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well-being. And then it goes on to say, to maintain these things against the unfair competition of wage and hour standards which do not provide adequate standards of living. You know, way back in 1967 we recognized that, unless the government takes action, what will happen is a dismal kind of downward spiral, where those businesses who feed off of the lowest level of income have no incentive to pay more. And so slowly and surely, over time, it erodes, as it is eroding now. How low can it go? Who knows? But it also has a dismal effect on the whole lower end of the wage schedules. And for myself, I think it's about time that we not only recognize trickle-down economics, but that we create some bubble-up economics. And one of the ways we do this is by insisting on a fair floor for wages. It is important. The minimum wage is important, because it not only does what is just for the workers, but it does create that level playing field among businesses. If all businesses in a particular industry have to comply, at least they know that everybody else has to do the same thing. And so there is no untoward advantage to one business or another, because they all have to comply with the same law. Do they have to pass these price increases on? Yes, they do. That's the way every business works. That's the way our economic system works. But it is right and just that they pass these increases on, because nobody in any business should be bottom feeding to the extent of being allowed to pay people wages that don't rise up even to the level of poverty for a family of three. You know, it's kind of interesting to me that on the one hand, people say, well, this is hard on a business that has to pay it. But you know, it's kind of unfair to other businesses who pay higher wages. Because the business that pays low wages is putting out there in the community a worker who can't afford to buy anything,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...can't afford to buy anything from the businesses that are paying better wages. So they're hurting other business when they pay other...when they pay low wages like that. And I think that should be taken into consideration. The increase that's being suggested to you, the first increase, from the current \$5.15 to \$5.80 an hour, all that does is to make up for inflation that has occurred since 1997, which was