

REFLECTING ON PRIORITIES
FACING AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PAYNE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleague and coanchor for the Congressional Black Caucus, Delegate STACEY PLASKETT, on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus for this Special Order hour where we can reflect on the priorities facing the American public.

This week, this body will be voting on the topic of raising the minimum wage and giving Americans a well-deserved raise and the impact that that would have not only on the workforce at large but, specifically, for Black workers and families across the United States.

Why is this so important as we touch on the issues of the day? According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, there is no place in America where a full-time worker making the current minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour can afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.

Additionally, many working people, particularly working women and Black workers, are still facing persistent and even, in some cases, worsening wage gaps since 2000. The wage gap between Black and White workers has grown significantly.

So for this hour, Mr. Speaker, we will discuss the issues affecting American workers and why it is imperative that this House take up the WAGE Act that we will be considering later this week.

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I am honored to have with us here this evening several members of the Congressional Black Caucus who will share their thoughts, concerns, and priorities for this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE).

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the issue of stagnant wages for African Americans and, as a result, the lack of economic opportunities. The Federal current minimum wage is \$7.25, not enough to sustain an individual's necessary expenses, let alone for those who are an entire American family.

In fact, the purchasing power of the current minimum wage has gradually eroded over the past decade. Since this minimum wage was raised to \$7.25, its purchasing power has declined by 17 percent due to inflation.

Mr. Speaker, this is a staggering thought: A person working 40 hours a week at the current Federal minimum wage earns a gross income of \$15,000 per year before taxes. Even families working full-time earning the Federal minimum wage are below the Federal poverty level.

This is why we need to pass the Raise the Wage Act. Under H.R. 582, 1.3 mil-

lion Americans will be lifted out of poverty. This includes 600,000 children who will finally have a shot at a better life simply because of raising the minimum wage.

The Raise the Wage Act helps women and workers of color the most since women are nearly two-thirds of the American workforce who earn the Federal minimum wage or just above that. In Michigan's 14th District, up to 61,000 women and over 76,000 Black and Hispanic workers in my district alone will receive a wage increase. This bill is way overdue.

Mr. Speaker, let me reference a letter from my colleague, the Honorable EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas: "We have seen a recent epidemic of the working poor, hardworking Americans who each day are forced to choose between food, shelter, clothing, or healthcare for themselves and their families. In the past 40 years, minimum wage increases have not kept pace," causing many families to struggle.

The Honorable EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON says that the current minimum wage in her home State of Texas "is only \$7.25 an hour and even lower for workers in the service industry who instead rely heavily on customer tips for take-home pay. The African American community, which makes up a significant portion of the minimum wage workforce, is disproportionately affected by lower wages.

"According to the Economic Policy Institute, 38.1 percent of all Black workers would receive higher pay as a result of an increased wage, therefore opening up new economic opportunities.

"We must act quickly to ensure that any American willing to work 40 hours a week can afford basic necessities."

That is why, Representative EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON says, she is proud to be a cosponsor of H.R. 582, the Raise the Wage Act. The bill will lift millions of Americans out of poverty by gradually increasing the minimum wage over a period of 5 years to \$15.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be on the Record and join my colleague, Representative EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, to say: "The growing racial wealth gap in our country can no longer go unnoticed. We now have an opportunity to take concrete steps to help close the gap."

This bill is way overdue.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Michigan for bringing forward her commitment and leadership on these important issues and sharing her support for the Raise the Wage Act, which this body will be considering later this week.

Just before we started this Special Order hour, one of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle came up and talked about the negative impact of raising the Federal minimum wage. It is so interesting that CEOs for the 350 largest U.S. companies on average were paid \$18.9 million in 2017, which is a 17 percent increase from the previous

year. Meanwhile, wages for the average U.S. worker grew by 0.2 percent during that time.

How is it okay that CEO pay can go up 17 percent, and the average CEO for the 350 largest U.S. companies can, on average, be paid \$19 million, and we can't afford to give America a raise?

On average, controlling for age, gender, and education, Black workers are paid 16.2 percent less than White workers. According to the Census Bureau—which is why it is so important for people to participate in the Census, so that we have this vital data—in 2016, the average household income for a White family was \$80,720. For a Black family, that number sat at \$38,555, less than half of what an average White family took home.

That affects every aspect of that family's life, from their ability to afford housing to healthcare to being able to put food on the table and put gas in the car so that they can make it to their work.

We believe that one job should be enough and that people should be able to have a livable wage to take care of themselves and their families.

I urge my colleagues throughout this body, particularly those on the other side, that if they are going to come to this floor this week and oppose giving Americans a raise, then they have to be able to explain why they support CEO pay increasing more than 17 percent in one given year while U.S. worker wages grew at less than 0.2 percent during that same time.

