

district from CEOs of pharmaceutical companies in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, to managers of local restaurants in West Long Branch.

We literally cannot afford to wait to help our schools recruit, retain, and train qualified teachers. We cannot postpone work any longer in making sure Federal aid provides more flexibility conditioned on more accountability for results. Now is the time to work in partnership with our communities to ensure that we have a school infrastructure that we need for the 21st century.

The number of school children is growing at a record-setting pace. More than 52 million students are in school today, an all-time high. In my home State of New Jersey, we are experiencing very rapid growth. That is why New Jersey communities need assistance to help pay for the bricks and mortar required to have the smaller class sizes so our kids can learn and compete with students throughout the world.

Last week, I joined with other freshmen Democrats in writing a letter to our Speaker asking that we bring willing school construction legislation to the floor of this House for a vote. We look forward to his answer. And even more, we look forward to legislative action.

We are investing billions in new prisons. We are investing billions of dollars into our military installations. But should we not also be voting on providing the resources to help our communities build schools, as well? I think so, and so do the families of Central New Jersey.

Together with my colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE), I am working to help New Jersey towns afford modernized and new schools by providing tax credits to the holders of school construction bonds, in effect paying the interest on those bonds.

Under this bill, the local entity will still be responsible for paying the principal. The interest-free capital will leverage the amount of money available to meet the need to modernize our educational infrastructure in fast-growing communities, as we have in Central New Jersey. But "infrastructure" does not just mean classrooms, desks, and chalk boards. It means technology.

One of the areas I am most concerned about is technology education. It is changing our lives. Today, with the touch of a key, we can send billions of dollars of capital around the globe, where the cars we drive have more computing power than the Apollo spacecraft. There are no unskilled jobs. Even entry-level jobs demand basic computer knowledge.

Yet there is a move underway here in Congress designed to rob hundreds of thousands of Americans from developing the computer skills they need to compete in an increasingly competitive technological world. The e-rate, the popular program that provides dis-

count telecommunications and Internet technologies to elementary and secondary schools and libraries, may fall victim to politics. We simply cannot allow this to happen.

Telecommunications and computer technology are effective in helping students master complex skills that the business community sees as critical for the future workforce. According to a recent study, students who actively use the Internet for classroom projects submit more ambitious and more complete projects. Other studies are also showing that on-line resources boost student interest and student motivation. Students are learning more and in greater depth because they have access to resources beyond their classroom, resources that are more current than their textbooks and sometimes more knowledgeable than even their teachers. However, we need teachers who can teach these subjects.

A recent survey published by the Department of Education tells us that only 20 percent of teachers feel qualified to use the technology that is available to them now. That is why I have joined my colleagues the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN) and the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA) in cosponsoring legislation to help teachers teach technology education.

Teachers deserve to be treated like the professionals that they are so they can continue to grow in their profession. We need to ensure that they are receiving the training they need to perform the miracles we ask of them. Of all the important jobs in our society, nothing makes more of an impact on our children than a well-trained, caring, and dedicated teacher and no job is ultimately more important to our society.

Across the Nation, recruiting and retraining high-quality teachers is becoming a major concern. Topping our list should be better targeted and more effective professional development programs. It is time we encourage partnerships with other school districts, universities, labor unions, and the business communities.

My colleagues, Mr. DAVIS and Mr. ROEMER, who will be speaking with us shortly, have introduced legislation to give grants to colleges and universities to help them train these professionals as a second career. This is patterned on the very successful "Troops to Teachers" programs, and I recommend strongly that we support this legislation.

TIME IS UP FOR MEXICO TO RETURN ACCUSED KILLER

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to update the House on a situation of grave concern to me and to the constituents in my district.

It has been 19 months since 13-year-old Stevie Bellush came home from school to find her mother's body on the kitchen floor.

Sheila Bellush, a young, vibrant 35-year-old and mother of six, had been shot in the face and her throat had been slashed. Her 2-year-old quadruplets were crawling in her blood next to her body. At that moment, it would have seemed inconceivable that the drama had only begun as the case turned into a national nightmare for our Sarasota community.

