

Lawmakers consider raising minimum wage



AP PHOTO

Joe Fox, operations director of the Second Harvest Food Bank in Anderson, inventories boxes of food Monday. Lawmakers are considering increasing the minimum wage.

Bureau: 37,000 workers make \$5.15 or less per hour

By DEANNA MARTIN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS
Some people who turn to an east central Indiana food bank for assistance have regular jobs, they just don't make enough money to support themselves

and their families.
"If you're at the minimum wage, you can work 40 hours a week and still be in poverty," said Lois Rockhill, executive director of the Second Harvest Food Bank in Anderson.
Indiana lawmakers could consider raising the state's minimum wage to try to help.
At least five bills filed in the Indiana General Assembly would raise minimum wage, now \$5.15 an hour, to more than \$7 an hour by 2008, but it is unclear which proposal could move forward.

Rep. Duane Cheney, D-Portage, believes at least one should.
"Work should have value," Cheney said. "To pay people five dollars ... an hour tells them that their work doesn't have value. You can't go to the movies for five dollars ... let alone try to supplement an income, or certainly not raise a family."
Of Indiana's roughly 1.8 million hourly workers, about 2 percent, or 37,000, make \$5.15 an hour or less, according to 2005 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Some workers make

less than minimum wage because of exemptions for waiters, young employees and others.
The state is one of 15 in which the minimum wage matches the federal rate. Twenty-nine states and Washington, D.C., already have minimum wage rates higher than \$5.15 an hour, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.
Congress is moving forward with a plan to increase the federal wage floor by \$2.10 over 26 months. If the plan succeeds, the higher rate would apply to most workers even if Indiana's

figure doesn't change.
But those in small businesses, such as those with two or more employees that do less than \$500,000 worth of business annually, might only be covered under state law, the Indiana Department of Labor said.
At the current state and federal minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour, a full-time worker makes about \$10,700 a year. At \$7.25 per hour, the annual salary is about \$15,000, still below the \$15,577 average poverty threshold for a family of three in 2005.

BRIEFS STATE

INDIANAPOLIS Daniels to outline agenda in State of State speech

Gov. Mitch Daniels is expected to tout his legislative initiatives in his State of the State speech, including phasing in statewide, full-day kindergarten, privatizing the Hoosier Lottery and having a private venture build a tollway around part of Indianapolis.



DANIELS

But unlike his first two speeches before joint sessions of the House and Senate, he says he plans no surprises tonight.

The 30-minute speech is set for 7 p.m. At least four Indianapolis TV stations plan to broadcast the speech live. Daniels said he wrote the speech over Thanksgiving.

"We've had two great years. We have to have many more," Daniels said. "And that's my main goal, I hope, is to try to spread a sense of optimism and some excitement about taking the next step."

FORT WAYNE Registry proposal aimed at fighting meth

A bill introduced in the General Assembly would create a public registry of meth offenders, one of several proposed tools aimed at helping police and the public fight the drug.

A legislative study committee voted unanimously in October to endorse a registry of anyone convicted of manufacturing the illegal stimulant, financing its production or delivering it.

Illinois, Minnesota, Montana and Tennessee already have passed laws creating similar registries, said Rep. Ralph M. Foley, R-Martinsville, one of the authors of the bill introduced last week.

BRIEF WORLD

LUXOR, Egypt U.S. summit to aid Israeli, Palestinian peace process

Hoping to breathe life into moribund peace efforts, the United States will gather Israeli and Palestinian leaders to discuss an eventual independent Palestinian state, President Bush's top diplomat said Monday.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice also asked Arab allies to help support the fragile government in Iraq.

The three-way U.S.-Israeli-Palestinian meeting would be the first among the main parties thought necessary to draft any settlement in the six-decade-long dispute.

"The parties haven't talked about these issues for a long time," Rice told reporters following a meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Luxor, Egypt, following a three-day visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories.

"It's been at least six years since they talked about these issues," Rice said. "It seems wise to begin this ... informal discussion, to just really sit and talk about the issues."

REMEMBERING MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Keeping his dream alive

Leaders urge Americans to continue King's work



By ERRIN HAINES
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA
The first Martin Luther King Jr. Day since the death of King's widow and the chief keeper of his civil rights dream was marked Monday with speeches, visits to the couple's tomb and the opening of a collection of his papers, including a draft of his "I Have a Dream" speech.

Coretta Scott King's legacy loomed large over the 21st observance of the King holiday at the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, where King preached.

"It is in her memory and her honor that we must carry this program on," said her sister-in-law, Christine King Farris. "This is as she would have it."

Mayor Shirley Franklin urged the congregation not to pay tribute to King's message of peace and justice on his birthday and then contradict it the next.

