

I am grateful to the Presiding Officer and to others who are here to hear these concluding remarks. Again, I felt it was important to identify exactly what the situation was as we concluded our business this evening.

With that, I yield the floor.

CAPITOL GUIDE SERVICE RETIREMENTS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I call to your attention today the contributions of three outstanding individuals who will be retiring from the U.S. Capitol Guide Service at the end of the week. Tom Stevens, Sharon Nevitt, and Jeannie Divine have served the Congress—House and Senate alike—with a dedication to duty that allowed the guide service to fulfill the mission of providing our constituents with an educational and enjoyable experience while visiting our Nation's Capitol.

Tom Stevens first came to the guide service in March of 1985. Tom's contributions toward managing the expanded role of the guide service following the events of September 11, 2001, were instrumental in his selection as Director of the Capitol Guide Service in 2003. Tom's commitment to the employees of the Capitol Guide Service and the Congressional Special Services Office is well known. Under his leadership, this team has skillfully provided assistance to hundreds of thousands of visitors who come to the Capitol each year. Tom has been a mainstay in the effort to prepare for the operations of the Capitol Visitor Center. We recognize and appreciate his extraordinary contributions to the Capitol Visitor Center and indeed the entire Congress.

Sharon Nevitt, the Assistant Director of the Capitol Guide Service, came to the Service in 1977, working her way up through a number of management and supervisory roles. Her efficiency, quiet competence, and fierce loyalty to the employees of the guide service have been invaluable to the day to day operations of the Capitol Guide Service. Sharon has also contributed a wealth of time and effort to various working groups aimed at establishing operational procedures for the new Capitol Visitor Center. Sharon's efforts and her many contributions are recognized and appreciated.

Jeannie Divine has been a fixture here in the Congress since 1975. I would venture to say that each and every one of our offices has been assisted by Jeannie at one time or the other over her career. Jeannie is the one who takes all our calls and works with our staffs to accommodate the growing number of tour requests from our constituents who visit our Capitol each year. She handles each request with efficiency and courtesy. Her kindness and lighthearted nature have allowed her to form lasting friendships with people from both sides of the aisle and

both sides of the Hill. Her efforts to help all of us are recognized and appreciated.

We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to this dedicated team whose combined tenure equals 87 years of exemplary service to the Congress of the United States. Please join me in wishing Tom, Sharon, and Jeannie never-ending success in their future endeavors.

HONORING NEA PRESIDENT REG WEAVER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I wish to honor a man who has spent the greater part of his life as an advocate for quality public education.

Reg Weaver has said, "There is no feeling like seeing children's eyes brighten up as they discover the world of opportunity."

He should know. For more than 30 years, as a teacher and a national education leader, Reg Weaver has helped countless children discover the world of opportunity. He has enriched children's lives and helped to improve America's public schools. And in doing so, he has helped to make America better and stronger.

This week, after two terms, Reg Weaver is retiring as president of the 3.2 million-member National Education Association, America's largest teachers union. I know that many of my colleagues join me in thanking Mr. Weaver for his dedicated service. We wish him well as he begins his next chapter in life. I won't say "retirement" because, if you know Reg Weaver, you know he is going to continue to champion children and teachers—it is who he is.

Reg Weaver grew up in the central Illinois town of Danville, about 120 miles south of Chicago. When he started grade school, the U.S. Supreme Court had not yet passed its landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. Reg attended a predominately White public school through the third grade. Then his family moved across town, and Reg found himself in a mostly Black public school. The differences between the two schools were stark.

Two years later, his mother re-enrolled Reg in the mostly White school, telling school officials the family lived with Reg's grandmother.

That first-person experience with "separate but equal" public schools in his hometown made a deep impression on Reg Weaver. He has spent his life working to guarantee all children the opportunity to attend a good public school, no matter where they live.

The idea of dedicating his life to that goal evolved gradually.

In high school, Reg Weaver shied away from science, despite the urgings of his homeroom teacher, Mr. Sanders, to take a chemistry class. He says he feared the class would be too difficult

and other students might ridicule him. Instead, he concentrated on Spanish and wrestling, both of which he excelled in. He thought of becoming an interpreter or maybe even a physical therapist.

His wrestling won him a scholarship to Illinois State University. Only after accepting the scholarship did Reg Weaver realize he was attending a teachers college. He couldn't major in Spanish or physical therapy at Illinois State so he majored in special education for students with disabilities.

Some might say that Reg Weaver fell into teaching by accident. I think it was fate. He discovered quickly that he loved teaching and went on to earn a master's degree from Roosevelt University in Chicago.

In another twist of fate, Reg Weaver found his niche teaching science—the very subject he had once avoided—to middle school students in suburban Chicago. It was there that he first got involved in the Illinois Education Association, the State chapter of the National Education Association.

In 1981, Reg Weaver became the first African American ever elected president of the Illinois Education Association. During his 6 years as IEA president, the organization increased its membership by 50 percent. IEA was also the driving force behind passage in 1983 of a comprehensive collective bargaining law for Illinois teachers and other school personnel. To this day, Reg Weaver keeps a photo of the bill signing in his office.

In 1996, Mr. Weaver was elected vice president of the National Education Association. He was elected president of the national organization in 2002. As we all well remember, that was a time of major change for public education in America. Less than a year before, President Bush had signed the No Child Left Behind Act, the most comprehensive overhaul of Federal education law in 40 years.

As NEA President, Reg Weaver has not only worked to highlight flaws in the new law, he has tried to suggest ways the law can be strengthened.

Reg Weaver fought to improve the achievement for all students and close the achievement gaps that leave too many low-income and minority students behind. He has worked to increase teacher pay so schools can attract and retain qualified staff. He has worked to encourage parents' involvement in their children's education, always mindful of the difference his own mother's involvement in his education made in his life.

From his days as a middle school science teacher in suburban Chicago to his tenure as president of the Nation's largest professional employee association, Reg Weaver has been a tremendous asset to Illinois and to our Nation.

Over the years, he has received many accolades and awards. *Ebony* magazine