

enormous sacrifices in order to defend our Nation. I am inspired by their patriotism, their courage, and their dedication to freedom. Military Appreciation Month also recognizes the more than 90 million Americans who have family members serving in the military. Military families are also making tremendous sacrifices on behalf of the American people, and they are equally deserving of recognition during National Military Appreciation Month.

Recent events have provided another reminder of the constant guard our brave servicemembers provide. Earlier this year, 24-year-old PO2 Mark Mayo of Hagerstown, MD, gave his life, without hesitation, to protect his fellow shipmate. As a civilian assaulted a fellow sailor and grabbed her gun, Petty Officer Mayo stepped into harm's way, shielded his shipmate, and died so that she could live. Petty Officer Mayo was laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery on April 25, 2014, and posthumously awarded The Navy and Marine Corps Medal, the highest noncombat decoration for heroism awarded by the U.S. Department of the Navy.

Petty Officer Mayo is just one example of the heroism of our servicemembers; heroism that has been displayed countless times, both at home and abroad, throughout our Nation's history.

Young military men and women represent the best of our country. They choose to serve our communities, fight for their fellow Americans and defend our liberties with the fullest measure of devotion. Similar to generations before them, they have committed themselves to the defense of our Constitution against all enemies. Their devotion to their fellow Americans makes our Nation exceptional.

Not all those who support our national defense have worn a uniform or have been called away to distant battlefields. World War II's "Rosie the Riveter" saying "We can do it" sounds an awful lot like today's young people saying "Yes, we can." I urge my colleagues to keep this spirit of our "Rosies" in mind today as we commit ourselves to answering the challenges that face our Nation.

We are fortunate to have so many women still living in Maryland who evoke the spirit of Rosie the Riveter. Crena Anderson riveted airplanes in Hagerstown, MD, during World War II. Ruth Staples of Brunswick, MD, worked on the railroad in support of allied efforts during the war. Even today, Crena and Ruth are both actively helping their local communities create replicable projects that teach and preserve World War II-era history and advance positive roles that women can play in our changing world.

This Memorial Day should be a time when all Americans can reconnect with our history and core values by honoring those who gave their lives for the ideals we cherish. In addition to remembering the servicemembers who fought and died in our Nation's wars, I

believe that we must also take care of the servicemembers and veterans who are still with us, especially when they return home. There are serious issues that need to be addressed in the military and veteran communities. Active-Duty military and veteran suicide rates are at record high, Veterans' Administration disability claims continue to face unacceptable delays, and many programs that help discharged servicemembers make the transition to civilian life are inadequate. It is unacceptable that many of our servicemembers, veterans, and their caregivers lack the health care they need after a decade of war. Too many of these men and women are suffering from not only visible injuries but invisible ones too. We must do better. In these challenging times, let us pledge to redouble our efforts to provide for our veterans, not just on this Memorial Day but every day.

Military Appreciation Month is a time we should hold close to our hearts. In our hectic daily lives, let us not forget why our country endures. Throughout this month we will see many American flags and flowers adorning the graves of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation. We honor them and remember their families, who wear the Gold Star Pin, because they bear the greatest burden of sacrifice. I remember in particular the 114 Marylanders who have been killed in our most recent conflicts and am reminded that our freedom isn't free. The best way to honor their sacrifice is to ensure that we are unwavering in our support for those who return to us wounded, ill, and injured. Let us affirm our commitment to them today and every day.●

JASPER COUNTY, IOWA

● Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, the strength of my State of Iowa lies in its vibrant local communities, where citizens come together to foster economic development, make smart investments to expand opportunity, and take the initiative to improve the health and well-being of residents. Over the decades, I have witnessed the growth and revitalization of so many communities across my State. And it has been deeply gratifying to see how my work in Congress has supported these local efforts.

