

immediately complete the transaction at the point of service.”.

CONGRESS STILL WORKING FOR BETTERMENT OF NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, we are here Thursday evening, and we all know that we are going to be here tomorrow, Friday. What I would like to tell my colleagues, all of them on both sides of the aisle, is that we are here to continue the process of legislating.

Some of the things that we are trying to work out here, one, for example, is to provide health care prescription drugs for Americans that need that service and do not have it right now.

We are working to create a system where no legal immigrants are turned away from our shores. We are working to ensure worker safety and much-needed, in certain circumstances, compensation for those who are injured in a variety of ways.

We are working to build schools for those municipalities around the country that need new construction. We are working to enhance the economy by stimulating productivity in the private sector. Some of that is by a tax structure. Some of that is opening new markets overseas.

We are working here, Mr. Speaker, to find ways to make this great country energy independent. We are working here, specifically what we will do tomorrow is to ensure that the environment is clean and sustainable.

Now, how do we do all those things while we are here working? Well, it is pretty fundamental. We as Members of Congress, both the Democrats and Republicans, and the two Independents, we come here every day, we exchange information. There is a sense of tolerance for somebody else's opinion. Then we vote. If you get 218 votes, you have the majority. Our fundamental democratic process is based on the majority. So if we have 218 votes, then that bill is passed out of the House and goes over to the Senate.

We hear a lot about gridlock and partisan politics, both here on the House floor and in the media, certainly. Well, I am here to say that partisan politics is actually the strength of our system. That means each of us is allowed to come here and express our deeply felt convictions without fear of any retribution or retaliation.

When we stand here and disagree with the Democrats or Republicans disagree with Republicans, or Republicans disagree with the President, that is the strength of our Nation, which is the diversity of thought.

Now, one cannot express one's difference of opinion in Cuba. One cannot express one's difference of opinion in Iraq to Saddam Hussein because one would disappear and never be seen again. But here on the House floor, the

fundamentals of democratic process is that every individual Member of Congress, whether one is the Speaker or a new freshman, has an opportunity to be a responsible advocate for what one believes. If one can talk to 218 Members, and they see one as credible and one has the right information, then one will get their vote, and one's bill will pass.

So the strength of our country is that we each have the availability to us, because of our Constitution, to express our heartfelt convictions.

There is one other thing that we need to do here on a regular basis, but especially now before this general election, is to tap the energy of the American people with all their diversity and their initiative and innovation. We need to inspire the American people to participate in the democratic process so that all of us collectively together can make the possibilities for this Nation and this world limitless.

PUTTING PEOPLE ABOVE POLITICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PITTS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, we are joined here tonight by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT). What we want to talk about is what we have tried to do in our individual careers, and we believe that this Congress has, and that is putting people above politics.

See, when we were elected in Arizona, in Minnesota, and, in my case, Georgia, we did not go out there and say I am going to be a Republican, and I am going to only be a Republican and I am going to only represent Republicans. We went out there to say the American people want a change. We are going to try to put people above politics. We are going to try to stick to that.

Do my colleagues know what, I have found that a lot of times in these negotiations, the Democrats have a lot of good things to offer. What we try to do is put the best of the Democratic ideas and the best of the Republican ideas forward for the best for the American people.

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That is one reason why we are still here in Washington after the Senate has already adjourned. It is one reason we are still here to fight for the things that we believe in. It would be a lot more convenient for us during this election time to be back home pounding the streets in our own districts, but there are some things that we need to fight for.

My wife, Libby, often reminds me that she does not mind driving the car pool alone and being alone at parties and taking care of the kids and sitting

down at the dinner table and seeing my empty chair night after night if I am here to make a difference.

But if I am not making a difference and it is politics as usual, then it is time to go home. But so far we are here to put people before politics.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH).

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Georgia for yielding.

As he mentioned his beloved spouse, Ms. Libby, my thoughts turn to home and Ms. Mary and a conversation that my bride, Mary, and I had just last night.

This is a great honor to serve in the Congress of the United States. Evoking the memories of one who served at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue before coming here, John Quincy Adams, he was heard to say, "There is no greater honor than serving in the people's house."

And so, Mr. Speaker, I think back to my conversation last night with Mary when she said, honey, we would love to have you at home. The kids have spelling tests. There is a lot going on. But you and the other Members of Congress need to stay there and complete the work you were sent to do. And as is often the case, Mary provides good advice, the kind of common sense that comes from Main Street, America, that may be disrupted in the Beltway and with the pundits and with the dominant media culture always ready to play a game of gotcha, especially now, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the calendar and see what approaches.

Fast approaching is the first Tuesday following the first Monday, election day, where our constituents, where citizens across America will make a choice. Conventional wisdom, our friends in the fourth estate, indeed our friends on the other side of the aisle, albeit sotto voce, from the other side of the aisle, say, we need to be at home. But the fact is we are here and here we will remain to put people before politics, to complete our work, to understand there are legitimate differences between people of the two major parties and those independents who join us here.

Mr. Speaker, I also think, in a sense, being entrusted with this role is not unlike applying for a job. And I have yet to take a job application and find a place to fill out partisan identification. I never see a spot on the resume or on a job application which asks whether you are a Republican or a Democrat or an Independent.

So putting partisanship aside, I think it is important for every Member who can possibly be here to return to this Chamber. And that is why I noted with great dismay tonight, as we cast the vote to make sure our Government was funded for another day, our friend the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), who happens to be the leader of the Democratic party in this Chamber, chose to be out campaigning in Missouri.