Workers deserve a wage increase. Their wages have been stagnant for far too long. That is why we are encouraging this body to bring up the Raise the Wage Act.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS), who is my good friend. He is a gentleman with whom I have the honor of serving on the Ways and Means Committee. The Representative likes to talk about the history of his great city, and I know he is here to also talk about why the constituents of that great city deserve a wage increase.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I applaud the gentleman and the coleader for leading this event for the Congressional Black Caucus under the leadership of Chairwoman KAREN BASS. The Congressional Black Caucus is the conscience of this Congress.

I don't know if you know, and I am constantly reminding people, Mr. Speaker, that the President, in August 2016, came to Philadelphia and said, "What the hell do you have to lose?" That is what he said.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues from the Congressional Black Caucus in calling for an increase in the Federal minimum wage. I am pleased that the Democratic leadership plans to put the Raise the Wage Act up for a vote in the House.

A raise for these workers is long overdue. Congress has not raised the national minimum wage in 10 years.

My home State has not raised its minimum wage for 13 years. Inflation has increased the cost of living nearly 19 percent from 10 years ago. Food, healthcare, and utilities all went up.

Let me repeat that. A raise for these workers is long overdue. Congress has not raised the national minimum wage for 10 years. My home State of Pennsylvania has not raised its minimum wage for 13 years. Inflation has raised the cost of living nearly 19 percent from 10 years ago. Food, healthcare, and utilities all went up.

Members from both parties should be able to agree that no one who works full-time should live in poverty. I am very focused on poverty because my city of Philadelphia has a 26 percent poverty rate.

Raising the minimum wage is one of the best tools in the toolbox for lifting Americans out of poverty. That includes 600,000 children who will be lifted out of poverty by the Raise the Wage Act.

It is important, Mr. Speaker, to understand that one of our colleagues, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, who leads the effort around the reduction of poverty, particularly child poverty, when we talk about the issue, 600,000 children will be lifted out of poverty by the Raise the Wage Act. How can my colleagues say no to that?

We need to find some way to move forward. We have an opportunity, and that opportunity is the Raise the Wage Act. Americans who are working the hardest to grow our economy need to share the rewards of that growth. Just think, that raise in their pocket allows them to spend money in the economy. That is not something to take lightly.

When we talk about small businesses—and I am the vice chair of the Small Business Committee—and we talk about small businesses being the backbone of our community, obviously, they need customers. They need customers who have money in their pockets.

It is not just enough for that individual, but it is enough for entrepreneurs. It is enough for building businesses. It is enough for building communities. It is enough for all of us to recognize the importance and the significance of raising the wage.

We need to not take that lightly. We need to understand that, in some of our communities, there is a growing income inequality gap, and we need to address that. The way to address it is by fundamentally raising the wage. Raising the wage gives people more of an opportunity to participate in this economy.

We know this economy tends to be rigged for those who are at the top against those at the bottom who are trying to struggle and find a way. When you talk about our not raising the minimum wage in 10 years—and 13 years in Pennsylvania—I want anyone who is listening or watching what is taking place here this evening to know that the Congressional Black Caucus,

clearly, as the chairperson always likes to say—she always talks about hidden figures. The hidden figures are that we haven't raised the wage in 10 years, and in Pennsylvania, they haven't raised it in 13 years.

Americans who are working are working harder. They are working more than one job. They are working two, three jobs. There is something wrong with that. The CEOs have definitely been getting their raises.

Where is the raise for the people who cook their food, make their beds, and clean their offices? Where is the raise for the people who cook their food, make their beds, and clean their offices?

Today, led by my two colleagues from the great State of Nevada and the great Virgin Islands who are leaders in this effort, I am glad to join with them to add my voice to raising the wage.

This is not an accident that the Congressional Black Caucus will be in the forefront because this is an issue that means a great deal to an awful lot of Americans and particularly African Americans when we have a President of the United States who comes and says: What do you have to lose?

The fact of the matter is, when we look at his administration, clearly, the policies are not connecting to moving the people, at least not moving the people whom we are talking to and the situations that we are seeing.

The bottom line on the minimum wage is simple: Pay these people now. Pay these people now and raise the wage.

We can no longer joke about this. We can no longer have it as political rhetoric. We must show action, and we must show people that we are determined to raise the wage.

I thank my colleagues for giving me the opportunity to add my voice to both of yours for what we are attempting to do today. We need to keep doing this every single day and not leave here until this wage raises.

The bottom line of the minimum wage is simple: Pay these people now and raise the wage.

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Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania and again thank him for his dedication and commitment on behalf of his constituents in Philadelphia, in bringing their voice to this process.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of tonight's Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nevada?

There was no objection.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, we are led by a dynamic chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Representative from California, Congresswoman

KAREN BASS, and I had the honor of attending one of her congressional field hearings this week. The CBC is dedicated on a number of policy platforms, and this is among them.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from the U.S. Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT), my colleague, whom I am coanchored with this evening.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD) for yielding and thank him for the work he is doing on this issue and so many issues that affect American families.

