

I've been in Afghanistan and talked to our soldiers there—soldiers, sailors, marines—and they tell me privately, Look, we have a hard time deciding, do I want to risk just letting someone kill me or going to prison when I get home? I kind of think I'd rather die as a hero and have an NAS burial than to be an embarrassment to my family by going to Leavenworth when I get back to the U.S.

We owe the 9/11 victims, the 9/11 survivors, the Benghazi victims, the Afghanistan soldiers, sailors, and marines that we have lost, we owe those who died in Afghanistan and Iraq, we owe them the truth. We owe them good rules of engagement so their lives are not needlessly put in jeopardy because of political gamesmanship.

We are owed the truth. And when Ambassador Chris Stevens' last words to his State Department colleague and friend, Greg Hicks, were, "Greg, we're under attack," everything should have stopped. The personal, hand-picked representative of the United States President was under attack. Everything should have stopped. I really think if it had and this administration had done everything they could to get help to these people, this President would have won in a huge landslide because he stood up for people, our Americans who were in harm's way.

A year later, we don't even know what he was doing. We don't know what the Secretary of State was doing. We can't talk to the CIA agents, and they keep getting polygraphed every 30 days to make sure nobody's leaking any information to Congress because apparently that would be embarrassing.

I mentioned to some people earlier today about the doctrine of spoliation. It's a legal doctrine that applies in courts of law. And whether in a court of law or in the court of public opinion, credibility always matters.

We have seen, this week, a briefing by people who may well have gotten their talking points from the same person or persons who altered the talking points a year ago, falsified them, and handed them to what I believe was an innocent Susan Rice and sent her out to unknowingly be a dupe to spread things that weren't true about a video when it wasn't true at all. How do we know what we get in a classified briefing if we don't know who it was that made true intelligence into lying intelligence a year ago? We need to know so we know we can have more faith in what Susan Rice, John Kerry, Secretary Hagel, General Dempsey, in the things they're saying. Where did your information come from? Is it somebody that created some of the lies we got in the past or is this a totally truthful source? It matters. It matters.

It matters when we have Christian Navy SEALs killed in Afghanistan and American flag-draped coffins are mixed with Afghan flag-draped coffins. And an American chaplain is not even allowed to pray in Jesus' name, even

though a chaplain may be a Christian and be taught that Jesus said, "If you ask for it in my name, it will be given." Being prevented—as the First Amendment said the Federal Government should never do—from freely exercising his religious beliefs, and then compounding the problem by bringing an imam in Afghanistan to stand and give a Muslim prayer over our SEALs that includes basically the words that, in the name of Allah, the merciful forgiver, the companions of hell, where the sinners and infidels are fodder for hellfire, are not equal with the companions of Heaven. The Muslim companions of Heaven are always the winners. We let an imam speak in his language, say words that, when examined, appear to be gloating over the dead Navy SEALs that should have never been allowed to take off in that chopper, that should never have been allowed to stay on after the Afghans pulled out the Afghan soldiers on the manifest and put other Afghan soldiers on that apparently were disposable to them. It should have stopped there.

There were so many places it should have stopped. But we can't get all the answers about that, how it came about, why our best and brightest were put in harm's way. We can't really get to the truth as to why a good man—I've spoken with him personally, privately; I like him very much—Leon Panetta, why he would tell people who did not have security clearances that it was SEAL Team Six that took out Osama bin Laden; why JOE BIDEN, as Vice President, I know he meant no harm to our SEAL Team Six, but when he outs a SEAL team as the one that took out Osama bin Laden. And as one SEAL called his mother and said, Mom, you've got to get my name off all of our family stuff online; we've been outed. One parent said his daughter-in-law looked out the window right after Vice President BIDEN outed his SEAL team took out Osama bin Laden, the Marines had provided her a guard because they knew what it meant. It meant this administration had exposed our valiant fighting forces, our SEALs, to danger they should never have been in.

This is a day of remembrance, but if it is not used to get to the bottom of what happened a year ago and what has happened in the 12 intervening years since then, find out where we've made our mistakes so that we can correct them so that we do not have more Boston bombings or attempts like we had in Times Square—thank God for local police and people paying attention there. And thank goodness for a sweaty rear end of a bomber that was prepared to take out a plane and was attempting to do so on Christmas.

The Divine Providence, as our Founders and George Washington so often referred to as God's overseeing, will not protect us forever when we will not protect ourselves. God is good all the time. All the time God is good. But it's time to be better friends to our friends.

It's time to stand up and be better enemies to our enemies. It's time that the blood of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice was honored with the truth.

