

(4) REPORT.—The Secretary shall prepare a report on the progress of State and local workforce investment boards in implementing new programs of entrepreneurial training services and any ongoing challenges to offering such programs, with recommendations on how best to address those challenges. Not later than 12 months after publication of the final regulations establishing the alternate standards, the Secretary shall submit the report to the Committee on Education and the Workforce and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 29, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 29, 2014, at 10 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on April 29, 2014, at 10 a.m. in room SD-430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled “Workers’ Memorial Day: Are Existing Private Sector Whistleblower Protections Adequate To Ensure Safe Workplace?”

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 29, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 29, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the ses-

sion of the Senate on April 29, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Committee on the Judiciary, the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on April 29, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room SH-216 of the Hart Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled “Law Enforcement Responses to Disabled Americans: Promising Approaches for Protecting Public Safety.”

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

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration en bloc of the following resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 427; S. Res. 428; and S. Res. 429.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to; the preambles, where applicable, be agreed to; and the motions to reconsider be laid on the table en bloc, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2014

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 30, 2014; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half; that following morning business, the time until noon be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees prior to the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 2223, the Minimum Wage Fairness Act; further, that at 4 p.m. the Senate pro-

ceed to executive session to consider Calendar Nos. 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, and 590, as provided for under the previous order.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the first rolcall vote will be at noon tomorrow. There will be additional votes at about 4 p.m. tomorrow afternoon.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn following the remarks by Senator MERKLEY and Senator HIRONO.

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

The Senator from Oregon.

The MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. MERKLEY. I rise in this Chamber to address an issue that is critical to working families across our Nation; that is, the Federal minimum wage.

First, I thank Senator TOM HARKIN for his leadership on this issue. He has advocated year after year, decade after decade that we need to ensure that we have an economy where workers fully participate in the fruits of their labor.

We should not have a society in which all of those fruits go simply to the very few at the expense of a fair wage for those who create that success. I thank Senator HARKIN for leading this fight over this extended period of time on behalf of working families.

He believes, as I believe, that we should measure the success of our Nation not by the growth of the GDP, not by having one eye on the Dow Jones and one eye on the S&P 500, we should measure the success by the success of our families. That is what this debate on the minimum wage is all about.

This issue matters a great deal to me because I come from a blue-collar family. My father was a mechanic. He employed those skills in a sawmill. He was the millwright, the person who keeps the machinery going so the plant can keep operating. When it is operating, there is work for the workers, and there is certainly success for the company. He went on to work as a mechanic in many other ways.

On that mechanic’s wage, he was able to raise a family and participate fully in the American dream. He and my mother were able to buy a home. They could afford to take us camping. They could afford to save a little bit to help us be able to go to college. That is what happens when workers get to participate in the success of our economy.

A minimum wage is part of this story because it is the foundation and the benchmark that helps set wages throughout the economy.

In the time period after World War II, our economy grew quickly, our wages

grew quickly, and workers took those wages and they bought products, and that demand fueled further production, which put more people to work. It was an upward cycle.

But more recently we have had a philosophy imposed, advocated, and put forward by the top 1 percent that if all the growth in revenue comes to them, they will be the job makers. They will be the job creators and everyone else will thrive.

If there was ever a moment in U.S. history when the complete falseness of this philosophy was evident, it is right now, because from 2008 until now, 95 percent of the newly created wages have gone to the 1 percent, to the very top. So we should have more jobs than we know what to do with on the philosophy that has been advocated so recently on the floor of this Senate, that we should minimize the wages at the bottom to maximize the profits at the top.

That is a downward spiral for a very clear reason, and it is this: People don't make things in society if the middle class doesn't have the money in their pockets to buy them. If they don't have the money, they don't go to the restaurant, the restaurant doesn't hire the waiter, and the restaurant doesn't hire the dishwasher. It doesn't open a new outlet and employ more people.

There are certainly many factors that have contributed to shrinking paychecks for working Americans, but the declining purchasing power of the Federal minimum wage is a major factor.

The Federal minimum wage sets an important standard for how the contributions of working families are valued. The minimum wage sets a floor on wages. It is a benchmark not only for minimum wage workers but for our entire wage scale. When the minimum wage goes up, the value placed on working Americans all across the economy goes up.

In 1968, when I was 12 years old, the Federal minimum wage was equivalent in today's dollars to about \$10.50, unlike the wage we have now which is \$7.25. So the purchasing power has roughly dropped by one-third, and that is not to the benefit of the workers, that is not to the benefit of all of the small businesses that provide retail services that benefit when a worker can afford to buy those services.

Putting money into the pockets of minimum wage workers lifts millions of working families directly. It lifts millions more because of the indirect effect of providing more demand for products in the economy.

