based on a policy approach that is more appropriate for the long-term economic interests of those families who today struggle against the odds.

Mr. President, with that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I know of no one else who wishes to speak. I have been authorized by the distinguished Democratic leader, Senator DASCHLE, and the ranking member, Mr. LEAHY—and I have exhausted my time—to yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

PRESIDIO PROPERTIES ADMINISTRATION ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will now report the pending business.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1296) to provide for the administration of certain Presidio properties at minimal cost to the Federal taxpayer.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

Murkowski Modified amendment No. 3564, in the nature of a substitute.

Dole (for Burns) amendment No. 3571 (to amendment No. 3564), to provide for the exchange of certain land and interests in land located in the Lost Creek area and other areas of the Deerlodge National Forest, Montana.

Dole (for Burns) amendment No. 3572 (to amendment No. 3571), in the nature of substitute.

Kennedy amendment No. 3573, to provide for an increase in the minimum wage rate.

Kerry amendment No. 3574 (to amendment No. 3573), in the nature of a substitute.

Dole motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Finance with instructions.

Dole amendment No. 3653 (to the instructions of the motion to commit), to strike the instructions and insert in lieu thereof ''to report back to April 21, 1996 amendments to reform welfare and Medicaid effective one day after the effective date of the bill.''

Dole amendment No. 3654 (to amendment No. 3653), in the nature of a substitute.

AMENDMENT NO. 3573

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 30 minutes equally divided prior to the cloture vote.

Mr. SIMON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. SIMON. Mr. President, I yield myself 2½ minutes.

We are talking about the minimum wage. We are talking about 12 million Americans who can benefit, and what that means to 12 million Americans, people who are struggling, I do not think I need to spell out for most people. But unfortunately, in the U.S. Senate, we have to spell it out.

We ought to spell it out, among other things, in terms of welfare. I have heard the phrase ''welfare reform'' on the floor of the Senate over and over again this year and last year. Let me tell you, this minimum wage bill will do more to help people on welfare and for welfare reform than any welfare reform bill that has been before us. And it will save money for the Federal Government.

Once in a while, we can do the humanitarian thing and save money. We will save welfare money. We will save money on the earned income tax credit if this is adopted. So for people who are interested in saving money, moving toward a balanced budget, here is one practical way of doing it.

But let me mention one other observation that I think is important, and that is the way we finance campaigns and distort what is taking place. Probably before this session of Congress is over, we are going to reduce the capital gains tax. Primarily 10,000 people will benefit from that. People are going to come out with the numbers, but 60 percent of the benefits go to 10,000 people. But those 10,000 people are contributors on both sides of the aisle, and we listen to them.

How many of the 12 million people earning the minimum wage are big campaign contributors? Virtually none. So their voice is muted in this process. We ought to today speak up for 12 million people who are not big campaign contributors but need our help.

Mr. President, I see you are about to gavel me down, so I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are 12 minutes 15 seconds remaining on your side and 15 minutes remains on the other side.

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield 3 minutes to the Senator from Minnesota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, this minimum wage increase is a very simple and straightforward proposition. Minimum wage right now is $4.25 an hour. You can work 52 weeks a year, 40 hours a week and you still do not make poverty wages. This is important for working families in Minnesota and across the country—almost 200,000 workers in my State—much less their children.

We are talking about a 90-cent increase over 2 years—90 cents over 2 years—to try and respond to the concerns and circumstances of working families in the United States of America, working families in Minnesota.

Let me put it another way. The U.S. Senate a few years ago voted itself 1 year a $30,000 increase in salary. That is almost four times the total yearly income of what minimum wage workers make right now in our country. The U.S. Senate voted itself a $30,000 increase in 1 year, which is almost four times the total annual salary of a minimum wage worker and his or her family in this country, and we cannot raise the minimum wage for working people?

I do not consider this to be partisan strategy. I do not consider this to be a game. I do not consider this to be tactics. People in the United States of America make it a plea that we respond to the issues that they care about; that we respond to fundamental economic justice questions. That a worker in our country should be able to see his or her wage raised from $4.25 an hour to $5.15 an hour over 2 years is a matter of fundamental economic justice. It is what I call a Minnesota economic justice issue, and I urge my colleagues to vote for cloture.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield 3 minutes to my colleague from Massachusetts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, thank you. I am pleased to join with my colleagues in asking the rest of my colleagues to join with all of us in voting for this increase in the minimum wage.

This vote is not a vote on process, it is not a vote on cloture, it is not a vote on who controls the Senate, it is not a vote on Presidential politics; it is a vote on whether or not people who are today working at the minimum wage who are at a record almost 40-year low in the purchasing power of that wage are going to get a raise.

We hear colleagues try to make diversionary arguments: ''Well, this is going to lose jobs.''

We have heard those arguments, Mr. President. We put the minimum wage in America into effect in 1938 at 25 cents. Obviously, to get up to the $4.25, it has been raised in the meantime.

In 1989, we raised it here, and 89 U.S. Senators, Democrat and Republican alike, joined in raising the minimum wage. We raised it each time against the arguments that, ''Oh, this is going to lose us jobs.''

Finally, in the last 5 years, because that argument keeps being raised, a series of studies have been done, study after study. More than two dozen of them have shown you do not lose jobs when you raise the minimum wage. As long as you obviously raise it to a reasonable level, you increase employment.

The study by Lawrence Katz, of Harvard, and Alan Krueger, of Princeton, most recently has showed what happened in New Jersey. New Jersey, Mr. President, raised the minimum wage to a level that is well above the $5.15 that we are seeking. If you had a comparable level today to what they raised it in New Jersey, it would be the equivalent of $5.93. We are only asking to raise it to something that is still 13 percent below the level the minimum wage had in the 1980's. We are not asking to raise it to the full level of purchasing power the minimum wage has had in the past.

America was never slowed by having it at that level in the past. We have increased employment in this country. In fact, after adjusting for inflation, studies would show that if we raised it now to just $5.15 an hour, you would still be below the purchasing power level of the minimum wage in prior years.

The other day we had an employer stand with us talking about the minimum wage. He is in the restaurant business. That is one of the businesses you most often hear about might be negatively impacted. This employer not only pays more than the minimum wage in his restaurant business, but he gives everybody in that business full health care—full health care—more than the minimum wage, and he is doubling his business every single year. He keeps the people employed. He keeps the people working for him. It is good for his business. It is good for the country, Mr. President. This is fair.

When chief executives are getting paid more, when the stock market goes up 34 percent in 1 year, when the productivity of this country increases 12 percentage points over the course of the last 5 years, but wages only go up 2 percent, it is time to say, give those people working at the least point of the economic ladder a raise. I hope we will do that in a bipartisan fashion.

Mr. President, let us not misunderstand this cloture vote today; let us not misunderstand what it means about the prevailing political agenda of the majority leadership who have consistently supported huge tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans and millions of dollars in corporate give-aways, but will not allow a simple up-or-down vote on increasing the minimum wage.

This cloture vote today is that vote. Some on the other side of the aisle would have us believe that this is a vote about schedules, or about Presidential politics, or about Democratic attempts to usurp control of the Senate when, in fact, it is none of those things. It is the vote on whether or not we support an increase in the minimum wage. It's a vote about economic justice.

Mr. President, I have offered, on my part, and we, on this side, have all said that we would ''sit down and shut up,'' in exchange for a vote anytime between now and June—an honest, up-or-down vote on rasing the hourly wage of the poorest American workers. But even that request was rejected by the majority leadership. So, this is not about us—on this side of the aisle—taking hold of the Senate's agenda, or stalling action on the Presidio bill. On the contrary, it is an honest insistence that we address this fundamental issue of fairness and economic justice.

