

families. For a single mom with two children and \$30,000 of income, the 2001 and 2003 tax relief has prevented a tax increase of \$1,100 per year. Similarly, for a family of four with \$50,000 of income, this tax relief has prevented them from facing a \$2,300 yearly tax increase.

Indeed, both Senator OBAMA and Senator MCCAIN agree on keeping most of the structure of the legislation criticized by my friends from Vermont and Illinois.

Where Senators OBAMA and MCCAIN disagree is on whether we should keep the tax rates where they are. I would note that Senator OBAMA recently agreed that, because of concerns about the economy, we should leave the top rates where they are, at least for now.

I would encourage my friends to review the data I presented yesterday. That data clearly illustrates that there are negative effects on small business from raising marginal rates by 17 percent to 33 percent. The data show that the tax increases of Senator OBAMA's plan will take direct aim at small business owners. Senator OBAMA does now agree that we should defer his tax increases until 2011. Senator MCCAIN thinks the current levels of taxation are appropriate for both now and the future.

The bipartisan tax relief of 2001 and 2003, largely supported by Senators OBAMA and MCCAIN, kept revenues at or above historical averages for most of the period they were in effect. These policies were put in place during economic shocks, and the economy responded.

I would ask my friends why they disagree. Why should we raise taxes on small business now? I look forward to their response.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2008

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise today to voice my support for S. 3406, The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008. Like the original ADA, this legislation is the result of extensive bipartisan effort; and I would take this opportunity to commend Senators Hatch and Harkin for their leadership on this issue. I would also note that this legislation was supported by a wide range of stakeholder groups in the employer and disability communities. These groups participated extensively in the development and negotiation of this legislation and it can safely be said that without their participation this bill would not be a reality today.

S. 3406 was principally crafted as a response to a number of Court cases that many observers felt had interpreted the ADA too narrowly, and, therefore, denied coverage to individuals that the statute was originally intended to cover. The legislation clarifies the legislative intent. It retains the inherently functional definition of disability from the original ADA; and

continues to require that in order for a physical or mental impairment to rise to the level of a covered disability it must substantially limit one or more of an individual's major life activities.

Ensuring that individuals with disabilities are free from discrimination, and fostering their full inclusion in the workplace and in all other aspects of life are singularly important goals and responsibilities. It is also equally important to continually monitor our laws, and, as we do today, amend them, to make certain these goals and responsibilities are met.

Whenever changes are made in existing law, however, we must be mindful of the likelihood of increased litigation in the aftermath of such changes. The drafters of S. 3406 have attempted to be as clear as possible in an effort to avoid the type of confusion that could spawn such excessive litigation. That said, we are not unmindful of the concerns expressed by some smaller businesses in this regard. Those businesses should recognize that this legislation was intended to ensure restored coverage for individuals that all of us recognize are entitled to the law's protection; and that the legislation was not intended to promote litigation or prop up questionable or frivolous claims of coverage. Just as Congress has monitored the original ADA and acts today to correct problems with its interpretation, it will continue to monitor the amended ADA and take action in the event it is abused.

I would also note that there have been some concerns expressed by both institutions of higher education and boards of professional certification that this bill would somehow change the fundamental nature of the service which a covered entity provides or lower the standards for professional certification. As to the latter, it should be expressly noted that nothing in the legislation affects the standards for professional certifications; and, as to the former, the legislation itself does not require that accommodations be extended where to do so would alter the fundamental nature of the services being provided. These would seem to be fair safeguards against the legitimate concerns expressed by some stakeholders.

The legislation that we pass today will hopefully help to aid in the full integration of those with disabilities into all aspects of society. It is an important piece in the strategy for achieving this end, but we must remember it is only a piece and cannot be the only strategy. Despite the existence of the ADA the workforce participation levels for individuals with disabilities have remained unacceptably low. We therefore need to think of approaches beyond the traditional enforcement of rights statutes in an effort to achieve the goal of the full participation of all our citizens in the benefits of our society and economy.

FEDERAL AND STATE VETERANS HOMES PARTNERSHIP

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise today to express my thanks for the 250 hard-working men and women of the New Hampshire Veterans Home in Tilton, NH, and to join them, and the other State Veterans Homes across our Nation, in celebrating the 120 year partnership between the Federal Government and State Veterans Homes. Our Nation has a proud history of looking after its warriors even after the loud sounds of battle have been pacified.

