I will, however, complete my term as congressman for the Sixth District of Georgia for the entirety of the 106th Congress. I will also continue to serve as Speaker until the completion of the 106th Congress. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

NEWT GINGRICH, Speaker.

November 22, 1998.

Governor Zell Miller,
Atlanta, Georgia.

DEAR GOVERNOR MILLER: As you are no doubt aware, I have decided that I will not seek re-election in the 106th Congress as Speaker of the United States House of Representatives. In conjunction with this decision, I hereby notify you that I have withdrawn pursuant to Section 21–2–503 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and will not take the seat of congressman for the Sixth District of Georgia for the 106th Congress.

I will, however, complete my term as congressman for the Sixth District of Georgia for the entirety of the 106th Congress. I will also continue to serve as Speaker until the completion of the 106th Congress. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

NEWT GINGRICH.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The Clerk. Pursuant to law and to precedent, the next order of business is the election of the Speaker of Representatives for the 106th Congress.

Nominations are now in order.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma, Mr. Clerk, happily for our country and happily for you and me, Republicans and Democrats, DENNIS HASTERT has answered his Nation’s call. This common man will bring his strong common sense, sharpened in the school of adversity, to bear on the Speakership. He has many qualities of another Congressman from Illinois, the Great Emancipator, Abraham Lincoln, and he will not hesitate, he will not doubt and he will not falter. We are grateful that he has resolved at whatever peril, at whatever cost, the most wonderful Nation in the world should be preserved.

As Chairman of the Republican Conference, I am directed by the unanimous vote of that conference to present for election to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives for the 106th Congress, the name of the Honorable J. DENNIS HASTERT, a Representative-elect from the State of Illinois.

The Clerk. The Clerk recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS).

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma, Mr. Clerk, happily for our country and happily for you and me, Republicans and Democrats, DENNIS HASTERT has answered his Nation’s call. This common man will bring his strong common sense, sharpened in the school of adversity, to bear on the Speakership. He has many qualities of another Congressman from Illinois, the Great Emancipator, Abraham Lincoln, and he will not hesitate, he will not doubt and he will not falter. We are grateful that he has resolved at whatever peril, at whatever cost, the most wonderful Nation in the world should be preserved.

As Chairman of the Republican Conference, I am directed by the unanimous vote of that conference to present for election to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives for the 106th Congress, the name of the Honorable J. DENNIS HASTERT, a Representative-elect from the State of Illinois.

The Clerk. The Clerk recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST).

Mr. FROST, Mr. Clerk, as Chairman of the Democratic Caucus, I am directed by the unanimous vote of that caucus to present for election to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives for the 106th Congress the name of one of most articulate and thoughtful Members of this Congress.
Parliamentary Inquiry

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ (during the vote). Have we been eliminated already? Have we been eliminated from the voting procedure?

The Clerk. Delegates and the Resident Commissioners are not qualified to vote.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. What is that? The Clerk. That is the case.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Yes. We voted the last time.

Parliamentary Inquiry

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Clerk, would the Clerk respond to a parliamentary inquiry?

The Clerk. The gentleman will state his inquiry.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. The parliamentary inquiry for the Clerk is for the delegates who represent American citizens. Where does that vote come today? Will they not be allowed to vote for Speaker of this House? The Member from Puerto Rico represents 4 million American citizens.

The Clerk. Representatives-elect are the only individuals qualified to vote in the election of the Speaker.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. All right. Can we just make sure that is duly noted under this majority, the disenfranchisement.

The following is the result of the vote:

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ANSWERED "PRESENT"—2

Gephardt Hastert

NOT VOTING—7

Barcia Boyer Stark

Gallegly Molinian

The Clerk. The tellers agree in their tallies that the total number of votes cast is 427, of which the Honorable J. DENNIS HASTERT of the State of Illinois has received 222, and the Honorable RICHARD A. GEPHARDT of the State of Missouri has received 205, with two voting present.

Therefore, the Honorable J. DENNIS HASTERT of the State of Illinois is duly elected Speaker of the House of Representatives for the 106th Congress, having received a majority of the votes cast.