The arguments that we are hearing from the other side—that an increase in the minimum wage loses jobs, that somehow giving people a better chance at survival is a bad thing—simply do not hold up on the economic side or on the fairness side.

In fact, Mr. President, the last time we raised the minimum wage by 90 cents over 2 years, it was with broad bipartisan support and the signature of a Republican President. These arguments never came up then, but now, we cannot even get the Republican majority to bring the issue up for a vote. It would seem to me that the only thing that has significantly changed—besides the inability of 22 million hard working Americans to keep up in this economy—is the political imbalance of a Republican Party sliding hopelessly to the extreme. Because—based on empirical evidence—the need for an increase is clear.

Study after study show that increasing the minimum wage helps.

I have brought up example after example in the last few days of young single mothers and working families in my State, trying desperately to find a job that pays them enough to raise their families with dignity—that pays enough to provide health care for their children, a decent safe place to live—enough to afford daycare and groceries, pay the heat and pay the electricity. Mr. President, is that too much to ask for people on the job and off the doles?

The evidence is clear. This increase would not be out of the range of increases that have been enacted at the Federal level and in some States, and the overwhelming preponderance of evidence—in studies that looked at the two-step 90-cent increase in the Federal minimum at the turn of the decade, as well as State increases at the level of nearly $5.70 an hour in 1996 dollars—is that these increases do not increase job loss.

So any argument here that points to job loss as a reason for voting against giving people a raise, is, on its face, absurd. David Card, in ''Industrial and Labor Relations Review'' in October 1992, studied the first 45-cent increase to $4.25 in the Federal minimum wage and found there to be no increase in job loss. Now, that study is in 1991 dollars. The equivalent in 1996 dollars is $4.93—without—without causing job loss.

Another study by Card and Alan Krueger, ''The Effect of the Minimum Wage on the Fast Food Industry'' studied the effects of New Jersey increasing its minimum wage by 80 cents, from $4.25 an hour to $5.05 an hour in 1992—that's $5.69 an hour in 1996 dollars—and they found that the increase did not cause job loss.

And a specific study by David Card entitled, ''Do Minimum Wages Reduce Employment: A Case Study of California, 1987–1989'' that looked at California's 90-cent increase in the minimum from $3.35 an hour in 1987 to $4.25 an hour in 1988—that's $5.68 in 1996 dollars—has no significant impact on job loss.

Card concluded: ''Comparisons of grouped and individual State data confirm that the rise in the minimum wage increased teenagers' wages. There is no evidence of corresponding losses in teenage employment.''

Another study by Lawrence Katz of Harvard and Alan Krueger of Princeton examined an increase on the minimum wage on the fast-food industry in Texas and found that the employment effects, if anything, were positive.

Mr. President, let us not be fooled by diversionary arguments that muddy the waters. There's no correlation between increases in the minimum wage and job loss, and that argument should be put to rest once and for all.

Harvard labor economist Richard Freeman, in the International Journal of Manpower, in November 1994, said it best. He said: ''at the level of the minimum wage in the 1980s, moderate legislated increases did not reduce employment and were, if anything, associated with higher employment in some locales.''

He said, ''Studies based on employment across economic units such as States and counties yield more disparate results. Most studies, however, reject the notion that the late 1980's and early 1990's increases had adverse employment effects, and the studies that find adverse effects prior to those increases obtain small elasticities—meaning small employment effects—which confirm the effectiveness of the minimum in redistributing wage income.

He concluded: ''That moderate increases in the minimum wage transferred income to the lower paid without any apparent adverse effect on employment at the turn of the 1990's is no mean achievement for a policy tool in an era when the real earnings of the less skilled fell sharply.''

Freeman also observed that any net reduction in employment from a higher minimum wage that might occur among teenagers would be mitigated by the extremely high turnover rates of these workers. So even if a higher minimum wage means that it will take some low-wage workers a little longer to find jobs, once they do find a job they will benefit from the higher wages.

Do you know what this vote comes down to, Mr. President? It comes down to whether or not to put $2,000 more in the pockets of workers. In these times, is that a difficult choice? That, $2,000 more for every minimum wage worker in local economies. My Republican friends rail against welfare, but when it comes to being fair, mark them absent.

So what are we arguing about. What are my Republican colleagues trying to tell us. What straws are they grasping at to create an argument about job loss, and teenage employment—or about the imagine hobgoblins that would appear if we were to give more money to the people who need it most.

Mr. President, the truth is that raising the minimum wage to $5.15 an hour, according to everyone, would make up slightly more than half of the ground that was lost to inflation during the 1980's. In fact, after adjusting for inflation, the studies show that even if we raised the minimum wage to $5.15 an hour it would still be 13 percent below its average purchasing power during the 1970's. To have the same purchasing power that it had in 1996 it would have to be raised to $5.93 and we certainly would not get a vote on $5.93 when we can't get one on $5.15.

Mr. President, the purchasing power of the minimum wage is now at its second lowest level in four decades. After adjusting for inflation, the value of the minimum wage is below its level for every year—except 1989—going all the way back to 1955.

To put this in perspective: as real wages for the middle-class have been stagnant, the real wages of people at the bottom end have dropped. And so the dramatic shift in wealth and obvious wage inequities in America are contributing to an extraordinary change in worker morale.

To put it simply: the dreams and hopes of millions of hard-working American families who or on the job and off the dole are at stake here. This is about whether or not we understand what people are going through in this country.

Mr. President, we are talking about the working poor. In 1993 more than half of the poor, some 22 million people, lived in households with someone who went to work everyday—8 hours a day—7 days a week. Some 4.2 million workers in America paid by the hour in 1993 had earnings at or below the minimum wage. This was 6.6 percent of hourly workers. An additional 9.2 million hourly workers had earnings just above the minimum wage.

Mr. President, these are not teenagers. These are not minorities. They are, to large extent, women. Less than one-in-three, 31 percent, were teenagers. About one-in-five, 22 percent, were 20 to 24 years old. Nearly half were aged 25 and older.

And almost 62 percent of them were women.

Mr. President, who are the real losers in today's economy? Not the corporate executives. Not the Republican leadership in the Senate that is looking to give them a massive tax cut, and reward these same corporations with huge giveaways. No. The ones being left further and further behind—are working women.

They represent 46 percent of the paid work force, but 60 percent of those working for the minimum wage. These working women cannot make ends meet on $4.25 an hour. A single working woman with two children cannot pay for daycare, health care, housing, and food on subpoverty wages. For that family of three, the Federal poverty level is $12,500. At the minimum wage that family earns only $8,500, $4,000 below the poverty level. Times have changed since the 1960's and 1970's when the minimum wage was enough to raise families up to the poverty line.

That imbalance is an unacceptable inequity in America. Yet, Republicans in Congress are quibbling over raising the minimum to $5.15—even though, since 1979, the minimum wage has lost 25 percent of its value—while at the same time they favor a tax cut for the wealthiest Americans, and wonder why women who take home less than $132 a week are forced to choose welfare over work.

While it may be easy for some to moralize about values and the dignity of work while they earn a congressional salary that is 10 times the poverty level for a family of three, common sense and common decency require that we look at what a single mother with a child and $148 a week faces in real terms, everyday. She has to hope that her employer provides or subsidizes the cost of daycare. But daycare programs at work are rare, particularly for minimum wage earners. Nationally only 5 percent of employers pay for or subsidize daycare costs for full time employees, and, if a mother is offered a second- or third-shift job, daycare is simply not an option.

The Republicans response is not only to say no to increasing the minimum wage, but to cut food stamps, cut school lunches, and cut nutritional programs for underprivileged children. Yet, they ask single working mothers to work hard, stay off of welfare, pay for daycare, get a decent apartment, feed the children, pay for health care, save for the future, have a good time, and make ends meet.

