than it is for most of us to go around living what they say they believe in. It's about time they got a reward and, today, they'll get it. (Applause.)

I would also like to say a very special word of thanks to the business owners, especially the small business owners who supported this bill. Many of the minimum wage employers I talk to wanted to pay their employees more than \$4.25 an hour and would be happy to do so as long as they can do it without hurting their businesses, and that means their competitors have to do the same thing. This bill will allow them to complete and win, to have happier, more productive employees, and to know they're doing the right thing. For all of those small businesses, I am very, very appreciative. (Applause.)

I would also like to say that this bill does a remarkable number of things for small businesses. In each of the last three years, our nation has set a new record in each succeeding year in the number of new businesses started. And we know that most of the new jobs in America are being created by small- and medium-sized businesses. In 1993, I proposed a \$15,000 increase in the amount of capital a small business can expense, to spark the kind of investment that they need to create jobs. Well, in 1993 we only won half that increase, but today I'll get to sign the second half into law, and I thank the Congress for passing that, as well. (Applause.)

As the Vice President said, this bill also includes a Work Opportunity Tax Credit to provide jobs for the most economically disadvantaged working Americans, including people who want to move from welfare to work. Now, there will be a tightly drawn economic incentive for people to hire those folks and give them a chance to enter the workforce, as well. It extends the research tax credit to help businesses stay competitive in the global economy. It extends a tax incentive for businesses to train and educate their employees. That's good news for people who need those skills, and it's good news for America because we have to have the best educated workforce in the world in the 21st century.

This legislation does even more to strengthen small business by strengthening the families that make them up. It helps millions of more Americans to save for their own retirement. It makes it much easier for small businesses to offer pension plans by creating a new small business 401(k) plan. It also lets more Americans keep their pensions when they change jobs without having to wait a year before they can start saving at their new jobs. As many as 10 million Americans without pensions today could now earn them as a result of this bill.

I'm delighted we are joined today, among others, by Shawn Marcell, the CEO of Prima Facie, a fast-growing video monitoring company in Pennsylvania, which now has just 17 employees—but that's a lot more than he started with. He stood with me in April and promised that if we kept our word and made pensions easier and cheaper for small businesses like his, he'd give pensions to all of

his employees. Today, he has told us he's making good on that pledge. I'd like him to stand up, and say I predict that thousands more will follow Shawn's lead. Thank you, Shawn. Please stand up. Let's give him a hand. God bless you, sir. Thank you. (Applause.)

I'd also like to say a special word of thanks to our SBA Administrator, Phil Lader, and to the White House Conference on Small Business. When the White House Conference on Small Business met, they said one of their top priorities was increasing the availability and the security of pensions for small business owners in America. This is a good thing. It is also pro-work, pro-family and pro-business.

Finally, this bill does something else that is especially important to me and to Hillary—and I'm glad she's here with us today. It breaks down the financial and bureaucratic barriers to adoption, giving more children what every child needs and deserves—loving parents and a strong, stable home. (Applause.)

Two weeks ago, we had a celebration for the American athletes who made us so proud in Atlanta at the Centennial Olympics. Millions of Americans now know that one of them—the Decathlon Gold medalist, Dan O'Brien—speaks movingly about having been an adopted child and how much the support of his family meant in his life. Right now, there are tens of thousands of children waiting for the kind of family that helped to make Dan O'Brien an Olympic champion. At the same time, there are thousands of middle class families that want to bring children into their homes but cannot afford it. We're offering a \$5,000 tax credit to help bring them together. It gives even more help to families that will adopt children with disabilities or take in two siblings, rather than seeing them split up.

And, lastly, this bill ends the long-standing bias against interracial adoption which has too often meant an endless, needless wait for America's children. (Applause.)

You know, as much as we talk about strong, loving families, it's not every day that we here in Washington get to enact a law that literally creates them or helps them stay together. This is such a day. Although he can't be with us today, I also want to thank Dave Thomas, himself adopted, who went on to found Wendy's and do so much for our country. Perhaps more than any other American citizen, he has made these adoption provisions possible, and we thank him.

