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Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I noted, as I mentioned earlier, that this advertisement points out the responsibilities all of us have in reaching a balanced budget as a challenge to all of us here in the Congress, to the administration, and it is really a challenge to all Americans. It is one that we all should be mindful of, and I hope that our friends that were signatories to that proposal would also feel that in a sense of fairness and equity, they, too, would like to do their part. We invite them to be a part of the solution to this challenge that we are all facing at this time so that what is eventually proposed, which hopefully will have bipartisan support, will be able to be looked on as being fair to all Americans. It is in that spirit that these remarks are made.

I thank the chairman and the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GORTON). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996—CONFERENCE REPORT

The Senate continued with consideration of the conference report.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I address this to the chairman and ranking member. Given the deteriorating weather and the need to have the vote tonight, the distinguished majority leader is quite amenable to leave the vote open for an extended period to accommodate a member or such Members that might be delayed.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we yield back time remaining on both sides and proceed to a vote, and we keep the vote open for 30 minutes after those present have voted.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. FORD. Reserving the right to object, I would like to have an opportunity for the Members that are at the

White House to have an opportunity to come back. As I understand, the majority leader is willing to leave the vote open until they arrive. If it will just stay open.

Mr. THURMOND. That is all right.

Mr. NUNN. If the Senator would state it in a form that does not have a time limit.

Mr. THURMOND. That would be all right. I ask unanimous consent that the vote remain open until Members now at the White House have an opportunity to return to the Senate and vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WARNER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the conference report.

The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, on this vote I have a pair with the Senator from Texas, [Mr. GRAMM]. If he were present and voting he would vote "aye." If I were permitted to vote, I would vote "nay." I therefore withhold my vote.

Mr. LOTT. I announce that the Senator from Missouri [Mr. BOND], the Senator from Texas [Mr. GRAMM], and the Senator from Delaware [Mr. ROTH] are necessarily absent.

Mr. FORD. I announce that the Senator from California [Mrs. BOXER] is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 43, as follows:

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 608 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Abraham	Frist	Mack
Ashcroft	Gorton	McConnell
Bennett	Grams	Murkowski
Brown	Grassley	Nickles
Burns	Gregg	Pressler
Campbell	Hatch	Robb
Chafee	Heflin	Santorum
Coats	Helms	Shelby
Cochran	Hollings	Simpson
Cohen	Hutchison	Smith
Coverdell	Inhofe	Snowe
Craig	Kassebaum	Specter
D'Amato	Kempthorne	Stevens
DeWine	Kyl	Thomas
Dole	Lieberman	Thompson
Domenici	Lott	Thurmond
Faircloth	Lugar	Warner

NAYS—43

Akaka	Exon	Kohl
Baucus	Feingold	Lautenberg
Biden	Feinstein	Leahy
Bingaman	Ford	Levin
Bradley	Glenn	McCain
Breaux	Graham	Mikulski
Bryan	Harkin	Moseley-Braun
Bumpers	Hatfield	Moynihan
Byrd	Inouye	Murray
Conrad	Johnston	Nunn
Daschle	Kennedy	Pell
Dodd	Kerry	
Dorgan	Kerry	

Pryor Rockefeller Simon
Reid Sarbanes Wellstone

PRESENT AND GIVING A LIVE PAIR

Jeffords, against

NOT VOTING—4

Bond Gramm Roth
Boxer

So the conference report was agreed to.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. WARNER. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, let me yield to the distinguished chairman of the Armed Services Committee, who did an outstanding job, and I congratulate him and members of our staff and our colleagues on this side for passing this most important conference report. I yield to the Senator from South Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. THURMOND. I would like to express my deep appreciation to all of the Members who worked hard to prepare this bill and who supported it. I also would like to express my deep appreciation to all the staff members who worked so hard to prepare this bill. This is a good bill. It serves the military well. It serves the country well. And I am sure all who support it will be proud that they did support it because it is going to help the soldiers and their families in every way possible.

Thank you very much.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I wish to join other members of the Armed Services Committee in stating our profound appreciation to the distinguished chairman, Senator THURMOND, for his work on this bill. I am trying to recall a quote by the Duke of Wellington in the close of the Battle of Waterloo when he said:

... a damned nice thing—the nearest-run thing you ever saw in your life.