I hope and pray in the days ahead we will have the resolve, as Members of Congress across the aisle, to stand firm and say, Give us the truth. We don't care who is made to look bad, Republican or Democrat, let the chips fall where they may. The blood of our devoted, life-giving patriots cries out for truth. Let's finally get to it.

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

□ 1545

LOW-WAGE WORKERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of New York). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Progressive Caucus, I am here to present a conversation that we would like to share with the American public, which is the plight of low-wage workers.

The Progressive Caucus here in Congress has worked on this issue for many years. This last month, when Members went home and worked in the district for the month, we joined many of these low-wage workers in a day of strike as a way to present their case to the American people.

Too many people are paid too little for the work they do. That harms families in this country; that depresses the economy in this country; and that makes more people have to go to government assistance because they're simply not paid enough for the work that they're doing.

We all know that economy has had a lot of tough times in the last several years, but things are getting better. The problem is they are only getting better for some.

We know that corporate profits have continued to break records, while Americans are working harder and getting paid less. We know that the stock markets are close to all time highs and corporate profits are booming. The \$200 billion-a-year fast food industry is doing extremely well in this country, and our workers are more than pulling their weight to help in these successes.

Over the past 30 years, the productivity of the American worker has increased 85 percent, however, the salaries that they get paid simply haven't kept up in pace.

Mr. Speaker, why is the economy stuck? Why aren't these people making more money? Why is it that while so many who are in the top 1 percent, the top 10 percent, are doing extremely well, somehow those financial returns haven't trickled down to the rest of the economy?

We know the incomes of the top 1 percent have grown by more than 31

percent since 2009, just in the last several years—a 31 percent increase—yet incomes for the bottom 99 percent have moved less than 1 percent. That inequality is what is causing the real problem that we have.

In order to have the economy truly prosper and truly recover, we have to make sure that all people are benefiting and that all people see an additional wage. Wages have been stagnant for a generation, as the minimum wage right now in real terms is \$1 less than it was in 1980. But yet the fastest-growing jobs in the economy are also those same jobs—they're the lowest paid. Fast food, retail, home health, child care, and security jobs are growing, but they don't pay enough to cover the basic necessities like food, clothing, and rent.

So how much is enough? Many of these people are working across the country at \$7.25 an hour. Now, if you take that times 2,080, which is the number of full-time equivalent hours in a year, that's about \$15,080 a year for a full-time worker on minimum wage. For a couple both earning that, that's a little over \$30,000. If you have a family, a couple of children, you're not even close to the median income of \$51,144 in this country.

But what makes this number even tougher is when you look at the actual cost of living. The Economic Policy Institute has said that the cost per year of maintaining a modest standard of living for a typical family of four—they figured that out across the country, including in my home city of Madison, Wisconsin, home of Bucky Badger—and these numbers are written in stone—this is what the costs are on average:

If you live in Madison, Wisconsin, your average costs are likely over \$75,000 a year for a family of four. That's a breakdown of housing is about \$10,668; food another \$9,048; child care for that family \$18,312; transportation \$7,284; other necessities a little over \$5,000; and their taxes are about \$6,900.

Now, that's for Madison, Wisconsin, the middle of America. But what about other places? Well, Milwaukee, a bigger city, but still in my State, \$74,000 is that expense. In New York City, it's over \$94,000 for that same low-wage worker, that same minimum-wage worker. And one of the best deals for a major city across the country, Atlanta, it's still almost \$62,000 a year, almost double what an average couple could make on minimum wage.

Now, I know some of the myths that are out there. People say a minimum-wage worker is someone who's living at home, probably going to school, under 18, just for pocket change, right? That's the myth. We've heard that more than enough.

Well, here's the reality. According to the Economic Policy Institute, what is that minimum-age worker actually? What's their demographic? What's the profile? Well, first of all, 88 percent are over 20 years of age—88 percent. So

really it's a small token percent that is that average high school student making minimum wage. A third of them are over 40 years old. So a full third of the lowest-paid workers are over 40 years old. The average age, 35 years old. Twenty-eight percent of those lowest-paid workers have children. So when we talk about that family of four, we are talking about it because the statistics are there. Twenty-eight percent have children. Fifty-five percent of them are full-time workers. So this isn't something on the side for some extra pocket change. This is the full-time job that they have at that minimum wage. On average, over half of them earn half of their family income based on that minimum wage job. Over 43 percent of them have some kind of college education.

So that's the reality. When you look at that worker, that's the real demographic. This isn't that high school kid staying with their parents making some extra money so they can go buy another CD or some new toy. This in reality is the living sustenance for many of these workers across the country.

