

I thank my colleague from California for yielding. Mr. Speaker, it is with tremendous pride that I rise today to deliver my first formal remarks on the floor of this fine institution regarding an issue of such importance – providing a fair and decent wage to our nation’s most economically disadvantaged.

Nine years is far too long for anyone to wait for a wage increase, especially for a single mother, who works 40 hours a week, but still faces the decision of buying food or medicine for her children. I find it unconscionable that in a country as rich as ours, anyone working full-time should ever have to make such a decision.

Opponents argue that raising the minimum wage will only stifle economic growth, and force employers to lay off workers.

I couldn’t disagree more.

For starters, the logic just doesn’t add up. Take for instance a small family owned, mom and pop grocery store in Upstate New York. Some argue that the owners of that store would have to hang up a going out of business sign in the window because of the costs associated with this wage increase.

But, that thinking only looks at half of the issue. It fails to take into consideration the hundreds of people frequenting that mom and pop grocery store who would have more disposable income thanks to a wage increase. Will they pack their new-found extra earnings away under their mattress or will they purchase basic necessities like food and clothing?

Time and time again, history has shown that people are more likely to pump that added cash right back into the market. Meanwhile that same mom and pop store is experiencing bigger profits. That’s the type of economic activity my district, along with many others across the country, desperately needs.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of a Congress who will not maintain the status quo. I urge all my colleagues to support this long overdue wage increase for those who need it most – not because it is the easy thing to do, but because it is the right thing to do.

Thank you.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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