

as things currently stand, we hope we will have not any additional votes tonight.

However, I would advise Members that discussions initiated by the Speaker and the majority leader with the President will be going on starting at 10:00 tonight and should those talks yield any agreement that would necessitate action on the House floor, all Members will have 1 hour notice to return to the Capitol.

One other thing I might add is that if the President does veto the CR that has been sent down, we are obliged to pick that up tonight. So I would urge all Members to keep in touch with their respective cloakrooms.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, my understanding is we are obliged to deal with that tonight if the House is in session.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, that is correct.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, if the House has completed its business on special orders and is not in session for special orders, could I ask what the plans would be then and whether under any circumstances Members would have an hour's notice?

Mr. HASTERT. Under all circumstances, we will anticipate that Members have an hour lead time before there will be a vote. We will take special orders and our intention is when special orders are exhausted or finished, we will go into recess and wait for a report from the meeting at the White House. We anticipate that our Members will have the ability to hear what happened at the White House this evening.

Mr. OBEY. Does the gentleman have any idea, is there any point beyond which you would want the House to adjourn or could we expect that we might be in session through 6:00, 7:00, 8:00 tomorrow morning?

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I would not anticipate being in session at that time. I would think that for the remainder of this evening, at least until midnight, the House would be in session so that if there is movement or results from the discussions tonight that we could act upon it or at least be advised.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, if there is not sufficient movement by, say, midnight or so, is it then the gentleman's understanding that there would be a motion to adjourn?

Mr. HASTERT. I would say that if there is not any information or movement within a reasonable time, I would say that would be probably shortly after midnight that the House would stand adjourned.

Mr. OBEY. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. (Mr. BARR of Georgia.) The gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude by saying, God bless

the common sense of the American people. God bless the common sense of the American people as reflected in the current polls. God bless the common sense of the American people as reflected in the elections last week. God bless the common sense of the American people because it has brought us through a lot of manufactured crises as well as real crises. This is a manufactured crisis. We do not need to be as mean and extreme as the Republican majority in this House insists on being. We can go forward and we can begin to go forward by supporting education again as a bipartisan effort. Education should be a priority for both Republicans and Democrats.

God bless the American people. God bless their common sense.

#### A SPECIAL THANK YOU

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. WELDON] is recognized for 10 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening for a brief period of time to say thank you. Today is my first day back in the session after approximately 3 weeks of recovering, becoming a member of what is known as the zipper club. Never would I have thought that at the age of 48 I would have to undergo open heart surgery, but I did. And I am here to say thank you to a lot of people who made my past 3 weeks very worthwhile and profitable and who certainly helped me in a period of need.

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Let me first of all say, Mr. Speaker, that it was 3 weeks ago last Friday, after I had gone to the House Physician, Dr. John Eisold, who I have the highest respect for, and told him that I thought I had a fullness in my chest and sought some advice from him, that he suggested I go to the Bethesda Naval Hospital even though I reside in Pennsylvania. I took his advice that night after taking a stress test under his supervision and the supervision of Dr. David Ferguson, a Navy officer and physician at the Bethesda, and they realized a very abnormal EKG, and therefore the next day should undergo a catheterization process. I did that, Mr. Speaker, on that Friday morning and by 12 noon was under the surgeon's knife because of the need to conduct a surgery immediately. It turned out that I had 95-percent blockage of my main artery. Doctor Edward Zeck actually performed the surgery, and he also was a Navy physician and someone who I also hold with the highest respect.

Mr. Speaker, here I am 3½ weeks later, able to come to the House floor and carry on the business of representing my constituents, and here I am in full health again, on the road to recovery, in fact 15 pounds lighter, although I would not suggest to any of my col-

leagues that this be a way that you lose weight.

But the reason I take the floor tonight, Mr. Speaker, is to thank some people; first of all to thank the Navy personnel who day in and day out provide health care for our enlisted personnel. I, as a Member of Congress stuck in Washington, had no place to go, and because of the recommendation of Dr. Eisold, I was referred to Bethesda. I received outstanding treatment, the same type of treatment that the people in the rooms next to me received, all of whom were enlisted personnel. There is nothing that I can say or do to make the case for the support for the medical services of our military personnel because they were just phenomenal.

I also want to thank God, Mr. Speaker, because without his counsel and guidance and without the prayer of many of my constituents and colleagues in this body perhaps I would not have been able to avoid what the surgeons referred to as the widowmaker, the widowmaker being a 95-percent blockage that I had in my main descending artery. I want to thank my colleagues from this body who called, sent letters and cards, and who made their wishes known from both sides of the aisle. It certainly helped in my recovery. I want to thank my staff, my friends.

I want to thank my family, my wife and five children, who put up with my past 3 weeks at home while watching C-SPAN, day and night, wishing I could be here getting involved in the issues of the day. I also want to thank my constituents who I think understand that I had to take some time off to recover to be able to be back here today to vote on the very important things that are coming before us in this session of Congress.

But, Mr. Speaker, I also rise today, besides thanking many people including the good Navy folks at Bethesda, I rise to encourage my colleagues who sometimes, oftentimes, get caught up in the business of representing their constituents, to make sure they take time to look out for their own health. I did not. I never thought at 48 years old that I would be a prime candidate for open heart surgery. But because of all that fast food, all of those 18-hour days, all of those 7-day-a-week efforts, I did not take time to watch out for myself.

So I come to the floor today to ask my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to take time out to check their own medical condition, to make sure that they take advantage of the medical technology that is out there today to have the kinds of success that I had in avoiding what would have been a catastrophic heart attack if I had not taken preventive efforts 3½ weeks ago.

