

RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE -- (House of Representatives - March 08, 2005)

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, Republicans in the Senate yesterday showed that they have no interest in helping millions of working families who clock 40 hours a week at their jobs for the minimum wage. Today, millions of hard-working Americans are working harder for less and less money.

Since the minimum wage has not increased in 8 years, these workers' paychecks are simply not increasing as the cost of living increases every year. Because congressional Republicans refuse to act, the real value of the minimum wage is not worth nearly as much as past minimum wages.

Consider that if a minimum wage this year provided the same wage to workers today, including cost-of-living adjustments, as it provided to workers in 1968, the minimum wage today would be \$8.88 per hour, rather than \$5.15 per hour. That is a big difference, and I believe working families living on the minimum wage feel the pinch every day.

Raising the minimum wage also raises the wages of all low-income workers, not just those below the poverty line. Mr. Speaker, Americans who work 40 hours a week should not be living in poverty. It is time congressional Republicans in both Houses join us in supporting an increase in the minimum wage.