

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 funds.

Among the highlights:

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, Allamakee County has received \$1,792,068 in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in Allamakee County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling \$59,494. Finally, Allamakee schools received more than \$280,000 through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 for academic and learning support.

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, Allamakee County has received more than \$1.3 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, Allamakee County's fire departments have received over \$900,000 for firefighter safety and operations equipment.

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 Allamakee 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 Allamakee 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 Allamakee 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.●

CONGRATULATING COLONEL JAMES WALKER

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate COL James Walker of Las Vegas, Nevada on his upcoming retirement from the Nevada Army National Guard. I am proud to honor a Nevadan who has dedicated his life to serving our country.

Born and raised in Las Vegas, NV, Colonel Walker's desire to serve came when he was studying psychology in college. On scholarship for soccer at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, he decided he wanted to enlist and become a combat medic. Upon joining the Army in 1979, Colonel Walker rose through the ranks and eventually became the highest ranking African-American Army National Guard officer in Nevada history. Colonel Walker's career from private to colonel over the course of 35 years is both commendable and admirable.

Throughout his career, Colonel Walker continued to pursue all of the educational training that the Army National Guard had to offer. With the support of his wife Doris Colonel Walker decided to pursue three NCO professional development schools, earning him the prestigious NCO Ribbon. Colonel Walker also participated in an Officer Candidate School at Clear Creek near Carson City and was a pioneering student in the Nevada primary leadership development course, graduating at the top of his class with honors. After his success there, he served as a training officer for the next graduating

class. His ability to give back to the National Guard and his community was also exemplified during his 3 years of teaching ROTC at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Upon his retirement from the National Guard, Colonel Walker plans to continue working for National Security Technologies as the company's facility manager at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Colonel Walker for his courageous contributions to the United States of America and to freedom-loving nations around the world. His service to his country and his bravery and dedication earn him a place among the outstanding men and women who have valiantly defended our Nation. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I recognize that Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals who serve our Nation but also to ensure they are cared for when they return home. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation.

Throughout his tenure, Colonel Walker has demonstrated professionalism, commitment to excellence, and dedication to the highest standards of the Army National Guard. I am both humbled and honored by his service and am proud to call him a fellow Nevadan. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing COL James Walker for all of his accomplishments and wish him well in all of his future endeavors.●

USS "NEVADA" CENTENNIAL

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the 100th Anniversary of the commissioning of the USS *Nevada* Battleship. I am proud to be able to honor Nevada's namesake battleship today and all of the Americans that served aboard her.

The anniversary of the battleship USS *Nevada* comes on the heels of Nevada celebrating its 150th year of statehood. Through her years of service, the *Nevada* suffered many blows and casualties, but remained dedicated to defending her country. The crew that served aboard her have all earned a place among the outstanding men and women who have valiantly defended our Nation. I, along with my fellow Nevadans, feel a great sense of pride that our State has been chosen as the namesake for this ship that is arguably one of the greatest of our navy or of any Navy.

Launched on July 11, 1914, at the Fore River Shipbuilding Corporation in Quincy, MA, the USS *Nevada* was the most-advanced battleship in the U.S. Navy at the time. The USS *Nevada* saw both World Wars during her time in active service. During the final months of World War I, she was based in Bantry Bay, County Cork, Ireland, to ensure that the supply convoys that were sailing to and from Great Britain were protected. In World War II, she was the