"Millions can't find jobs, have no health insurance and struggle to make ends meet, working minimum-wage jobs. What's going on?" Franklin said, repeating a refrain from soul singer Marvin Gaye.

As King condemned the war in Vietnam 40 years ago, Ebenezer's senior pastor, the Rev. Raphael G. Warnock, denounced the war in Iraq.

"The real danger is not that America may lose the war," Warnock said. "The real danger is that America may well lose its soul."

Coretta Scott King died last year Jan. 31 at age 78. An activist in her own right, she also fought to shape and preserve her husband's legacy after his death, and founded

WHAT THEY SAID

"I encourage people all around the country to seize any opportunity they can to help somebody in need. And by helping somebody in need you're honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King."

President Bush

King's "vision became even more powerful because he understood the risks he was taking. It's very important for our children to know that his sacrifice didn't win the war. We still have to keep at it."

The Rev. Brenda Kneece
During a breakfast prayer service for King

"I remember a lot that I don't care to say. I always wanted to see (King's) papers in person, just to be here and be around what you believe."

Bertis Post
Atlanta resident who marched with King in Alabama

what would become the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change.

Crowds lined up early at the Atlanta History Center to see the first exhibition of King's collected papers since they were returned to his hometown. The papers brought back difficult memories for some.

"I remember a lot that I don't care to say," said Bertis Post, 70, of Atlanta, who marched with King in Alabama and Atlanta. "I always wanted to see the papers in person, just to be here and be around what you believe."

The exhibit includes King's letter from the Birmingham jail, an early draft of his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize and more than 600 other personal documents.

King also sought a peaceful coexistence between science and religion and rejected a literal reading of the Bible, an approach he said had been used to justify slavery and other racial injustices.

Elsewhere, thousands of volunteers observed the holiday by taking part in service projects. Organizers expected about 50,000 people to participate in about 600 projects, said Todd Bernstein of the group MLK Day of Service.

President Bush, in an unannounced stop at a high school near the White House, said people should honor King on the holiday by finding ways to give back to their communities. Classes were not in session but volunteers were sprucing up the school.

"I encourage people all around the country to seize any opportunity they can to help somebody in need," Bush said. "And by helping somebody in need you're honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King."

Several hundred people gathered in West Columbia, S.C., for a breakfast prayer service, where the Rev. Brenda Kneece said King set the standard for sacrifice and vision.

King's "vision became even more powerful because he understood the risks he was taking," said Kneece, executive minister of the South Carolina Christian Action Council.

"It's very important for our children to know that his sacrifice didn't win the war. We still have to keep at it."

This year's holiday comes on the day King would have turned 78. King was assassinated April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tenn. His confessed killer, James Earl Ray, was arrested two months later in London.



People rally in Raleigh, N.C., during the annual Martin Luther King Jr. memorial march on Monday. King, above, was assassinated April 4, 1968.

AP PHOTOS

Saddam's two aides executed

Video showed one man decapitated during hanging

By STEPHEN R. HURST
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq

The Iraqi government's attempt Monday to close a chapter on Saddam Hussein's repressive regime, by hanging two of his henchmen, only appeared to anger many of Saddam's fellow Sunni Muslims after the former leader's half brother was decapitated on the gallows.



AL-BANDAR



IBRAHIM

Barzan Ibrahim plunged through the trap door and was beheaded by the jerk of the thick beige rope at the end of his fall, in the same execution chamber where Saddam was hanged a little over two weeks earlier.

The decapitation appeared inadvertent, and Iraqi officials seemed anxious to prove they hadn't mutilated Ibrahim's remains.

The hangings came as a suicide car bomber slammed into an Iraqi army patrol in the northern city of Mosul Monday, killing seven people and wounding 40 others, police said. A total of at least 55 people were killed or found dead across Iraq, authorities said.

The U.S. military, meanwhile, announced the deaths of two more soldiers, both killed in Baghdad.

While Ibrahim's body was wrenched apart by the execution, his co-defendant, Awad Hamed al-Bandar, head of Saddam's Revolutionary Court, died as expected: swinging at the end of a rope. Both men met death at 3 a.m. wearing reddish orange prison jumpsuits.

By day's end at least 3,000 angry Sunnis, many firing guns in the air, others weeping or cursing the government, assembled for the burials of Ibrahim and al-Bandar in Saddam's hometown of Ujja, near Tikrit, 80 miles north of Baghdad.

Ibrahim's son-in-law, Azzam Saleh Abdullah, said, "We heard the news from the media. We were supposed to be informed a day earlier, but it seems that this government does not know the rules."

The execution, he said, reflected what he called the Shiite-led government hatred for Sunnis. "They still want more Iraqi bloodshed," he said. "To hell with this democracy."

The executed men, at their request, were buried in a garden outside a building Saddam had built for religious events. Saddam was buried there on New Year's eve in a grave chipped out of an interior floor.

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