Yet, if you look at just one of the fast food companies, their CEO makes 580 times what that low-income worker is making at that very same company. Now, if you just raise that wage to \$10.10, you would literally lift 6 million of these people out of poverty—6 million people, you could literally have a significant change in their lives.

Now, let's look at the economy and what this means. We know that while wages have been stagnant, the price of housing in the United States has doubled since the early '80s. Safe, adequate housing has become less and less affordable to someone who makes minimum wage.

But let's look at some of the consequences of that person making \$7.25 an hour. First of all, it's bad for families. If you can't support your family and your children on that wage, like we just talked about—rent, food, medicine, housing—the most basic costs that you have are more than they could possibly make on that.

Second, it's bad for the deficit. Low-wage workers often qualify for food stamps and other public assistance while big profitable corporations are forcing taxpayers to subsidize their low wages and burden our economy.

In Wisconsin alone, there is one employer that has a majority of folks who are on our low-income assistance health program. A majority of folks who should be getting that support from their job instead are on our public assistance program for health insurance.

Now, thankfully, the Affordable Care Act is going to make sure that more and more people in this country have access to health care. But the reality is we are subsidizing those people right now, each and every one of us, because those big corporations that are having record profits and CEOs making hun-

dreds of times what that low-wage worker makes are doing well and yet we are paying for it.

Also, it's bad for the economy. That means in the local economy if you don't have people spending money in this current economy, that's what's holding us back. I truly believe a rising tide lifts all boats. If we increase that wage, whether it be \$9 that the President proposed, \$10.10, \$15, whatever wage we ultimately have a debate about, you raise that, that money that that low-wage worker has is not going to be invested, it's not going to be held in savings. It's very likely going to be spent in the economy just to get by on the day-to-day expenses. But that builds the entire economy. If they are able to occasionally go to a movie or maybe go to a restaurant, not the fast food one they work at, and have a dinner, that's going to help stimulate the economy for everyone. So, again, we hold back our economy by those low-wage workers not making more.

Finally, I think what this country really is about is opportunity. This takes away that opportunity to grow the middle class from the middle out and from the bottom up. How do we help those people get that chance, that opportunity for their family that many of us have, but they're not able to because they're stuck at that job at \$7.25 an hour, yet they have the expenses we all have?

Now, at the same time, during this, CEO pay has skyrocketed. We know that the average CEO between 1978 and 2012, their compensation grew, according to an article in *The Huffington Post*, 876 percent. Now, during the same period, worker compensation grew 5.4 percent.

Income inequality is a huge problem in this country. If we don't address it at some point, these stagnant wages that haven't kept up with the cost of living, haven't kept up with the cost of housing, we are going to have real and serious problems for our economy for each and every person.

In fact, the average CEO right now makes 354 times what that low-wage worker makes—354 times. That fast food worker, their CEO made 580 times. But we have to make sure that everyone prospers in this country, and everyone prospers in this economy.

□ 1600

We have to make sure that families can cover their basic needs, that we can lessen the need for public assistance and help reduce our deficit. We can put more money in the pockets of workers instead of corporate CEOs and, thus, more money in the pockets of our small businesses, which are going to benefit when they're spending that additional money. We can lift up our local economies and, by doing that, lift up our local communities—having safer, better, healthier communities by people having more money.

That's why the members of the Progressive Caucus stood with those low-

wage workers in this last month, in August, when they took a day of strike. They didn't go to work for part of the day or for the whole day in order to illustrate the problems that they're facing, and we across the country stood with them to support a fair wage for a full day's work. In more than 50 cities across the country, members of the Progressive Caucus and other Democrats joined with these low-paid workers to make sure we talked about their stories. I'd just like to read a couple of quotes from people who participated in this.

One was a gentleman from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who was 45 years old, a low-paid worker, and this is what he said:

I'm a maintenance man at McDonald's. When my grandbabies come over on the weekend, I spend on them, making sure that they eat and are comfortable. I eat McDonald's the last 2 weeks of the month because I have no food left.

Is that the America that, I think, we value; the land of opportunity so that every family can prosper?

Let me read another one. This is from a worker in New York City, and she said:

On some days, I've been up for 48 hours straight, and McDonald's makes billions of dollars every year.

Now, think about that. That person, who very likely may have children—28 percent of those people who are making minimum wage do—was up for 48 hours straight. How do you do that? How do you make that work?

So we have tried to stand up on behalf of the low-paid workers and say it's time we address this issue. The President said we need to raise the minimum wage. Democrats have said we need to raise the minimum wage. People across the country—business owners and others—have said that it's time to increase the minimum wage. I served 14 years in the Wisconsin legislature before I was here. Every single time that we increased the minimum wage in Wisconsin we had more people enter the workforce.