The Clerk. The Clerk appoints the following committee to escort the Speaker-elect to the Chair: The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), the gentleman from Texas, (Mr. ARMET), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR), the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FEOST), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. CRANE), the Honorable RICHARD A. GEPHARDT, a Representative-elect from the State of Missouri.

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the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), the gentleman from Illinois, (Mr. COSTELLO), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZUZ), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JACKSON), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BLAGOJEVICH), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS), the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT), the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. BIGGERT), the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. PHIELPS), and the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAEFFER).

The committee will retire from the Chamber to escort the Speaker-elect to the chair.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Speaker-elect of the House of Representatives of the 106th Congress, who was escorted to the chair by the Committee of Escort.

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, before I hand the gavel over to our new Speaker, let me say to him simply, let us bury the hatchet.

First, I want to say to the new Speaker that Jane Gephardt and I would like to invite him and his wife, Jean, to our congressional district in Missouri, and I hope that in the days ahead Jane and I can come to your congressional district in Illinois.

The only problem that I have with this new Speaker is that as I understand it, he is a Chicago Cubs fan, and all of us know that I am a St. Louis Cardinals fan. He tells me his wife is a St. Louis Cardinals fan, which gives me real hope. But if Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire can figure it out, so can we.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you know that over the next 2 years I am going to work hard to win a majority back for Democratic values and ideas. But I want to shift the focus today away from politics to other ideas, to other endeavors. What I am is a former high school teacher, a wrestling and football coach, a small businessman and a State legislator. And for the last 12 years, I have been a Member of this House. I am indebted to the people of the 14th Congressional District of Illinois who have continued to send me here to represent them.

Those of you here in this House know me, but Hastert is not exactly a household name across America. So our fellow citizens deserve to know who I am and what I am going to do.

What I am is a former high school teacher, a wrestling and football coach, a small businessman and a State legislator. And for the last 12 years, I have been a Member of this House. I am indebted to the people of the 14th Congressional District of Illinois who have continued to send me here to represent them.

I believe in limited government, but when government does act, it must be for the good of the people. Serving in this body is a privilege, it is not a right, and each of us was sent here to conduct the people's business. I intend to get down to business. That means formulating, debating, and voting on legislation that addresses the problems that the American people want solved.

In the turbulent days behind us, debate on merits often gave way to personal attacks.

Some have felt slighted, insulted, or ignored. That is wrong. That will change. Solutions to problems cannot be found in a pool of bitterness. They can be found in an environment in which we trust one another's word; in which we generate heat and passion, but where we recognize that each member is equally important to our overall mission of improving life for the American people. In short, I believe all of us, regardless of party, can respect one another, even as we fiercely disagree on particular issues.

Speaking of people who find ways to work together across the political fence, let me bring an analogy to a personal level. Two good Illinois friends of mine, George Ryan, the Republican Governor-elect, and Richard Daley, the Democratic mayor of Chicago, are in the visitors' gallery side by side. I will ask them to stand to be recognized.

Those who know me well will tell you that I love my Cubs, and everything about them. A good coach means that you can count on me to be a workhorse. My experience as a football and wrestling coach taught me some other lessons that apply here. A good coach knows the value of fair play, camaraderie, respect for his salt will instill in his team a sense of us all, and against the opposition. Without those, victory is hollow and defeat represents opportunities lost. I have found that to be true around here, too. So where do we go from here? Some media pundits say that we will have 2 years of stalemate because the Republican majority is too small. Some say that a White House bent on revenge will not give us a moment's peace. Some say the minority in this House...
will prevent passage of serious legislation so that they can later claim this was a "do-nothing" Congress.

Washington is a town of rumors and guesses and speculation, so none of this comes as a surprise, but none of it needs to come true; that is, if we really respect the voters that sent us here.

To my Republican colleagues, I say, it is time to put forward the major elements of our legislative program. We will succeed or fail depending upon how sensible a program we offer.

To my Democratic colleagues, I will say, I will meet you halfway; maybe more so, on occasion. But cooperation is a two-way street. I expect you to meet me halfway, too.

The President and a number of Democrats here in the House have been saying it is time to address several issues. I want to buy that, but I think we should agree that stalemating is not an option; solutions are.