Lastly, I'd like to point out that we do have some significant number of adoptive families here with us today, including some who are on the stage. And so I'd just like to acknowledge the Weeks (ph.) family, the Wolfington (ph.) family, the Outlaw (ph.) family, the Fitzwater (ph.) family, and ask them and anyone else here from the adoptive family community to stand up who'd like to stand. We'd like to recognize you and thank you for being here. Thank you all for being here. Thank you. (Applause.)

Beside me, or in front of me now, is the desk used by Frances Perkins—Franklin Roosevelt's labor secretary and the very first woman ever to serve in the Cabinet. She was one of our greatest labor secretaries. It was from her desk that many of America's pioneering wage, hour and workplace laws originated—including the very first 25 cent an hour minimum wage signed into law by President Roosevelt in 1938.

Secretary Perkins understood that a living wage was about more than feeding a family or shelter from a storm. A living wage makes it possible to participate in what she called the culture of community—to take part in the family, the community, the religious life we all cherish. Confident in our ability to

provide for ourselves and for our children, secure in the knowledge that hard work does pay. A minimum wage increase, portable health care, pension security, welfare to work opportunities—that's a plan that's putting America on the right track.

Now, we have to press forward, giving tax cuts for education and child-rearing and child care, buying a first home, finishing that job of balancing the budget without violating our obligations to our parents and our children and the disabled and health care, to education and the environment and to our future. That's a plan that will keep America on the right track, building strong families and strong futures by working together.

For everyone here who played a role in this happy day, I thank you, America thanks you, and our country is better because of your endeavors. God bless you. Thank you. (Applause.)

(The bill is signed.) (Applause.)

Mr. GRASSLEY. President Clinton said in the signing ceremony:

I want to thank all the Members of Congress who are here, especially Senator KENNEDY who, himself, probably broke the wage in hour laws by working so hard to pass this bill.

And then in another place:

There are a lot of people who worked hard on this bill who aren't here—Senator Daschle, Congressman Gephardt—

He went on to name other Members—led by truly tireless John Sweeney.

And there was applause. Now, some of the same people are objecting to what we are doing now.

Another quote:

I would also like a very special word of thanks to the business owners, especially the small business owners who supported this bill. Many of the minimum wage employers I talked to wanted to pay their employees more than \$4.25 an hour and would be happy to do so as long as they can do it without hurting their businesses, and that means their competitors have to do the same thing. This bill will allow them to compete and win, to have happier, more productive employees, and to know they are doing the right thing. For all those small businesses, I am very, very appreciative.

Continuing:

I would also say that this bill does a remarkable number of things for small businesses. . . . [a]nd we know that most of the new jobs in America are being created by small- and medium-sized businesses. In 1993 I—

Meaning President Clinton—

proposed a \$15,000 increase in the amount of capital a small business can expense, to spark the kind of investment that they need to create jobs.

As the Vice President said—

Meaning at that time Mr. Gore—

this bill also includes a Work Opportunity Tax Credit to provide jobs for the most economically disadvantaged working Americans, including people who want to move from welfare to work. Now, there will be a tightly drawn economic incentive for people to hire those folks and give them a chance to enter the workforce, as well.

Well, if Senators who were on the stage at that time thought that the work opportunity tax credit was a good thing to have, why isn't it a good thing to have it here, to extend it? Why not?

This is a win-win situation. There is a win for the workers, a win for small

business. Why should we chortle over a little thing such as increasing the minimum wage or having a tax provision in it?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 2:45 today the Senate proceed to a vote on or in relation to Snowe amendment No. 103, as modified, with time from 2:15 to 2:45 equally divided and controlled in the usual form, with no second-degree amendments in order prior to the vote.

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

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE TO ESCORT THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. KENNEDY. I ask unanimous consent that the Presiding Officer of the Senate be authorized to appoint a committee on the part of the Senate to join with a like committee on the part of the House to escort the President of the United States into the House Chamber for the joint session to be held at 9 p.m. Tuesday.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I see my friend and colleague from Hawaii wishes to address the Senate on morning business time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes as if in morning business.

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

(The remarks of Mr. AKAKA and Mr. KENNEDY are printed in today's RECORD under "Morning Business.")

