

Chris Darling and former director of operations Sherwood Johnson.

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 Fort Dodge 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.●

HINTON 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 Hinton 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 Hinton Community School District received a 2003 Harkin grant totaling \$234,475 which it used to help build an addition to the elementary school for preschool and child care programs. The Federal grant has 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 Hinton Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Steve Eddy, Ed Vondrak, Rob Held, Lynette Blanchard and Randy Riediger and former board members Michelle Rodgers and Kenneth Hoefling. I would also like to recognize superintendent Allen Steen and curriculum director and principal Jane Krehbiel.

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NORTHWOOD-KENSETT COMMUNITY EDUCATION

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I would like to take just a few minutes, today, to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Northwood-Kensett Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

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The Northwood-Kensett Community School District received a 2002 Harkin grant totaling \$112,500 which it used to help replace the roof at the elementary school. The district also received two fire safety grants totaling \$66,280 to install a fire alarm system and to make other repairs at the elementary school and to install heat detectors and to make other safety improvements at the 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 Northwood-Kensett Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—John Anderson, Larry Hovey, Cindy Pangburn, Don Pangburn and Keith Braun and former board members Deanna Madsen, Dan Block and Mike Dierenfeld. I would also like to recognize superintendent Thomas Nugent, former superintendent Arnie Snook and business manager Karen Abrahams.

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SOUTHEAST WARREN 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 Southeast Warren 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 Southeast Warren Community School District received a 2002 Harkin grant totaling \$39,360 which it used to help renovate a classroom and replace windows and siding for the gymnasium in Lacona. The district also received a fire safety grant totaling \$50,000 for electrical upgrades, door closures and emergency and exit lighting at the junior/senior high school in Liberty Center. 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 Southeast Warren Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Ron Miller, Jennifer Mihalovich, Paul Mead, Larrie Williams and Marianne Lester and former board members John Burrell, Gerald Judkins, Thomas Farley, Greg Davis, Debbie Miller and Kevin Smith. I would also like to recognize former superintendent Susan Garton, custodian Silas Andersen and business manager Julie Wilson.

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REMEMBERING SPECIALIST SHAVONTE DONTRELL FIELDS

• Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the life of SPC Shavonte Dontrell Fields from Fort Wayne, IN. Shavonte was 22 years old when he lost his life on September 7, 2008, from injuries sustained when his vehicle, also carrying his 2-year-old son Ladaryion Shavonte Fields, overturned in Indianapolis shortly after he returned from active duty in Iraq.

Today, I join Shavonte and Ladaryion's family and friends in mourning their deaths. Shavonte, who was known to many as Dontrell, will forever be remembered as a loving father, son, brother, and friend to many. Shavonte is survived by his parents Anita M. Davis Fields and Robert Lee Fields, Jr.; his stepfather Detrick Eley; his siblings Robert Lee Fields, III, Detrick Tubbs and Demetria Eley; his grandparents, John and Margurite Davis, Frank and Betty Cochran, Robert and Mary Fields and Deborah Andrew; and his great-grandparents Tom and Lena Lofton. He was preceded in death by his grandmother, Carlotta Joann Cochran.

Shavonte served a 14-month deployment in Iraq as a petroleum specialist with the Army National Guard. Those who knew him best recall a devout man who loved making people smile. Shavonte's family said he had an "energetic personality and an infectious sense of humor that spread to all those in his vicinity." He was a member of the Progressive Baptist Church of Fort Wayne. At the time of the accident, Shavonte was moving back into civilian life, set to start a new job as a customer service representative with AT&T the next day.

While we struggle to express our sorrow over this loss, we can take pride in the example Shavonte set as both a soldier and a father. Today and always, he will be remembered by family, friends and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we cherish the legacy of his service and his life.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Shavonte Dontrell Fields in the RECORD of the U.S. Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy and peace. I pray that Shavonte's family can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Shavonte.●

TRIBUTE TO MIKE CRITELLI

• Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to someone I have known for many years, both because of his guidance of a major company in Connecticut as well as his leadership in the mailing industry—Mike Critelli, executive chairman of Pitney Bowes Inc.—which is headquartered in Stamford, CT. Mike will be retiring late this year, after dedicating 30 years to both Pitney and the mailing industry.

Mike and I have come to know each other not only because Pitney Bowes is headquartered in my home State of Connecticut but also because he has been the chairman of the Mailing Industry CEO Council, an organization of chief executive officers of companies in the mailing industry.

The Mailing Industry CEO Council, under Mike's able leadership, has been at the forefront of educating policy-makers about the mailing industry for years. Although those of us who follow mailing industry issues know by heart now the key statistics—a \$900 billion industry representing over 8 percent of the gross domestic product and employing 9 million workers—there was a time when the impact of the industry was less well known. Mike Critelli and the Mailing Industry CEO Council helped to change that. The CEO Council came to town several times a year to meet with me and others in Congress to provide support for the postal reform legislative effort. They helped to spread the word to many of my colleagues who are not on the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which has jurisdiction over postal issues, about the importance of the mailing industry and the impact of the industry on jobs in each of their States. As we moved forward with postal reform legislation in the 109th Congress, having others in Congress actively supporting the mailing industry proved very helpful.

As we worked together on the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, my staff and I were always impressed by the attention and care Mike gave to every detail. As a lawyer, Mike took the time to read the various versions of postal reform legislation page by page. He got into the details and commented on specific provisions—and the final outcome was better as a result. He was critically important in brokering some agreements with interested parties that helped get us over the final hurdles towards enactment. In the final days of the 109th Congress, the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act passed the House and Senate and was signed into law. Mike Critelli played an essential role in helping to educate others about the importance of the mailing industry and the need for the legislation that enabled it to get done.