

what is known as the Montessori Method. Named for Maria Montessori, her teaching philosophy was to foster in children a desire to think independently and be creative. Its environment maximizes independence and includes a strong focus on communication and self-molding for young students.

Beverly became certified as a pre-school Montessori teacher and renamed her school Alexander Montessori School. She gathered teachers around her who shared her passion and dedication for providing a quality and caring Montessori environment for children, ones with only the highest standards of excellence.

From modest beginnings of that single kindergarten class, Alexander Montessori School has grown to be one of the largest and most renowned Montessori schools in the country. Today, in south Florida, Alexander Montessori School has two toddler environments, nine children's houses, and an elementary campus. These are centers where children lead the way, follow their natural talents, and fall in love with learning, an attitude summed up in its motto: "To learn to Love to Learn."

This independent school remains the only fully accredited American Montessori Society School in our community and one of only 10 throughout the State of Florida. I can relate to Beverly's story, her spirit, and her relentless dedication to provide children with high quality education.

I am a former Florida certified teacher and founded and was principal of a small private bilingual school in Hialeah. I know the challenges faced by our educators as well as the positive impact that an amazing teacher can have on a young mind.

I am a product of the south Florida school system. I graduated from West Miami Middle School and then Southwest Miami High School. I have an associate of arts degree from Miami/Dade College; bachelor's and master's degrees from Florida International University in education; and as an older adult, I completed a doctorate in education from the University of Miami. I am very grateful for the support that I received while I was in school, and I am certain that I would not be the same person without this support.

So ensuring that our children have the same access to a comprehensive education has become a top priority of mine. Our students deserve the best that we can offer them, and that is why I continue to work with strong partners like Alexander Montessori School to constantly improve our school system.

Education is the key to self-empowerment, and teachers like those at Alexander Montessori School are giving our students the tools they need to develop and to excel. Teachers have the power to inspire and to open whole new horizons to our youth, setting them up on a positive path with high hopes and expectations for the future.

For the professionalism and care that Beverly and everyone at Alexander

Montessori School have shown in the pursuit of this most noble of professions, I thank each and every one of them. They have shaped the lives of so many students over the last 50 years, and we are truly privileged to have such wonderful individuals taking on this rewarding work in south Florida.

I thank the school again, and congratulate them on a half century of great work. Good luck in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I will now enter the names of the remarkable team members at Alexander Montessori School into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Mrs. Beverley A. McGhee, Superintendent
Mr. James R. McGhee II, Headmaster
Dr. Joyce McGhee, Headmistress
Mr. Brette Rothfield, Business Manager
Ms. Anne Becton, Administrator
Mrs. Maria McGuire, teacher
Ms. Brenda Orihuela, teacher
Ms. Mirnelly Borrero, teacher
Ms. Sharon Dalton, teacher
Mrs. Marta Demmer, teacher
Ms. Maria Luisa Ferro, teacher
Ms. Soraya Penate, teacher
Mrs. Grecia Perez, teacher
Mrs. Beatriz See, teacher
Mrs. Maria Teresa Vicens, teacher
Ms. Pamela Earl-Parler, teacher
Mrs. Linda Habich, teacher
Ms. Milagros Vargas, teacher
Ms. Cynthia Arboleda, teacher
Ms. Anne Becton, teacher
Mrs. Meghan Camilletti, teacher
Mrs. Melanie Carlson, teacher
Mr. Michael Depew, teacher
Mr. Stephen Falk, teacher
Ms. Lessie Fleischfresser, teacher
Mrs. Gretchen Goldstein, teacher
Ms. Ines Hanna, teacher
Mrs. Ismary Hassun, teacher
Mrs. Caroline Jacobellis, teacher
Mrs. Gail Jacobs, teacher
Mrs. Ellen Kahn, teacher
Mrs. Maria Claudia Kondrat-Libreros, teacher
Mrs. Mary Kucera, teacher
Mrs. Robbie Lukes, teacher
Mrs. Nina McClendon, teacher
Mrs. Debra Mistretta, teacher
Mrs. Colette Myers, teacher
Mrs. Patricia Pittaluga, teacher
Mrs. Cecilia Richter, teacher
Mrs. Sandra Salinas, teacher
Mrs. Janet Sanson, teacher
Mr. Samuel Steele, teacher
Mrs. Lauren Stern, teacher
Mrs. Gladys Tirse, teacher
Mrs. Virginia Vaca, teacher
Ms. Jodi Veillette, teacher
Ann Blau, Campus Secretary
Jennifer Dipolito, Accounts Payable
Gioconda Dynes, Accounts Receivable
Maria Franco, School Secretary
Odalys Fernandez, Campus Secretary
Jose Casares, Director of Maintenance
Marta Valdes, Campus Secretary
Carol Wolcott, Administrator
Cathy Rapport, Campus Director

A FAIR MINIMUM WAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on my colleagues to join in the effort to pass the Fair Minimum Wage Act and raise the Federal minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour.

