

Because of the greedy, this country is going to socialism.

MARLIN.

I have to put almost all of my gas purchases on my credit cards because of the huge increase in costs. This has greatly increased my credit card debt, and continues to increase my payments on my credit cards, with no end in sight. I am not getting any pay raises at work due to economy, and my wife has taken extra jobs to help make ends meet yet we are still falling behind. I owed next to zero on my credit cards a year and a half ago; I now have over \$12,000 related mostly to the increase in cost of fuel. Why cannot we reintroduce 55 mph speed limits? This would greatly cut down the demand for fuel, which should decrease the cost.

REX, *Rigby*.

Although we were warned in the early eighties, there was no effort made to correct our path. We are seeing the repercussions of past failures to act on this threat. Although the cost of energy is a serious detriment to the economic stability of America, I still believe that the invasion of our country by Mexican nationals in the future will prove to be a far more serious problem. Still our Congress deals with the use of steroids and other trivial matters, rather than dealing with immigration, Social Security and national security. As today's youth would ask—what is up with that?

BILL.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

BOYER VALLEY 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 Boyer Valley 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 Boyer Valley Community School District received a 2002 Harkin grant totaling \$1 million which it used to help build an addition to the school in Dow City to provide a multipurpose

room that could be used by the community as well as the school. The district collaborated with the City of Dunlap to build an addition to the middle/high school to house the community/school library. 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 a \$25,000 fire safety grant.

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 Boyer Valley Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Ken Dunham, Pat Putnam, Julie Wood, Steve Puck, Paul Klein, Mark McAllister, and Randy Mitchell, and former board members Roger Waderich, Theresa McAllister, Ruth Sherwood, Sam Cogdill, Sam Head, and Jane Davie as well as superintendent Thomas Vint and former superintendent Debra Johnsen. I would also like to recognize the city of Dow City and mayor Ace Ertleman, the city of Dunlap and treasurer Dwaine Hack and the late mayor Giles Lacey and the committee that worked to pass the bond referendum for the new schools.

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 Boyer Valley 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. •

COLUMBUS 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 Columbus 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 Columbus Community School District received a 2004 Harkin grant totaling \$500,000 which it used to help replace the heating and cooling system with a geothermal system at the high school. Additionally, in 1998 and 1999, fire safety grants totaling \$50,000 were used to update the electrical wiring and the installation of new alarm systems and fire doors at the middle and high schools. 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 Columbus Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education, Mike Braun, Marsha Gerot, Ed Smith, Dan Peters, and Georgia Kost. I would also like to recognize superintendent Richard Bridenstine and staff members including Tanya Purdy, Todd Heck and Mike Jay, and the community leadership of Mark Huston and Wade Edwards.

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.

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