

Earlier today, we passed legislation—overwhelmingly, bipartisanly—finally, to raise Pell grants to increase the opportunity for young people to go to school. Pell grants had not been increased in years and years and years.

We know for students in Ohio, for example, the cost of a public education at a 4-year public school has gone up, in the last 5 years, 53 percent. The cost of a private education at a 4-year private school has gone up 28 percent. Yet the average wage in Ohio only went up 3 percent. So we have private education going up this much, public education going up this much, and wages increasing only slightly. That is why the legislation the Senate passed earlier and legislation the House is working on absolutely will matter to provide opportunity for middle-class kids.

At the same time, as I traveled the State, I heard people talk about tax policy. It is clear to people in Akron, in Youngstown, it is clear to people in Dayton and Middletown, and Hamilton and Gallipolis and Galion, OH, that too often the wealthy have paid, as their income goes up and up and up, very little in taxes, relatively, while middle-class families get more and more of a burden.

We saw, from 1946 to 1973, in the history of this country, economic opportunities for poor families and working families grew. Then, from 1973 to 2000, we saw it pretty much level out. We have seen those families who are working hard, playing by the rules, not even enjoying increases at all in their wages. In fact, they have fallen behind in too many cases.

That is why today, in addition to passing the bill providing opportunity for students to go to Ohio State or Hiram College or the University of Toledo or the University of Steubenville, students in Ohio have more opportunity—after this bill becomes law, if we can get the President to sign it—than they had yesterday.

Today is also a cause to celebrate. Today the minimum wage goes into effect. It is the first raise in 10 years. For 300,000 working Ohioans, 13 million workers nationwide, they will see their wages go up today.

For 10 years, worker productivity has gone up. In this country, more productive workers meant higher income workers. But too often we have seen a disconnect between productivity and wages. While American workers are continually more productive, their wages have not gone up. Whether that is a minimum wage worker, whether it is a worker making \$20 an hour, it is way too common.

Today, we did something about it for those minimum wage workers. Because of workers in this country—minimum wage and higher income workers—because of what they did last November, voting for change, minimum wage workers have the increase in the pay they deserve and have earned.

It is a good day for American workers. It is especially a good day for min-

imum wage workers. We have lots more work to do.

IRAQ CONTINGENCY PLANS

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, an issue I wish to address today relates to a request that Senator CLINTON, my colleague from New York, made to the Secretary of Defense back in May, asking that appropriate oversight committees in the Congress, particularly the Armed Services Committee on which I serve, as does the Presiding Officer, be given briefings regarding what current contingency plans might exist in the Department of Defense if we do, in fact, begin a withdrawal of our forces from Iraq.

The Secretary of Defense did not respond to the Senator from New York directly. Instead, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Eric Edelman, wrote her a letter with which she took great umbrage last weekend stating, and I quote from Mr. Edelman's letter, "that premature and public discussion of the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq reinforces enemy propaganda that the United States will abandon its allies in Iraq, much as we are perceived to have done in Vietnam, Lebanon, and Somalia."

He then said at the end of his letter:

It is a longstanding departmental policy that operational plans, including contingency plans, are not released outside of the department.

I have great concerns about this letter, having spent 5 years working in the Pentagon and knowing these sorts of letters require coordination among the highest offices inside the Pentagon. I ask that the Secretary of Defense clarify that position of the Department of Defense on the matters that his Under Secretary addressed.

Is it the policy of the Department of Defense that a discussion of the withdrawal of forces reinforces enemy propaganda and that we might be abandoning our allies, as we are perceived to have done in Lebanon and Somalia?

The first thing I ask is, what allies did we abandon in Lebanon and Somalia?—I was in Lebanon as a journalist. We went into Lebanon as part of a U.N. peacekeeping force in order to separate warring factions. We were there purely on a mission of peace. We were not there to side with one faction or another. In Somalia, it was basically gang warfare. We all know that now.

This is the kind of rhetoric that, in my opinion, was designed purely for the purpose of attacking Senator CLINTON rather than addressing the issues that we need to be looking at.

There is probably no greater testimony to that than to just go back to the bill that Senator WARNER and Senator LUGAR offered as an amendment on the Defense authorization bill, which was just pulled because this amendment—which was put together after careful thought by the former chairman of the Armed Services Committee and the former chairman of the

Foreign Relations Committee, two of the esteemed leaders of the Republican Party—asked for the same thing. In fact, it called for the same thing.

Senator WARNER and Senator LUGAR were stating in this amendment that the President should require, among other things, a report to be presented to the Congress no later than October 16, 2007, which specifically addressed the same issues that Senator CLINTON asked to be addressed in her letter, showing what the plans might be and when they might be executable in the event we decide to withdraw our forces from Iraq.