Times have, indeed, changed in the 57 years since Congress first set the minimum wage at 25 cents an hour in 1938. But what has not changed is our pride and our spirit and our sense of hope. There are millions and millions of young, hard-working Americans in the vanguard of a new labor movement that is no longer fighting against ruthless employers for child labor laws, fair labor practices, health and safety standards, decent working conditions, or an 8-hour day. I hope we have put those fights behind us because those labor wars were fought over the most fundamental rights of people trying to work for a living and survive the unregulated power of ruthless employers.

Now, there is a new labor force struggling against downsizing and technology and a global economy. For them, an increase in the minimum wage is not too much to ask. The last time we voted to increase it, in 1989, a Republican President and a Democratic Congress did it together. And there were none of these arguments that we are hearing today.

We worked together then to raise the minimum from $3.35 an hour to $4.25 an hour, and I was proud to have voted for it. The House passed it by a vote of 382 to 37 with 135 Republicans voting for the increase. It passed the Senate by a vote of 89 to 8 with 36 Republicans on the side of common sense. We can do it again together, if common sense and fairness are still bipartisan virtues in Washington.

I yield the floor.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, how much time remains on both sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts, has 5 minutes 50 seconds remaining on his side. There are still 15 minutes remaining on the other side.

Mr. MURKOWSKI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I am sorry I was distracted. I think the Senator from Massachusetts suggested time run over here.

Mr. KENNEDY. I was inquiring what the allocation of time was that remained.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, as the chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, the committee that brought the Presidio legislation to the floor, I want to make some very brief comments at this time. I think we are all very much aware that minimum-wage legislation has absolutely nothing to do with the parks package that included the Presidio, the Utah wilderness, Sterling Forest, and numerous other titles. As a matter of fact, we had some 35 titles in the bill that affected some 26 States.

It is no secret that, unfortunately, the parks package coincides with the national convention of the AFL–CIO, or at least their Washington meeting, and it is unfortunate for this legislation that the timing and the announcement by the group that they were going to raise some $35 million to put into the campaign effort against Republicans who were up for reelection. The announcement that they were clearly endorsing the Clinton administration, provided Members on the other side the opportunity to put the minimum wage, which is one of labor's criteria, on something that might move. Unfortunately, the parks package, the Presidio, all the 35-some odd titles, are affected.

The point is, Mr. President, minimum wage legislation has nothing to do with this package of bills before the Senate. It has really no business being offered or even debated while there is one of the most important environmental and conservation legislative packages before the 104th Congress. Yet, they have seen fit to take advantage of this opportunity. They are well within their rights, but, in the opinion of the Senator from Alaska, this is simply politically motivated and it is political grandstanding. We all know it, even if the media refuses to report it that way.

It is rather interesting to see the media's comments with regard to the bill and the support base concerning the adequacy of wilderness in Utah. Not too many people are aware of just how much a million acres of wilderness is in size. It is about three times the size of the State of Rhode Island. Two million acres is about half the size of the State of New Jersey. It is a pretty big hunk of real estate. In any event, in this legislation, there was a provision that would have put 2 million additional acres into a wilderness classification in Utah.

There are those who suggest that the legislation prevents the Federal Government and the Congress from making a determination that additional wilderness might be created. That is absolutely false, Mr. President. Anyone

who studied the legislation, anyone who looked at the bill, and particularly the media, should recognize that Congress can create more wilderness any time they see fit, as is evidenced by the creation of 56 million acres of wilderness in my State of Alaska.

So, the point I want to make at this time, Mr. President, is, as we look at the status of this bill and the package in the context of its significance, this package of park-related issues constitutes the most significant single environmental package before the Senate in this Congress.

Those who criticize the package process have a responsibility for two things.

One, ask the question why is the package needed? The answer to that question is simple. As these individual bills came before the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and were reported out, had their hearings, and so forth, a hold was put on virtually every one of these 50 plus bills now found within the 35 titles of this legislation. The Senator from New Jersey who saw fit to hold up the entire collection of reported bills to negotiate his particular interests relative to the State of New York and the State of New Jersey. That issue was Sterling Forest.

We have no problem with that, but it did force us to package all of the individual bills into a single piece of legislation. Some are now suggesting we take it apart. Yet we all know it will not prevail in the House if one goes and the others do not.

Mr. President this process has been going on for a year. Mr. President, the other interesting thing is that hundreds of thousands of dollars have been expended criticizing this package by unnamed, motivated elitists. They do not have to report where the money comes from. They simply write full-page ads in some of the Nation's major newspapers.

I think that is a bit irresponsible, Mr. President, they are responsible to no one. They are well-financed groups that are single focused.

They are not the people of Utah. They are not the legislature of Utah. They are not the delegation from Utah. They are an elitist group that wants to dictate the terms and conditions under which they can recreate in Utah or any other Western State.

I advise my colleagues that perhaps it is time to put a little wilderness in all of our States. We have six States that have no wilderness. Is there justification for that?

Mr. President, in conclusion, I urge my colleagues to show some restraint in their enthusiasm to get 5 seconds on the evening news tonight. Let us move forward with the most important conservation measure to come before this body. We have an opportunity to preserve that magnificent Presidio, provide the necessary authority for the Bureau of Land Management to set aside 2 million acres of new wilderness, and provide critical protection for other areas.

Mr. President this bill affects almost every single State, let us move forward on this important environmental bill and leave this specific amendment for the Labor Committee.

We need to pass the Presidio bill, Mr. President. The minimum wage has no business even being on this bill. We all know it.

I reserve the balance of my time. How much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska has 7 minutes and 32 seconds remaining.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I yield the floor.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the issue before us is straightforward. It is about whether or not we are truly committed to helping working people earn a livable wage.

Recently, we have begun to hear more concern expressed about jobs and wages for the working family in America. Some have newly discovered the problems that working families face today: the declining purchasing power of their wages, increasing health care costs, and the high cost of child care are among those most important. But, for some of us, and for the American people, this is not a new issue.

Unfortunately, too little has been done to address these concerns. Today, we have the opportunity to take an important step in the right direction, by making sure that those hard-working Americans at the bottom of the wage ladder get closer to a fair living wage.

Many workers in our society work for low wages and few benefits. They have virtually no bargaining power in their workplaces and any attempt to negotiate for higher wages is futile. For these workers, the government has historically provided protection in the form of a minimum wage.

The Rand Corp. a highly respected think tank, recently reported what they called a double dose of bad news: economic inequality is growing and living standards for millions are getting worse.

The last time we gave minimum wage workers a raise was 5 years ago April 1. The current minimum wage is $4.25. In the last 5 years, because of inflation, the buying power of that wage has fallen 50 cents. The minimum wage is now 29 percent lower in purchasing power than it was in 1979—17 years ago.

With this amendment, the hourly minimum wage would rise to $4.70 this year and to $5.15 next year. Close to 12 million American workers would take a step forward toward a more equitable living wage.

Remarkably, there are some in this Congress who not only would not increase this wage to a fair level, but would eliminate the wage completely. But, I think that they comprise a minority. The last increase had overwhelming bipartisan support. On November 8, 1989, the Senate passed the increase by a vote of 89 to 8. Supporting that increase were the current majority and minority leaders. In the House, this bill passed by a vote of 382 to 37. Voting yes were the current Speaker of the House and the minority leader. Of course, the bill was signed into law by President George Bush.

The results of Rand's study demonstrate once again that the economic squeeze is real. Discounting inflation, the study shows that the median income of families fell more than $2,700 over 4 years to about $27,000 in 1993. People at the lower rungs of the economic ladder have had it the worst.

These figures illustrate that although our economy is growing and unemployment is relatively low, working families are confronting difficult and uncertain times. This amendment would provide a modest boost in earnings for many of these households.