Today a worker who works 40 hours per week at the Federal minimum wage makes barely \$15,000 per year. That puts a family of two below the poverty line. That is poverty despite the fact the mother is working full time 52 weeks a year. A family of three puts them further below the poverty line because of the additional expenses

of taking care of a second child. That is wrong.

The more we look at the numbers, the more it becomes clear that the current minimum wage is insufficient to provide a foundation for a family. We need to raise the minimum wage because there is no way to support a family on \$7.25 per hour, less than \$15,000 per year.

A recent study estimated that a worker paid the Federal minimum wage in States as diverse as Minnesota, Texas, and Pennsylvania would have to work more than 90 hours per week to afford rent on a market-rate two-bedroom apartment—90 hours per week, more than two full-time jobs, 13 hours of work per day, Monday through Sunday. Imagine working from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. on your feet, getting up, doing it day after day, week after week, and still you can't afford rent on a two-bedroom apartment—no breaks, no vacations, no sick days, no benefits, and you can't afford rent on a two-bedroom apartment.

Without a minimum wage that comes closer to families' real costs of living, our economy will continue to leave behind too many hard-working Americans. The legislation we are debating this week would raise the Federal minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour and index it to inflation to sustain the purchasing power. That doesn't get us back to the purchasing power of 1968, but at least it comes a lot closer.

Let us understand what we are talking about. We are not talking about an entry wage for teenagers. The vast majority of folks who earn the minimum wage are adults—far more than 80 percent. More than four out of five are adults, more than half of whom are women. The earnings of these families contribute to the support of nearly one in four American children.

Contrary to the arguments made for the superwealthy and couched in sympathy for the poor we heard a few minutes ago on this floor, this minimum wage would lift 4.6 million Americans out of poverty. It would give America's low-wage workers paychecks that better reflect their contribution, their work, and their value in our economy.

Some in this Chamber, as we heard not so many minutes ago, would try to convince us that this is bad for business. Nothing could be farther from the truth. For proof, just look to the Northwest. In Oregon, we know this model works because Oregon has road-tested the model. We don't need to have theoretical debates about it; we have a real-life example in the State of Oregon. Our minimum wage has been indexed since 2002. It sits at \$9.10 per hour. Indexing enables businesses to plan for small and steady increases rather than to speculate about potential dramatic leaps.

Oregon's restaurant industry, one of the largest employers of workers at Oregon's higher minimum wage, is projected to grow faster than the national average—faster. In fact, a higher min-

imum wage may well create jobs. The reason is simple: When workers have more in wages in their pockets, they spend more in our retail stores, which then hire more workers to meet the demand. When the retail stores sell more to the workers who have more money in their pocket, they order more from the factory and the factory employs more workers. A study by the Economic Policy Institute found the higher minimum wage we are debating would create 85,000 jobs.

Strengthening our Federal minimum wage is, at its core, about basic respect and basic fairness. It is about recognizing there is dignity in work and that when we allow working families to fall farther and farther down the wage chain we all pay the price. Consider the many aspects that take away from our society. A mother who has to pursue four minimum wage jobs to try to fill in when the earnings from one or more jobs are too low to support a family means she is not at home helping to guide her child. That is not helping to build a strong and productive future for that child or for our society in general.

It doesn't matter whether you are a CEO or a janitor, if you work full time in America, you should not be living in poverty. If we pay the janitor a little more, it helps a lot more people than just that one worker. Those wages go straight back into the broader economy that the CEO and his or her company depend upon.

So let's do what is right for our workers. Let's do what is right for our economy. Let's pass this bill and restore the power of the minimum wage for America's working families.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DONNELLY). The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Minimum Wage Fairness Act because it is time to give everyone a fair shot. More and more States are voting to raise the minimum wage. Last week, the Hawaii State legislature passed a bill to raise the minimum wage in my home State. Hawaii's bill would increase the wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10, and increase the tip wage to at least \$9.35.

Hawaii will become the tenth State enacting a wage increase since President Obama's 2013 State of the Union Address. In 2014 alone, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Minnesota, West Virginia, and Washington, DC have enacted wage increases. Hawaii will become the 26th State with the higher minimum wage than the current Federal minimum wage. It is time for Congress to join with the States that are leading the charge to give hard-working families a raise.

I am going to share a few reasons why the Senate should vote to raise the minimum wage. First, today's Federal minimum wage is a poverty wage. If the minimum wage had kept up with inflation since 1968, the minimum wage today would be about \$10.68. This

means that minimum-wage workers today earn less than \$15,000 per year working full time. If someone is supporting a child or an elderly parent, that would put their family income below the Federal poverty line.

