

same time, have the loan rates pegged at a level where America's farmers can cover most of the costs of their operation. So as a consequence, our proposal is to increase the loan rate for corn as an example, to \$2.43 a bushel; the loan rate on soybeans to \$5.50 a bushel; to extend the period of the marketing loan to 20 months; and to include payment limitations, so that this farm program does not enrich those that are farming tens of thousands of acres, but instead, focuses its benefits and its attention on those farmers that are moderate size, family farming operations.

Mr. Speaker, I submit that this is the track that we need to take if we are going to get American agriculture back on course, and I urge my colleagues to join with the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY) and myself on this legislation.

TOPICS OF NATIONAL INTEREST

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to speak on two unrelated, but very important topics of national interest.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, first, I spent 7½ years before coming to Congress as a criminal court judge, trying felony criminal cases. I tried several death penalty cases, and I think I am the only Member of this Congress who has sentenced anyone to the electric chair.

It is almost impossible, Mr. Speaker, to get a jury to return a death sentence today. Despite polls showing very high support for capital punishment, it is one thing to favor the death penalty, but a much more difficult thing to actually impose it. It is so difficult, in fact, that most prosecutors will not even ask for a death sentence except in the most gruesome, horrible cases; and that is the main point I wish to make today, that juries return death sentences only in extremely brutal, terrible crimes.

In fact, it has been the law in this country for many years that an ordinary, simple murder, if there is such a thing, with nothing more, is not a capital case. To have a case justifying the death penalty, there must be aggravating circumstances that outweigh any mitigating factors, anything sympathetic in favor of the defendant. There have to be multiple crimes or killings, circumstances that make the case especially heinous.

I do not think a death sentence is appropriate except in 1 in 1 million very rare, very unusual kinds of cases. But I do believe that there are cases which are so gruesome, so horrendous that a

death sentence is the only appropriate punishment. Those who oppose the death penalty should ask themselves, would they oppose it if their daughter or wife or sister was brutally raped as her three small children watched and then all were strangled to death, an actual case.

The media does a great job gaining sympathy for those who are about to be put to death. I wish they would do just as good a job describing the sickening details of the murders that have been committed, even if almost shockingly, a prosecutor can get a rare, unusual jury to return a death sentence, the trial judge sits as the 13th juror and must later approve the verdict or grant a new trial or sometimes a lesser sentence. Following the trial judge, both State and Federal appellate courts review the case. Usually at least 30 or 40 judges review a death sentence before it is carried out, and many of these judges are philosophically opposed to the death penalty. There seems to be a real drum beat in the media to do away with capital punishment.

I urge my colleagues and others to look very closely at this before they jump on this particular band wagon.

SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS IN AMERICA

Mr. DUNCAN. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, another important, but unrelated issue of national concern is the impending teacher shortage. This is a very artificial, political government-produced shortage. It has come about only because the teachers' unions and colleges of education want to drastically restrict and limit and control the number of people allowed to teach in the Nation's public schools.

If a person with a Ph.D. and 30 years of experience, say a chemist, wanted to teach after working for years for the Government, he cannot do so under the rules in most States today. If a small college went under and a professor with 25 years of teaching experience, let us say a professor of English, wanted to move to a public school, he could not do so in most States today. If a very successful businessman wanted to teach for a few years as a way to contribute back to society, he could not do so today, despite all of his great wealth and success and experience. Why? Because they would not have the required degrees in education.

So school boards are restricted to hiring 22-year-olds with no experience because they have taken a few education courses over people with Ph.D.s and great experience and success and knowledge who have not had the education courses. This makes no sense at all at any time, but it is crazy in a time when there is or is about to be a teacher shortage. School boards should never hire an unqualified teacher, but they should be given the flexibility and freedom and power to hire people who have great knowledge or experience or success in a particular field, even if

they have never taken an education course. If they could do this, there would be no teacher shortage in this country. There are hundreds of thousands of experienced, well-trained, well-educated people with degrees and even graduate degrees who have not taken education courses, but who could and would make great teachers, if only government regulations would give them the freedom and opportunity to do so.

HIV/AIDS, THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST DISEASE

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

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to discuss one of the most challenging and life-threatening public health issues facing the global community, HIV infection and AIDS. I will also highlight significant actions our government and fellow Americans have taken to combat this threat.

HIV/AIDS is now the world's deadliest disease with more than 40 million persons infected worldwide. Not surprisingly, the pandemic affects the most vulnerable citizens of our global community. In fact, nearly 95 percent of infected persons live in the developing countries, with sub-Saharan Africa being the hardest hit of any other region in the world.

The statistics are startling. New HIV infections in Africa have numbered more than 1.4 million each year since 1991. That is an average of more than 3,800 new HIV/AIDS infections per day. Nearly 6,000 will die within this same time frame. Mr. Speaker, 23.3 million adults and children are infected with the HIV virus in the region, which has about 10 percent of the world's population, but nearly 70 percent of the worldwide total of infected people.

Life expectancy in these nations has been reduced by the disease to between 22 and 40 years. Some sub-Saharan African countries could lose as much as a third of their adult population by 2010, and 16 African countries have an HIV infection rate of more than 10 percent. South Africa is 20 percent, Zimbabwe and Swaziland are at 25 percent; and in Botswana, which has the highest infection rate in the region, 36 percent of adults are HIV infected.

When I hear these daunting statistics, I am reminded of a quote by John F. Kennedy. He said, "Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind." HIV/AIDS and its death toll have declared war on our humanity. We must fight back. All sectors and all spheres of society have to be involved as equal partners in fighting this assault. The health sector cannot meet this challenge on its own, nor can one government or nation. It is imperative that we have a collective global effort.