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## Senate Defeats Democrats Minimum Wage Increase

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By REUTERS

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**REUTERS** 

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WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. Senate on Wednesday defeated a proposal pushed by Democrats to raise the federal minimum wage in increments from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour by January 1, 2009.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, a Massachusetts Democrat, unsuccessfully tried to attach the proposal raising the wage for the first time since 1997 to a defense authorization bill that is expected to be passed by the Senate soon.

While a majority of the Senate, 52 senators, backed the move to increase the minimum wage, it failed to win the 60 votes needed for passage under a procedural agreement worked out earlier.

Operating under those same rules, the Senate was expected to also defeat a Republican-backed amendment that would raise the minimum wage in two steps to \$6.25. But that measure also would change some work rules, drawing Democratic opposition.

House Democrats, like their Senate counterparts, are pushing a \$2.10-per-hour minimum wage increase. Last week, the House Appropriations Committee voted to include the wage hike in a fiscal 2007 labor and health spending bill.

House Republican leaders, who oppose raising the minimum wage, have put that bill on a backburner because of the amendment.

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