Since 1890, the New Hampshire Veterans Home has served in this fine tradition by providing care and comfort for thousands of men and women who have sacrificed so much to preserve our freedom and protect our country and State. The commitment and outstanding contributions of past Commandants, members of the board of managers, staff, and many volunteers to the welfare of New Hampshire veterans is truly extraordinary. Today, the New Hampshire Veterans Home continues to improve and uphold its value by assuring access to affordable, professional, and quality nursing care in a community setting that cultivates learning, growth, and optimal quality of life.

I look forward to building upon the good relationship between our Nation's State Veterans Homes and the Federal Government and again join in celebrating this milestone of service to our Nation's heroes.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MARGARET "PEGGY" SIMS

• Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to a longtime public servant who spent her career working hard to improve the quality of elections. Ms. Margaret Sims spent her entire career working for both of the agencies under the jurisdiction of the Rules Committee—the Federal Election Commission and the Election Assistance Commission. She passed away earlier this month after a long battle with cancer.

A resident of Burke, VA, Ms. Sims, known to her friends as "Peggy", was born in Schenectady, NY, and was a graduate of Wells College. She was an intern in the community services department at the AFL-CIO before starting her career at the FEC as an investigator. She also served as Director of Compliance and Election Administrative Research Specialist at that agency.

Long before the 2000 election and hanging chads, Ms. Sims was working hard with our Nation's election administration professionals to provide them with the best information available to help them do their job. While at the FEC, she assisted in developing voting systems standards and in the creation

of a guide and training tools to accompany the 1993 National Voter Registration Act. She was also part of the first U.S. delegation to the Trilateral Conference between Canada, Mexico and the United States held in Mexico City in 1994. This conference engaged the three countries in dialogue regarding their respective election processes so that each country might learn from the others.

She moved to the newly created U.S. Election Assistance Commission in 2004, where she assisted in guiding States in appropriate voting procedures and in training them how to report back to that agency. She provided guidance to the new EAC Commissioners and assisted them in developing a working knowledge of the election administration process. During the challenging implementation of the Help America Vote Act, hundreds of election officials relied on her assistance in getting the law right.

Because she worked in the field of elections, Ms. Sims was always non-partisan. She proudly said that she would not even let her husband put a political bumper sticker on his car. Her emphasis on providing assistance in an impartial, unbiased way is a testament to her dedication. She did not care about who won or lost, she cared that the process was always fair.

She is survived by her husband and son, Dug and Jay Greevy, as well as her mother, two brothers, and a sister.

It is important to remember not only the life of Peggy Sims but also the impact of her work. She worked hard every day for civic leadership and better government. She rose above partisan labels. We honor her memory by recognizing her commitments to public service and to shaping better elections for our country. ●

CENTRAL DECATUR 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 Central Decatur 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 up-

dating 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 Central Decatur Community School District received two Harkin grants totaling \$947,775 which it used to help build additions to two schools in Leon. The district built an addition to South Elementary which serves students in prekindergarten through third grade and also built the North Elementary addition to the high school. The school board is to be commended for thinking to the future by incorporating an energy efficient geothermal system at the North Elementary building. 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 school facilities that every child deserves.

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 Central Decatur Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education president Mike Frost, vice president Jack Parsons, Rose Saxton, Mike Stuck and Igor Takacs and former board members Nick Morrell, Gary Hayworth, Dave Smith, Brent Buckingham and Jim Lafleur. I would also like to recognize superintendent Tucker Lillis, former superintendent Steve Williams and key supporters of the bond referendum, Jerry Parsons, Gene Binning and Peg Erke.

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 got to do better.

That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Central Decatur 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. ●

CLEAR LAKE COMMUNITY SCHOOL 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 Clear Lake 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 Clear Lake Community School District received a 2002 Harkin grant totaling \$1 million which it used to help build an addition to the high school to provide new classrooms for science, family and consumer science and art. 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. The district also received fire safety grants totaling \$127,481 to install new fire alarms and detectors in several schools in the district.

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 Clear Lake Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Ron Andrews, Tom Lovell, Paul Stevenson, Sandy Christ and Deborah Betz and former board members Joel Secory, Michael Baker, Lynn Scribbins and Tammy Schwichtenberg. I would also like to recognize superintendent Dwight Pierson, former superintendent Dr. Michael Tegland, former high school principal John Chalstrom, facilities director Kelly McLaughlin, high school principal Jay Mathis, business manager Lorna Leerar and facilities coordinator for AEA 267 Bill Schutz.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in