

News from Senator

# BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas) SH 141 Hart Building, Washington, D.C. 20510-1601

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 1989

CONTACT: WALT RIKER  
(202) 224-5358

## DOLE SAYS MINIMUM WAGE VETO IS NO SURPRISE

MR. PRESIDENT, WE HAVE ALL HEARD THE NEWS. PRESIDENT BUSH HAS FULFILLED HIS PROMISE. HE HAS VETOED THE MINIMUM WAGE CONFERENCE AGREEMENT SENT TO HIM BY CONGRESS. NO SURPRISES

I AM NOT SUPRISED BY THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION. I KNOW THAT MY REPUBLICAN COLLEAGUE FROM UTAH, SENATOR HATCH, IS NOT SURPRISED. AND I AM SURE THAT MY DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUE FROM MASSACHUSETTS -- THE MANAGER OF THE BILL HERE IN THE SENATE -- IS NOT SURPRISED. SO, THERE HAVE BEEN NO SURPRISES. LOST OPPORTUNITIES

BUT CONGRESS HAS HAD PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES. THAT'S FOR SURE. OPPORTUNITIES TO DO SOMETHING REALLY WORTHWHILE FOR THE WORKINGMEN AND WORKINGWOMEN OF THIS COUNTRY. OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE THE MINIMUM WAGE SUBSTANTIALLY AND RESPONSIBLY -- TO \$4.25 AN HOUR -- AN INCREASE OF 90 CENTS OVER THE EXISTING MINIMUM WAGE. OPPORTUNITIES TO SAVE JOBS DESPITE A MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE.

MR. PRESIDENT, THESE OPPORTUNITIES -- UNFORTUNATELY -- HAVE SO FAR BEEN SQUANDERED. IF CONGRESS WANTED A MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE, WE COULD HAVE HAD A GOOD ONE: THE INK FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN WOULD BE DRYING THIS VERY MINUTE. WE WOULD NOW BE AT THE WHITE HOUSE -- AT A ROSE GARDEN SIGNING CEREMONY. STOP PLAYING POLITICS

LAST WEEK -- ON THIS FLOOR -- I URGED CONGRESS TO STOP PLAYING POLITICS WITH THE MINIMUM WAGE. I SAID THAT PLAYING POLITICS MIGHT BE FUN FOR SOME OF US AROUND HERE -- BUT IT'S NOT FUN FOR THOSE IN THIS COUNTRY WHO REALLY WANT -- AND NEED -- A MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE.

SO LET'S STOP THE POLITICAL POINT-SCORING. LET'S LEAVE THE POINT-SCORING TO THE FOOTBALL FIELD AND THE BASKETBALL COURT. WE DON'T HAVE A SCOREBOARD HERE IN THE SENATE. COMMITMENT TO A MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

(MORE)

I KNOW I HAVE SAID IT BEFORE. BUT I MUST SAY IT ONCE AGAIN. I SUPPORTED -- AND I CONTINUE TO SUPPORT -- A MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE. THAT IS WHY I SUPPORTED THE PRESIDENT'S OWN MINIMUM WAGE PROPOSAL. AND THAT IS WHY I -- ALONG WITH MY DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUE FROM UTAH -- HOPE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON A MINIMUM WAGE BILL THAT WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PRESIDENT. THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL

THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL WAS A SERIOUS ONE. IT WAS MEANT TO BE A SERIOUS COMPROMISE. AT THE OUTSET, THE PRESIDENT DECIDED THAT HE WAS NOT GOING TO PLAY GAMES WITH CONGRESS -- THAT HE WAS GOING TO SEND TO CONGRESS -- RIGHT OFF THE BAT -- WHAT HE BELIEVED TO BE A FAIR AND RESPONSIBLE MINIMUM WAGE PROPOSAL.

THE PRESIDENT HAS DONE JUST THAT. BUT HIS PROPOSAL IS NO PAPER TIGER. IT CALLS FOR A 27 PERCENT INCREASE OVER THE EXISTING MINIMUM WAGE OF \$3.35 AN HOUR. LET ME REPEAT THAT: A 27 PERCENT INCREASE.

THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL ALSO GOES 75 PERCENT OF THE WAY TO \$4.55 AN HOUR -- THE DEMOCRATIC POSITION. THAT'S MORE THAN A COMPROMISE ON THE PART OF THE PRESIDENT. THAT'S REAL COMMITMENT TO A MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE.

THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL IS ALSO SPECIFICALLY CRAFTED TO PRESERVE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE YOUNG AND THE LEAST-SKILLED. THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT OF THE SIX-MONTH TRAINING WAGE -- A TRAINING WAGE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR ESTIMATES WILL SAVE ALMOST 200,000 JOBS NATIONWIDE. THE PRESIDENT'S TRAINING WAGE ALSO GIVES EMPLOYERS SOME FLEXIBILITY. AND IT GIVES YOUNG PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP SOME BASIC WORK SKILLS AND WORK HABITS.

THE PRESIDENT'S VETO MESSAGE

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO CONGRESS YESTERDAY SUMS IT UP: "MY DIFFERENCE WITH CONGRESS IS NOT JUST ABOUT 30 CENTS AN HOUR. IT IS ABOUT HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF JOBS THAT WOULD BE PRESERVED BY MY ADMINISTRATION'S APPROACH, AS OPPOSED TO THOSE THAT WOULD BE SACRIFICED -- SACRIFICED -- UNDER THE... [THE CONGRESSIONAL BILL]."

BUT THERE SHOULD BE NO DOUBTS: THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ALSO DEMONSTRATES HIS FIRM COMMITMENT TO A FAIR AND RESPONSIBLE MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE. IT DEMONSTRATES HIS WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE. AND IT DEMONSTRATES HIS DEEP-SEATED DESIRE TO HELP THOSE AMONG THE WORKING POOR WHO REALLY NEED A MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE.

SO, I JUST HOPE THAT THOSE SENATORS WHO OPPOSED THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL WILL RETHINK THEIR POSITIONS. AND I HOPE THAT THESE SENATORS WILL SOON COME TO SEE THE MERITS OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL AS WE ATTEMPT TO REACH AGREEMENT ON A MINIMUM WAGE BILL THAT WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PRESIDENT.

CONCLUSION

OVER THE PAST SIX YEARS, WE HAVE WITNESSED AN UNPRECEDENTED GROWTH IN EMPLOYMENT. DURING THIS PERIOD, OUR ECONOMY HAS CREATED 20 MILLION NEW JOBS. THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE HAS ALSO DIPPED TO 5.2 PERCENT -- ONE OF THE LOWEST LEVELS IN FIFTEEN YEARS. AND SINCE 1981, THE NUMBER OF WORKERS EARNING THE MINIMUM WAGE HAS BEEN CUT IN HALF -- FROM 7.8 MILLION TO 3.9 MILLION LAST YEAR.

THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL WILL SAFEGUARD THIS GROWTH. IT WILL SMOOTH THE OFTEN ROCKY ROAD TO ECONOMIC EXPANSION. AND IT WILL ENSURE THAT THOSE WHO MOST NEED A MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE WILL RECEIVE AN INCREASE THAT IS BOTH FAIR AND SUBSTANTIAL.