As the statistics from the Economic Policy Institute said, this isn't about high school kids earning a little extra pocket change while living at home, which is 12 percent of that population. This is about getting real people into the workforce, earning money, putting it back into the economy, supporting their families, and doing exactly what we need to do with the economy.

When we did this across the country, we were very, very fortunate to have someone who has been a real role model for many of us who are progressives across the country in elected office, someone from the city of Chicago or outside the city of Chicago, but a real leader in the progressive movement in Congress and, again, someone who has been a real leader for many of us for the many years that we've been in government.

I would like to yield, Mr. Speaker, to Representative JAN SCHAKOWSKY from the Chicago area.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Thank you, Representative POCAN, for leading us in this Special Order that really talks about so many Americans who are paid poverty wages, people who simply cannot afford to support themselves or their families on the kinds of wages that they are paid, and the role of the Progressive Caucus in helping them to highlight that.

So, on August 29, I was proud at 7 in the morning to arrive at the Rock-n-Roll McDonald's in downtown Chicago. It's one of the most profitable McDonald's, certainly, in our area. I saw a growing crowd of people wearing T-shirts, saying, Strike for 15, and signs that said, We are worth more. In Illinois, the minimum wage is \$8.25, so some of them were chanting, We can't survive on \$8.25, and they were engaged in this 1-day strike, the demand being \$15 an hour and the right to join a union, to form a union.

\$15 an hour to work at McDonald's?

If you were to work at McDonald's for 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year—and of course the average employee there works about 24 hours a week—you would at minimum wage make the lavish salary of \$31,000 a year, which starts heading you toward the middle class, but it's certainly not a huge salary. Compare that with the CEO of McDonald's, a man named Donald Thompson, whose pay package last year in 2012 was \$13.7 million for the year. If you divide that out, he makes an hourly wage of \$6,611, and he earns more in the first 2 hours of work on the first day of the year than the workers I was standing with make all year long. Now, these weren't kids. I was out there with some people who have worked at McDonald's for 10 years, 15 years. One gentleman was still making \$8.50 an hour. He had climbed up from the minimum wage to \$8.50 an hour.

Unless you think that McDonald's isn't thinking about its workers, they actually put out a book, a little book, in conjunction with Visa, called "Practical Money Skills," which is going to help their workers figure out how to budget. They have a budget that lists income from a worker's first job and his second job, admitting that you certainly can't plan to work at McDonald's and live on that, so you have to have a second job—so the first job and second job—all totaling \$2,060 for the month.

Then they have recommended monthly expenses to help their workers budget, including \$600 a month for housing. Now, I don't know about Madison, Wisconsin, or anywhere else, but in Chicago, unless you live with somebody—or with maybe a couple of somebodies—\$600 a month for two jobs and budgeting that way is not going to get you a decent place to live. Remarkably, they budget \$20 per month for health insurance, and that exists only in some sort of fantasy world.

These are workers who often turn to government assistance just to make ends meet. These are the people who

have often been demonized by our colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle for going for SNAP programs, maybe for housing assistance, for Medicaid. Lots of wealthy Americans and even some of our colleagues suggest we ought to test them for drug use or accuse them of being lazy; but I posit today that the real welfare kings are those fast-food giants and all those poverty-wage employers who refuse to pay a livable wage, a living wage. We, the taxpayers—all the rest of the taxpayers—subsidize them because they don't pay a living wage, so their employees, who are often working their tails off, often have to come to the government for help. I would argue that it's the Walmarts and the McDonald's that really depend on these welfare programs and that, if you want to divide the world into takers and makers, those companies and those CEOs are the real takers.

If I have time, I want to give a couple more facts.

This hasn't always been true in America, these poverty wages. Between 1948 and 1973, the productivity of U.S. workers rose 96.8 percent, and wages rose 93.7 percent. They went up together. Workers benefited from increases in productivity, and that's true of the wages of the managers and bosses and CEOs as well. Wages went up. Between 1973 and 2011, productivity rose 80.1 percent, but wages rose only 4.2 percent. So you saw that, even though productivity went up, wages stayed essentially flat. Median household income today, adjusted for inflation, is at 1989 levels, and it's not coincidental that during that same time union membership dropped from about one-third of the private sector workforce to about 6.5 percent today; nor is it coincidental that almost all the growth in income—and, yes, we are richer today per capita than ever before. We are at the richest point in our country, but that growth in income has gone, really, especially to the top .1 percent, to the very richest Americans. All of that growth in income has gone to the top.

