

Fighting for a Minimum Wage Increase

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Rep. Rothman Fights for a Minimum Wage Increase

Republicans Block Minimum Wage Vote Supposed to Take Place This Week

(Washington, DC)—Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) is fighting this week to increase the federal minimum wage, which is at its lowest point in 50 years when adjusted for inflation. The minimum wage has not been increased since 1997, and the Republican Leadership in Congress has blocked all efforts to increase it, including a full House vote on the issue that was supposed to take place this week.

"I am appalled that while defending tax cuts of \$114,000 for individuals who make more than \$1 million a year, my Republican colleagues refuse to raise the federal minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25 for working Americans," said Rothman. "This increase is an issue of fairness. It is long overdue and will be the top priority of Democrats if we take the majority in November."

Last week, Rothman backed an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2007 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education spending bill that would raise the federal minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour over two years. The amendment passed the House Appropriations Committee by a vote of 32 to 27, with 7 Republicans voting for it, setting up the first time in a decade that there would be a vote by the full House of Representatives about this issue.

However, instead of allowing all members to vote on-the-record for or against a federal minimum wage increase, the Republican leadership has cancelled the vote, which was supposed to take place this week. "Their actions on this issue should be watched closely by anyone who listens to President Bush's rhetoric about 'compassionate conservatives' but wonders about the President's and his Republican Majority's actions," added Rothman.

Rep. Rothman has signed a "discharge petition," which would force a vote on the Democrats' minimum wage bill if supporters secure 218 Member signatures. There are currently 189 signatures on the petition.

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