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, we are going to go into a recess in a moment. We will come out of the party caucuses at 2:15. We are working on some additional amendments. The amendments of the Senator from Alabama, the Sessions amendments, we will try to include, if necessary, votes on those issues as well around the 2:45 hour. We are making some progress. We have a shorter evening tonight because of the President's State of the Union, but we want to move this legislation. It is not complicated. Everyone in this body, new Members who have arrived here, understands what the increase in the minimum wage is all about. It is not complex. Is it not difficult. It is not hard to understand. There is no reason we can't move this process quickly. If it is necessary to have votes, we are prepared to move along on those issues.

We have listened this morning to those who believe that raw economic arguments ought to control the question of the minimum wage. We as a country have moved away from that. We have accepted the great traditions of Judeo-Christian teachings as well as the underlying teachings of all the religions that talk about responsibilities we all have for the least among us. In the Constitution of the United States, they have what is called the general

welfare clause. The general welfare clause was written into the Constitution for those very purposes.

The fact is, this country has rejected the law of the jungle as it applies to economic conditions for workers. In my State of Massachusetts, we had individuals at the turn of the last century, children, 10, 11, 12 years old, who were working 12, 15 hours a day, 6½ days a week. We had the exploitation of children, of women, the exploitation of workers. We, as a country and a society, have recognized that we can be the strongest economy in the world and treat people with respect and dignity. That is why the members of Let Justice Roll, an extraordinary number of religious leaders representing a wide group of churches, talk about what the Scriptures say about poverty in their letter.

I ask unanimous consent to print the letter in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

JANUARY 5, 2007.

DEAR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, We, the undersigned religious leaders, in partnership with the Let Justice Roll Living Wage Campaign, call on the 110th Congress to raise the minimum wage! Let Justice Roll is a non-partisan coalition of more than 80 faith, community and labor organizations working to raise the minimum wage at the state and federal level. In 2006, we played a major role in increasing the minimum wage throughout the country at the state level.

We strongly support the Miller/Kennedy bill that increases the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour. Furthermore, we strongly oppose any attempts to add provisions to the bill. We urge you to vote for this clean minimum wage bill.

The Prophet Amos proclaims, "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an overflowing stream" (5:24, NRSV). We are morally outraged by the number of people living in poverty in the United States, and believe that now is the time to give hard-working low-wage workers a raise and take the first step toward a true living wage for America's workers.

It has been nearly 10 years since the last federal increase in the minimum wage, and low-wage workers urgently need a raise. A minimum wage employee—making \$5.15 an hour, working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, earns about \$10,700 a year—about \$6,000 below the federal poverty line for a family of three. This situation is unconscionable and immoral, as the wealth of our nation continues to be built on the backs of the working poor. Working poor families in America are struggling to meet the rising costs of health care, gasoline and housing, and \$5.15 an hour is simply not enough.

Minimum wage legislation in the past has stalled in Congress because of attempts to attach unrelated provisions such as tying the minimum wage to a repeal of the estate tax, rolling back over-time protections or reducing the minimum wage of tip workers. In addition, such provisions are harmful to the very workers that a minimum wage increase is intended to help. The strong victory on all the minimum wage ballot initiatives is evidence that there is strong and widespread support from Americans for a prompt, clean minimum wage increase at the federal level.

We appreciate the commitment made by the leadership of the 110th Congress to address the woefully inadequate federal minimum wage. We will continue to raise our

voices on behalf of "the least of these" and proclaim that a job should keep you out of poverty, not keep you in it.

Signed, Rev. Dr. Paul Sherry, National Coordinator, Let Justice Roll, Cleveland, OH; Rev. Dr. Bob Edgar, General Secretary, National Council of Churches, New York, NY; The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church, NY; Rev. Jim Wallis, President and CEO, Sojourners/Call to Renewal, Washington, DC; Rev. John H. Thomas, General Minister and President, United Church of Christ, Cleveland, OH; Rabbi David Saperstein, Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, Washington, DC; Rev. Dr. Roy Medley, Gen. Secretary, American Baptist Churches in the USA, Valley Forge, PA.