An overwhelming trail of evidence immediately led to Jose Luis Del Toro, who allegedly killed Sheila in a murder-for-hire scheme. Del Toro fled to Mexico, where he was arrested on November 20, 1997, 19 months ago, and he remains in Mexican prison.

Del Toro is a U.S. citizen born and raised in Texas. His parents are U.S. citizens. Mr. Del Toro is accused of driving from San Antonio, Texas, to Sarasota, Florida, to commit a murder, driving back to San Antonio, and then crossing the Mexican border to escape justice in this country. He had entered Mexico illegally and he was scheduled for deportation 2 days after his arrest in November of 1997. At the last hour, as border patrol agents in Texas were awaiting Del Toro's arrival at the border to take him into custody, Sarasota State attorney, Earl Moreland, received a phone call from officials at the Department of Justice who informed him that Del Toro's deportation had been canceled and that the United States will have to file a formal extradition request.

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No reason was given for this change. Then the Department of Justice delivered a startling and dismal message. The State Attorney's office would have to waive the death penalty in order to obtain Del Toro's return. It was a difficult decision, but Mexican demands were agreed to in the hope that Del Toro would at least return to Florida to serve a life sentence. Nineteen months later, he has still not returned.

Tomorrow morning, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) will hold a hearing on this case in the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources of the Committee on Government Reform. This hearing is another important step in keeping the pressure on Mexico to return fugitives like Del Toro to the United States. Pressure needs to be applied not only to Mexico but to the administration as well to renegotiate our extradition treaty with Mexico to prevent other U.S. fugitives from escaping justice by merely walking across the border. Mexico should not be a haven for murderers. This is a case where a U.S. citizen was murdered, the accused is a U.S. citizen, Mexico has nothing to do with the case, and Del Toro should be promptly returned to this country so justice can be served. I greatly appreciate the gentleman from Florida having this hearing tomorrow.

As the old saying goes, justice delayed is justice denied, and I will not stand by quietly as justice is denied to my congressional district by a foreign entity who should have no interest in this case. Today's editorial page in the Sarasota Herald-Tribune reads, "Time's Up for Mexico." It begins, "The reasons for Mexico to extradite murder suspect Jose Luis Del Toro Jr. will be the same tomorrow as they were a year ago. The only difference is that Mexico can no longer cite the need for time as its inexcusable refusal to send Del Toro to trial in the United States." I could not agree more. I am here today on the floor of the House to say, "Mexico, your time is up. Send back Del Toro."

DEBATE ON GUNS AFFECTS THE DISTRICT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, last week we had a heartbreaking debate on guns. Women Members of this body felt this debate with particular poignancy. If the truth be told, we regard ourselves as special guardians of issues that affect women and families, not because we are such, we are after all, self-anointed, but because we choose to be. However, I ask you to imagine a bill that came from outside, thrown in like a piece of dynamite to wipe out all your local gun laws, whether you are from the West and treasure your right to have a gun or whether you are from a crowded city and treasure your right to ban guns.

Two amendments came forward that would have invaded my district with law from this body. We defeated one handily, that that simply wiped out handgun laws in the District of Columbia. The other, we almost defeated. That is the one I want to talk about this afternoon, because it is one that is of special importance to women and children, and that is a bill that would have allowed people in the District of Columbia to have guns in their home.

Some Members came up to me and said, "Well, that sounds reasonable to me to have a gun in your own home." So why should we not impose that on the District even though your city council has said otherwise and even though no Member here would impose anything on anybody else's district. Nevertheless, I can understand the surface appeal of a gun in your own home.

Ask the women in your own district why they do not want a gun in their own home. No woman in America wants a gun in the home and there is a very good reason why. The greatest cause of death of women is inflicted upon them not by rapists in the streets but by guns and knives in the hands of their own partners in their own homes as it is now. Most of them go to the hospital, the victim of beatings, often

severe. Imagine if guns were freely available in homes, particularly in large cities which have rampant domestic violence rates.

