

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, Marshall County has received more than \$4.9 million in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in Marshall County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling \$64,660.

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, Marshall County's fire departments have received over \$1.1 million for firefighter safety and operations equipment, and \$841,737 in Byrne Justice Assistance Grants, as well as \$200,000 for drug free communities through the Department of Justice.

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 Marshall County has recognized this important issue by securing over \$61,000 in wellness grants.

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 advo-

cate 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 Marshall 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 Marshall County, during my time in Congress. In every case, this work has been about partnerships, cooperation, and empowering folks at the State and local level, including in Marshall 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.●

LAS VEGAS-CLARK COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

● Mr. HELLER. Madam President, today I wish to recognize and congratulate the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District for receiving the National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the highest community service honor a museum or library can earn. Nevada is proud to have one of its institutions dedicated to the education and betterment of the community be chosen for such a prestigious award.

In its 20th-anniversary year, the National Medal is celebrating institutions that have made a significant impact on individuals, families, and communities across the Nation. Nevada is honored to have the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District selected as one of only 10 institutions to receive this award. The library has long served as a home to community members looking to further their education and entertain themselves through the joys of reading. More recently, recognizing the growing needs within the community, the library has become a haven for those who need a retreat from their homes or as a destination for Internet that they cannot afford.

As Nevada's unemployment rate remains one of highest in the Nation and as our national economy continues to struggle, I recognize the unique role

the Las Vegas-Clark County Library has played in working to address the needs of its local community by carefully crafting a strategic plan to address the unemployment problems in Nevada. By adding more computers so users could fill out job applications online and creating programs about managing stress and dealing with bankruptcy, the library is able to assist Nevadans during this tough time. While our economy continues to recover, vulnerable Nevadan's rely on a variety of resources to help them find employment, especially those provided by the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District.

The importance of libraries is exemplified through their community engagement, support for afterschool programs, and ability to act as learning tools for students. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Las Vegas-Clark County District. As a father of four children who attended Nevada's public schools and the husband of a lifelong teacher, I understand the important role that libraries play in educating Nevada's students. Ensuring that America's youth are prepared to compete in the 21st century is critical for the future of our country. The State of Nevada is fortunate to be home to a library district that offers a large variety of assistance to the members of the community.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District and know that they serve as an example for the rest of the Silver State.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:38 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 4031. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal of Senior Executive Service employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs for performance, and for other purposes.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and