Rev. Jennifer Butler, Executive Director, Faith in Public Life, Washington, DC; Mary Ellen McNish, General Secretary, American Friends Service Committee, Philadelphia, PA; Rev. William G. Sinkford, President, Unitarian Universalist Association, Boston, MA; The Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Senior Minister, The Riverside Church, New York, NY; The Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church USA, Louisville, KY; Rev. Dr. Sharon E. Watkins, Gen. Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Rev. Roy Riley, Chair of the Conference of Bishops and Bishop of the NJ Synod ELCA, NJ; Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton, Archdiocese of Detroit, MI; Rev. Dr. Stan Hastey, Executive Director, The Alliance of Baptists, Washington, DC; James E. Winkler, General Secretary, United Methodist Church, Gen. Board of Church in Society, Washington, DC; Rev. Michael Livingston, President, National Council of Churches and Executive Director, ICCO, Trenton, NJ; Rev. John L. McCullough, Executive Director, Church World Service; Charlie Clements, President, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, Cambridge, MA; Rabbi Rebecca Alpert, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA.

Most Reverend Gabino Zavala, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA; Rev. Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock, Director, Faith Voices for the Common Good, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Oakland, CA; David A. Robinson, Executive Director Pax Christi USA: National Catholic Peace Movement, Washington, DC; Simon Greer, President and CEO, Jewish Funds for Justice, New York, NY; Dr. Michael Kinnamon, Chair, Justice and Advocacy Commission, National Council of Churches, St. Louis, MO; Sr. Catherine McDonnell, OP, Prioress of the Dominican Sister of Hope, Ossining, NY; Rev. Kim Bobo, Executive Director, Interfaith Worker Justice, Chicago, IL; Rev. Tom Youngblood, United Methodist, Decatur, AL; The Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald, Episcopal Bishop of Alaska and Navajoland, AK; Rev. Trina Zelle, Arizona Interfaith Worker Justice, Tempe, AZ; Rev. Briget Nicholson, Pastor, First Congregational United Church of Christ, Tucson, AZ; Rev. Stephen Copley, President, Arkansas Interfaith Conference, United Methodist Church, North Little Rock, AR; Imam Ali Siddiqui, Corona Valley, CA.

The Rev. Dr. Rick Schlosser, Executive Director, CA Council of Churches, California Church IMPACT, Sacramento CA; Bishop Allan C. Bjornberg, Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA, Denver, CO; Fidel "Butch" Montoya, Minister Confianza, An Association of Latino Ministers, Denver, CO; Sister Maureen McCormack, President, The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado, Denver, CO; The Right Rev. James E. Curry, Bishop Suffragan, Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford, CT; Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree, Conference Minister, Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ, Hartford, CT; Rev. Dr. Wil-

liam L. Rhines, Jr., Harriet R. Tubman United Methodist Church, New Castle, DE; The Rt. Rev. Philip M. Duncan, II, Bishop, Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast, Pensacola, FL; Rev. John F. Stanton, Associate Priest, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Miami, FL; Rev. Charles Buck, Conference Minister, Hawaii Conf. United Church of Christ, Honolulu, HI; The Rt. Rev. Harry B. Bainbridge, III, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Idaho, Boise, ID; Bishop Paul R. Landahl, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Chicago, IL; The Rev. Dr. Larry L. Greenfield, Executive Minister, American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago, Chicago, IL; Megan M. Ramer, Pastor, Chicago Community Mennonite Church, Chicago, IL; The Rt. Rev. Catherine Waynick, Bishop of Indianapolis, IN.

Rev. Stephen C. Gray, Conf. Minister, Indiana-Kentucky Conference, UCC, Indianapolis, IN; Rev. Dick Clark, Pastor, St. Timothy's United Methodist Church, Cedar Falls, IA; Sr. Joy Peterson, PBVM, President, Sisters of the Presentation of BVM, Dubuque, IA; Rev. David Hansen, Conference Minister, Kansas-Oklahoma Conference, United Church of Christ, Wichita, KS; Rev. Albert M. Pennybacker, Former National Chair, Clergy and Laity Network, Former Natl. President, The Interfaith Alliance, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Lexington KY; Sr. Margaret Stallmeyer, CDP, Thomas More College President, Congregation of Divine Providence, Melbourne, KY; Rev. David F. Kniker, Kewanee, LA; Rabbi Darah R. Lerner, Congregation Beth El, Bangor, ME; Rev. David R. Gaewski, Conference Minister, Maine Conference, United Church of Christ, Yarmouth, ME; The Right Reverend Robert W. Ihloff, Episcopal Bishop of Maryland.

