

still call Joni to ask for advice, or just to tell her how their family is doing.

I still do not know how I managed to convince her and her husband Kim to leave her children and grandchildren and come with me to Washington when I was elected to Congress in 1992, but whatever I said, it was one of the best speeches I ever made.

In just over a month, Joni will return to her home in Sacramento and to her three children and eight grandchildren, including Eric Royce Bates. For Joni, there is nothing more important than family. I just consider myself fortunate to have been part of her extended family for the past 19 years. I will miss her very much as will every member of my staff.

Thank you, Joni, for all you did for me. You will be 3,000 miles away, but you will never be forgotten by me or by anyone who has had the good fortune to work with you.

#### MAJORITY LEADER ARMEY

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, today Majority Leader DICK ARMEY announced that he would not run for reelection. I received this news with mixed emotions.

First, I am very happy for DICK ARMEY because he is moving to the next phase of his life where he will continue to pursue his dreams. This morning he fondly spoke of his wife Susan and how he was looking forward to spending more time at home with her. The gentleman from Texas spoke of her admiringly and spoke of the sacrifice that she has made, being a spouse of a Member of Congress. We all stood and applauded when Susan ArmeY was recognized. We stood because each of us knew what our spouses have endured—the long hours, the brutal campaigns, the time away from our families. We know what Susan has endured.

DICK and Susan ARMEY will get to spend more time together, and I am very happy for them. But also, Mr. Speaker, I am saddened by the gentleman from Texas' announcement. I am saddened because I consider him a friend and I respect what he has accomplished, but I will miss him and I wonder who will fill the void. DICK ARMEY has fought for so many things that have made this a better place to live: Welfare reform that has improved the lives of more than 6 million Americans who are working today and pursuing their dreams. It was DICK ARMEY who fought so hard for Congress to balance the budget, and finally we see a surplus for the first time in a generation. It was DICK ARMEY who fought for a flatter, fairer tax system for Americans.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am going to miss DICK ARMEY when he leaves. I am going

to miss my friend. Thank you, DICK, for carrying on the banner, for accomplishing so much, making life in America better for me and for my children.

God bless you and God bless America.

#### TEACHER CERTIFICATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 because occasionally I still read articles or hear news reports about a teacher shortage in this Nation. This is a government-induced, contrived or special interest produced shortage, because this is a problem that could be solved very simply and very quickly if we would do a few simple things.

Many, many years ago, I taught American government and journalism at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia, the school that the famous movie "Remember the Titans" was made about. I have had many, many teachers in my family. My grandmother taught for 40 years. My older sister taught for 30 years. Nobody admires teachers, I suppose, more than I do. But I think some of the certification requirements are warped, are out of whack. It makes no sense, for instance, that people who have Ph.D.s or master's degrees and long experience and great success in a particular field cannot teach in most of the public schools of this Nation.

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What spurred me to speak here tonight was an article that was in yesterday's Washington Post entitled "Down to Basics on Teacher Certification." This article says:

"University of Virginia Professor Frederick M. Hess says states should dump their current teacher certification requirements and instead ask prospective educators three simple questions:

1. Do you have a college degree?
2. Can you pass a test in your subject area?
3. Can you pass a criminal background check?

If the answers are yes, yes and yes, you could apply for any teaching job in the state.

To those who are picturing a crime-free yet clueless misfit at the front of their child's class, Hess says: Give school principals some credit. Allowing someone to apply for a job is not the same as guaranteeing them employment, he wrote in a recent paper for the Progressive Policy Institute.

Currently, each state sets its own complex guidelines for certification. They require a degree from an education program. The problem is that nobody agrees on what these programs should be teaching, Hess writes, in "Tear Down This Wall," the case for a

radical overhaul for teacher certification."

That is what we need, Mr. Speaker, a radical overhaul of teacher certification. It makes no sense, if, say, a Ph.D. chemist who works at Oak Ridge in East Tennessee and who has spent, say, 30 years in that field and decides he would like to teach for a few years, he cannot be hired over some 22-year-old recent college graduate who has a bachelor's degree in chemistry, because that young person took a few education courses, and this Ph.D.-experienced chemist did not.

It makes no sense, Mr. Speaker, that a person who has a Ph.D. in political science cannot go teach American government in most of the high schools, public high schools, in this country. Or you could name any other field.

Let us say that we know that many private small colleges are struggling financially. Some of them close. Some of them cannot pay as well as the public school systems in this country. So let us say a person who has a Ph.D. in English and has taught 25 years at some small college wants to go teach in a public school. They should be able to.

The school systems of this Nation, the school boards, should be allowed to say a degree in education is a plus and a factor in favor of someone being hired; but they should have the flexibility to hire somebody who has great experience in a field and has maybe even advanced degrees in a particular field, and they should not be disregarded or excluded from even being considered for teaching positions in this country just because they did not take an education course when they were in college.

So I appeal to the Committee on Education and the Workforce members here and at the various State levels across this Nation to give our school boards and school systems more freedom and flexibility in who they can hire. I believe that we will get much more qualified teachers and wipe out this contrived, government-induced, pressure group-produced teacher shortage in this Nation.

#### NATIONAL AVIATION CAPACITY EXPANSION ACT

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

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to introduce the National Aviation Capacity Expansion Act. This measure will codify into Federal law a historical agreement reached between Illinois Governor George Ryan and Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley that would benefit not only the Chicago area, but the entire Nation.