

of a guide and training tools to accompany the 1993 National Voter Registration Act. She was also part of the first U.S. delegation to the Trilateral Conference between Canada, Mexico and the United States held in Mexico City in 1994. This conference engaged the three countries in dialogue regarding their respective election processes so that each country might learn from the others.

She moved to the newly created U.S. Election Assistance Commission in 2004, where she assisted in guiding States in appropriate voting procedures and in training them how to report back to that agency. She provided guidance to the new EAC Commissioners and assisted them in developing a working knowledge of the election administration process. During the challenging implementation of the Help America Vote Act, hundreds of election officials relied on her assistance in getting the law right.

Because she worked in the field of elections, Ms. Sims was always non-partisan. She proudly said that she would not even let her husband put a political bumper sticker on his car. Her emphasis on providing assistance in an impartial, unbiased way is a testament to her dedication. She did not care about who won or lost, she cared that the process was always fair.

She is survived by her husband and son, Dug and Jay Greevy, as well as her mother, two brothers, and a sister.

It is important to remember not only the life of Peggy Sims but also the impact of her work. She worked hard every day for civic leadership and better government. She rose above partisan labels. We honor her memory by recognizing her commitments to public service and to shaping better elections for our country.●

CENTRAL DECATUR 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 Central Decatur 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 up-

dating 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 Central Decatur Community School District received two Harkin grants totaling \$947,775 which it used to help build additions to two schools in Leon. The district built an addition to South Elementary which serves students in prekindergarten through third grade and also built the North Elementary addition to the high school. The school board is to be commended for thinking to the future by incorporating an energy efficient geothermal system at the North Elementary building. These schools are the modern, state-of-the-art facilities that befit the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, they are the kind of school facilities that every child deserves.

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 Central Decatur Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education president Mike Frost, vice president Jack Parsons, Rose Saxton, Mike Stuck and Igor Takacs and former board members Nick Morrell, Gary Hayworth, Dave Smith, Brent Buckingham and Jim Lafleur. I would also like to recognize superintendent Tucker Lillis, former superintendent Steve Williams and key supporters of the bond referendum, Jerry Parsons, Gene Binning and Peg Erke.

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 got to do better.

That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Central Decatur 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.●

CLEAR LAKE COMMUNITY SCHOOL 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 Clear Lake 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 Clear Lake Community School District received a 2002 Harkin grant totaling \$1 million which it used to help build an addition to the high school to provide new classrooms for science, family and consumer science and art. This school is a modern, state-of-the-art facility that befits the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, it is the kind of school facility that every child in America deserves. The district also received fire safety grants totaling \$127,481 to install new fire alarms and detectors in several schools in the district.

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 Clear Lake Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Ron Andrews, Tom Lovell, Paul Stevenson, Sandy Christ and Deborah Betz and former board members Joel Secory, Michael Baker, Lynn Scribbins and Tammy Schwichtenberg. I would also like to recognize superintendent Dwight Pierson, former superintendent Dr. Michael Tegland, former high school principal John Chalstrom, facilities director Kelly McLaughlin, high school principal Jay Mathis, business manager Lorna Leerar and facilities coordinator for AEA 267 Bill Schutz.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in