So I think this is not just bad for the workers that we were out with this summer. This is really bad for our economy. If we want to have a robust middle class, where people can go out and buy things and create demand and, thus, create jobs, they would be the real makers. They would be the people who could revive our economy. I think that the essentials here are a living wage and the rights of workers to be able to collectively bargain so that they can defend themselves together, represent themselves together and get a decent middle class life in this richest country in the world, which is at its very richest stage right now.

Mr. POCAN. Thank you, Representative SCHAKOWSKY.

In fact, when you talked about that, according to the Economic Policy Institute, the average family expense for a typical family in Chicago is \$73,055.

That \$600 allotment for rent is hardly enough. That \$20 for health care will get you a bottle of orange juice and maybe some Band-Aids, but I don't know if I'd call that health care.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. It's like flossing and praying, and that's about it.

Mr. POCAN. You're not going to get much.

I really appreciate what you said about the fact that a business owner can benefit. I've been a small business owner for 25 years. When I opened my small business, I had hair—it's been a long time—and I can tell you that, when you treat your employees well, everyone benefits. When they make more money, that helps as they're invested in the company, and they're able to support their families. If they have health insurance, they're able to make sure that everyone is healthy in their families. If their families are good, they're good. There are many benefits. Yet when you get to the factor of almost what we'd call greed—when you get to 580 times the salary of that low-paid worker, like the CEO of McDonald's makes—that's a problem across the country.

So I really appreciate what you've brought up and specifically your example from Chicago because, in Madison, we've actually got it slightly higher, about \$75,000 a year. When they broke out those expenses, they were talking housing of about \$10,668, transportation \$7,200, food \$9,000, taxes \$6,900. When you go through that, it's absolutely impossible to live on that minimum wage. Yet, as you said, you were with a bunch of people who were adults who were working at these places. Again, according to the Economic Policy Institute, 88 percent of the people are over 20 years old. The average age of a minimum-wage worker is 35 years old. So the myth that's out there about that low-income worker is simply not true.

Representative SCHAKOWSKY, I wonder if you might be able to just share a little bit more, based on the years you've been here, about exactly what some of the costs are to the local government and to the State government and to the Federal Government that come out of these workers having to come for subsidies, because, as you know, there are various programs that so often get attacked, sometimes by the people on the other side of the aisle. Like you said, there is the SNAP program that they're trying to provide an almost \$40 billion cut to in the next budget if they have their way. There would be even less available for those people who need the subsidy thanks to those companies. I wonder if you could just share a little more about that.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I'll tell you that I have three times now done the SNAP challenge, or the food stamp challenge. The average SNAP benefit is now \$4.50 a day. Almost everyone on the SNAP program is on there for less than a year. It has been described to me by a former SNAP recipient as a trampo-

line. Nobody wants to do it, and they certainly don't want to line up at a food pantry, and those cupboards are really having a problem being filled.

□ 1615

It is hard to do. You can get the calories, but getting the nutrition and the health that you need from the food, that is really hard to do.

People are reluctant to apply for these benefits. I wish they weren't, but there's still some stigma attached to that. I want to encourage people, by the way, that if they are eligible, they should get that for the sake of their children and their own health.

States are struggling right now to meet their Medicaid budgets because there are so many people who are not getting health care through their employer or can't afford it on their own, so they are turning to State and local governments. We're finding that those governments are having to decide about fixing the roads, hiring teachers, or being able to provide these kinds of benefits.

The same kinds of decisions that individual poor people are having to make, governments are having to make right now. But if only they were paid a decent wage for all the hours that they're willing to put in to get up early and get on that bus.

Let me just tell you that I went into McDonald's with some of the workers. They had six things that they were asking for. Listen to the modest requests:

Stop requiring employees to pay out of pocket if their cash registers are short;

Two, show respect to your employees—less shouting and insulting language;

Three, air-conditioning in the kitchen;

Four, permit employees to drink water when the kitchen gets too hot. That one threw me for a big loop. They said, "No, they're saying, 'Get back to work. You can't have a drink of water.'" They put it on paper. It's not made up;

Five, give raises and provide living wages;

Listen to this one: stop requiring employees to pay out of pocket for food that is returned by customers.

The whole event was very peaceful. No one at McDonald's was there to accept it, so they left these demands on the counter.

There is one other little point I want to make. This was during the week that we were commemorating the 50th anniversary of the march for jobs and freedom, the March on Washington. The march sought to "give all Americans a decent standard of living," and called for a minimum wage of \$2 an hour. If you adjust that \$2-an-hour request from 1963, that would equal \$15.26 an hour, which is just about what the workers are asking for right now.