I have always believed in accountability for public officials, and this, my final year in the Senate, is an appropriate time to give an accounting of my work across four decades representing Iowa in Congress. I take pride in accomplishments that have been national in scope—for instance, passing the Americans with Disabilities Act and spearheading successful farm bills. But I take a very special pride in projects that have made a big difference in local communities across my State.

Today, I would like to give an accounting of my work with leaders and

residents of Jasper County to build a legacy of a stronger local economy, better schools and educational opportunities, and a healthier, safer community.

Between 2001 and 2013, the creative leadership in your community has worked with me to secure funding in Jasper County worth over \$3.2 million and successfully acquired financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than \$22 million to the local economy.

Of course my favorite memory of working together has to be working to fund the Neal Smith Wildlife National Wildlife Refuge. Congressman SMITH's dedication to protecting Iowa's local wildlife, fragile ecosystems, and beautiful natural scenery was a legacy that was truly a privilege to carry on. This refuge is not just a state natural resource, but a national treasure. It is home to grazing buffalo herds, white-tailed deer, badgers and pheasants, and more than 200 types of native prairie flowers and grasses. The hundreds of thousands of Iowans who visit the refuge every year experience the beauty and fragility of our natural environment. I hope that as I worked to carry on Congressman SMITH's legacy in providing over \$1.3 million since 2000 to the refuge, Iowans will help take up the mantle to continue to support this tremendous local resource.

Among the highlights: Main Street Iowa: One of the greatest challenges we face—in Iowa and all across America—is preserving the character and vitality of our small towns and rural communities. This isn't just about economics. It is also about maintaining our identity as Iowans. Main Street Iowa helps preserve Iowa's heart and soul by providing funds to revitalize downtown business districts. This program has allowed towns like Colfax to use that money to leverage other investments to jumpstart change and renewal. I am so pleased that Jasper County has earned \$43,000 through this program. These grants build much more than buildings. They build up the spirit and morale of people in our small towns and local communities.

School grants: Every child in Iowa deserves to be educated in a classroom that is safe, accessible, and modern. That is why, for the past decade and a half, I have secured funding for the innovative Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program—better known among educators in Iowa as Harkin grants for public schools construction and renovation. Across 15 years, Harkin grants worth more than \$132 million have helped school districts to fund a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools. In many cases, these Federal dollars have served as the needed incentive to leverage local public and private dollars, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect within a school district. Over the years, Jasper

County has received \$618,741 in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in Jasper County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling \$132,888.

Disaster mitigation and prevention: In 1993, when historic floods ripped through Iowa, it became clear to me that the national emergency-response infrastructure was woefully inadequate to meet the needs of Iowans in flood-ravaged communities. I went to work dramatically expanding the Federal Emergency Management Agency's hazard mitigation program, which helps communities reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters and enables mitigation measures to be implemented during the immediate recovery period. Disaster relief means more than helping people and businesses get back on their feet after a disaster, it means doing our best to prevent the same predictable flood or other catastrophe from recurring in the future. The hazard mitigation program that I helped create in 1993 has provided critical support to Iowa communities impacted by the devastating floods of 2008. Jasper County has received over \$72,000 to remediate and prevent widespread destruction from natural disasters.

Agricultural and rural development: Because I grew up in a small town in rural Iowa, I have always been a loyal friend and fierce advocate for family farmers and rural communities. I have been a member of the House or Senate Agriculture Committee for 40 years—including more than 10 years as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Across the decades, I have championed farm policies for Iowans that include effective farm income protection and commodity programs; strong, progressive conservation assistance for agricultural producers; renewable energy opportunities; and robust economic development in our rural communities. Since 1991, through various programs authorized through the farm bill, Jasper County has received more than \$7.8 million from a variety of farm bill programs.

Keeping Iowa communities safe: I also firmly believe that our first responders need to be appropriately trained and equipped, able to respond to both local emergencies and to statewide challenges such as, for instance, the methamphetamine epidemic. Since 2001, Jasper County's fire departments have received over \$1.2 million for firefighter safety and operations equipment.