The bill we are considering today would raise the Federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 by 2016 and index it to inflation afterward. Increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10 would help lift nearly a million workers and their families out of poverty.

In Hawaii, raising the minimum wage will bring more than 12,000 people above the Federal poverty level.

Second, the minimum wage is a woman's issue. Growing up, my mother was a single parent. We were an immigrant family. She raised three children by herself on very low wages. I know what it is like to run out of money at the end of the month and what it is like for every dime to matter. Nationwide, nearly two-thirds of minimum-wage workers are women. In Hawaii, increasing the minimum wage will give 54,000 women a raise. One out of five Hawaii women workers will get that raise. That is important to the women in my State, where the cost of living is high.

During the legislative debate on this issue in Hawaii, numerous advocacy groups came forward to provide testimony on why the minimum wage should be increased in Hawaii. These included representatives from churches, unions, individual parents, students, and others. For example, Dr. Lori Kamemoto is an ob-gyn who came forward to testify. She told of her work in health clinics where many of her patients are minimum-wage workers. She testified:

The majority of patients I saw at the free clinic worked multiple minimum wage jobs, and each job made sure that they did not give my patient enough work hours to qualify for health insurance or benefits. Oftentimes, a patient would not be able to afford the medication needed for her health condition. She had a choice to either pay for her children's food or the recommended medication.

Another testifier, Laura Finlayson, is a student at Hawaii Pacific University. She testified:

As someone who has worked several minimum wage jobs, I have experienced firsthand how the low wages perpetuate the cycle of poverty. . . . Many must also rely on government aid in order to make ends meet.

These stories and countless others show why we must raise the minimum wage.

Many workers in Hawaii are tipped workers. The tipped minimum wage is especially far behind. I have met restaurant workers who can't afford to eat in the very restaurants in which they work. Take the example of Nyah Potts, whom I met recently. She is a tipped worker. She works in a restaurant in the Reagan Building in Washington, DC. Due to her low wages, she has had to choose between buying diapers for her child or eating lunch that day. She decided to do something about her situation. Joining with her fellow workers and advocacy groups, she pushed the administration to raise the minimum wage for Federal contract workers. Nyah and her coworkers will now get a raise. It is time to give everyone in America a raise.

There is a common myth that tipped workers are teenagers just starting out. That is false. Eighty-eight percent of workers in tipped occupations are age 20 and over, and 45 percent are 30 or older.

Back in 2007, the last time Congress raised the minimum wage, the restaurant industry with its many tipped workers said it would cost their industry jobs. This did not happen. In fact, in 2013 the restaurant industry forecast said "restaurants remain among the leaders in job creation." The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that between 2007 and 2013, restaurants added 724,000 jobs.

There is a misconception that all tipped workers are servers at fancy restaurants. This is also not true. Many people who work at the airport, who help you get your bags, who help you make it to your gate on time, are also tipped workers. Tipped workers include bar-backs, bellhops, parking attendants, car washers, airport wheelchair workers, and many people don't even realize that these workers need tips to survive.

On average, hourly wages for tipped workers are almost 40 percent lower than overall hourly wages. The fact is, raising the minimum wage is not just good for workers, it is also good for the economy. That is why a survey of small business owners found that three out of five small business owners supported raising the minimum wage. They understand a higher minimum wage would increase consumer spend-

ing on their goods and services. That is because minimum-wage workers spend new money from higher wages right away at local businesses in their communities.

In addition to the restaurant industry I referred to earlier, there are other persistent critics who claim raising the minimum wage will cost jobs. Some cite a Congressional Budget Office report that only looked at old studies and not the latest research. The fact is, the latest academic studies say a higher minimum wage increases consumer spending and does not cost jobs.

A March Goldman Sachs report said that States which raised their minimum wage in 2014 actually created more jobs than other States that didn't raise the minimum wage. Six hundred economists, including 7 Nobel prize winners, have endorsed a minimum wage of \$10.10.

Raising the minimum wage also saves taxpayers money on social services, as many of my colleagues have already noted. The current minimum wage leaves many below the poverty line and eligible for assistance such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP, or food stamps. If we raise the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10, we reduce taxpayer costs for SNAP benefits by \$4.6 billion a year. In Hawaii, over 15,000 workers would no longer need SNAP benefits. This would save nearly \$40 million in Hawaii alone.

In America, we believe that if you work hard and play by the rules, you can get ahead. It is time for Congress to follow the example of Hawaii and other States that have raised their minimum wages. They are doing the right thing. It is time for Congress to do what is right. Let's give America a raise so all Americans can have a fair shot.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate adjourn until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow, Wednesday, April 30, 2014, with all other provisions of the previous order remaining in effect.

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:15 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, April 30, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.