

conservative movement one of the most effective movements in modern history.

Finally, I would also have to add that not only has Paul dedicated his life to serving the conservative movement, his wonderful family, and his Nation, but he has also dedicated his life to serving God as a leader in his church.

Senators and conservative leaders will come and go. Most of us will be barely remembered. But years from now when a new crop of conservatives is charged with advancing our cause, the sword they will wield will be the institutions left to them by previous generations. Many of them, from the numerous coalitions to the Steering Committee to the mighty Free Congress Foundation and the Heritage Foundation, owe their creation to Paul Weyrich.

I want to personally express my gratitude to Paul for his friendship and for all that he has done to move the conservative cause forward. Paul's hard work and dedication have inspired me and countless others in the fight to protect liberty and to secure America's future.●

#### DES MOINES INDEPENDENT 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 Des Moines Independent 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 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 Des Moines Independent Community School District is Iowa's largest public school district, with more than 30,000 students, 5,000 teachers and staff members, and 60 schools in our State's capitol city. Serving more students than even our State universities, Des Moines has received several grants, totaling \$4,275,000, to help meet the diverse and important needs at dozens of their schools.

The school district received five construction grants totaling \$3,250,000. The first construction grant for \$750,000 was awarded in 1999 to Capitol View Elementary, a new school just a few blocks from our State capitol building. In 2000, a \$500,000 construction grant went to Moulton Extended Learning Center, a K-8 school in the heart of the city. East High School, the oldest high school in Des Moines, received a 2002 grant for \$1 million to help with the construction of their new Community Activity Center. A 2004 construction grant for \$500,000 helped build a new elementary school combining Longfellow and Wallace, now known as the George Washington Carver Community School. And in 2005, a \$500,000 construction grant helped to renovate the Walnut Street School, a growing elementary school located in the city's business district. 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 schools that every child in America deserves.

The Des Moines Independent Community School District also received five fire safety grants totaling \$1,025,000 to install fire alarm systems and make other safety repairs at over two dozen schools including, Central Campus, home to some of the Nation's top high school programs, McCombs Middle School, King Elementary School, East High School, Hoover High, Meredith Middle School and Lincoln 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 Des Moines Independent Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—chair Ginny Strong, vice chair Jeanette Woods, along with members Connie Boesen, Teree Caldwell-Johnson, Patty Link, Dick Murphy and Jonathan Narcisse, and former board members Ako Abdul-Samad, Som Baccam, Margaret Borgen, Graham Gillette, Jane Hein, Jon Neiderbach, Jim Patch, Phil Roeder, Laura Sands, Mark Schuling, Nadine Hogate and Marc Ward.

I would also like to recognize superintendent Nancy Sebring, former superintendent Eric Witherspoon, chief operating officer Bill Good, chief financial officer Patricia Schroeder, former executive director of facilities management Duane Van Hemert, grant specialist Kris Mesicek along with the principals, teachers, staff and parents at more than two dozen Des Moines schools who have helped make the most effective use of these funds.

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 Des Moines Independent 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.●

#### ELK HORN-KIMBALLTON 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 Elk Horn-Kimballton 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 Elk Horn-Kimballton Community School District received a 1998 Harkin grant totaling \$250,000 which it used to help build an addition to the high school. The building included a gymnasium and four classrooms for math, art and science. 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.