The least that we could do here in this Congress is raise the minimum

wage in this country, which hasn't been raised for a long time. You probably have that number. I don't remember how long it's been. A \$7.25-an-hour minimum wage in this country just doesn't make it.

I also believe we need to do more to guarantee workers the right to organize. I believe that organized labor helped to deliver us the middle class, and I think that workers organized will be able to rejuvenate our middle class and make these just and reasonable demands a reality.

Mr. POCAN. Thank you, Representative SCHAKOWSKY, for your many years of advocacy on behalf of the low-wage worker.

When you talked about businessowners, one of the things I think about as someone who's been in business my entire adult life is just the fact that you always call us "job creators." I like to think of the consumer as the job creator. When I have someone buying from my business, that allows me to be able to hire someone. If we help people have more money in their pocket, they're the job creators. Each and every one of those people are the job creators we're talking about.

Again, thank you so much.

We've been joined by another strong progressive, Representative RICK NOLAN from Minnesota. I know that he also has been an outspoken advocate when it comes to the plight of the low-wage workers, and I would like to yield to Representative RICK NOLAN from northern Minnesota.

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to begin by commending and complimenting the gentleman from Wisconsin, Congressman POCAN, for the work that you're doing here in highlighting this important issue. There's so much to be said that one is not sure where to begin. You've provided a lot of the facts and a lot of the information, as have some of the other Members here.

I'd like to just speak to the issue in a more general sense. To be sure, what's happening in this country has to be reversed. The rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer, and the middle class is getting crushed. Corporations and banks are sitting on trillions of dollars.

I'm a business guy. If there's a business opportunity out there, you invest in it; but if the middle class is broke, can't buy the goods and services, you're just going to sit on your cash and you're not going to invest it if there aren't customers there for your product. This is not only good for middle America and for poor people, raising the minimum wage is going to be so important for our whole economy.

When I started my entry into the employment market, the ratio of executive compensation to that of the worker was 25 to 1. I just read recently today that the ratio is 273 to 1. To my point, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. We've just seen some numbers on the percentage

of income that's earned by the upper 1 percent and by the upper 10 percent, and they're earning all the revenue.

I would like to suggest that everybody, if they haven't done it yet, take a look at the Bill Moyers' film that was done in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, following the lives of two families. It was quite remarkable. Hats off to Bill Moyers for his vision in understanding how valuable a film like this could be because he followed two good, hard-working families playing by all of the rules, doing everything right, going to church on Sunday, not living extravagantly, no speedboats in their driveway, living in modest housing in wonderful modest communities.

He followed them as they were entering into the employment market 22 years ago. They had good-paying manufacturing jobs in the \$25 to \$30 range. They had benefits and retirement. Both families, all the mothers and fathers, ended up losing their jobs, not through the failure to show up to work, but because tax and trade policies had shifted those manufacturing jobs overseas to another country. Through no fault of their own, they found themselves unemployed.

Well, they struggled, and over a period of months they managed to find other jobs. Now they were back down in the \$12 to \$16 range, and in many cases they had lost benefits, but they were content. They just took an extra job here and there and wherever they could. Wouldn't you know, those jobs ended up being moved overseas because of our tax and our trade policies, and this time they had an even harder time finding employment. You could see all the stresses that—because Moyers was going back and visiting these people every year or two and recording what was happening in their lives, you could see the stress that was being created.

In one of the families—oh, gosh, to see these two young kids in love in their youth and to see the young man go into a tailspin of depression at not being able to provide for his family and the conflict that ended up in divorce. He was hanging out with buddies at the end trying to pick up odd jobs here and there, and his wife is living in a spare bedroom in an apartment with a friend. The other couple, the guy is out picking up garbage. Then he showed what happened. They all lost their homes. It also showed what happened to the entire community. All the homes were boarded up. The neighborhood was in shambles because they had all been foreclosed. It was just a classic example of how we have failed these people.

In my judgment, here's what we did: In our parents' time, at least my age group and maybe your grandparents, the average life expectancy in this country was 47; today, it's pushing 80. That is remarkable progress, especially for the two oldest guys here in the freshman class. Then we did a whole bunch of things. We looked, and the rivers and lakes were catching on fire; acid rain was destroying the forest and

the lakes. I had people in my district whose lives were over. When they were 25 and 30 working in boat factories and for want of ventilation, their lungs were full of fiberglass, and so they couldn't breathe.

Anyway, we did all these things. We set up some good rules for environmental protection. We set up some good rules for health and safety. We insisted on Medicare for our elderly and workers' comp and unemployment comp and Social Security. We put a tremendous amount of burden for all of that on our business community, our manufacturing sector. I know about that. I spent the last 32 years of my life in business, manufacturing.

