

BRIEFS
NATION

WASHINGTON
Senate seeking tax breaks in wage hike proposal

The Senate cleared the way for an increase in the minimum wage Tuesday, but only with business tax breaks that House Democrats want removed.

Final Senate passage of the legislation is expected this week, setting the stage for negotiations between House and Senate Democrats over how to get the legislation to President Bush.

The Senate voted 87-10 to end debate on the bill Tuesday, well clear of the 60 votes needed.

Earlier this month, the House passed the same increase without any tax provisions. Senate Democrats failed to get the 60 votes to end debate.

NEW YORK
Consumer confidence rose slightly in January

The Conference Board, a private research group, said Tuesday that its Consumer Confidence Index edged up to 110.3 in January from a revised 110.0 in December.

At the same time, a measure of consumer expectations for the next six months dropped to 94.5 in January from 96.3 the month before.

Lynn Franco, director of the board's consumer research center, said that "looking ahead ... consumers are not as optimistic as they were in December."

BRIEF
WORLD

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip
Palestinian cease-fire fragile in face of violence

Gaza's warring factions began to hold their fire Tuesday as a truce took effect across the territory.

But the killing of a Hamas militant by rival Palestinians — combined with an Israeli airstrike on a tunnel following a suicide bombing — underscored the fragility of the truce.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas called for a total halt to the violence.

"The past few days were difficult, and everyone paid in blood," he said. "Everyone is facing a difficult test, either we maintain this calm ... or everything collapses again, and then everyone will be held responsible."

Indiana House OKs minimum wage raise

By DEANNA MARTIN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS

Legislation that would raise the state's minimum wage and lessen the impact of the inheritance tax passed the House on Tuesday on a 71-29 vote, with only Republicans voting against it.

The bill would increase Indiana's minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.50 an hour by 2008. The legislation would also change how much inheritance children or other descendants

"These are two issues which are just not related at all."

Rep. Tim Harris, R-Marion
On proposal to raise minimum wage being packaged with an inheritance measure

could receive tax free. Currently, the first \$100,000 is exempt, but the bill would bump that threshold to \$200,000.

Some Republicans who support the inheritance tax measure but do

not want to increase the state minimum wage said the two proposals should not be in the same bill.

"These are two issues which are just not related at all," said Rep. Tim Harris, R-Marion, who voted for the legislation.

Rep. Michael Murphy, R-Indianapolis, said he would vote for the proposal because the inheritance tax was important, while raising the minimum wage would not have a large impact on many businesses.

"I can't find anybody who still pays \$5.15 an hour," Murphy said.

"The market has moved beyond this political debate."

At the current state and federal minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour, a full-time worker makes about \$10,700 a year. At \$7.50 per hour, the annual salary is about \$15,600, just above the average poverty threshold for a family of three in 2005.

The bill would increase the minimum wage to \$6 an hour on Sept. 1, to \$6.75 on March 1, 2008, and to \$7.50 on Sept. 1, 2008.

Even if Indiana's rate doesn't change, minimum wage workers

in the state could be getting a pay raise. Congress is moving forward with a plan to raise the federal minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour over two years.

If both plans succeed, the higher of the two wages would be paid to most minimum wage employees.

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.

Senate committee debates execution of mentally ill

By MIKE SMITH
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS

The state would be prohibited from executing people who were severely mentally ill at the time they committed murder under legislation a Senate committee is considering.

The Senate Committee on Corrections, Criminal and Civil Matters heard about an hour of testimony on the bill by Democratic Sen. Anita Bowser of Michigan City but did not vote.

Sen. Brent Steele, a Bedford Republican and committee chairman, said the bill involved weighty issues and he wanted members to give more thought to them.

He also said the panel might want to forgo any action until the U.S. Supreme Court issues a ruling that could change the standard for executing mentally ill persons by offering a new interpretation of the Eighth Amendment, which bans cruel and unusual punishment.

Indiana law prohibits executions of those who are mentally retarded, which is primarily tied to a person's IQ. Indiana also prohibits executing those who were 17 years old or younger at the time they committed murder.

Bowser's bill defines a mentally ill defendant in capital cases as someone who has a severe mental disorder or disability that significantly impairs the person's capacity to appreciate the nature, consequences or wrongfulness of his or her conduct; to exercise ratio-

RAIL STUDY

INDIANAPOLIS — State transportation officials would study the feasibility of a commuter rail system running from Indianapolis to Muncie, with stops in between, under a bill approved Tuesday by a Senate committee.

The bill was endorsed 10-0 by the Senate's transportation committee and now heads to the full Senate for consideration.

Sen. Tim Lanane, D-Anderson, told committee members that a commuter rail system would spur economic growth in central Indiana by allowing people a new way to travel to work, to visit friends and relatives and to shop.

