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March 14, 2008

The Honorable Eni F.H. Faleomavaega  
2422 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Faleomavaega:

Thank you for your leadership on the issue of the minimum wage in American Samoa. I want to provide you with an update on the matter and provide a response to your proposal to adjust the current schedule and methodology for future minimum wage increases.

As you know, in May 2007, the President signed into law the first federal minimum wage increase in more than ten years. The law also raised the minimum wage rates for workers in American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and required the Secretary of Labor to study the impact of the wage increases on living standards and employment rates in the two territories. This study, from the Department charged with administering the nation's wage laws and promoting the welfare of the nation's workers, was intended to provide Congress with the fullest picture possible of the effects of the wage increases.

Unfortunately, the Department of Labor's January report does not provide sufficient information to compel the Congress to adjust the current minimum wage schedule for either territory. The report, as detailed in the attached letter, is incomplete and unreliable. The people, businesses, and governments of these two Pacific territories have a right to expect that the Department of Labor would make every effort to fully inform the Congress of their present economic circumstances. The Department fell far short of meeting such basic expectations.

Despite the Department's failure, as my staff continues to monitor the situation and receive data, I will continue to work with you on these matters of critical importance to American Samoa. I know we share a common concern that the people of the territories receive fair and decent wages for their labor and that the economies of these territories grow and diversify in a sustainable way.

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Thank you again for your continued advocacy on behalf of your constituents.

Sincerely,

  
**GEORGE MILLER**  
Chairman