Then we said to all the manufacturers, Oh, by the way, now you're going to have to go compete with people in countries where they don't have to do any of that. It wasn't fair. It couldn't work. I'm not necessarily faulting corporations for moving overseas, but I am faulting the people responsible for the public policies that allowed that to happen.

The first thing that we have to do here, in my judgment, is to raise the minimum wage. It's not a cure-all, but it's a good beginning to put some money back in the hands of low-income and middle America. There are also so many other things that we need to do.

I just learned in one of our committees they were going to spend \$89 billion in Afghanistan this year on infrastructure projects. I read in the Times one project was \$299 million. Fifty brave young American men and women lost their lives securing the area for this hydroelectric project. And for every one that is killed, there is another six or seven that are maimed and harmed for life. Well, this project has now been abandoned because the locals kept blowing it up as fast as we could secure the area and build it.

We need to start reinvesting in our own infrastructure, our bridges, our roads, our communities, our educational system, investing in our people. We're going bankrupt here on these wars of choice, in this nation-building abroad. We're destroying what made America a great country, a middle class, a place where there was opportunity for everybody. If you showed up and you wanted to work hard, there was a job for you. I submit, in my generation, if you wanted to be a failure, hell, you had to have a plan. There were just so many jobs and so many good-paying jobs and so many opportunities. And that's what we're losing, and that's what we have to get back to in this country. I think we can start by raising the minimum wage.

I am so thrilled to be able to join you and my colleagues in urging the leadership here to bring this measure before the Congress. Let us have the debate. Let us have a vote on it. Let us see if we can't move this country forward. Let us see if we can't do something for the middle class here, and then let's follow that up with a good, healthy de-

bate on what kind of a trade policy we are going to have. Is it going to be totally free, or is it going to be fair trade that recognizes the accomplishments that we've made here with a determination to keep moving that progress forward?

Also, let's have a good look at the tax policies, too. The fact is anyone who has examined it knows that clearly the richest and most powerful people in this country pay a much lower percentage of their income in taxes than the average person. They just did an analysis in Minnesota here a while back. The average person making between \$30,000 and \$50,000 pays 31 percent of their income in a variety of taxes—Social Security, income, real estate, gas taxes, the whole works.

□ 1630

The average millionaire is only paying 13 percent. Well, that's not fair. Nobody's suggesting here that we should penalize the rich for their success. On the contrary, we want everybody to be successful in this country, but we also want everybody to pay their fair share. So there's no one easy, simple solution to what we're looking at here, but we can start with raising the minimum wage, and then let's go after the tax policy and let's go after the trade policy. Let's institute some fairness in this country. Let's rebuild the middle class, let's restore the American Dream where there's opportunity for everyone—everyone who's willing to go to work, play by the rules, work hard, and go to work every day. That's the America we grew up with. That's the America that we want to leave behind when we pass on to the big country. Thank you.

Mr. POCAN. Thank you, Congressman NOLAN. Again, thank you for your many years of devotion to helping raise the economy for every single person so they can really have access to that opportunity you talk about. We have a lot to do in Congress. I think we will have a chance to talk about trade and other policies later this year. But you're right, the first and most fair thing that we could possibly do, that we have control in this room to do, is to raise the minimum wage. The President has asked for it. The Democrats have asked for it. It's time we have a vote so we ensure that you don't live in poverty working that job or working two jobs or three jobs trying to get by, because that's exactly what happens.

I would like to yield to another colleague who has spoken out in his district and across his home State of California not only on behalf of low-wage workers but also someone who is a strong environmentalist.

I yield to Representative ALAN LOWENTHAL.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. First, I want to say that I stand with you, and I'm so glad that you've raised this issue about the crisis that is occurring to working families in America, and, as was just pointed out, the tremendous crash and

burden on the middle class, who are rapidly becoming low-wage workers because of our policies in this country. I agree completely that the first step that we have to do is to raise the minimum wage and have that discussion and really provide and demonstrate that this Congress really cares about working people in America. That's our first thing.

But I'm also glad that you've given me an opportunity this afternoon to talk about one other issue that is not really directly related to this issue, and that has to do with environmental issues.

I just want to report to my colleagues that later this month the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which is the leading international climate science body with over 195 member countries, is going to be releasing a report which will predict that the planet's average global temperature will increase by more than 2 degrees Celsius over the next century. Not only does this report issue new warnings about continued warming, but it asserts that the scientific community can now claim with 95 percent certainty that the warming is a by-product of human activity.

