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POSTVILLE COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes, today, to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Postville Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Postville Community School District received a 2002 Harkin grant totaling \$1 million which it used to help build an addition to the elementary school that included a new media center and administrative offices. The district also received a 2003 grant totaling \$265,408 for renovations at the high school. The Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Postville Community School District. In particular, I'd like to recognize the leadership of the Board of Education, president Brad Rekow, Jeff Cox, Laura Lubka, Jamie Smith and Dan Schutte and former board members Staci Malcom, Kathy Ohloff, Gary Catterson, Dennis Koenig and Dennis White. I would also like to recognize the chairman of the district's capital campaign, Cloy Kuhse, superintendent Darwin Winke, former superintendent David Strudthoff and architect Mark Moine of Gardner Architecture.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in Iowa, I am obliged to point out that many thousands of school buildings

and facilities across the United States are in dire need of renovation or replacement. In my State of Iowa alone, according to a recent study, some 79 percent of public schools need to be upgraded or repaired. The harsh reality is that the average age of school buildings in the United States is nearly 50 years.

Too often, our children visit ultra-modern shopping malls and gleaming sports arenas on weekends, but during the week go to school in rundown or antiquated facilities. This sends exactly the wrong message to our young people about our priorities. We have to do better.

That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Postville Community School District. There is no question that a quality public education for every child is a top priority in that community. I salute them, and wish them a very successful new school year.●

HONORING DR. AL LORENZO

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the importance of providing access to a quality education is one of our most important goals as a nation, as our children and grandchildren compete in an ever increasingly complex workplace. Those who dedicate their lives to this mission have chosen one of the most rewarding and satisfying life paths. For 29 years, Dr. Albert Lorenzo served as president of Macomb Community College, skillfully charting a course that has greatly benefitted not only those who have been directly affiliated with the college, but also the surrounding community. His commitment to educating students has transformed countless lives.

July 1, 2008, marked the end of an era for one of Michigan's premier educational institutions, Macomb Community College, and the end of a richly rewarding journey for Dr. Lorenzo. I, along with my Michigan colleague, Senator STABENOW, would like to sincerely thank him for a job well done and for making such a significant contribution to the lives of the people of Macomb County and the State of Michigan.

Dr. Lorenzo was installed as the fourth president of Macomb Community College in July 1979 and navigated the college through significant transition and growth. Upon his retirement, he was the longest-serving community college president in Michigan. Under his leadership, Macomb Community College began offering classes leading to various bachelor degrees in 1991, filling an important void in the community. Dr. Lorenzo is also credited with creating the first ever university center model, which is now used in community colleges throughout the country. Macomb's University Center facilitates partnerships with eight universities and institutions, working to bring higher educational opportunities to this underserved community in

Michigan. The college is flourishing, with an enrollment of approximately 27,000 students and with three out of every four Macomb County college students beginning their college careers at MCC.

In addition to his commitment and success at MCC, Dr. Lorenzo has been a leading member of the Macomb community. Over the years, he has been active on several corporate boards and policy commissions, has worked with several national advisory groups and has been appointed by both Governor Engler and Governor Granholm to economic advisory boards.

Al Lorenzo has also been recognized nationally for his many publications and has been awarded 12 major leadership awards, as well as 2 honorary doctoral degrees. He has received numerous other commendations, including the Tom Peters Leadership Award, and the March of Dimes Citizen of the Year Award. Additionally, he was named President of the Year by three national associations.

Al will be devoting the next chapter of his life to solving the economic and educational challenges that face Macomb County and Michigan by working with Oakland University as they expand their services in Macomb County. We know our colleagues in the Senate join us in recognizing Dr. Al Lorenzo, his wife Katherine, and their family on his retirement. He has left an enduring mark on the educational landscape in Michigan, and we wish him many more years of service and success as he begins this new endeavor.●

ANNIVERSARY OF MARIAN HIGH SCHOOL

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to offer my warmest congratulations to the students, faculty and staff of Marian High School on the 50th anniversary of the school's founding. This is indeed an important milestone, and the many contributions they have made are evident throughout the Detroit community.

For a half century, the faculty and staff of Marian High School have worked tirelessly to educate young women and prepare them for college and the workforce. The school's emphasis in service instills the values of leadership and responsibility in Marian High students, and the strong academic curriculum, vast array of sports and activities, and qualified staff has contributed mightily to the success of many women over the years.

Education is an investment in the future of our Nation, and students and schools must aspire to high standards. Throughout the last 50 years, the faculty and staff of Marian High School have met this challenge by fostering a nurturing and safe environment for its students to grow and develop. The most recent example of this is the class of 2007, which produced five National Merit Scholars, 37 Phi Beta Kappa Honorees, and numerous other scholarship