So, Mr. Speaker, I rise with a heart filled with thanks and a heart that is filled with energy, ready to go and take on the battles, and I take time out from this heavy debate here on the

floor to say thank you to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their thoughts, their cards, their prayers, and for being my friends.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KINGSTON. Please, would you? If the gentleman would yield to me, I would request that our colleagues speak under unanimous-consent agreement. I would greatly appreciate that because this is our hour, and we would like to make a few discussions. But I would certainly yield for unanimous-consent agreement.

Mr. HOYER. Can I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman's hour be extended by whatever period of time I take? I do not know whether that is an appropriate unanimous-consent request, but that is the unanimous-consent request I make.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARR of Georgia). I am not sure that would be in order, but certainly the gentleman from Pennsylvania continues to have the floor.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 4 minutes remaining.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I certainly will accommodate our friend from Georgia, but let me say, as someone who has worked very, very closely with the gentleman from Pennsylvania for many, many years, he has been the leader in this Congress on the formation, and the growth, and flourishing of the Fire Service Caucus. He has been a leader in foreign affairs, a leader on the Committee on Armed Services, and a leader in so many other efforts on behalf of his constituents and on behalf of this country.

I want him to, however, in this period of time when we are—because he is such an able Member—when we are contending so heartily here, Mr. Speaker, I want him to rest, and I want him to take care of himself, not work those 7 days a week, 20-hour days that he has been working, and I want to say we welcome you back on this side of the aisle.

I have often said that it is unfortunate that people see us on this floor usually contending about the 20 percent of the issues that are contentious and we have disagreements on, and they sometimes, I think, believe that we do not interact with one another as human beings, as colleagues, and as people who care about this country and work together on an overwhelming majority of issues to make our country a better place for our children, our constituents, and all Americans, and so I join with, I know, my other colleagues in welcoming CURT WELDON from Pennsylvania back to the House. We share his joy and the joy of his family that the genius of medical technology has enabled him to come back whole and indeed from those with whom I have

talked to have had this operating feeling much better than he did before, and I am confident that he is going to continue to be one of the most able, involved, effective Members in this body.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. I thank my colleague.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Indiana.

Mr. ROEMER. I just want to welcome you back. I think around here we are not bipartisan enough, and certainly the bipartisanship on the Democratic side extends to this Republican Member, Mr. WELDON from Pennsylvania.

I know a lot of firefighters in the Third District of Indiana were praying for you, for your good health, and we are delighted to see you back, and we miss some of that fiery speech making that you give on the floor as well, too. So, welcome back.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY].

Mr. OBEY. I simply would like to welcome the gentleman back also, and I say that his comments remind me of the late Claude Pepper when Claude came back after open heart surgery. I heard him at a senior citizen convention. They gave him a big round of applause, and he said, "I want to thank you from the bottom of a very repaired heart."

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF BALANCING THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] is recognized for 50 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I am certainly glad to join the gentlemen in welcoming the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. WELDON] back. We are glad to have him with us, and Democrats and Republicans during this stressful period of negotiations can certainly agree on that and keep in mind what is the most important thing.

Mr. Speaker, as of November 8, 1995, our national debt was \$4,984,737,460,958.92.

Now that was on the 8th of November. On the 13th, which is today, that figure has risen to \$4,985,913,011,032.65. We advance each week in terms of almost \$3 billion.

Mr. Speaker, this debt is passed on to our children.

Now I have a 7-year-old daughter, and the other day, as I was coming off the floor making my daily phone call home, Ann asked me, "Daddy, what were you voting on?" And it was, as you will recall, Mr. Speaker, last week right after the vote on increasing the debt ceiling was held, and I had just voted to increase the debt ceiling on my 7-year-old, and I think that just having that happen immediately underscored the importance to me of

what we are trying to do when we talk about balancing the budget. It is not academic, it is something that my 7-year-old daughter, her 5-year-old brother, her 10-year-old brother, and her 12-year-old sister will be having to pay. A child born today, Mr. Speaker, owes \$187,000 in interest on the national debt during his or her 75-year lifetime, and that does not even pay the principal down.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I think it is so important right now for us to keep in mind why we are working late tonight, why are we working probably through Thanksgiving and maybe through Christmas. But we need to balance the budget for our children's children.

Previous speaker tonight was talking about education and education being an investment. I could not agree with that statement more. But I can tell you another investment, and that is keeping America from going broke, and that is why it is so important for us to support this Republican plan to balance the 7-year budget, because you see, Mr. Speaker, in the year 2002 the Republican balanced budget plan has a zero deficit, but the President's plan has a \$200 billion deficit in the year 2002. The differences are real.

We have a real bill here. We want to balance the budget. We do not want to close government down. But we have got to do this for our children.

Mr. WELDON from Florida has joined us, and I would like to yield the floor to him. I see he has a chart and also the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. LAHOOD].

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I cannot agree with you more on the importance of balancing our budget for the sake of our children and for our children's children.

The United States has a longstanding history of doing what is right in the setting of adversity, in difficult times coming to the right conclusions, and I believe that today our Nation is really at that point. I think when the other body failed to ratify the balanced budget amendment and our dollar decreased from about 106 yen to about 80 yen, I think that gave the American people a good glimpse of what happens to a nation that truly does spend more than it takes in. Its currency is ultimately worth nothing, and the implications for that on our entire economic system is really huge, and I cannot understand why the President will not join us in this historic effort to restore fiscal sanity to our budgeting process and to make sure that our children are not left bankrupt, but do inherit a brighter and better future, and I do want to take a minute to talk a little bit about this chart because the President has been talking about saving Medicare, and I personally think it is disgraceful for him to be carrying on like this because everybody knows that in his health care plan that he was talking about back in 1993, he was talking