Yet in this House of Representatives, the majority party continues to ignore the warnings of the scientific community. Over the past 2 years, this Congress has done absolutely nothing to address climate change. Republicans in the House voted to overturn EPA's scientific findings that climate change endangers health and the environment. They voted to block U.S. participation in international climate change negotiations, and they voted to stop the agencies from even preparing for the effects of climate change.

Just yesterday, Republicans on the Energy and Commerce Committee revealed that they are preparing to introduce legislation aimed at preventing EPA from limiting the amount of CO₂ emitted from coal-fired power plants.

This is a mistake.

Mr. Speaker, we need to be moving ahead with policies aimed at encouraging alternative sources of energy, preparing for the worst effects of climate change. We need policies that are not written by the coal lobby. We must take action. And I must remind you, just as you raised these issues about the effect of the economy on our middle class and our lack of preparation of working families, that the people that are the most affected are the people that have the least ability to deal with climate change, and they are working Americans.

It is all related. We must protect working Americans, and the way we do

it is to not only acknowledge some of the effects of climate change but really to give working families the tools that they need so that they can survive. And more than survive, so they can prosper in this society. That's what this is all about.

I thank you for raising this issue, and I am glad to show support.

Mr. POCAN. I thank Representative LOWENTHAL. On behalf of the Progressive Caucus, thank you for showing some of the other issues we're working on. We're fighting for equality for every single person across the country. We want everyone to have access to democracy. We need to have meaningful campaign finance reform, from the Citizens United decision to every single candidate for Congress and how we fund our campaigns.

We need to make sure every single person has the right to vote in this country, something that because of the recent Supreme Court decision isn't guaranteed.

But one thing the Progressive Caucus today really wanted to highlight, and we have made the case, why we joined so many workers across the country in the month of August who are getting paid minimum wage, who are barely getting by, who aren't being treated fairly in their workplace: we literally have too many people who are paid too little for the work they do. As Representative NOLAN said, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. It's not a talking point, it's a fact. It's the actual statistics that are out there.

If we're going to help people support their families, if we're going to help support the economy, if we're really going to take people off of government assistance, the very ones who are working and yet having to be on government assistance because of the low wage they make, there's a simple answer, and that's increase the minimum wage. That's what we came here to talk about today, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Progressive Caucus. We appreciate having the time to talk about the plight of the low-wage worker and why we need to raise the minimum wage.

I yield back the balance of my time.

OMISSION FROM THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2013 AT PAGE H5474

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CULBERSON (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today after 3 p.m. on account of family business.

PUBLICATION OF BUDGETARY MATERIAL

STATUS REPORT ON CURRENT LEVELS OF ON-BUDGET SPENDING AND REVENUES FOR FY 2013, 2014 AND THE 10-YEAR PERIOD FY 2014 THROUGH FY 2023

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,
Washington, DC, September 11, 2013.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker, Office of the Speaker, U.S. Capitol,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, to facilitate application of sections 302 and 311 of the Congressional Budget Act, I am transmitting an updated status report on the current levels of on-budget spending and revenues for fiscal years 2013, 2014 and for the 10-year period of fiscal year 2014 through fiscal year 2023. This status report is current through September 6, 2013.

The term "current level" refers to the amounts of spending and revenues estimated for each fiscal year based on laws enacted or awaiting the President's signature.

Table 1 in the report compares the current levels of total budget authority, outlays, and revenues with the overall limits set in H. Con. Res. 112 (112th Congress) for fiscal year 2013 and H. Con. Res. 25 (113th Congress) for fiscal year 2014 and the 10-year period of fiscal year 2014 through 2023. This comparison is needed to implement section 311(a) of the Budget Act, which creates a point of order against measures that would breach the budget resolution's aggregate levels. The table does not show budget authority and outlays for years after fiscal year 2014 because appropriations for those years have not yet been considered.

Table 2 compares the current levels of budget authority and outlays for action completed by each authorizing committee with the "section 302(a)" allocations made under H. Con. Res. 112 (112th Congress) for fiscal year 2013 and H. Con. Res. 25 (113th Congress) for fiscal years 2014 and the 10-year period 2014 through 2023. "Action" refers to legislation enacted after the adoption of the budget resolution. This comparison is needed to enforce section 302(f) of the Budget Act, which creates a point of order against measures that would breach the section 302(a) allocation of new budget authority for the committee that reported the measure. It is also needed to implement section 311(b), which exempts committees that comply with their allocations from the point of order under section 311(a).

Table 3 compares the current status of discretionary appropriations for fiscal years 2013 and 2014 with the "section 302(b)" sub-allocations of discretionary budget authority and outlays among Appropriations subcommittees. The comparison is also needed