

DEMOCRATS WIN VOTE ON MEASURE TO PROTECT OVERTIME PAY FOR MILLIONS OF AMERICANS

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WASHINGTON, D.C.- The House today approved a Democratic amendment to block new rules backed by President Bush and the Republican Leadership from being implemented that would have disqualified six million Americans from overtime pay protection. The rule change to disqualify many workers overtime pay took effect on August 23. Larson backed the Democratic measure offered by Reps. David Obey (D-WI) and George Miller (D-CA), to stop the new rules from being implemented by the Department of Labor and restore overtime protections to workers. The amendment previously passed the House and Senate in last year's appropriations bill for the Labor Department appropriations bill, however the Republican Leadership removed it from the final omnibus appropriations bill. Today, the Democratic amendment passed by vote of 223-193, with 21 Republicans joining every Democrat present in support of the bill.

"This is a big victory for the Democratic Minority and a setback for the Republican Leadership and the Bush administration, who actively supported the rule changes to deny millions of American workers overtime protection," said Larson. "This amendment will help stop scores of American workers from receiving a pay cut in the midst of a struggling economy. If this rule were allowed to be implemented, many of these workers would have had to work the same long hours for less money. Many families depend on overtime to pay the bills, put food on their tables, and pay for their children's education. While new rules allow some low-income workers to become eligible for overtime pay - a provision protected by the Democratic amendment - it pales in comparison to those who would have lost out if the GOP Leadership had their way. The GOP Leadership did all they could to twist the arms of their members to oppose this amendment, a perfect example of the indifference of the Majority Leadership to the needs of working Americans."

If a worker is eligible, they receive paid time and a half for every hour they worked that was more than 40 hours in a single week. This rule being implemented would have meant that many workers would likely have had to work the same or more hours with less pay without overtime. Some of the professions that can be affected include foremen, assistant managers, salespeople, chefs, nursery school teachers, insurance adjusters, journalists, funeral directors and embalmers, law enforcement officers, athletic trainers and others. The amendment was offered to the Department of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations Act for the next fiscal year, H.R. 5006.

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