

Washington, DC -- U.S. Rep. Michael Arcuri (D-Utica) stood with working families in Upstate New York today as he voted for and the House of Representatives passed legislation to increase the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour.

“The hardworking men and women of our great nation shouldn’t be forced to make a decision between buying food or medicine for their children,” Arcuri said. “Increasing the minimum wage puts money into the hands of people who need it most, people who suffer as wages stagnate and the cost of living keeps going up.”

“Increasing the minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour will increase the annual income of a family of three by \$4,400 per year. Raising the minimum wage makes economic sense because those benefiting from the wage increase will immediately pump that added cash right back into the market – exactly the type of economic activity many communities across the nation will benefit from,” Arcuri said.

Increasing the minimum wage will affect nearly 13 million American workers and their families - 661,000 people in New York alone. The minimum wage has not been raised in more than nine years which is the longest period in the history of the law.

The House approved legislation (H.R. 2), increases the minimum wage by \$2.10 – from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour over two years. H.R. 2 raises the minimum wage in three increments: \$5.85 sixty days after enactment; to \$6.55 one year later; and to \$7.25 one year after that.

During debate on H.R. 2 today, Arcuri delivered his first official speech on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives outlining his strong support for increasing the minimum wage. A copy of Arcuri’s floor speech is attached below.

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**THE HONORABLE MICHAEL A. ARCURI (NY-24)**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**110th Congress, First Session**  
**January 10, 2006**

**Floor Speech on the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 (H.R. 2)**

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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