

and served as a catalyst for a whole ripple effect of positive, creative changes. For example, working with mayors, city council members, and local economic development officials in Dickinson County, I have fought for more than \$9.2 million for Polaris through the Department of Defense to provide All Terrain Ultra Tactical Vehicles to the National Guard, helping to create jobs and expand economic opportunities.

School grants: Every child in Iowa deserves to be educated in a classroom that is safe, accessible, and modern. That's 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, Dickinson County has received \$1,124,075 in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in Dickinson County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling \$223,047.

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, Dickinson County has received more than \$3.1 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, Dickinson County's fire departments have received over \$500,000 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's 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 Dickinson 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 Dickinson 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 Dickinson 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.●

REMEMBERING ERNIE SCHOCH

● Mr. HELLER. Madam President, today we honor the life and service of Ernie Schoch, whose passing signifies a great loss to Nevada. I send my condolences and prayers to Joann and all of Ernie's family in this time of mourning.

Ernie came to the United States to become a member of the U.S. Air Force. During his tenure in the Air Force, Ernie was a recipient of the prestigious Good Conduct Medal. Airmen awarded this medal must earn character and efficiency ratings of excellent or higher throughout a 3-year period of Active military service or for a 1-year period of service during a time of war. As one of our Nation's servicemembers, he made exceptional sacrifices for our country and deserves our deepest gratitude. I am both humbled and honored by not only his but his family's service to our great Nation.

Ernie and his wife Joann were exemplary volunteers throughout the community. Their selflessness extends far beyond our Nation's military. He was dedicated to supporting homeless veterans and worked with the U.S. Veterans Initiative and other organizations in his spare time. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am proud to have continued his work through my own legislative proposals to help in assisting homeless veterans. His volunteerism brought so much to his community, and rest assured his contributions will remain a lasting legacy in the "Silver State."●

I extend my deepest sympathies to Joann and all of Ernie's family. We will always remember Ernie 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 to his family and community earn him a place among the outstanding men and women who have valiantly defended our Nation.

Ernie's wife Joann is a woman whom I am proud to call a friend. Together, the two were an inseparable couple whose love for each other was obvious to anyone who spent time with them. They enjoyed traveling together and sharing their stories with all who eagerly listened. When not traveling or volunteering, Joann and Ernie opened their home generously to the many people who loved their company.

Throughout his life, Ernie maintained a dedication to the preservation of justice and integrity, which I am honored to commend. Today, I join the Clark County community and citizens of the "Silver State" to celebrate the life of an upstanding Nevadan.●

CONGRATULATING RABBI DR.
GERSHON C. GERWITZ AND DR.
MINDY GERWITZ

● Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I wish to express my warmest congratulations to both Rabbi Dr. Gershon C. Gerwitz and Dr. Mindy Gerwitz of Brookline, MA upon their departure. Rabbi Gerwitz has served as Young Israel of Brookline's dedicated Mara d'Asra for three decades, alongside his wife Mindy, and their children Yossi, Henoah, Sorah Leah, Adina and Doniel arrived in 1984. His wife, Dr. Mindy Gerwitz has also been a longtime passionate and dedicated community leader in her own right, contributing tireless decades of service.

Rabbi Gerwitz leaves Young Israel of Brookline with an indelible legacy as one of the prime architects of Young Israel and as a local and national Jewish leader, in Brookline, the Greater Boston Jewish community, and the national Orthodox movement.

Rabbi Gerwitz has led in times of great joy, incredible challenge, deep tragedy and monumental growth. Through it all, Rabbi Gerwitz has kept the Young Israel community together. He represented the Orthodox Jewish community locally and nationally with wisdom and integrity. Most importantly, he established personal relationships with his congregants, always serving their religious, spiritual, intellectual and halachic needs.

I wish to express my boundless gratitude to Rabbi Gerwitz for his many years of devoted service to Young Israel of Brookline and to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. He has had a storied career, and I know the best is yet to come for him and his family.●