



\$10.10 Minimum Wage Increase Debate Has Congress Members Saying They'll 'Live The Wage' For A Week

Editorial

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The debate over the proposed idea of raising the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour has some members of Congress saying they will “live the wage” for a week in order to see if they could pull it off.

In a related report by *The Inquisitr*, the 2014 unemployment extension faces an uphill battle, and now the rising federal debt may become an obstacle for various Social Security programs. Meanwhile, the richest of the one percent are actually richer than expected, according to a recent study.

Some Democrats are claiming that President Obama has put income inequality on the backburner for his agenda due to the upcoming 2014 mid-term elections. When Obama suggested his daughters should have minimum wage jobs in order to “get a taste of what it’s like to do that real hard work,” Rand Paul scoffed at the idea, saying instead that the minimum wage is temporary and that he would not want his own son to “stop there.” Other critics have scoffed at the idea that the Obama girls would ever work a minimum wage job and point to how even Chelsea Clinton is a millionaire and charges \$75,000 per hour for speaking engagements.

Former Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland, Rep. Jan Schakowsky and Rep. Tim Ryan are attempting to lower themselves to the level of the little guy by “stepping into the shoes of a minimum wage worker and live for one week on just \$77.” Ryan believes that a \$10.10 minimum wage would give more Americans a chance to join the middle class, and Strickland says full-time workers should not have to “live in poverty or have to choose between food and electricity every month.”

The Live The Wage challenge may not change many minds since a poll by Public Policy Polling finds that even 69 percent of Republicans believes it’s impossible to live on the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour. This belief is bipartisan since 80 percent of Democrats say the same, although only 37 of Republicans support a federal minimum wage increase.

Michael Tanner, a senior fellow at the libertarian Cato Institute, says the Live The Wage challenge does not make sense:

“What’s the point. We all know it’s very hard to be poor. There aren’t a lot of people who want to be poor.... First, minimum wage is not a lifetime event. It’s a starting point. More than half the people who get a minimum wage will earn a raise within a year.”

Rea Hederman, executive vice president at the Buckeye Institute, believes these politicians are trying to support the \$10.10 minimum wage by appealing to emotion:

“It’s always difficult in the minimum wage debate. On one side you have facts and logic and on the other side you have emotional stunts.”

But Rep. Ryan believes Live The Wage is still worth doing, saying, “A lot of times our friends in the tea party movement or in the conservative political movement try to marginalize these men and women who work extremely hard in many jobs that those of us in Congress wouldn’t dare dream of doing.”

Do you think the \$10.10 minimum wage is fair?