Fifty years ago, 200,000 Americans marched on Washington. Appealing to the soul of the Nation, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his fellow speakers charted out the long journey for equality and justice ahead. In the pamphlet promoting the March on Washington, they listed 10 specific legislative demands. A number of these demands would go on to become some of the most significant achievements of the Federal Government in the postwar era: comprehensive civil rights legislation, desegregation of all school districts, an end to discrimination in Federal housing programs.

It is clear that we have made progress on many of these issues, but for many of us here, the fight for these goals remains unfinished. Let us not forget, though, that the March on Washington was actually called the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

Let us remember number eight on that list of demands: "A national minimum wage act that will give all Americans a decent standard of living. Government surveys show that anything less than \$2 an hour fails to do this."

On whole, the American economy has made tremendous strides in the last half century. Many in this Congress have been benefactors of that growth, but the American worker has been left behind. The \$2 an hour that Dr. King and his colleagues called for would be nearly \$15 per hour today when adjusted for inflation.

Despite this fact, many of my colleagues will call the demand for a \$10.10 Federal minimum wage unreasonable. Many will even say this demand for a reasonable wage is rooted in partisan politics. Mr. Speaker, this reasonable demand is rooted in the belief that American workers deserve more.

President Truman said that minimum wage legislation was "founded on the belief that full human dignity requires at least a minimum level of economic sufficiency and security." The call for a raise in the minimum wage is based on the fact that while a single parent making minimum wage earns \$15,080 annually, that is still more than \$400 below the Federal poverty rate.

The call for a raise in the minimum wage is based on the fact that working 40-hour weeks 52 weeks a year, a parent still struggles to feed their family. Think about that during your next paid vacation.

The call for a raise in the minimum wage is based on the fact that a single parent is overwhelmingly likely to be a single mother. Because, while women make up 47 percent of our workforce, they represent nearly two-thirds of minimum wage earners.

Finally, the call for a raise in the minimum wage is based on good economics. I know full well that those opposed to a raise in the minimum wage say that any raise will reduce employment, and at a certain point, it could, but a modest raise to \$10 an hour is nowhere near this theoretical tipping point, and more than six dozen economists agree.

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In a recent letter to Congress, they explicitly said:

Increases in the minimum wage have little to no impact on the employment of minimum wage workers, even during times of weakness in the labor market.

The economic recovery has been a very long, slow road for low-wage American workers, and a raise in the minimum wage is the jolt our economy needs. Higher wages quickly turn into increased spending. Increased spending quickly turns into growth.

But minimum wage legislation, like unemployment insurance, is merely the minimum we should be doing for the American worker. Let's remember that, during the March on Washington, the demand directly preceding the call for an increase in the minimum wage was demand number 7:

A massive Federal program to train and place . . . workers . . . on meaningful and dignified jobs at decent wages.

This body needs to turn its focus on advancing legislation that will create more American jobs and policies that matter to American workers. I urge my colleagues to support the American worker. Join me in calling for jobs legislation and a reasonable raise of the Federal minimum wage.

THE PRIMACY OF STRONG AMERICAN LEADERSHIP AROUND THE GLOBE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KINZINGER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, we deal with a lot of very important issues in this body. In fact, everybody that is going to speak this morning is going to speak about some very important issues. But I would argue that there is no issue more important that we deal with in this body than the issue of American global leadership and the issue of national defense.

I just got back from a security summit in Munich, and I want to share some of my thoughts in talking to our allies and talking to strategic partners around the globe.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is a decline of American leadership around the globe. There is a perception that America is on the retreat from the rest of the world and is an America tired of a decade of war, which I fully understand, and is an America that decides the fight is just not worth it anymore. The decline of American leadership around the world is not just something

that we can't do because it is not good, but it is dangerous—not just to us, but to the rest of the globe.

