

Harkin: Iowa House Republicans Using Teachers, Public Employees as a Political Scapegoat

Written by Sen. Tom Harkin
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Passage of House File 525 a huge disappointment for Iowa's working families

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chairman of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP), issued the following statement after the Iowa House of Representatives voted 56 to 39 to pass a measure that restricts the collective bargaining rights of public workers.

"Following Wisconsin's vote earlier this week, I was hopeful that Iowa's House Republicans would choose a different path, and not resort to using our public sector workers – our friends and neighbors – as a political scapegoat. Unfortunately, today they voted to strip Iowa's public servants of meaningful collective bargaining rights. It is a shameful thing to do to those who work so hard for the public good, and it will only undermine the economic recovery of our great state.

"Let's not forget who we are really talking about. We are talking about the police officers and firefighters that put their lives on the line to keep our families safe. We are talking about the elementary school teachers who make sure our kids know their ABCs. Our public servants deserve respect – especially from our elected officials. They did not cause the recession, and they do not deserve to be treated this way.

"Iowans have a very strong sense of community – they know that in tough times it's important to support your friends and neighbors and do all you can to lift people up, not tear them down. Working families are facing unprecedented challenges, and it's time that we all come together to do whatever we can to help rebuild a strong middle class with good jobs, fair wages, and benefits. My hope is that the Iowa Senate defeats this measure."