Sr. Gayle Lwanga Crumbley, National Coordinator, National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Silver Spring, MD; The Rev. Dr. Jim Antal, Conference Minister and President, Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ, Framingham, MA; Rabbi David Lerner, Temple Emunah, Lexington, MA; Johanna Chao Rittenburg, Economic Justice Program Manager, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, Cambridge, MA; Rev. Dr. Kent J. Ulery, Conference Minister, Michigan Conference United Church of Christ, East Lansing MI; Lucinda Keils, Executive Director, Detroit Metropolitan Interfaith Committee on Worker Issues, Detroit, MI; Rev. Peg Chamberlin, Executive Director, Minnesota Council of Churches, Minneapolis, MN; Rev. Dr. Karen Smith Sellers, Conference Minister, Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ, Minneapolis, MN; Rev. Charlene B. Burch, Interim Conference Minister, Missouri Mid-South Conference, United Church of Christ, St. Louis, MO; Rev. W. Audrey Hollis, Organizer, St. Louis Area Jobs With Justice, St. Louis, MO.

The Rev. Randall Hyvonen, Conference Minister, Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference, United Church of Christ, Billings, MT; Rev. F. Vernon Wright, Minister, UCC, Helena, MT; Rev. Dr. Dallas Dee Brauning, Burwell, NE; Mr. David Lamarre-Vincent, Exec. Dir., New Hampshire Council of Churches, Concord, NH; The Rev. Eleanor McLaughlin, Ph.D. Rector, St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, Berlin, NH; The Rev. Bruce H. Davidson, Dir., Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry in NJ, Trenton, NJ; Frank McCann, Director, Just Neighbors Program, Summit, NJ; The Reverend Elizabeth Purdum, Pastor, St. Luke Lutheran Church, Albuquerque, NM; The Reverend Arthur Meyer, Manager, Pastoral Care Dept, San Juan Regional Medical Center, Farmington, NM; The Rt. Rev. Jack McKelvey, Episcopal Bishop of Rochester, NY.

The Rt. Rev. Catherine S. Roskam, Bishop Suffragan of the Episcopal Diocese of New

York; Rev. Ned Wight, Executive Director, Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock, Manhasset, NY; Rabbi Jill Jacobs, Director of Education, Jewish Funds for Justice, New York, NY; Rev. Nelson Johnson, Board Chair, Interfaith Worker Justice, Greensboro, NC; Rev. Ginny N. Britt, Director, The Advocacy for the Poor, Winston-Salem, NC; Rev. Dr. Charles R. Traylor, Executive Presbyter, Presbytery of the Northern Plains, Presbyterian Church (USA), Fargo, ND; Rt. Rev. Kenneth Price, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio, Columbus, OH; Rev. Callon Holloway, Jr., Bishop for Southern Ohio Synod, ELCA, Columbus, OH.

Rev. Rebecca Tollefson, Executive Director, Ohio Council of Churches, Columbus, OH; Rev. Ron Hooker, Chair of Church in the World Commission, Central-Southeast Association of the Ohio Conference UCC, Columbus, OH; Fr. Clark Sheckelford, Rector, Emmanuel Episcopal, Shawnee, OK; Rev. Robin Meyers, Pastor, Mayflower UCC, Oklahoma City, OK; Rev. John M. Gantt, interim Conference Minister, Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ, Portland, OR; Norene Goplen, Director, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of Oregon, Portland OR; Gary Straughan, President, Eastern District Executive Board, Moravian Church, Northern Province, Bethlehem, PA; Rev. Sandra L. Strauss, Director of Public Advocacy, Pennsylvania Council of Churches, Harrisburg, PA; Rabbi Gail Glicksman, Dean of Students, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Wyncote, PA.

