

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 named him one of the 100 most influential Black Americans. He is also the recipient of People for the American Way's 2005 Spirit of Liberty Award and the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute's 2006 George Meany Latino Leadership Award.

One award that has special meaning for him is his inclusion in the Danville, IL, High School Wall of Fame. In the same high school where he once feared to take a science class, Reg Weaver now serves as an inspiration for students to study hard and go as far in life as their talents and passions will take them.

In closing, I want to thank Reg Weaver's family—especially his wife Betty—for sharing so much of Reg with America for so long. Above all, I want to thank Reg Weaver for his passionate advocacy on behalf of America's students, teachers and public schools.

GLOBAL AIDS BILL

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, many of us on the Democratic side have dis-

agreed with the President's policies—on the war in Iraq, on the economy, on education, and health care.

But an overwhelming majority of us, on both sides of the aisle, find common ground in our support for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR.

The President believes this program is one of the hallmarks of his administration. I agree. I think it is his most positive achievement as President of the United States.

In fact, I believe it is an important illustration of American smart power, a resource we have both squandered and underutilized in recent years.

Smart power is the idea that America's strength resonates not only from its military power but from the power of its ideas, the power of its values, its generosity and diplomacy.

I worry that a measure of this leadership has been lost recently. We are in a struggle of ideas across the world. Many of our harshest critics paint a picture of the United States that is not even close to reality.

When you consider the purpose of this bill—to prevent 12 million new infections; support treatment for at least 3 million people; and provide care for another 12 million, including 5 million vulnerable children—it is easy to see it as an expression of American values—of generosity and caring for those in need.

The success of the PEPFAR program has brought us a long way since 2003, when only 50,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa were receiving treatment. Today, PEPFAR and the Global Fund jointly support nearly 2 million people on treatment, primarily in Africa.

That is remarkable progress in just 5 years. The situation on the ground has been literally transformed through the support and generosity of the American people.

We should be proud of this achievement. But, as U.S. Global AIDS coordinator Dr. Mark Dybul has reminded us many times, "We cannot treat our way out of this epidemic." To build on this progress, we are going to have to integrate our treatment efforts with other prevention activities.

Epidemics do not occur in isolation. If a person goes hungry or doesn't have safe water to drink, her antiretroviral drugs will not be effective. If there are not enough doctors or nurses in her village, she will not receive the care she needs to overcome this terrible disease.

It is essential to integrate treatment with prevention, health workforce capacity development, and other important public health efforts on the ground. We need to move away from an emergency posture to one that encourages sustainability for the long term.

This bill—the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008—helps us do that.

The President has urged Congress to send him this important bill before the end of the year.

In March, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved the bill on an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 18 to 3. Our colleagues in the House passed a similar measure with a resounding vote—308 to 116—a few weeks later.

Some of the most vulnerable parts of the world have been ravaged by AIDS, TB and malaria. Through this bill, we have an opportunity to turn the tide on these terrible diseases.

Around the world, all eyes are on the U.S. Senate.

Although it has been a long 2½ months of negotiation with those who placed holds on the bill—and I applaud Senator BIDEN and Senator LUGAR on their tenacity and leadership in reaching an agreement last night to finally advance this bill.

I urge my colleagues to do the right thing and to support this vital, life-saving legislation.

CRISIS IN ZIMBABWE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have repeatedly come to the floor to talk about the genocide in Darfur, a tragedy that is now entering its sixth year, with little end in sight. Senator SNOWE and 27 other Senators joined me last month in writing to the President saying that his legacy would be largely affected by whether definitive action is taken to halt this humanitarian crisis on his watch.

Unfortunately, I fear President Bush will leave office and hand the crisis in Darfur to the next President.

Sadly, there is another African crisis that also demands the world's attention—this one in Zimbabwe.

On March 29, the country held a presidential election in which opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai won over incumbent Robert Mugabe by nearly 5 percent. Official results were withheld by the government for more than a month, raising concerns of official manipulation. Opposition leaders and supporters, election observers, and reporters were harassed and in some cases detained. Some were tortured, others killed.

Under those results, in which neither candidate received more than 50 percent, a runoff was scheduled for June 27.

The period leading up to this runoff has been a tragedy for the people of Zimbabwe, for democracy, for the rule of law, and for the entire southern African region.

President Mugabe, once a hero of Zimbabwe's independence, has used violence to destroy his country's democratic process.

