

(Washington DC) House Republicans continue to block the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill (LHHSE) from coming to the House floor because Democrats successfully added a provision that would raise the minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour over two years. The minimum wage was last raised in 1997 to \$5.15 per hour.

Congressman Charlie Gonzalez issued the following statement:

"For many American families, a raise in the minimum wage would immediately improve their lives. An extra two dollars an hour would enable hard working parents to better afford the basics their children need such as school supplies, clothes or simply food to put on their table. A worker earning the minimum wage during a 40 hour week is not enough to support an American family.

In terms of real purchasing power, the minimum wage is at its lowest level in 50 years. It has been nine years since Congress increased the minimum wage even though the cost for many necessities has risen. Unless Republicans allow this bill to move forward, working American families will continue to have to make do with paychecks that are effectively shrinking.

I call on House Republicans to allow the House to vote on increasing the minimum wage. A raise in the minimum wage is long overdue."

A minimum wage earner who works full-time all year earns just \$10,700, leaving them well below the poverty line. In the United States, 6.6 million people would benefit from a raise in the minimum wage, including 1.6 million who are parents with children under the age of 18.

Roughly three-quarters of minimum wage workers, 4.7 million workers, are adults over the age of 20, and many are responsible for over half of their family's income. If the minimum wage was equal to what it was at its highest point (1968) it would be \$9.05 (as of January 2006).

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