To all my colleagues, I say: We must get our job done and done now. We have an obligation to pass all the appropriations bills by this summer. We will not leave this Chamber until we do. I intend to be a good listener, but I want to hear ideas and the debate that flows from them. I will have a low tolerance for campaign speeches masquerading as debate, whatever the source.

Our country faces four big challenges which we must address, and not next month or next year or the year after that, but now. Each challenge involves an element of our security.

First is retirement and health security. Both our social security and Medicare programs will run into brick walls in a few years if we do not do something about them now. We must make social security is there for those who depend on it, and those who expect to. We also must consider options for younger workers, so they can look forward to an even brighter retirement.

Nearly a year ago President Clinton came here to give his State of the Union Address. He called for reform of social security. This year I invite him to return to give us his reform plan, and he has my assurance that it will be taken seriously.

Second, we must ensure a secure future for America’s children by insisting that every child has a good school and a safe, drug-free environment. In my 16 years as a teacher, I learned that most of the decisions having to do with education are best left to the people closest to the situation: parents, teachers, school board members. What should the Federal government’s role be? It should be to see that as many education dollars as possible go directly to the classroom, where they will do the most good.

Next is economic security. In the early eighties we adopted policies that laid the foundation for long-term growth. Except for one brief period, that growth has continued ever since. We want our economy to keep on growing. I think it is time for us in Congress to put a microscope to the ways that government takes money from our fellow citizens and how it spends it.

There is a culture here in Washington that has grown unchallenged for too long. It combines three notions. One is that government has a prior claim to the earnings of all Americans, as if they worked for the government and not the other way around. Another notion is that a government program, once it is begun, will never end. A third notion is that every program must grow each passing year.

To borrow a musical line, it just ain’t necessarily so; at least, it will not be as long as we have something to say about it. We must measure every dollar we spend by this criterion: Is it really necessary?

This is important. For most Americans, money does not come easy. When I was a kid, to make ends meet my dad had a feed business and he worked nights in a restaurant. My mom raised chickens and sold the eggs. I still remember, when tax time came around, our family really felt it. What we need is a leaner, more efficient government, along with tax policies that spur and sustain growth by giving tax relief to all working Americans.

Finally, there is the challenge of America’s security in a world of danger and uncertainty. Without it, other elements of our security will not be possible. We no longer worry about Soviet nuclear bombs raining down on us. Today there are different worries: the sudden violence of a terrorist bomb, the silent threat of biological weapons, or the rogue state that aims a deadly missile at one of our cities.

We need a defense capability that matches these turn-of-the-century threats. We have asked the men and women of our Armed Forces to take on assignments in many corners of the Earth. Yet, we have not given them the best equipment or preparation that they need to match those assignments. That must be corrected.

These are not Democratic or Republican issues, they are American issues. We should be able to reach agreement quickly on the goals. And yes, we are going to argue about the means, but if we are in earnest about our responsibilities, we will find common ground to get the job done. In the process, we will build the people’s faith in this great United States Congress.

As a classroom teacher and coach, I learned the value of brevity. I learned that it is work, not talk, that wins championships.

In closing, I want you to know just how proud I am to be chosen to be your Speaker. There is a big job ahead for all of us, so I ask that God bless this House as we move forward together. I thank the Members very much. Now, let us bring an end to talk and let us get to work.

I recognize my friend, the distinguished gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), Dean of the House, my colleague from the Committee on Commerce, whose common sense and fairness I admire. He will administer the oath of office.

Mr. DINGELL then administered the oath of office to Mr. HASTERT, as follows:

Do you solemnly swear that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter. So help you God.

(Appause, the Members rising.)

SPEARING IN OF MEMBERS

The SPEAKER. According to the presiding officers, the Chair will swear in all Members of the House at this time.

If the Members will rise, the Chair will now administer the oath of office.

The Members-elect and Delegates-elect and the Resident Commissioner-elect rose, and the Speaker administered the oath of office to them as follows:

Do you solemnly swear that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter. So help you God.

The SPEAKER. Congratulations. You are now Members of the 106th Congress.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBER-ELECT

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. EHRLICH) kindly come to the well of the House and take the oath of office at this time?

Mr. EHRLICH appeared at the bar of the House and took the oath of office, as follows:

Do you solemnly swear that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter. So help you God.