Rev. Christopher H. Bender, Pastor, Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church, Aliquippa, PA; Father Jack O'Malley, Labor Religion Coalition of Western PA; Rev. John Zehring, Kingston Congregational Church, Kingston, RI; Rev. Peter E. Lanzillotta, Ph.D., Minister, The Unitarian Church in Charleston, Charleston, SC; Bishop Craig B. Anderson (VIII South Dakota)—Retired, SD; Rev. Rebekah Jordan, Executive Director, Mid-South Interfaith Network for Economic Justice, Memphis, TN; Dr. Nabil Bayakly, Muslims in Memphis, Memphis, TN; Rev. Janet Wolf, United Methodist Clergy, Hobson United Methodist Church, Chair, Division of Church Vocations, American Baptist College, Nashville, TN; The Reverend Jeff St. Clair, Pastor, New Hope Lutheran Church, El Paso, TX.

Rev. Tom VandeStadt, Pastor, Congregational Church of Austin United Church of Christ, TX; Linda Hilton, Director, Coalition of Religious Communities, Salt Lake City, UT; Kay Miller, Salt Lake City Police Dept Chaplain, All Saints Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City; The Rt. Rev. Neff Powell, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, VA; Rev. C. Douglas Smith, Executive Director, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, Richmond, VA; Francis X. Doyle, (retired) Associate General Secretary, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Ashburn, VA; Rev. Paul Benz, Director, Lutheran Public Policy Office of Washington State Don Kelly, Co-chair, UU Voices for Justice, Seattle, WA.

Fr. James E. Hug, S.J., President, Center of Concern, Washington, DC; Rev. Marvin M. Silver, United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries, Washington, DC; Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker Langston, Director, Disciples Justice Action Network, Coordinator, Disciples Center for Public Witness, Washington, DC; Mr. Curtis Ramsey-Lucas, National Coordinator of Public and Social Advocacy, National Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA, Washington, DC; Rev. Elenora Giddings Ivory, Director, Washington Office, Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington, DC; Rev. Romal J. Tune, CEO,

Clergy Strategic Alliances, LLC, Washington, DC; Alexia Kelley, Executive Director, Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, Washington DC; Rev. Ernest S. Lyght, Bishop, West Virginia Conf., United Methodist Church, Charleston, WV; Rev. Lori Fell, Morgantown, WV; Scott Anderson, Executive Director, Wisconsin Council of Churches, Sun Prairie, WI; Rev. Robert Chapman, Pastor, Mount of Olives Lutheran Church, Rock Springs, WY.

For a complete list of signatories in formation, please visit <http://www.letjusticeroll.org/pdfs/20070105NationalMinWageletter.pdf>

I am a member of NETWORK, A Catholic Social Justice Lobby, and I support S. 2, the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007—to increase to the minimum wage from \$5.15 to 7.25. Long overdue, this bill provides a first step towards a dignified life for low-wage workers in poverty. I urge you to support a “clean” bill to raise the federal minimum wage—one that does not attempt to add provisions of any kind and instead allows it to pass as a stand-alone issue.

Catholic Social Teaching reminds us that all persons are created by God, which is the basis for their dignity. In justice and to live with dignity, each human person working full time should be compensated enough to support him/herself and a family. It has been almost ten years since Congress voted to increase the minimum wage. Currently, a minimum wage employee who works 40 hours a week, 52 weeks in a year makes \$10,700 for that year. For a single parent with two children, that amount is thousands of dollars below the poverty line. This is unconscionable. Workers who provide security, clean hotels, wash dishes and haul supplies should not have to rely on charity or government assistance to get by. The proposed minimum wage increase to \$7.25 an hour (from \$5.15/hr.) would give an additional \$4,368 per year to a full-time worker making minimum wage. This would bring them a step closer to obtaining a livable wage which would provide for a family's basic needs: food, shelter, health care, clothing, education and recreation.

The minimum wage should be increased without any extra provisions or tax breaks in order avoid establishing such a precedent. Since the last minimum wage increase, congress has passed no fewer than five tax relief packages which have provided small businesses with up to \$36 billion in tax breaks. While congress has had no problem providing tax breaks for small businesses without considering raising the minimum wage, it seems impossible for some that the minimum wage be raised without a tax break for small businesses. Given the urgency of the minimum wage increase it is best to avoid linking it to other issues and pass it as a stand-alone “clean” bill.