Opposition supporters are harassed, attacked, and threatened if they do not vote for Mugabe. Tsvangirai has been detained repeatedly and has survived three assassination attempts. His party's secretary general, Tendai Biti, was arrested earlier this month and charged with treason.

And then this week, government thugs raided opposition party head-

quarters, rounding up supporters, including women and children.

Mugabe even said in regards to the next round of voting, "We are not going to give up our country because of a mere X. How can a ballpoint pen fight with a gun?"

Mugabe has driven Zimbabwe's economy into the ground, starved his own people, and brought sweeping international condemnation upon his government. He has further added to his people's suffering by manipulating the distribution of international food aid.

The process has been so undermined by President Mugabe that on Monday, Morgan Tsvangirai withdrew from the race and sought refuge in the Dutch embassy.

The man who won the most votes in the first round of Zimbabwe's election now has to seek the protection of a foreign embassy out of fear the government will take his life.

This is outrageous.

The situation in Zimbabwe is a tragedy that the international community must address. The world cannot stand idly by anymore while petty dictators destroy the lives and ignore the democratic will of their own populations.

What message are we sending when murderous governments such as those in Burma, Sudan, and Zimbabwe are allowed to thumb their noses at basic human rights and the international community?

The UN Security Council said this week that it would be "impossible for a free and fair election to take place." UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon also strongly condemned the situation in Zimbabwe, saying that an election under current conditions "would lack all legitimacy."

And recently 14 former African presidents, two former UN Secretaries-General and 24 other prominent African leaders signed a joint letter to Mugabe, calling for an end to the pre-election violence and for a free and fair election.

But where pressure has not been strong enough is from the democracies neighboring Zimbabwe. Recently Senators FEINGOLD, KERRY, and WHITEHOUSE joined me to meet with the ambassadors from the southern African nations of Botswana, Zambia, and South Africa to discuss the need for greater attention to the crisis in Zimbabwe.

While I am pleased that Botswanan and Zambian leaders have spoken more forcefully on Zimbabwe in recent days, these nations must do much more to help the people of Zimbabwe. Many African leaders have argued over the years that they must take greater responsibility for political and human rights reform on their own continent. I suggest Zimbabwe is an urgent opportunity for just such action.

South Africa in particular, a nation that the world stood behind to end the tragic injustice of apartheid, has been noticeably quiet in its responsibility to halt Mugabe's reign of destruction.

President Mbeki has tried quiet diplomacy, but it is clear that Mugabe does not respect these efforts.

The South African ruling party said this week that "any attempts by outside players to impose regime change will merely deepen the crisis." That argument misses the point.

It is the people of Zimbabwe that are demanding change.

The right to associate freely, to vote without intimidation or violence, to peacefully choose one's leader—these are all basic democratic values shared around the world. They are the values that brought a peaceful end to apartheid.

In fact, election protocols agreed to by the members of the Southern African Development Community demand certain benchmarks for elections to be considered legitimate—benchmarks which are certainly not being met in Zimbabwe.

South Africa, more than any other nation in Africa, has the ability and the moral responsibility to rein in Mugabe. The rest of the global community stands ready to help South Africa with this urgent need.

The world must step up against the injustices in Zimbabwe. The Mugabe regime must not conduct a runoff election until conditions allow for a free and fair process, including an end to political violence and intimidation, the release of political detainees, free access of election observers, the freedom to associate and hold political rallies, and a transparent and honest vote counting process.

Without such minimal steps, the world must not recognize the results of a rigged process in which Mugabe will simply proclaim himself president for another term.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

LANCE CORPORAL ANDREW FRANCIS WHITACRE

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the life of the brave lance corporal from Bryant, Indiana. Andrew Whitacre, 21 years old, died on June 19, 2008, in Farah Province, Afghanistan, from injuries sustained while his unit was conducting combat operations. He was a member of the U.S. Marine Corps, G Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division from Twentynine Palms, CA.

Andrew graduated from Jay County High School in 2005. Andrew loved sports and was an avid snowboarder. Those who knew him best recall a brave young man with an extraordinary sense of generosity. He enlisted in the Marines at the age of 17, telling his family that if he served, another would be spared that decision. Andrew left for boot camp in July of 2005, shortly after graduating from high school. Proud of his service and patriotic in spirit, Andrew never wavered in his decision to enlist. His family said it was the surest decision he ever made.

In March of this year, Andrew proposed to his fiancée, Casey McGuire of