Sometimes here in Congress we can be distracted by issues that come up on a daily basis, but the gentleman from Nevada has kept his mind focused on the things that everyday Americans are concerned with, that is, proper wages, livable homes, good education, affordable housing. I am appreciative that we have kept our eyes on the prize, kept our eyes focused on the policy and the things that move the needle on this.

I was so happy to hear just a few moments ago from the gentleman from Philadelphia, Mr. EVANS, because, although he talks quite a bit about Philadelphia, there is one area he talks about quite a bit, and that is sustaining the Black middle class, sustaining Black homeownership.

This minimum wage bill, Raise the Wage Act of 2019, supports those kind of initiatives. It gradually raises, as we have said, the Federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$15 over several years, over the next 6 years, to lift millions of workers out of poverty, even those who are working, who are still the working-class poor, stimulate local economies, and restore the value of the minimum wage. It gives 40 million Americans a raise.

As we heard from the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE), my colleague and good friend, it helps women and workers of color.

Today, more than 40 percent of Black workers and one-third of Hispanic workers will get a raise under this bill. Women make up nearly two-thirds of all minimum wage workers.

In areas like the Virgin Islands, where many of the homes and percentages of homes are run by single-person households, those being predominantly Black women, this is very important that women are two-thirds of the minimum wage workers. For them to be lifted out raises families.

One thing that I think this touches on and is part of that hasn't really been expressed as yet is wealth disparity.

The wealth, the measure of an individual's or a family's financial net worth, provides all sorts of opportunities for American families. Wealth makes it easier for people to seamlessly transition between jobs, move to new neighborhoods, and respond to emergency situations.

Unfortunately, wealth in this country is unequally distributed by race,

particularly between White and Black households. African American families have a fraction of the wealth of White families, leaving them more economically insecure and with far fewer opportunities for economic mobility.

Even after considering positive factors such as increased education levels, African Americans still have less wealth than Whites. Less wealth translates into fewer opportunities and is compounded by lower income levels and fewer chances to build wealth or pass accumulated wealth down to future generations.

This also is very symptomatic and has a well-documented history of mortgage market discrimination. It means that Blacks are significantly less likely to be homeowners than Whites, which means they have less access to savings and tax benefits that come with owning a home.

Persistent labor market discrimination and segregation also force Blacks into fewer and less advantageous employment opportunities than their White counterparts. Even when they have homeownership, they have less access and ability to be able to use that homeownership.

In the Virgin Islands, surprisingly, almost 60 percent of families of Black people own their home, but they are unable, and the banks are unwilling, to allow them to leverage that wealth for education, for second mortgages, to start businesses. The scrutiny is high.

When we are talking about wages, in the Virgin Islands, we make 75 percent of what is the national average. The average for a Virgin Islands family is \$37,254; whereas, the estimated national average is \$50,221. And 13.5 percent of U.S. Virgin Islanders have family income levels below \$10,000 a year—for a family. That is horrendous.

This bill, however, and passage of this bill would mean lots of wealth and lots of opportunities for Black families, African Americans, the working poor, White poor families, Hispanic families.

African Americans own approximately one-tenth of the wealth of White Americans. In 2016, the median wealth for nonretired Black households 25 years old and older was less than one-tenth that of similarly situated White households. Those are White households, making the same and having the same access as Black families, which are making one-tenth that of similarly situated White households.

The Black-White wealth gap has still not recovered from the Great Recession. In 2007, immediately after the Great Recession, the median wealth of Blacks was nearly 14 percent of Whites. Although Black wealth increased at a faster rate than White wealth in 2016, Blacks still owned less than 10 percent of White's wealth at the median.

Black households have fewer and are in greater need of personal savings than their White counterparts. For a variety of reasons, Blacks are more likely to experience negative income

shocks but are less likely to have access to emergency savings. As a consequence, Blacks are more likely to fall behind on their bills and go into debt during times of emergency.

The systematic challenges in narrowing the wealth gap for African Americans with Whites persists. The wealth gap persists regardless of a household's education, marital status, age, or income.

This is something that we are fighting for. We are grateful for this legislation that is going to make a difference in African American lives.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for bringing this important matter to the floor for us to discuss here this evening, and it is my plea for my colleagues to pass this legislation, for it to go to the Senate so that it can make a tremendous difference in so many Americans' lives. Raising the income level of the less fortunate assists all Americans in raising the tide of Americans' ability to excel.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the U.S. Virgin Islands, and I appreciate, again, her work as a coanchor tonight and bringing not only the increasing issues of wages for American workers, but tying and connecting the point around housing and the ability to really afford to live.

As we have heard time and time again from our constituents, people are falling behind, and it is because they have seen stagnant wages for far too long. While the other side is giving corporate tax cuts to the wealthiest, 83 percent of the benefit of their \$1.7 trillion tax going to benefit only the top 1 percent, it has done nothing to help the working poor and those who actually help build a strong economy.