Most of those who think about guns in the home are surely unaware of the most tragic statistics of all, and they are not the statistics from Columbine. They are the statistics that are awesomely larger. They are statistics that show accidental killings occur routinely from guns that are simply lying in the home, often out of the reach of children but found by children whose natural curiosity often makes them look for guns. Very few guns are used the way they are in the movies to counter somebody entering through the bedroom window and you shoot them dead. That is not what happens to guns in the home. Look at the statistics and you will know. But in big troubled cities there are other hazards in addition.

The lady who takes care of my handicapped daughter when I told her about how some people wanted guns in the homes gave me I think the best wakeup call of all. She said, "Oh, my God, what will happen to these bad teenagers?" The first she could think of is in her high crime neighborhood in southeast Washington, the troubled teens would be all over the place. She has a hard enough time with them now, but if they think that everybody is packing a gun in her neighborhood, she did not know what she would do. I know that because I represent this city. I do not expect Members to know that who do not. That is why I do not expect them to impose guns on me when my city council has not done so. In this town, particularly in high crime neighborhoods, the criminals and, yes, the teens would be breaking in not looking for computers but looking for guns because they hear the people are packing guns now because the Congress says, "That is the thing to do if you live in a high crime city, pack your gun in."

I do not need this body to send this message to a city that is one of the most violent cities in the United States and that our police chief is just getting under control. He was at the forefront of those who said he did not want our handgun laws wiped out and for God sakes do not send a message from the House that everybody ought to pack a gun.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, a grandmother named Helen Foster was shot in the back in southwest Washington as she gathered children after she heard gunshots, recognizing that they might be in danger. She died at D.C. General Hospital. What happens when there are guns in the home in a city like this? What happens when there are no handgun laws in a city like this? Grandmothers get shot in the back trying to defend their children.

Let the District be the District. Go home and be what you want to be. Let my District be what it is.

NORTH KOREA: EXPERIENCE DICTATES CAUTION

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, despite a number of highly contentious foreign policy issues that have been debated in this body in recent months, this Member continues to believe that American interests are best served by a bipartisan foreign policy. When the executive and legislative branches, furthermore, speak with one voice, the Nation is more likely to enjoy success in preserving its vital interests.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the Committee on International Relations, this Member has had the opportunity to focus closely on the Clinton administration's policy toward this important region. Frankly, the administration deserves credit on several fronts in its overall policy there, including its active support for democracy in Indonesia and a peaceful resolution to the festering situation that is East Timor, the successful renegotiation of the U.S.-Japan Security Guidelines, its commitment with Congress to maintain 100,000 U.S. military personnel in the Asian region, and the judgment to elevate the import of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum.

Genuine bipartisanship in Congress complementary to formulating a foreign policy, however, requires that Members of the Congress speak out when serious foreign policy failings by this or any other administration are detected. It is in this context that this Member expresses deepening concerns over the Clinton administration's continued lack of a coherent, comprehensive strategy towards Pyongyang, toward North Korea. This situation presents a grave challenge to vital U.S. national security interests.

In recent weeks, two important U.S. missions have traveled to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, that is, North Korea. The first mission was that of former Secretary of Defense William Perry who has been tasked by the President to complete a congressionally mandated, comprehensive review of U.S. policy regarding the problems of the Korean Peninsula. Dr. Perry is an outstanding public servant, extraordinarily well qualified to undertake this important assignment. In large part because of his reputation, his qualifications and the high bipartisan respect he has here on Capitol Hill, expectations are very high that he will be successful in engaging Pyongyang and presenting them with a clear choice of another track for its relationship with the United States, the Republic of Korea—that is South Korea—and our allies in the region.

The second mission involved the inspection of the suspected underground nuclear facility at Kumchang-ni, North Korea. That country, my colleagues will remember, agreed to abandon its