A higher minimum wage could help reverse the growing wage inequality that has occurred since the seventies. A raise in the minimum wage is not only good for workers, but it is also good for business.

The minimum wage is now at a lower level in terms of purchasing power than it has been in three or four decades. That means minimum wage workers buy less. More money in the pockets of workers means more dollars circulating in the local economy.

While some claim a moderate increase in the minimum wage will cost jobs, leading economists find little evidence of loss of employment. Instead, they find that a ripple effect could expand the impact beyond the immediate minimum wage workforce. Some workers in low-wage jobs who currently earn more than the minimum wage may see an increase in their earnings as minimum wages rise.

As the richest nation on Earth, our minimum wage should be a living wage, and it is not. When a father or mother works full-time, 40 hours a week, year-round, they should be able to lift their family out of poverty. Sadly, even the proposed $5.15 an hour will not do that. But, our proposal makes an important stride toward assuring that work is more profitable than welfare.

A minimum wage hike rewards work and lessens the burden of dependency. The current minimum wage is actually about $2 an hour less than what a family of four needs to live above the poverty line. At $4.25 an hour, you earn $680 a month, gross. That's $8,160 per year. The poverty line for a family of four is $15,600 per year.

Adults who support their families would be the prime beneficiaries of our proposal to raise the minimum wage. Nearly two-thirds of minimum wage earners are adults and more than one-third are the sole breadwinners. Nearly 60 percent of the full-time minimum wage earners are women. Often these are women bringing home the family's only paycheck.

We must puncture the myth that a minimum wage hike would only help teens holding down part-time jobs after school. An increase in the minimum wage would improve the standard of

living for many working Americans who live paycheck to paycheck, trying to get a foothold on the American dream. In reality, almost half of minimum wage earners work full-time while only one-fifth work less than half time. Only a quarter are teenagers.

In 32 States, including Michigan, over 10 percent of the workforce would benefit directly from an increase in the minimum wage. Workers who now earn less than $5.15 per hour stand to gain immediately. An analysis by the Economic Policy Institute finds 10.5 percent of all Michigan voters, more than 420,000 workers, are in this group.

Mr. President, the bottom line is work should pay, and the current minimum wage is not enough to live on. The minimum wage is a floor beneath which no one should fall. But we should make sure that standing on that floor, a person can reach the table. A full-time minimum wage job should provide a minimum standard of living in addition to giving workers the dignity that comes with a paycheck. Hard-working Americans deserve a fair deal.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I take this opportunity today to clarify my position on the pending Kennedy amendment to increase the minimum wage. As with any debate that takes place in this Chamber, we debate both the merits of a particular legislative initiative as well as, and equally important, the procedures and timing of bringing a legislative initiative to the floor for debate.

Mr. President, last year during debate on S. 1357, the Balanced Budget Act adopted by this Congress, I supported a sense-of-the-Senate resolution to debate and vote on the merits of increasing the minimum wage. While I have been supportive of past minimum wage increases, I don't believe H.R. 1296, the Presidio Act, the underlying bill currently being considered, provides a proper vehicle to increase the current minimum wage. This bill, and the fact that the pending amendment prevents further consideration of this bill, is not conducive to properly address some of its more contentious issues regarding a minimum wage increase.

For example, just as minimum wage opponents may believe the highest proportion of low-wage workers to be young people, proponents of a higher minimum wage often portray the minimum wage work force as largely adult and, therefore, much more in need of an increase. However, we must recognize that this debate hinges upon how one defines youth. If, for example, one defines a youth as between 16 and 19 years of age, then about 36 percent of workers, paid hourly at the minimum wage, are youths and 64 percent adults. However, if one adopts a definition of youth as one between 16 and 24 years of age, then about 60 percent of the work force at the Federal minimum wage are youths and only 40 percent are adults. Indeed, this discrepancy alone warrants further debate.

Mr. President, this brings me to the second, and equally important issue, that of the procedure and timing of this discussion. I believe this debate on the minimum wage deserves to be debated as a vehicle unto itself, and not as a proposal to be attached to each and every legislative initiative that comes up on the floor in this Chamber, in this case H.R. 1296, the Presidio legislation.

The procedure of appending the minimum wage initiative to H.R. 1296, in my view Mr. President, is to attach a nongermane element to a bill that deserves to be debated on its own merits. In this case, it is a bill that has several elements that are important to my State of Colorado.

As a small business owner and former minimum wage laborer, I can truly understand where both sides of this debate are coming from. While a compromise increase of 45 cents over 2 years is something I would consider, Congress should approach this issue with full deliberation; over 80 million workers are covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act's minimum wage, and its impacts would undoubtedly be far reaching.

Therefore, I look forward to working with my colleagues on this issue in the future, and I am hopeful a more suitable legislative vehicle will be found in which we can properly address the issue of raising the Federal minimum wage.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of this amendment on behalf of American workers and American families.

Here in Washington, and on the campaign trail we hear a lot of talk about corporate downsizing, stagnant wages, and worker anxiety. Throughout this country, American workers and their families are frustrated and anxious of what the future might bring.

And, if we're going to do more than pay lip service to these issues, if we're going to be serious about helping those Americans that work hard and play by the rules then this amendment should pass by a unanimous vote.

Today, with this measure we have a genuine opportunity, on behalf of millions of American workers, to turn the minimum wage into a true living wage.

Today, the real value of the minimum wage is at its second lowest point in 40 years—$4.25 an hour.

Now, I want every person in this room to consider living on $4.25 a hour; or, living on $36 a day. That's an annual income of $8,500 a year—well below the poverty level for a family of three, which is $12,500.

How can any American expect to bring themselves out of poverty or pull themselves up by their bootstraps when they're expected to raise a family on $8,500 a year?

Over the past year I've heard a lot of talk from the other side of the aisle about encouraging responsibility and a strong work ethic among our Nation's welfare recipients. I think it's something we can all agree upon.

But, it is utter hypocrisy to talk about encouraging self-sufficiency and responsibility while we ask our Nation's poorest citizens to live on a meager wage of $36 a day.

Let us be clear, the people affected by the minimum wage aren't high-school kids flipping hamburgers at McDonald's. I can see why people would like to believe that: it certainly makes it easier to oppose this amendment.

We're talking about child care workers, waiters and waitresses, telemarketers, custodians, salesclerks, and the list goes on and on.

The fact is, more than 73 percent of those affected by the minimum wage are adults. More than 47 percent are full-time workers. Four in ten are the sole earner for their families and nearly one in five currently lives in poverty.

What's more, nearly 60 percent of minimum wage workers are women, more than three-quarters of whom are adults. That's 5.2 million adult women, many of whom are also busy raising children who would be directly affected if we pass this amendment.

These figures represent millions of American workers who are just able to keep their heads above water, who are barely subsisting at three-fourths the level of poverty.

For them this amendment isn't about politics or partisan games—this is about economic survival.

Now, my colleagues from across the aisle often use the argument that raising the minimum wage will cost jobs. But study after study has shown that this is a fallacious argument.

Studies done after the minimum wage was raised in 1990 demonstrate that not only did it have a negligible effect on job loss, but in some locales it actually brought higher employment.

The fact is, a higher minimum wage is not only a stronger incentive to work, but it reduces turnover, increases productivity, and lowers cost for retraining and recruiting.

And, the fact is we're not even talking about an enormous increase—only 90 cents an hour. And, while 90 cents may not seem like a lot to most people, it represents $1,800 in potential income for American workers.

For a family struggling to make ends meet, a simple 90-cent-an-hour increase in the minimum wage would pay for 7 months of groceries, or 1 year of health care costs, or more than a year's tuition at a 2-year college.