For the past 40 years, Congress has failed to increase the minimum wage to keep up with inflation, making it the longest period of time in history without an increase. Today's minimum wage workers have less buying power than minimum wage workers had in the 1960s. In the past 40 years, the Federal minimum wage, stuck at \$7.25 since 2009, has lost 30 percent of its value.

What does this mean? It means the minimum wage is worth less today than it was in 1960. The same wage can't buy you as much due to inflation and wages not being corrected to match for inflation.

The person who has been leading the charge as the chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, the person who has brought so much perspective on so many issues, from criminal justice reform to voting rights and now is making sure that this body considers the Raise the Wage Act this week, is none other than Congressman BOBBY SCOTT.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the great State of Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, we are considering the Raise the Wage

Act later this week. That proposal will gradually increase the Federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2025, and after that, adjust for inflation.

I thank the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD) for convening this Special Order to discuss the minimum wage on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus, because this gives us an opportunity to explore the historic and continuing intersection between race and the Federal minimum wage.

When the Federal minimum wage was established under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, it purposely excluded many African American workers. Agriculture and most service workers, who are predominantly African American, were exempted from labor law protections.

From 1930 to 1940, the share of Southern Blacks who worked in agriculture, in domestic service was over 40 percent. At the same time, the practice of tipping, which had originally enabled American employers to avoid paying wages to newly freed Black workers, was in effect.

And the law also treated disabled workers as inferior and permanently codified some forms of labor as lower than minimum wage work. Those exclusions lowered labor standards in the South by excluding a large share of its workforce and denied African American workers access to basic labor protections.

But in 1966, Congress finally amended the Fair Labor Standards Act to expand coverage to agriculture, restaurants, nursing homes, and other service workers. The benefits of that act were particularly strong for Black workers. Nearly one-third of Black workers gained protection under the Fair Labor Standards Act compared to only 18 percent of Whites.

The size of that minimum wage increase in finally protecting a larger share of African Americans closed 20 percent of the Black-White earnings and income gap. Estimates based on the differential impact of the 1966 amendments by industry and wage levels within industry give a clear indication of how important the minimum wage protection was, because it established a Federal minimum wage.

We know how effective it was because Black workers in industries that were not protected by the Fair Labor Standards Act were paid significantly lower than the minimum wage. After increases in minimum wage increased earnings by an average of 34 percent, studies found modest to positive job gains as a direct result of the increase in the minimum wage in the industries that came under the Fair Labor Standards Act protection.

The poverty rate for African American children fell from a staggering 65 percent in 1965 to 39 percent in 1969 after the minimum wage expansion in coverage and increase to its highest value in real terms. That caused a rapid decline in childhood poverty amongst African Americans. Fifty

years later, the Raise the Wage Act would have a similarly strong impact on African American workers.

This past June marked the longest time in the history of the minimum wage where there was no increase in the minimum wage. Just about half of African American workers live in the 21 States where the minimum wage has not been increased over \$7.25 an hour.

Most of the States, in fact, have not waited for the Federal Government; they went ahead and increased it. But half of the African American population lives in the 21 States stuck at \$7.25.

To make matters worse, factoring for inflation, these minimum wage workers have actually suffered a cut over the last decade. So, as a result, millions of Americans who are working full-time still find themselves in poverty. In fact, one recent study showed that there is no city or county in America where a minimum wage worker working 40 hours a week can afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.

□ 2015

So, for nearly a third of Black workers, this is important legislation. One-third of Black workers would get a raise if Congress passes the Raise the Wage Act.

We have a responsibility and an opportunity to restore the value of the minimum wage, lift millions of hard-working people out of poverty, and boost the wages for African American families across the country.

There is nothing more that we can do to actually reduce the wage and income gaps, the wealth gaps, that we have in America today than raise the minimum wage.

So, this week, we must pass the Raise the Wage Act and restore President Roosevelt's promise of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman from the Education and Labor Committee. It makes a big difference when he has the gavel and the priorities that he has set as the chairman of that committee and the fact that, as we have done from the beginning of this Congress, the For the People Agenda has been focused on making a difference in the lives of the American people that we represent.

The gentleman just pointed out that two-thirds of the minimum wage workers in this country are women and that two-fifths—in fact, 38 percent of African Americans and one-third, 33 percent of Latinos—would get a raise when we pass the legislation and the Federal minimum wage is increased to \$15 an hour.

It would also boost the economy. A 10 percent increase in the minimum wage would increase sales by around \$2 billion each year.

Now, I want to just take on a couple of the myths that have been out there with this administration and my Republican colleagues who have opposed the efforts of the House Democrats to bring forward this wage increase.

One of the myths out there is around the Black unemployment rate in this country. We hear often the President say that, among certain racial groups, particularly African Americans, the unemployment rate is at an all-time low.

And while it is, in fact, true that the unemployment rate is down and it has been down and has been steadily falling since 2011, well before Trump was sworn into office, that rate of decline has not gained momentum since.

In fact, even at an annual rate of 6.6 percent, the Black unemployment rate is still more than double the White unemployment rate, which is at 3.2 percent.