The vote on this conference report was also very close, and I doubt if it would have been passed without the absolute determination and the total dedication of the distinguished chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Mr. THURMOND of South Carolina, and we all render this fine gentleman a hand salute.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 132

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, let me advise there will be no more votes today because the weather is lousy out there and the roads are going to be difficult if you live in the suburbs. But I would propound a unanimous-consent request. I assume there will be an objection, and there might be someone, a couple on this side who would like to speak briefly.

Yesterday, the House passed by an overwhelming vote House Joint Resolution 132, which relates to balancing the budget, and so forth, over 7 years. So I would ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of House Joint Resolution 132, a resolution affirming that budget negotiations be based on the most recent technical and economic assumptions of the Congressional Budget Office, and shall achieve a balanced budget by fiscal 2002 based on those assumptions.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I would inquire of the majority leader whether the resolution includes all of the priorities that we listed in the continuing resolution which passed about 3 weeks ago?

Mr. President, it is my understanding that the priorities that were listed in the continuing resolution are not included in this specific draft, and because they are not we would be compelled to object at this time. I hope that perhaps we could work out some language that would include those priorities, and then there would be no objection on this side.

Mr. DOLE. I thank the Democratic leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DOLE. I think we can work it out because we have already passed those priorities once, talking about veterans, Medicare, agriculture. There are I think six or seven. So let us see what we can do, or if the minority would like to propose an amendment, we could modify it. I think there are some who would like to speak even though there has been objection, if that is satisfactory.

Mr. DASCHLE. Sure.

Mr. DOLE. Let me indicate to my colleagues who are in the Chamber and those who may be in their offices that we have had, as I have said earlier, a very constructive discussion with the President and Vice President and Chief of Staff with reference to achieving a balanced budget over the next 7 years. There will be a meeting going on tonight with Mr. Panetta, Senator DOMENICI, Congressman KASICH, and others, and then, depending on what happens in that agreement, there may be another agreement of the principals either tomorrow morning or early afternoon, depending on everyone's schedule.

I think it is fair to say that at least I am optimistic about getting something done here that will satisfy a great majority of Americans and probably most people on both sides of the aisle—not everyone but most of my colleagues on each side of the aisle. There are certainly areas of difference, and we will not go into those at this time, but I think there was an agreement that there are at least five or six or seven categories where the leaders are going to have to be directly involved and the President is going to be directly involved, and he has agreed to be directly involved.

We hope to give you more detailed information as soon as it is available and as soon as we have something that we can really say this is it; we are serious; we are going to go to work; we are going to stay here today, tomorrow, whatever. It is our hope—and we have not worked out the schedule because I know some have some difficulties with it, but hopefully if we have, if we put it together tomorrow morning, then there will be a CR passed that would extend at least until December 27 or December 28 and perhaps an adjournment resolution to extend from this Friday until December 27.

We have not worked out those details. But in any event, I think the important point I should make is that I really believe we are going to start the process.

Now, will we finish the process and when will we finish the process? We would like to say we could put together the framework this year, by the end of the year, and then take some days for drafting, come back a couple days in January and finish the product. Some would like to do it all before New Year's Eve. I am not certain that is possible. But in any event, I think there is reason for optimism, bipartisan optimism and I hope it continues.

Mr. DASCHLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. I share the views expressed by the majority leader. I think there is reason for optimism tonight. I think the meetings held at the White House have been very productive. The President has committed to become personally involved in these negotiations. With a good-faith effort on both sides, there is renewed hope that we can reach an agreement. As the majority leader said, I do not know that there is any timeframe within which we can realistically reach that agreement tonight. We certainly know that these are difficult issues.

We agreed to reach an agreement in three areas. First, on the continuing resolution; second, on the schedule; and third, on the framework within which these negotiations would take place.

Leon Panetta will be talking with our Budget Committee people on both sides to discuss all three of those and hopefully reach an agreement sometime tomorrow, which then would allow us to go to our caucuses to discuss in detail what that agreement may entail. But there is no agreement tonight. There is simply an agreement to work out in three areas what that agreement might look like. If we can reach that tomorrow morning, I hope our caucuses could be informed and we will begin to go to work. But I again share the optimism expressed by the majority leader, and hopefully it will lead to even more optimistic developments in the days ahead. With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. HARKIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.