And if you don't believe me, listen to the experts. According to a recent study by economists William Spriggs and John Schmitt: ''The overwhelming weight of recent evidence supports the view that low-wage workers will benefit overwhelmingly from a higher Federal minimum wage.''

And that's the choice we have before us today: To raise the minimum wage and make a real difference in the lives of close to 12 million American workers.

If we want to be serious about moving welfare recipients to work, if we want to calm the fears of anxious workers, if we want to provide economic opportunity for every American we have a solemn commitment to pass this amendment and raise the minimum wage for American workers.

In the past, this body has, in a bipartisan manner, overwhelmingly supported increasing the minimum wage. The last time we raised it in 1989, the Senate voted 89 to 8.

Indeed, Senator DOLE, who I often hear talking about the importance of working families on the campaign trail, was a key supporter of raising the minimum wage in 1989.

Well, I hope Senator DOLE and all my colleagues continue the bipartisan tradition of supporting the minimum wage and join me in backing this critically important amendment for American workers.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Kennedy amendment to raise the minimum wage.

This amendment presents the Senate with a unique opportunity to address one of the most pressing anxieties for America's lower and middle-class workers—stagnant wages. By passing this amendment, Congress can take a small step to help reverse the shrinking purchasing power and suppressed living standards of America's lowest paid workers.

The amendment before us would allow some of the hardest working American's to make a better life for themselves and their families. It would increase the minimum wage from the current level of $4.25 to $5.15 over 2 years. Granting a 90 cent wage increase over 2 year's will not solve the economic problems of the working class nor will it break the bank; but it will help working families.

Mr. President, over 12 million workers would directly benefit from an increase in the minimum wage—over 210,000 of those workers live in Wisconsin.

Contrary to assertions of minimum wage opponents, this amendment would not wreak havoc on job availability. In fact, a large group of prominent economists, including three Nobel prize winners, recently endorsed a minimum wage increase. These economists assert that the moderate Federal minimum wage increase will not significantly jeopardize employment opportunities. The Kennedy amendment represents such a moderate increase.

Mr. President, the plight of the American worker has received more attention in speeches during recent political primaries than through the policy decisions of the 104th Congress. During the first session of the 104th Congress, we have seen proposals to cut education, job training, and workplace safety programs. Perhaps most inexcusable are the severe cuts proposed in the earned income tax credit for low paid working Americans. These are the same workers who are held down by the artificially low minimum wage.

Mr. President, the economy appears healthy, unemployment is down and millions of jobs have been created over the past 3 years. Yet the average American worker remains uneasy. Real wages have become stagnant and many Americans have discovered that their standard of living has decreased over the years.

It has been almost 5 years since the minimum wage has been increased. Studies indicate that after the minimum wage was increased in 1991, the real value of the wage has fallen by nearly 50 cents. Furthermore, the real value of the minimum wage is 29 percent lower than it was in 1979. If this trend continues, the value of the minimum wage will plummet to a 40-year low by 1997.

The importance of increasing the minimum wage looms even larger today as Congress attempts to balance the budget and cut spending for welfare, worker education and training, the earned income tax credit, child care and other resources that families use to stay afloat economically. To deny America's lowest paid workers a sustaining wage during a time of substantial budget cuts simply represents misguided priorities. This is precisely the time when we need to reward the people who work. If we are going to cut funding for education and training, we must provide individuals with the economic tools necessary to get ahead.

The last minimum wage increase under President Bush enjoyed broad bipartisan support. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to undertake a similar bipartisan effort today and demonstrate their commitment to working families by restoring the fair value of the minimum wage. It is time for Congress to remove this issue from Presidential politics and take real legislative action to address the economic problems facing the American worker.

Raising the minimum wage will not solve all of the problems of low-wage workers, but it will go far in demonstrating that Congress can act to help those on the lowest rung of the economic ladder. I urge my colleagues to vote for cloture and pass the minimum wage increase.

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, I support raising the minimum wage over the next 2 years, from its current $4.25 per hour to $5.15 per hour, because I believe in the American dream and I believe in family values.

If a person works hard and diligently, he or she should succeed. This is a deeply held belief in this country and one which I share—this is the American dream. And if a person works hard and diligently, he or she should be able to care for family—this is family values.

Today, 12 million Americans earn the minimum wage. In my State alone, over 10 percent of the workforce earns the minimum wage—545,647 Illinoisans earn $4.25 an hour. This means that an Illinoisan, working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, earns only $8,840.

These workers are not just young people working at their first job—although young people often contribute to their family's income. The majority of the people earning minimum wage—73 percent—are adults. Many of these are parents raising families on under $9,000 a year—still eligible for food stamps. It is a travesty that a mother or father working full-time— 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year—cannot support a family.

As we continue to purge the welfare roles of children and their mothers, we should remember that close to 60 percent of those earning minimum wage are women. These are women who are taking responsibility for themselves and their children. These are women who are trying to make it on their own. These are women who go to work every single day. And still, minimum wage does not provide them with a living wage for their family.

This legislation would not overcompensate workers. It has been almost 5 years since the minimum wage was last increased. Prices have increased over the last 5 years, as I'm sure anybody who has bought a carton of milk or a dozen eggs lately can tell you.

In this country, we increasingly face a declining standard of living for working people. In the 1980's, 80 percent of Americans did not improve their standard of living. While the average wage increased 67 percent, the average price of a home increased by 100 percent, the average price of a car increased 125 percent, and the cost of a year in college increased by 130 percent. And the minimum wage increased by only 23 percent.

If a 90-cent increase in minimum wage had been part of the Contract With America, by today, a full-time worker earning the minimum wage would have earned an additional $2,000. That money could pay more than 7 months of groceries, rent or mortgage for 4 months, a full year of health care costs, or 9 months of utility bills. The money would make a world of difference to a family—and it is money that the employee earned.

And paying a living wage does not mean that jobs will be lost as opponents of increasing the minimum wage claim. Last year a group of respected economists, including three Nobel Prize winners, concluded that an increase in the minimum wage to $5.15 an hour will have positive effects on the labor market, workers, and the economy.

Workers are our greatest resource. The American worker is what has made this country great. We should recognize the contributions of our workers and reward those who work long and hard to earn a living. And we must make certain that parents working full-time can support their families. If a parent working full-time cannot keep a family above poverty, a child will learn about the American nightmare, not the American dream.

Let us today show that America rewards work, that Americans who try

hard can succeed, that America's families are important to us. A living minimum wage is a sign of a just and decent society. I urge my colleagues to vote for cloture and for this modest increase in the minimum wage.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, this one is real simple. If you raise the minimum wage, you provide working people with a higher salary and a better standard of living. And so I come here in very strong support for the minority leader's effort to give working people a raise by increasing the minimum wage.

BUTTE SAFEWAY

Over the years, Butte, MT, has seen more than its share of hard times. When the mines closed, a lot of people said it was curtains for Butte. But those people had obviously not spent much time in Butte.

Through a lot of hard work, resourcefulness, and community spirit, the folks in Butte fought to rebuild their economy. And they did it. The economic success story that is Butte today is a great example of what can happen when people come together, play by the rules, and work hard.

A few weeks ago, I was in Butte. I spent some time at the Safeway store just listening to people. And I was struck by what a young woman named Rhonda had to say. She was in her early 20's; friendly, energetic, and bright. And like most people that age, she was also anxious to build a better future for herself. But she told me, ''Max, I am having a hard time making ends meet on minimum wage. I work hard, but it's just not enough.''

A whole lot of Montanans feel just the same. They see their wages increasing too slowly to keep up with the cost of living. They find it harder and harder to save money to send their children to college.