What this says is that the Black unemployment rate has been about double the White unemployment rate for more than four decades, making this relationship more historically significant than any single unemployment rate.

So, Mr. President, if you want to take credit for the low unemployment rate among African Americans, then you need to be held accountable for keeping the rate down and to propose a plan to close the persistent 2-to-1 racial disparity that has existed for more than 40 years.

Another issue that I want to take on is the fact of the amount of jobs that have been created since this administration has taken over. We know that many of the jobs that have been created are, in fact, low-wage, low-paying jobs. Many of the jobs are in the gig economy, and those individuals are not getting paid the same amount as traditional workers.

We know that many employers are paying workers for less than full-time work, which means that they still cannot provide for their families, that they are not being afforded healthcare, and, in fact, the government is subsidizing many of these corporations—the same corporations that give their CEOs 17 percent pay increases but then want to tell the workers: “You can't have a raise.”

And these are the myths that the other side wants to, again, put out there to distract from the House Democrats and our agenda in giving Americans a raise.

Now, I want to just touch on one specific point from my home State in Nevada. Recently, our Governor, Governor Steve Sisolak, the first Democratic Governor to be elected in Nevada in 20 years, signed into law a \$12 minimum wage increase, following 10 years of wage stagnation for working-class families in Nevada.

In fact, the last time we raised the minimum wage in Nevada was when I was serving in the State Senate. So, elections do have consequences.

But, with the help of our legislative leaders, Speaker Jason Frierson and Senate Majority Leader Nicole Cannizzaro, the Nevada legislature increased the Nevada minimum wage to \$12. But that raise won't go into effect

until 2020, and, for now, one in five workers in Nevada are making under \$12 an hour, less than \$24,000 a year—\$24,000 a year.

What is a family supposed to do? How are they supposed to make ends meet on \$24,000 per year?

Mr. Speaker, \$12 for Nevadans is a step in the right direction, but we need to be working to provide equitable wages for all Nevadans.

The Raise the Wage Act would work toward a \$15 minimum wage by 2024, as the chairman from the Education and Labor Committee indicated.

A pay increase will benefit 127,000 workers in my district alone. Specifically, it will raise wages for 18,800 Black workers, more than any other congressional district in Nevada.

So, the Raise the Wage Act is an important measure. It would give up to 27 million workers a raise, lifting 1.3 million Americans out of poverty and boosting economic growth by putting money into the pockets of workers, who will spend that money in growing the economy, not like the corporate tax cut that was given to big corporations where they simply just bought up more shares of their own stock.

They didn't do anything to hire more workers or to help stimulate the economy. They just made themselves more rich.

All Americans who work hard deserve to be able to afford a middle-class life and opportunities to get ahead.

I believe that one job should be enough and that it is time that we set our children up for success by making sure that working families have the wages that they need to provide for themselves and their family.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT).

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that discussion about what is happening in Nevada and raising the minimum wage, what that is going to do in the gentleman's State. Kudos to the Governor to take that bold leap.

There is concern about what happens with small businesses, and I know that the chairman of the Committee on Education and Labor has been thinking about that as well, that this bill does take this into account, that there are small businesses that this may be difficult for.

But we have to understand what the entire objective is of this bill. I know that there are amendments by other good Democrats to look at the Government Accountability Office to determine employment impacts.

That is much more helpful than what was done with the tax bill that the Republicans passed. They aren't trying to see what the impact has been of their legislation. They didn't ask for a lookback to see is this, in fact, stimulating the economy, because the objective was not to stimulate the economy.

The objective was to give the 1 percent—those corporate CEOs and others—additional money. It was not to

put money into the economy. Because, if it was, then we would be looking at it right now: What is the impact on America?

That was not put into that tax bill. But the Democrats are willing to do that. The Democrats want to make sure that this legislation is doing what it is meant to do; that is, to be for the people, for the larger American people, by supporting that.

When I was talking earlier about the wealth gap and income, income and employment are obstacles to the wealth gap. The income gap has actually worsened over time.

According to a 2016 Economic Policy Institute report, the income gap between Blacks and Whites has grown since the 1970s, not lessened. In 1979, for example, Black men earned 22 percent less than White men. In 2015, Black men earned 31 percent less.

The report's authors note that, in 1979, Black women's wages reached near parity with White women's wages, but that by 2015 the gap had risen to 19 percent.

We are not getting better. The equality gap is not narrowing. We need to face the statistics. And Democrats are willing to do something about that.

The report also found that the gap persists across women's educational levels and worsens for those with higher levels of educational attainment.

The gap at a higher level of education for White women and Black women with similar education is worse than it is for those lower.

In 1980, college-educated Black women with more work experience actually earned slightly higher wages than college-educated White women with the same experience. By 2014, however, the gap had widened to 10 percent in White women's favor. That is a reversal.

Similarly, while the gap between college-educated Black and White men in 1980 was slightly less than 10 percent, it rose to 20 percent by 2014.