"I think it's time for us to bring in people to study this seriously," said Lanane, the bill's sponsor.

He said the study would examine the feasibility of a commuter line that would run from Indianapolis to Muncie with stops in Fishers, a growing Indianapolis suburb plagued with congestion, Noblesville, Anderson and possibly other cities.

nal judgment in relation to that conduct; and to conform the conduct to requirements of the law.

It would not include a disorder manifested primarily by repeated crimes or attributed solely to the acute use of alcohol or other drugs.

The bill would allow defendants in capital cases to claim they are severely mentally ill and have a judge order an evaluation. If the judge later determines from evidence that someone is severely mentally ill, the state could no longer seek the death penalty.



amazing.

The money-saving, feature-packed Mutual Mastercard

Compare, and you'll see why we say it's the area's best credit card value:

- 9.9% fixed rate (APR)!
- No annual fee!
- Cash advances just \$5!
- Worldwide acceptance!

Apply for yours today at any Mutual Savings Bank location!

Mutual SAVINGS BANK
A friendly place to bank

736-7151 • www.mutualsavingsbank.net
Franklin (3 locations) • Trafalgar • Nineveh • Franklin Township

Member FDIC

©2006 MSB. Credit approval required. Minimum monthly payment of 3% of outstanding balance or \$20, whichever is greater. As of 11/29/06, standard fixed rate for purchases and cash advances was 9.9%. \$5 cash advance and balance transfer fee. \$15 late and over-limit fees. Rates and fees subject to change.

Hillview Veterinary Clinic
Welcomes
DR. KAREN DELFIN

Dr. Delfin will be joining Dr. Jennifer Clarke in the small animal clinic

1761 Thornburg Lane
736-8880
www.HillViewVets.com



PARTY PLATTERS

Celebrate the Big Game with Texas Roadhouse!

Ask about our Party Platter to go!

Wings Over Texas Platter \$39.99
Killer Rib Platter \$44.99
Wild West Sampler \$39.99



Party Platters must be ordered one day in advance. No pick-ups after 5:00 p.m. on February 4th.

Don't forget to order our Legendary Bread and Honey Cinnamon Butter! Reserve your Party Platter today and schedule a pick-up time that's convenient for you!



Greenwood St. Rd. 135 next to Menards
(317) 859-8800

GO BLUE!

EMBARQ™ HIGH-SPEED INTERNET, \$24.95 A MONTH. YOUR PRICE UNTIL PIGS FLY.



\$24.95 /MO CONSISTENTLY FAST BROADBAND CONNECTION 24/7. AND, UNLIKE SOME CABLE COMPANIES, YOUR PRICE WON'T GO UP AFTER A FEW MONTHS.

FOR AS LONG AS YOU HAVE THE SERVICE. (Excludes taxes, fees, and surcharges. Applies to up to 1.5 Mbps speed, Qualifying services and 1-year term agreement required. Free modem available for \$12.95 shipping and handling fee. \$50 online rebate covers \$49.99 activation fee.)

FREE ONLINE FILE STORAGE	+ 25 GB OF FREE ONLINE STORAGE + BACK UP YOUR PERSONAL FILES + STORE UP TO 8,000 PICTURES OR 6,000 SONGS	ONLINE SECURITY	+ ANTI-VIRUS PROTECTION + SPAM BLOCKER + PARENTAL CONTROLS	MONEY BACK AND MORE	+ \$50 ONLINE REBATE + FREE MODEM + 24/7 TECHNICAL SUPPORT
---------------------------------	--	------------------------	--	----------------------------	--

CALL 866-2EMBARQ OR VISIT embarq.com
(866-236-2277)



This Way to Common Sense™

Voice | Data | Internet | Wireless | Entertainment

Services not available everywhere. Residential customers only. EMBARQ may cancel services or substitute similar services at its sole discretion without notice. Additional restrictions apply. Requires approved credit. Monthly rate: \$24.95 promotional monthly rate applies while customer subscribes to a qualifying EMBARQ™ calling plan and remains in good standing in a service area. Taxes, fees, and surcharges are additional, subject to change without notice, and based on non-promotional, standard monthly rate. EMBARQ™ High-Speed Internet: \$99.00 early termination fee applies. Performance may vary due to conditions outside of network control and no minimum level of speed is guaranteed. Modem: Without credit approval, customer will be charged \$99.99 for modem. Rebate: Customer must request and submit \$50 rebate online at embarq.com/hisrebate within 45 days of installation. EMBARQ™ High-Speed Internet account must be active and in good credit standing to receive rebate. Only one \$50 rebate per household. EMBARQ will not honor late, misdirected, incomplete, or duplicate rebate forms. © 2007 Embarq Holdings Company LLC. All rights reserved. The name EMBARQ and the jet logo are trademarks of Embarq Holdings Company LLC.