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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 28, 2006

LARSON: NO CONGRESSIONAL PAY RAISE UNTIL MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

WASHINGTON ♦ U.S. Representative John B. Larson (CT-1) today called on members of Congress to forgo any pay raise until the House votes on a minimum wage increase. The minimum wage has remained at \$5.15 an hour since 1997, its lowest level in fifty years adjusted for inflation. House Democrats have attempted numerous times to bring a minimum wage increase to the floor for a vote, but have been defeated by Republicans each time.

Larson stated, ♦Millions of Americans are struggling in this economy, dealing with gas prices, education costs, pension security, and prescription drugs. Billions of dollars in subsidies are given away to big oil companies while it takes a full day♦s pay at minimum wage to pay for a tank of gas. Billions of dollars in tax cuts are given to the wealthiest one percent of Americans while young people struggle to afford the cost of college tuition. Billions of dollars are given away to the pharmaceutical industry while seniors struggle to pay for the life-saving prescription drugs they need.

♦This do-nothing Congress has had all year to address the minimum wage. Instead, the Republican majority has waited to bring it up in a late night or weekend vote just before Congress recesses for five weeks. What♦s even worse is they appear ready to pair the minimum wage vote with estate tax cuts, or pension reforms that will hurt average workers, or association health plans that overrule hard fought healthcare rights and Republicans will use heavy-handed procedural tactics to ensure that Democrats can♦t strip these provisions and have a clean vote on minimum wage.

♦What the Republicans are saying is that they can♦t help low-income workers without giving another handout to the wealthiest Americans.♦

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