In 2017, researchers from the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco similarly concluded that the Black-White earning gap is growing, and that the growth can largely be attributable to so-called immeasurable factors.

What are some of those factors? Those factors that play a role in the Black-White income and employment gap include employment discrimination, weak enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, and racial differences in unobserved skill levels, as opposed to measurable factors such as educational attainment or work experience.

I am grateful that we have this time this evening to talk about this, to let the American people see the truth—not a tweet, not what is happening on the news on a regular basis, but the things that everyday Americans care about: wages; minimum wage; having quality of life; and, as my colleague from Nevada said, the ability to have one job to sustain your family, not having to

juggle two and three jobs, leaving your children at home and not being able to be an important and positive force in your children's lives because you have to work.

We are concerned as well about what is happening to our young children who don't have that supervision in the evening.

Those are some of the issues where we have concern in Black communities, not because parents aren't working and they are not there for their children because they are shiftless, they are lazy, et cetera, the things that you hear. It is because parents have two jobs. They are trying to hold it together.

Single households, even those households that have both parents working, they have to have two jobs to make ends meet.

This is a means to get people to be able not only to get out of poverty but to support their families, to support their communities, to create wealth, to have homeownership, which allows access to so many other things such as education and so many things that are, in fact, the American Dream.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman was talking about the impact beyond just family incomes, which is important. And we want to give all Americans a raise.

While the priorities on the other side were about giving corporations and billionaires more wealth creation, we are laser-focused on putting more money in the pockets of hardworking Americans.

But the question I have is around the recent research with States that, following an increase in wages, we actually can see the rates of suicides fall, consumer spending rise, and a more productive workforce.

There is no place in America where a full-time worker making \$7.25 an hour can support their entire family, let alone afford basic needs.

There is no place in America where a full-time worker making the current \$7.25 an hour can support their entire family.

And, as I said, the productivity piece—which, again, my colleagues are always talking about the need to make America more competitive and more productive. Well, in one study, researchers tracked 10,000 workers at about 200 department stores and found that a dollar increase in the minimum wage led a typical employee to sell about 5.4 percent more per hour.

So, if we give workers the wage that they are deserving of, they will put that extra money to work for the American economy, unlike giving more tax breaks to the wealthy. For a worker earning the minimum wage, the increase could be almost 20 percent.

□ 2030

Now, again, I have underscored repeatedly the impacts to the economy, and we will take on that debate later this week when this bill comes to the floor.

But the point I just wanted to ask my colleague about is that human impact. You know, this is more than just numbers. This is the two-thirds of American workers who are women who are increasingly the head of their household.

So can the gentlewoman relate to that impact and the constituents that she serves and the stories that she has heard about the anxiety that they go through every day and not being able to make ends meet?

Ms. PLASKETT. Every day, every week, and definitely every month, they are trying to juggle which bill they are going to pay, and which bill they are not going to pay. Are they going to be able to keep the lights on? Are they going to be able to pay the rent?

In the Virgin Islands, public school students wear uniforms. Are they going to be able to scrounge up money at the end of the summer to be able to provide clothing for their children to be able to go to school?

Those are the things that people are concerned with working minimum wage jobs, and working them hard; and then maybe at night having a night-time job somewhere else; and making sure that maybe one of the older children is watching the younger ones; making sure that they are asleep while they are away at that job; and praying that nothing happens while they are there, not because they are negligent parents, but that they care enough to be trying to put food on the table.

Those are the stories that I am sure you hear in your district; that I know I hear in the Virgin Islands; and that I am sure all of our colleagues, if they are willing to listen to the people that are on the ground, the people that have put them here in Congress, are facing every day.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I know the affected workers that I hear from in my district, they want this raise. This raise would provide on the order of about \$3,000 a year. That is enough money to make a tremendous difference in the life of a preschool teacher, a bank teller. We have got fast-food workers who, today, struggle to get by on around \$20,000 a year.

A \$15 minimum wage by 2024 would generate \$144 billion in higher wages for workers and would also benefit the communities in which they live.

So while corporate profits, as a share of our national income, are at an all-time high, wages are at a 65-year low. So if we are not going to give workers a raise now, when are we going to give it to them? They have been waiting for far too long.

I want to commend the leadership of our Speaker, of course; the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, the chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, it is because of their leadership, the chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, HAKEEM JEFFRIES, and others, that this is part of the For the People Agenda.

This is why we are laser-focused. And we are laser-focused on a lot of priorities. We want to give workers a raise. We also want to address housing affordability. We want to address the issues around healthcare costs and the out-of-pocket expenses that so many Americans are dealing with.

We know that more entrepreneurs want to start a new business, and we want to give them the tools and the resources necessary for them to do so.

We want to repeal some of the unnecessary tax burdens on Americans, like the Cadillac tax on healthcare, which I know this body is also going to be considering.

So these are among the priorities of the House Democratic Caucus in the For the People Agenda that we are raising up and reminding people that we need to deal with this congressional session.

