

Nixon Set To Veto Wage Bill

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By Peter Milius

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President Nixon said yesterday that he is going to veto "with very great regrets" the bill Congress passed to raise the legal minimum wage from \$1.60 to \$2.20 an hour.

The President said the bill would be inflationary.

His decision was swiftly denounced by Democrats in Congress and by AFL-CIO President George Meany, who must now try to round up the two-thirds majorities necessary in both houses to override the veto.

Their problem is going to be in the House, where one strategist called their chances "dim."

The President pointed out that the bill would raise the minimum wage "by 38 per cent" and "would deny employment... to unskilled and younger workers."

Chairman Harrison A. Williams (D-N.J.) of the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee shot back that the legislation would add only 0.4 per cent to the nation's total wage bill this year.

Meany, calling the President's decision "callous" and a "blow to the worst-paid workers in America," noted that "the basic minimum wage has not increased since Feb. 1, 1968."

In the interim, he said, "all the things these workers buy and the rents they pay have gone galloping upward, and the President has done nothing effective to control these costs."

The President, Meany said, was making "the poor of this nation the front-line troops in the war against inflation while he tolerates outrageous corporate profits."

See ECONOMY, A20, Col. 1