In fact, according to a recent study, over 52,000 Montana workers—more than the entire population of Lewis and Clark County, Montana's sixth largest county—would find it a little easier to make ends meet if we raised the minimum wage to just $5.15 per hour.

FALLING WAGES, RISING COSTS

The experts confirm this. A recent Paine-Webber analysis shows that real wages in America have declined from $7.55 per hour in 1990 to $7.40 in 1995.

We're getting the worst of it in Montana. Our wage growth has been slower than virtually any other State in the Nation. Let me point to a few startling Montana statistics to prove my point:

The purchasing power of the average Montana family has actually fallen by $700 over the last 10 years;

In 1980, Montana's average personal income ranked 33 in the Nation. But today we've slipped to 41;

And the cost of living continues to climb—particularly when it comes to housing costs. Just 5 years ago, the average price of a Montana home was about $48,000. But today that figure has increased by 30 percent to $68,500.

NEED THE RIGHT KIND OF CHANGES

The people who suffer most from this wage stagnation are the middle class—the backbone of America. People who work hard. Pay taxes. Volunteer in their communities. When they suffer, the whole country suffers. Because if our middle class cannot afford homes, or cars, or college educations for the children—ultimately American businesses and America itself will be weaker.

Congress is not going to solve these problems all by itself. But there are some things Congress can do to help.

We need to cut the tax burden on working families. Not by giving new tax breaks to corporations that are already profitable, but by giving a tax deduction for college expenses, so more families can afford college and more children can qualify for high-paying jobs in demanding fields.

We need to make sure family businesses can stay in the family, by reducing the estate and gift tax substantially.

We need to balance the budget, in the right way. Not by threatening retirement and health security. Not by threatening the next generation's prosperity by cutting college loans and vocational education. But by a more serious effort to attack fraud and abuse in Government health care programs, by sticking to the Defense Department's recommendations on security rather than tacking on pork programs, and by resisting the temptation to create new loopholes and deductions for profitable companies.

RECORD OF THE CONGRESS

So these are the people Congress is here to help. And I think it's fair to say that at the beginning of 1995, a lot of Montanans felt this Congress might help. There was a lot of new blood and some new ideas, and people had some high hopes.

But those hopes have vanished in the mess of bumbling revolutionary experiments and Government shutdowns which the leadership in the House has created. Rather than make people a little more prosperous and secure, the Congress seems to have deliberately done just the opposite.

When Speaker GINGRICH, for example, was angry about his seating assignment on Air Force One a few months back, he shut down Yellowstone and Glacier National Park, along with most of the rest of the Government, to take revenge. That drove small businesses in the gateway communities to the edge of bankruptcy. And it threatened to put Park Service employees and Government research scientists on welfare.

A SECOND CHANCE

So the leadership in this 104th Congress has let our State down pretty badly. All too often, rather than do something good and positive for the people, it has done something irrational and destructive.

But we are here today to offer the folks in charge a second chance.

By adopting this amendment, we will give hard-working people a raise. Plain and simple. A 90-cent-an-hour raise in the minimum wage, from $4.25 an hour to $5.15 an hour. That is something concrete for people like Rhonda. People who are working hard and finding they can't make it.

For a young woman working 40 hours a week at the minimum wage, this amendment means a raise of 90 cents per hour. That means almost $2,000 more in the pocket every year. And it means a bump along the wage scale that will give some help to Rhonda's co-workers with a bit more seniority—the men and women struggling to provide for their families on $6 or $7 an hour.

OPPOSITION TO MINIMUM WAGE MISGUIDED

I know some around here don't like the idea. But if they'll step back and look again, they'll find that the opposition to a minimum wage increase boils down to one idea: higher wages are bad for the country.

I simply can't accept that. America cannot prosper by keeping a lid on the prosperity of most of our families. That doesn't make sense.

So by putting party ideology aside, the majority here can rebuild some of the credit it has squandered in the past year and a half. It can do some good for honest, deserving working people like Rhonda. And that is what we ought to do.

This minimum wage increase is a chance for Congress to show some common sense. Some independence from elitist supply-side ideologs. The courage to do what we all know is right.

Let's agree to this amendment and give America a raise.

Thank you, Mr. President, and I yield the floor.

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield myself 4 minutes.

Mr. President, I urge the Senate to vote for cloture and end this unconscionable Republican filibuster against the minimum wage. Senate DOLE is leading this filibuster. He is the one who can end it. It is his decision.

Thumbs up, and 13 million wage earners get their first pay raise in 5 years. Thumbs down, and 13 million minimum wage workers go on living in poverty, because the minimum wage is not a living wage. A hard day's work deserves a fair day's pay. No one who works for a living should have to live in poverty.

Senator DOLE locks up the nomination, and the first thing he does is lock out the 13 million Americans who are only asking for the fair minimum wage they deserve. Stock prices are going right up through the roof, and the minimum wage is falling through the basement. That is not fair. It is not acceptable.

Speaker GINGRICH and Senator DOLE make a remarkable couple. It is like Bonnie and Clyde writing the Republican platform. NEWT GINGRICH wants to repeal the ban on assault weapons,

and BOB DOLE wants to block any increases in the minimum wage. Democrats do not share those appalling priorities and neither do the vast majority of the American people.

Who are the minimum wage workers? The vast majority are not teenagers. More than two-thirds are adults, 59 percent are women. Minimum wage workers are nurses aides caring for patients, child-care workers caring for young children, garment workers, retail clerks, janitors cleaning office buildings.

Last year, we heard the story of Tonya Outlaw. She had been teaching at a child care center in Windsor, NC, for 4 years making the minimum wage. She left a high-paying job because she could not afford the child care for her own two daughters. Earning only $4.25 an hour, she cannot afford medicine for her family. She lives with her uncle and sister. Every bill is a struggle. Why are the Republicans filibustering against giving the raise that she deserves?

David Dow was 23 years old when I met him last year working for a pizza chain, in Southfork, PA, working for the minimum wage, struggling to support his 2-year-old daughter and 1-year-old son. His wife works for telemarketing, just above the minimum wage. They have no health insurance, are repaying college loans, and cannot afford child care. They work different shifts and see each other for an hour or two a day, except on weekends.

This is America in 1996. Who are the Republicans kidding? David Dow needs the pay raise the Republicans are filibustering.

The question is, whose side are you on? You cannot have it both ways. We cannot be for working Americans and their families and against making the minimum wage a decent wage. You cannot be concerned about declining living standards for American families and the widening income gap between the wealthiest Americans and everyone else, and then deny a fair increase in the minimum wage.

Congress has not voted to raise the minimum wage in 5 years. At least three times since that last increase, the Senate has given themselves a pay increase. We take care of the privileged. Surely it is time to take care of those at bottom of the economic ladder.

It is shocking that the longstanding bipartisan support for raising the minimum wage has disappeared. The last vote in the Senate in 1989 was 89–8 in favor of a 90-cent increase in the minimum wage.

The economy is healthier in 1996 than it was in 1989. Inflation and unemployment are lower. Corporate profits and the stock market are at record highs.

BOB DOLE and all but a handful of Republican Senators were in the mainstream in 1989 and voted to make the minimum wage a fair wage. The question now is, why have they changed?

I withhold the balance of the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRIST). The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, how much time do we have remaining on this side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Seven minutes and thirty-two seconds.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I will yield my remaining time to the Senator from Oklahoma after I make a few remarks.

Mr. President, I think it is interesting to reflect that the attack now is being made on the majority leader as a consequence of the fact that he is the designee, Republican nominee for President.

The comment has been made that there is a filibuster going on. I do not know that there is a filibuster going on. We voted yesterday on cloture. We will vote today on cloture, but, instead, the attack is on the majority leader. I resent that.