So, just to highlight, again, the Raise the Wage Act of 2019 would gradually raise the Federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2024; and here is how it would work.

As the chairman has indicated, it would raise the Federal minimum wage to \$8.55 this year and increase it over the next 5 years until it reaches \$15 an hour in 2024. After 2024, it would adjust the minimum wage each year to keep pace with growth in the typical worker's wages, something that we have not done for some time.

It would phase out the outdated sub-minimum wage for tip workers, which has been frozen at a meager \$2.13 since 1991. And it would sunset the sub-minimum wages for workers with disabilities employed in sheltered workshops, and for workers under age 20.

This is a commonsense measure, something that American workers and our constituents have been demanding. In fact, 1 in 9 U.S. workers are paid wages that leave them in poverty today, even when working full-time and year round. And so that is why this bill is so important, the Raise the Wage Act.

I am looking forward to working with my colleagues to bring this measure to the floor later this week, and to debate with my colleagues on the other side where they stand and whether they will join with the House Democrats to pass this legislation over to the Senate so that they can also take action.

I also want to just touch on a point that my colleague was talking about, dealing with home ownership in the Black community. Today, The Wall Street Journal released a report that Black home ownership is at an all-time low. It has fallen 8.6 percentage points since its peak in 2004, hitting an all-time low in the first quarter of this year.

Homes and neighborhoods with a concentration of Black homeowners, on average, are worth less than 6 percent than they were in 2006. And in the second quarter of 2018, Black home ownership stood at 41.6 percent, down more

than a full half percent from the first quarter rate.

Nationally, the Black home ownership rate is only 41.6 percent, virtually unchanged from 50 years ago when the Federal Fair Housing Act banned racial discrimination in housing. The national White home ownership rate, by comparison, is 71 percent.

So these are really dire statistics that I wanted to bring to the attention of this body. I know that the chairwoman of the Financial Services Committee, MAXINE WATERS, and her Subcommittee on Housing are working to tackle this problem as well.

But it is time that we address the 30 percent point gap in home ownership between Black and White Americans, which is at its highest point in the new millennium.

Why is this so important?

It is, because, for Black Americans, so much of our wealth is accumulated in the equity of home ownership. And again, this is central to the issue of giving workers a raise because they need that raise in order to afford the higher cost of housing, the higher cost of healthcare, the higher cost of food, the higher cost of gas. Everything is going up but their pay check, and that is what I hear from my constituents, from those who are earning a minimum wage.

Under the Raise the Wage Act, it would increase by almost 20 percent. So I am looking forward to, again, debating my colleagues on this important issue when we come to the floor later this week.

As we have talked about here tonight, the Congressional Black Caucus is laser-focused on making sure that Americans get a raise. We know that giving Americans a raise would give up to 27 million workers the benefit of increased take-home pay. It would lift 1.3 Americans out of poverty. And it would boost our economic growth by putting money where it belongs, in the pockets of workers who will spend that money in the economy.

Unlike what was done with the corporate tax cuts that were given, where 83 percent of the benefit of the \$1.7 trillion tax cut went to benefit just the top 1 percent, we are focused on helping everyday Americans get the money they need in their pocket.

Now, I asked a question at the beginning of tonight's Special Order hour dealing with the 350 CEOs from the largest U.S. companies who earned an average pay, in 2017, of \$1.89 million. That is a lot of money.

I have no beef with CEOs getting a fair pay, but that pay increase amounted to a 17 percent increase from the previous year. And just before we started the Special Order hour, one of my colleagues came to the floor and said that increasing the Federal minimum wage would be devastating to our economy.

Well, what does he say about the CEOs who are getting record pay and record bonuses, and the fact that all of

the corporate tax cuts that they provided went to just buying more stocks in those companies?

Meanwhile, the wages for the average U.S. worker grew at .2 percent during that same time. This is a fundamental question that I honestly would like my colleagues to be able to answer, and I will seek them out during this week, because I want them to join with us to pass this bill.

This really should not be a partisan issue. Giving Americans a raise is something that we all should agree on benefits all of our workers. My colleagues on the other side have low-wage, low-paid workers in their district just like I have low-wage, low-paid workers in my district.

The Raise the Wage Act of 2019, which proposes raising the Federal minimum wage in six steps to \$15 an hour by 2024, will result in a pay increase for 38.1 percent of all Black workers and 23.2 percent of all White workers.

This disproportional effect on Black workers comes not just because they are more often employed in jobs that currently pay less, as we have discussed tonight, than the proposed minimum wage, but also because they are less likely to work in States or localities that have passed a State minimum wage that is higher than the Federal minimum wage.

So that is why it is time for Federal policy to set the standard so, regardless, of where you live, you can earn a decent, livable wage to provide for yourself and your family.

We believe that one job should be enough. It should be enough to provide for you and your family. It should be enough to put a roof over your head. It should be enough to make sure that you can pay for the copays and the prescription drugs that you need in order to stay well.