Think about how we got in this position in the first place. It was the failure of American leadership through the nineties to pursue a terrorist jihadist by the name of Osama bin Laden. Instead, this Nation and the President treated him as a common criminal and not as a declared opponent and a war opponent of the United States of America. What we saw was an attack on the World Trade Center, an attack to the USS Cole, an attack on the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, and then, finally, it culminated in an attack that took 3,000 American lives and woke America up to the reality of global jihadism and terrorism, and the fact that we have people that live solely for the purpose of killing and destroying people that don't see eye to eye with their specific religious ideology.

Failure to confront those terrorists in the 1990s led to that big problem we have today. And what we have seen lately is the same kind of retrenchment by the United States of America—undoubtedly, still the most powerful country in the world. Our enemies no longer fear us, and our allies no longer trust us.

Let me label a few of these areas that have concerned me.

In Iraq—I am a veteran of Iraq—the U.S. Marines actually fought to take the city of Fallujah and took the most casualties that they have taken probably since Khe Sanh in Vietnam. Today, the black flag of al Qaeda flies over Fallujah. The sacrifice of thousands of Americans is now being confronted by the black flag of al Qaeda because this President, eager to achieve a campaign promise, pulled all the troops out at the end of 2011 and didn't leave a residual force. As unpopular as it may be, if we had left a counterterrorism force in Iraq, we would not be facing this problem today.

I look at a terrible deal that was just struck with Iran, a deal that basically says Iran is allowed to be a threshold nuclear state. Sure, the Secretary and the President will say that we are going from 20 percent enrichment to 5. He doesn't mention that bringing 5 percent enrichment to weapons-grade enrichment actually doesn't take that long. And, oh, by the way, all the surrounding states to Iran think that they are totally entitled to say that they have a right to enrich uranium up to 5 percent, in essence, creating a whole host of Middle East threshold nuclear states. And yet we call this a victory?

I look at Syria—11,000 opponents to Assad, tortured and murdered and labeled with numbers—11,000 people—which made Srebrenica, the thing that launched America to intervene in Bosnia, look small. Eleven thousand opponents to Assad tortured and killed. And you look at Assad, who is purposely targeting the Free Syrian Army and not al Qaeda opposition so that al

Qaeda opposition grows to him and he can stand in front of the West and say, "I am the protector." If we get to the point where we look to Assad, a brutal dictator in Syria, as the protector of freedom, God help us.

I look at instability in Lebanon, and I look at one of our greatest allies, Jordan, hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees. I look at Israel, surrounded by instability in the Middle East, and I look at a resurgent China that challenges America all over the globe now, and I look at a Russia that continues to occupy one-third of its neighbor to the south, Georgia. I look at Ukraine's people standing up for freedom. I haven't heard much from this administration.

I am burdened by this lack of American global leadership. I don't care about the politics of it. I don't care about any of this. I care about the future of this country. And what I see is the decline of American leadership in what is still the greatest country around the globe.

INCOME INEQUALITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, my friend from Illinois is right. There is a decline in American leadership, but it is not overseas—not at all. It is here at home.

Since the 1970s, American workers have seen their wages fall or stagnate. The wealthiest American incomes, however, have increased fourfold. Even after 40 years of economic growth, today's generation takes home less than its grandparents did, and high school graduates make 40 percent less than their predecessors did four decades ago.

This problem ought to elicit bipartisan concern, yet many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have shown little or no interest in the consequences of our country becoming so sharply divided by wealth. For many of my Republican colleagues, even talking about it is uncomfortable. It is time to realize that all too many Americans—hardworking Americans—are falling behind.

From 1979 to 2007, wages for the top 1 percent grew 156 percent, while the bottom 90 percent of us saw our wages grow only 17 percent. Since 1983, 75 percent of the growth and wealth has been captured by the top 5 percent, while the bottom 60 percent actually suffered a net decline. By 2010, nearly all middle- and low-income families have made the same hourly wage they did in 2000, despite having raised productivity during that time period by 22 percent. That is not how it is supposed to work. Worse, median family income was 6 percent lower. But this lost decade only caps a trend that has been going on in this country for over 30 years.

In what might be the most telling portrait of how middle- and low-income Americans are being shut out of the