Also, I think it is a legitimate question for people in Congress to be asking when we look back at the way we ended up going into Iraq. I was not a Member of this body, but I watched, as did so many Americans, on television as this body and the House of Representatives had administration officials testifying. They asked in the runup to this war how long we were going to be in Iraq, and the answer was a litany. It was as long as is necessary and not 1 day more.

For Under Secretary Edelman to in any way indicate that it is the policy of this administration that they do not have to share the thought they are putting into these options is totally out of line.

For that reason, I joined with Senator CLINTON, Senator BAYH, and Senator BYRD in a letter to the chairman of the Armed Services Committee specifically asking that we have hearings in the Armed Services Committee that will address these issues. If the administration wants to go into closed hearings, that is fine. But I am asking today, No. 1, that the Secretary of Defense clarify for us what his beliefs are with respect to the rhetoric that came out of a letter that took 2 months to be generated from his Department in response to what Senator CLINTON asked for; and then secondly, that the other Members of this body join me in expressing their concern on this issue.

We have to have contingency plans. It is within the purview of the Congress for us to examine them. Again, I ask Senators on both sides of the aisle to put their eyes on this and join me in this expression of concern.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY WINNERS

• Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today I recognize and congratulate three of Washington State's outstanding students, Leigh Douglas and Helen Lee from Redmond, Washington and Brian Maskal from Tacoma, WA, for their award-winning projects recognized by the National History Day program.

Each student's project reflects this year's National History Day theme, "Triumph and Tragedy in History." I am proud to say that these students were selected from more than 2,000 finalists by the National History Day program to present their projects.

Leigh Douglas presented a performance titled, "Traditional Irish Music and Dance: Triumphing over Tragedy" at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Helen Lee's exhibit titled, "The Triangle Factory Fire: Tragedy and Triumph for the American Worker," and Brian Maskal's exhibit, "Atomic Bomb: A Race for Triumph or Tragedy" were displayed at the National Archives and Records Administration.

These students created projects that add important perspectives to the way we think about American history. Lee's exhibit explored how a workplace tragedy reshaped the role of the American worker. Douglas's performance illustrated the ability of Irish dance and music to provide strength, unity and tradition within the community. Maskal articulately portrayed the role of the atom bomb in the 20th century and how it too has reshaped the way we view the world. I am proud of the dedication and hard work of these students from Washington State.

I would like to commend the National History Day Program for empowering students like Leigh Douglas, Helen Lee, and Brian Maskal to take a deeper look into history so we can better understand and address the problems our Nation faces today.●

RECOGNIZING WARREN BERRY

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Warren Berry, an intern in my Aberdeen, SD, office, for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Warren is a graduate of Kadoka High School in Kadoka, SD. Currently he is attending Northern State University, where he is majoring in political science and history. Warren also serves as president of the College Republican chapter at NSU. He is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Warren for all of the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING JOE COOCH

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Joe Cooch, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Joe is a graduate of Spearfish High School in Spearfish, SD. Currently he is attending the University of South Dakota, where he is majoring in political science and economics. He is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Joe for all of the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING ROXY HAMMOND

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Roxy Hammond, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Roxy is a graduate of Mitchell High School in Mitchell, SD. Currently she is attending South Dakota State University, where she is majoring in broadcast journalism, political science, and Spanish. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Roxy for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING HEATHER JELEN

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Heather Jelen, an intern in my Sioux Falls, SD, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Heather is a graduate of Lincoln High School in Sioux Falls, SD. Currently she is attending Bethel University, where she is majoring in political science. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Heather for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING JOSH KLUMB

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Josh Klumb, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Josh is a graduate of Mitchell Christian High School in Mitchell, SD. He is a recent graduate of Oklahoma Wesleyan University, where he majored in business administration and business marketing. He is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Josh for all of the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING CODY RHODEN

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Cody Rhoden, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Cody is a graduate of Sunshine Bible Academy in Miller, SD. Currently he is attending Black Hills State University, where he is majoring in business ad-

ministration. He is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Cody for all of the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING KATHRYN RICH

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Kathryn Rich, an intern in my Rapid City, SD, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Kathryn is a graduate of Stevens High School in Rapid City, SD, and Colorado State University. Currently she is attending the University of South Dakota, where she is studying law. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Kathryn for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING LAURA SUNDE

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Laura Sunde, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Laura is a graduate of Madison High School in Madison, SD. Currently she is attending South Dakota State University, where she is majoring in agriculture education. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Laura for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:04 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.J. Res. 44. Joint resolution approving the renewal of import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The message also announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 966. An act to enable the Department of State to respond to a critical shortage of passport processing personnel, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).