The American people have spoken out on the urgency of this bill. With strong victories in all six minimum wage ballot initiatives this election, voters have shown concern for hardworking people in poverty. People who work full-time should earn enough to support themselves and their families. Consequently, I call on you to act justly, and challenge your other members to do the same. I urge you to quickly pass the minimum wage bill with no extra add-on provisions as it comes up this January.

Mr. KENNEDY. They mention Matthew's great teachings. The questioner says: When did I fail to treat you well? And the Lord says: When you failed to treat the least of these among us.

We are talking about a minimum wage, not an optimum wage. As the

charts show, it has declined dramatically over a period of years, now at \$5.15, far away from what it was in the 1960s and 1970s, right through the 1980s. We believe that in this country, with the strongest economy in the world, people who work hard 40 hours a week, 52 weeks of the year, should not have to live in poverty. An increase in the minimum wage is long overdue. Hopefully, we will have an opportunity in this body to express our views on this in the near future.

If there are no further speakers, I suggest that we recess, according to the leadership's earlier request.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 12:25 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. CARPER).

FAIR MINIMUM WAGE ACT OF 2007—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 103

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there are now 30 minutes equally divided on amendment No. 103, as modified. Who yields time?

The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I yield myself 3 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized for 3 minutes.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the amendment offered by Senator SNOWE, Senator LANDRIEU, and others, to provide regulatory assistance to our Nation's small businesses.

This amendment requires that when Federal agencies issue new rules and regulations that impact small business, they also must issue compliance guides for small businesses. The amendment also requires that the compliance guides be written in plain English and made available in a timely manner.

I think this is a commonsense requirement. It not only reduces the administrative costs for small business, but it also increases the level of compliance with such new rules and regulations. I think the work opportunity tax credit is an example. That isn't a program that a lot of small businesses have taken advantage of. Part of it is because they don't know about it, and part is they don't know how to comply with it. They don't have the opportunity to hire the specialists that might be needed to understand it or to do the recordkeeping on it. So they don't take advantage of it to the level they could. It is a provision in the tax bill that could make quite a difference to small employers.

Many small employers simply lack the resources, the outside consultants, the experts necessary to continually advise them of changes in Federal rules

that impact the way they must run their business. As it now stands, smaller businesses currently pay disproportionate per employee compliance costs when compared to larger employers. The average per employee cost for Federal regulatory compliance in a business with less than 20 employees is 45 percent higher than the same cost for a business with 500 or more employees. So it is about \$7,600 for a small business to comply versus \$5,200 for a big business to comply. Those numbers stagger me—the cost for small business to comply with Federal rules and regulations. That doesn't count the cost of complying with the Tax Code, which is a whole other range of costs.

Cost mandates, such as a minimum wage increase, impose significant financial burdens on our small employers. We must do everything we can to help alleviate this burden and ensure that small businesses remain the well-run engine of our economy, and providing the kind of compliance assistance called for in Senator SNOWE's amendment is one of the ways we can assist small businesses in meeting the administrative costs associated with Federal regulation.

I commend Senator SNOWE for her efforts on behalf of small businesses and am proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation with her. She has put in diligent efforts to hold hearings and get this into place in the committee that she chaired, the Small Business Committee, on which she is now the ranking member.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment that not only provides assistance that reduces employer costs but also assistance that increases employer compliance. That is two goals. This amendment will do both of those. I ask for your support.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum, and I ask unanimous consent that the time be equally divided between the sides.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. 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. Mr. President, we still anticipate a vote at 2:45 p.m. As I mentioned, we are going to urge the Senate to accept the amendment offered by Senator SNOWE. I think it is an important contribution to small businesses and their understanding of the kinds of rules and regulations that have been out there and do it in ways that are understandable and in a timely way and to ensure that the relevant committee is going to find out how that is being implemented. We are certainly in strong support of that concept and idea. I commend those who have been involved in it.