Mr. President, the amendment today being offered would raise the minimum wage from $4.25 to $5.15, a 20-percent increase over 2 years. Now, our Democratic friends suggest that this would be very meritorious and everybody would be a winner. They are accommodating, obviously, the interests of the unions. Of course, those members are virtually all in the unions, receiving a wage much higher than the minimum wage. But look at what they are not addressing and the consequences associated with that.

That is why I oppose the amendment, because of the danger that it is going to foreclose job opportunities precisely for those who we want to help. They do not mention that. Increasing the minimum wage will raise the lower rung of the economic ladder and leave behind those just trying to get a foothold with their first job. They will not be hired and we all know it.

The amendment, though well-intentioned, will cause a loss of entry-level jobs. It will limit job opportunities for low-skilled workers. This will not help raise the standard of living for the poor. They do not even want to address that in the discussion.

The U.S. Senate cannot repeal the law of supply and demand. Common sense tells us we cannot make it more expensive to hire new workers and then expect employers to hire the same number of workers. Experience has shown when we raise the minimum wage, employers hire fewer workers and substitute new machinery and new technology in place of those workers. That is why we pump our own gas today. That is why we pay with a credit card rather than have a gas attendant do the job, wash our windows. It is why we bus our own trays in the fast food restaurants.

Make no mistake about it, Mr. President, this is not a win-win-win. As a consequence, the appropriateness of putting this on the parks bill, the most significant environmental measure to come before this body, is simply unconscionable. It is political opportunism at its worst. The fact that it is directed at the majority leader is absolutely uncalled for.

I yield the balance of my time to the Senator from Oklahoma.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. NICKLES. How much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Four minutes.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I compliment my friend and colleague from Alaska, Senator MURKOWSKI, for, one, his statement, but also for maybe one of the most important things he said: This amendment has nothing to do with the national parks. It does not belong on this bill.

You might say, well, why is it on this bill? Why was it offered by my friend and colleague from Massachusetts to put on this bill? I will tell you. In my opinion, it is all about politics. It is not about increasing minimum wage. If my friends on the other side of the aisle wanted to increase the minimum wage, they controlled this body in 1993, in 1994. They controlled the White House. They could have done it at that time. They had that right. They had the votes. The majority leader could have called it up any time. They did not do it.

Why did they do it now? Well, Presidential politics. Plus, I noticed an article in the paper that says the AFL-CIO endorses Clinton and approves a $35 million political program. They want to run a lot of independent expenditures, all against Republicans. It is all about politics. It does not belong on this bill. We should reject this amendment.

What is the substance of the amendment? The substance of the amendment is, it says if you make less than $5.15 an hour, you should not have a job. Not only should you not have a job, you cannot have a job. An increase in the minimum wage says it is against the Federal law for you to have a job if you make less than $5.15. You cannot have a job.

I do not care if my friends from the States of Massachusetts, New York, or North Dakota want to increase the minimum wage to $10 an hour in their States; let them do it. I do not think they should do it in my State because they are going to put some people out of work. I heard them say that it has no adverse economic impact and maybe it will increase jobs. If that is the case, let us increase minimum wage to $10 an hour. I do not want everybody to make just $5 an hour; I want everybody to make more than $5 an hour. Why not $10 or $20 an hour? If we can repeal the law of economics, if it makes no difference whatsoever economically, let us make it more because I want people to make a lot more money. I am not against people getting a raise. I want that.

But I do not want to raise the minimum wage and say it is against the law for you to have a job if the best thing

you can get is $4.50 or $4.75. I have kids that make that amount of money. We are going to pass a law that says they cannot have a job if it does not pay $5.15. If the infinite wisdom of Washington, DC, says, ''If you do not have a job that pays at least $5.15 an hour, you should not have a job,'' and that person cannot get a job and they are idle, then what are they doing? A lot of times they end up involved in crime or involved in mischief. That is ridiculous. And they do not learn a trade or a new skill.

I worked for minimum wage. I do not make any bones about it. I worked for minimum wage after my wife and I were married, 27½ years ago. We made $1.60 an hour. I needed more, but it was enough. I quit that job and started my own janitor service. I learned a trade, and I hired a lot of people, and they all made more than minimum wage. Why in the world should we set an arbitrary level, a higher level, and say, ''If you do not meet this level, you cannot have a job? Uncle Sam says we would rather have you be idle if you cannot meet at least this standard.'' I think that is ridiculous.

I think the Senator's amendment is wrong in its substance. It is nothing but a political act of appeasement or trying to make organized labor leaders happy. Thank you very much for your $35 million. You are going to get a great program. We are going to try to embarrass BOB DOLE and see if we cannot come up with a great program to thank you for your money. I think that is blatant political abuse and should be rejected. I hope it is rejected.

My colleagues on the other side know this amendment is not going to become law. They hope to score some political points, and I hope they will not be successful.

Mr. KENNEDY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 1 minute 12 seconds.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield myself 1 minute 12 seconds.

BOB DOLE, March 28, 1974:

> I am pleased to support the conference report on the minimum wage bill. A living wage for a fair day's work is a hallmark of the American economic philosophy.

May 17, 1989, BOB DOLE on the floor of the Senate:

> I have said, as a Republican, I am not going to stand here and say you can live on $3.25 an hour, or $4.55 an hour.

BOB DOLE on the Senate floor, April 11, 1989:

> To be sure, I am all for helping the working poor. I have spent most of my public life supporting causes on behalf of the working poor, and no one would deny that the working poor are the ones who most deserve a wage increase.

Mr. President, where is that BOB DOLE? Where is that BOB DOLE? I hear from my colleagues that they resent the fact that this is being offered on this particular bill. I want to tell you that it does not make a difference whether any Senator resents it in here. The people who resent us not doing this have a right to, and they are the men and women not getting it. They are the ones who ought to feel the resentment by our failure to provide a decent wage, a livable wage, for working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks of the year.

Mr. DASCHLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I will use my leader time.

Mr. President, I think it would be very unfortunate if someone cast this as anything other than what it is—unless we act soon, we will be at the lowest point in terms of purchasing power that we have been in our Nation's history when it comes to the minimum wage. That is a fact.

This is not an effort to encumber an environmental bill, as troubling as one aspect of that bill is. It has nothing to do with Presidential politics, it has nothing to do with labor unions. It has everything to do with the fact that the economic foundation for working families in this country has been, is now, and will continue to be the minimum wage. That is a fact. A fair minimum wage is an economic foundation for working families, period.

Seventy-three percent of those who would benefit from this minimum wage increase are adults. Almost three out of every four people; not just those getting started in life, or just out of high school or college. They are people struggling to make ends meet with a family. And 40 percent of those on minimum wage today are the sole breadwinners.

Let us put an end to the stereotype of the teenager flipping hamburgers so he can buy a car, or somehow get started right out of school. The face of a typical minimum wage worker is a woman working full time or part time to support her family, a single mother working 40 hours a week, and concluding at the end of every week or month when she tries to pay the bills that she is still living in poverty. A minimum wage increase could help, at long last, after 5 years, pull her at least a little bit out of the depths of concern that she has about the economic and financial problems she is facing. A 90-cent increase, which is what this bill would do, provides $1,800 more in a year's time. And 45 cents does not sound like a whole lot, but when you combine 45 cents this year and next, over a period of time you find that it buys more than 7 months worth of groceries, 1 year of health care, including insurance premiums, prescription drugs, and other out-of-pocket costs.

This increase will buy 4 months rent or mortgage payments. This increase pays 9 months of utility bills. So do not let anybody mislead you. This is not just a minuscule amount for a lot of people. This is whether people can eat or have the ability to pay their bills. That is what we are talking about here.