It should be enough so that we can address food insecurity in this country; and it should be enough so that your children can be set up for success in their future.

I encourage each and every one of my colleagues this week to study this bill; to think about the constituents back home in their district; and to ask themselves, what were we sent here to do; to help the well-off and the well-connected, or to give voice to those who deserve to be heard in this body?

I am honored to be a Representative from Nevada's Fourth Congressional District; and I know my district is not exactly the same as every other district, but I have rural parts and I have urban parts of my district, covering 52,000 square miles.

The commonality in my district is that there are struggling people throughout every corner of my district. And so when I vote this week in favor of giving workers a raise, I will be voting to give a raise to every single worker throughout Nevada's Fourth, and throughout this great country.

I thank my colleague, the coanchor, Congresswoman STACEY PLASKETT, the

chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, Mr. SCOTT, and each and every one of my colleagues who have spoken here tonight.

I thank the Speaker for giving us this hour to bring about the issues that are important.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the issue of stagnant wages for African Americans and, as a result, the lack of economic opportunities.

We have seen a recent epidemic of the working poor—hardworking Americans who each day are forced to choose between food, shelter, clothing or health care for themselves and their families. In the past 40 years, minimum wage increases have not kept pace with inflation, causing millions of families to struggle with stagnant wages while the cost of goods and services continue to rise. The current minimum wage in my home state of Texas is only \$7.25 an hour, and even lower for workers in the service industry, who instead rely heavily on customer tips for take-home pay.

The African American community, which makes up a significant portion of the minimum-wage workforce, is disproportionately affected by lower wages. According to the Economic Policy Institute, 38.1% of all black workers would receive higher pay as a result of an increased wage, therefore opening up new economic opportunities.

We must act quickly to ensure that any American willing to work 40 hours a week can afford basic necessities, that is why I am proud to cosponsor H.R. 582, the Raise the Wage Act. This bill would lift millions of Americans out of poverty by gradually increasing the minimum wage over a period of five years to \$15.

Mr. Speaker, the growing racial wealth gap in our country can no longer go unnoticed. We now have an opportunity to take concrete steps to help close the gap.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 44 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2022

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MORELLE) at 10 o'clock and 22 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3494, DAMON PAUL NELSON AND MATTHEW YOUNG POLLARD INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEARS 2018, 2019, AND 2020; RELATING TO THE CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE REPORT 116-125 AND AN ACCOMPANYING RESOLUTION; RELATING TO THE CONSIDERATION OF MEASURES DISAPPROVING OF SALES, EXPORTS, OR APPROVALS PURSUANT TO THE ARMS EXPORT CONTROL ACT; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 489, CONDEMNING PRESIDENT TRUMP'S RACIST COMMENTS DIRECTED AT MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Mr. RASKIN, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 116-154) on the resolution (H. Res. 491) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3494) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2020 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes; relating to the consideration of House Report 116-125 and an accompanying resolution; relating to the consideration of measures disapproving of sales, exports, or approvals pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act; and providing for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 489) condemning President Trump's racist comments directed at Members of Congress, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 582, RAISE THE WAGE ACT

Mr. RASKIN, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 116-155) on the resolution (H. Res. 492) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 582) to provide for increases in the Federal minimum wage, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mr. JEFFRIES (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of family commitment.

EXPENDITURES BY THE OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL UNDER HOUSE RESOLUTION 6, 116TH CONGRESS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC, July 15, 2019.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 302(c) of House Resolution 6 (116th Congress) I hereby submit the attached statement “setting forth the aggregate amounts expended by the Office of General Counsel on outside counsel and other experts pursuant to this title on a quarterly basis” for the quarter beginning on April 1, 2019 and ending on June 30, 2019, for publication in the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

ZOE LOFGREN,
Chairperson.

Attachment.

AGGREGATE AMOUNT EXPENDED ON OUTSIDE COUNSEL OR OTHER EXPERTS—H. RES. 6

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| January 1–March 31, 2019 | \$0.00 |
| April 1–June 30, 2019 | 0.00 |
| Total | 0.00 |

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Cheryl L. Johnson, Clerk of the House, reported that on July 15, 2019, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 866. To provide a lactation room in public buildings.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 24 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Tuesday, July 16, 2019, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

BUDGETARY EFFECTS OF PAYGO LEGISLATION

Pursuant to the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (PAYGO), Mr. YARMUTH hereby submits, prior to the vote on passage, for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, that H.R. 526, the Cambodia Democracy Act, as amended, would have no significant effect on direct spending or revenues, and therefore, the budgetary effects of such bill are estimated as zero.

Pursuant to the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (PAYGO), Mr. YARMUTH hereby submits, prior to the vote on passage, for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, that H.R. 2037, the Saudi Arabia Human Rights and Accountability Act of 2019, as amended, would have no significant effect on direct spending or revenues, and therefore, the budgetary effects of such bill are estimated as zero.