Wellness and health care: Improving the health and wellness of all Americans has been something I have been passionate about for decades. That is why I fought to dramatically increase funding for disease prevention, innovative medical research, and a whole range of initiatives to improve the health of individuals and families not only at the doctor's office but also in our communities, schools, and workplaces. I am so proud that Americans

have better access to clinical preventive services, nutritious food, smoke-free environments, safe places to engage in physical activity, and information to make healthy decisions for themselves and their families. These efforts not only save lives, they will also save money for generations to come thanks to the prevention of costly chronic diseases, which account for a whopping 75 percent of annual health care costs. I am pleased that Jasper County has recognized this important issue by securing \$264,000 for community wellness activities.

Disability Rights: Growing up, I loved and admired my brother Frank, who was deaf. But I was deeply disturbed by the discrimination and obstacles he faced every day. That is why I have always been a passionate advocate for full equality for people with disabilities. As the primary author of the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA, and the ADA Amendments Act, I have had four guiding goals for our fellow citizens with disabilities: equal opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency. Nearly a quarter century since passage of the ADA, I see remarkable changes in communities everywhere I go in Iowa not just in curb cuts or closed captioned television, but in the full participation of people with disabilities in our society and economy, folks who at long last have the opportunity to contribute their talents and to be fully included. These changes have increased economic opportunities for all citizens of Jasper County, both those with and without disabilities. And they make us proud to be a part of a community and country that respects the worth and civil rights of all of our citizens.

This is at least a partial accounting of my work on behalf of Iowa, and specifically Jasper County, during my time in Congress. In every case, this work has been about partnerships, co-operation, and empowering folks at the State and local level, including in Jasper County, to fulfill their own dreams and initiatives. And, of course, this work is never complete. Even after I retire from the Senate, I have no intention of retiring from the fight for a better, fairer, richer Iowa. I will always be profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve the people of Iowa as their Senator.●

MARSHALL COUNTY, IOWA

● Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, the strength of my State of Iowa lies in its vibrant local communities, where citizens come together to foster economic development, make smart investments to expand opportunity, and take the initiative to improve the health and well-being of residents. Over the decades, I have witnessed the growth and revitalization of so many communities across my State. And it has been deeply gratifying to see how my work in Congress has supported these local efforts.

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Today, I would like to give an accounting of my work with leaders and residents of Marshall County to build a legacy of a stronger local economy, better schools and educational opportunities, and a healthier, safer community.

Between 2001 and 2013, the creative leadership in your community has worked with me to secure funding in Marshall County worth over \$19 million and successfully acquired financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than \$55 million to the local economy.

Of course my favorite memories of working together have to include lead paint remediation, for which I have provided more than \$4.1 million since 2001, providing over \$2 million to increase availability of affordable housing, supporting local law enforcement efforts, and improving downtown buildings in Marshalltown and State Center through the Main Street Iowa program.

Among the highlights:

Investing in Iowa's economic development through targeted community projects: In central Iowa, we have worked together to grow the economy by making targeted investments in important economic development projects including improved roads and bridges, modernized sewer and water systems, and better housing options for residents of Marshall County. In many cases, I have secured Federal funding that has leveraged local investments and served as a catalyst for a whole ripple effect of positive, creative changes. For example, I have fought to secure over \$15 million for Mechdyne, a Marshalltown company which is a world leader in 3D and virtual reality visualization technology, helping to create jobs and expand economic opportunities.

Main Street Iowa: One of the greatest challenges we face—in Iowa and all across America—is preserving the character and vitality of our small towns and rural communities. This isn't just about economics. It is also about maintaining our identity as Iowans. Main Street Iowa helps preserve Iowa's heart and soul by providing funds to revitalize downtown business districts. This program has allowed towns like State Center and Marshalltown to use that money to leverage other investments to jumpstart change and renewal. I am so pleased that Marshall County has earned \$575,159 through this