The increase in the minimum wage is obviously just a piece of it. The earned-income tax credit is also a very important part. We have faced, throughout this last 14 months, efforts by many of our Republican colleagues to cut the earned-income tax credit. They tell us that they ought to go out and find a job, they do not need the EITC, they ought to rely on the marketplace to find, somehow, an increase in wages there. If we are going to rely upon the marketplace, we better have a living wage to do that. The minimum wage can only be the beginning for many of these working families.

Republicans often tell us they want to move people off welfare and on to work, and we share that view, that desire, that goal. What do you tell people who work 40 hours a week and are still below the legal level of poverty in this country? How is that an encouragement to tell people to get off welfare? Restoring the minimum wage to a working wage is one of the best ways you get people off of welfare.

Five years, Mr. President, is a long time. In that 5 years, we have had increases in our wages. Just about every CEO in this country has seen dramatic increases in their wages. I do not deny them that. In many cases, they truly deserve it. On April 1, we will see the fifth anniversary of the last increase in the minimum wage. We have seen a 20-year period of wage stagnation, and the gap between the richest and poorest in this country has never been wider. The stratification in this country has to be something this Senate addresses.

A higher minimum wage is the least we can do to begin dealing effectively with that stratification. The real value of the minimum wage has fallen by nearly 50 cents since 1991, and by 29 percent since 1979. If we do not act right now, the real value will be at a 40-year low by January 1997.

This is not just a matter affecting a few people, Mr. President; 12 million working people will benefit directly by what we are going to decide this afternoon. In 32 States, it is over 10 percent of the work force. In study after study, in spite of all the denials you hear from our Republican friends—nearly two dozen in all, not one or two—have shown that a moderate increase in the minimum wage can be achieved without costing jobs. That is not our assertion. That is not something we just postulate about. This is something that actually has been examined in case after case after case, and in every single case it has been reported that you can raise the minimum wage at a moderate level and not cost jobs.

In fact, we see a positive effect on both business and workers. A higher minimum wage reduces turnover, raises productivity, and lowers recruitment and training costs. When workers are paid better, when they get a better living wage, then there is more demand for the products they make.

There are all kinds of advantages in doing this in a proper way. We know that. Apparently, a lot of Republican colleagues share that view because the last time we voted in 1989, 89 Senators supported the increase in the minimum wage. A Republican President signed it into law indicating that he endorsed the principle of a guaranteed and fair minimum wage.

The time has come to show that same bipartisanship and to do it again. A recent Gallup poll said that 77 percent of the American people think that we ought to do it again. Sixty-three percent of Republicans think that we ought to do it again.

This is not a ''new mandate.'' This is not something that we have just dreamed up. This is something we have been doing for decades and decades with the realization you have to start somewhere. The U.S. Conference of Mayors just sent us all a letter that makes it very clear that they endorse an increase in the minimum wage. These are government leaders at the most local level telling us that they see what this does; they know that if we get people off welfare, they can reduce the cost of government. The way to do it is with a minimum wage that works.

So, Mr. President, there are those who say we are somehow encumbering the process. So be it. If there is no other way to ensure that we get a vote on the minimum wage, we have no other choice but to do it this way.

We have all agreed that we will hold off on offering this as an amendment to any other piece of legislation if we can simply get a timeframe within which this can be debated, when we can consider it in a way that gives us a commitment to vote on a minimum wage.

The ultimate irony is that the majority is asking people making $4.25 an hour to wait until the majority figures out a way to cut their Medicare benefits before they allow them a 45-cent increase. Republicans—at least some of them—are prepared to wage a war on working families.

Two days ago, we saw that they are willing to go to any length to avoid a vote and to face a choice. We saw a 4-hour quorum call, a motion to recommit, a recess in one of the biggest weeks of the year, and talk of an unfunded mandates points of order.

Mr. President, never have so few done so much to deny so little to so many.

Working Americans are not going to be fooled. Our Republican colleagues cannot have it both ways. They express newfound concern for workers in a campaign but then manufacture reasons to oppose them when it is real.

If you oppose the minimum wage, as the House majority leader does, then vote against this. But if you believe that 12 million people—many the sole earners for their families—deserve an increase, then vote for it.

The time to face up to that choice is what this is all about. It is what we were elected to do. Let us do it this afternoon.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, will the minority leader yield for a question?

Mr. DASCHLE. If I have time available, I will be happy to yield for a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Thank you, Mr. President.

I ask the Democrat leader. Is it not so that 51 Senators have already gone on record in favor of raising the minimum wage?

Mr. DASCHLE. The Senator is correct. We have seen a number of Republicans as well as Democrats—in fact, almost unanimously the Democrats and many Republicans have indicated their support in votes taken earlier last year.

So clearly we have a majority vote in the Senate in support of an increase in the minimum wage.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, will my leader agree that these parliamentary maneuvers are really meant to delay, put off, postpone, block an up-or-down vote even though the majority of Senators support such an increase?

Mr. DASCHLE. The Senator is correct.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, will the minority leader yield for a question?

Mr. DASCHLE. I am happy to yield, if I have any time.

Mr. NICKLES. I ask the Senator from South Dakota, correct me if I am wrong, but when the Democrats were in control of the Senate and the House in 1993 and 1994 and you had Bill Clinton in the White House, if this is so urgent, why did not you bring it to the floor any time during those 2 years? Is there any reason why it was not brought to the floor at that time?

Mr. DASCHLE. The answer is very simple. Obviously, if we could put some sort of cost of living adjustment in the minimum wage we would do so. We would do so today. We would do so any time. Obviously that is not possible. So we have to revisit the issue from time to time. The average length of time between increases of the minimum wage is 6 or 7 years. You cannot do it the first couple of years. We know that. As much as we would like to, we recognize the limitations of increasing the minimum wage. But over a period of time, you finally have to come to the conclusion that, if you cannot do it in 2 years, if you cannot do it in 3 years, at least you have to do it in 5 years.

That is really what this is all about—a recognition that we could not do it before but we ought to do it now—now that we have reached a purchasing power level that approaches the lowest in history.

So certainly the Senator from Oklahoma recognizes, as all of us do, that this is the time to face up to the facts and adjust this minimum wage as we know we must.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time has expired.

Mr. DASCHLE. My time has expired. I appreciate the indulgence of the President.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Fifteen seconds.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I think we have just witnessed a preview of the course of the Senate action from here on until the elections. It is going to be crass political attacks against the Republican Presidential nominee, BOB DOLE. Nothing meaningful is going to get done in this body, and that is simply too bad.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

Mr. WARNER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

(The remarks of Mr. WARNER pertaining to the introduction of legislation are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

AGRICULTURAL MARKET TRANSITION ACT—CONFERENCE REPORT

The Senate continued with the consideration of the conference report.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the conference report to accompany H.R. 2854, the farm bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the conference report. On this question, the yeas and nays have been ordered, and the clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber who desire to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 74, nays 26, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 57 Leg.]

YEAS—74

Abraham	Ford	McConnell
Ashcroft	Frist	Moseley-Braun
Baucus	Gorton	Moynihan
Bennett	Graham	Murkowski
Biden	Gramm	Murray
Bingaman	Grams	Nickles
Bond	Grassley	Nunn
Boxer	Gregg	Pell
Bradley	Hatch	Pressler
Breaux	Hatfield	Robb
Brown	Heflin	Roth
Burns	Helms	Santorum
Campbell	Hutchison	Shelby
Chafee	Inhofe	Simon
Coats	Inouye	Simpson
Cochran	Jeffords	Smith
Cohen	Johnston	Snowe
Coverdell	Kassebaum	Specter
Craig	Kempthorne	Stevens
D'Amato	Kyl	Thomas
DeWine	Leahy	Thompson
Dole	Lieberman	Thurmond
Domenici	Lott	Warner
Faircloth	Lugar	Wyden
Feinstein	Mack	