

Senator Harkin Announces His Plans for the Future

Written by Sen. Tom Harkin
Monday, 28 January 2013 16:26

Thanks Iowans for dedication during his nearly 40 years in public service

Outlines full HELP Committee agenda for next two years

CUMMING, Iowa – Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) today issued the following statement on his plans for the future, including his decision not to seek reelection for his U.S. Senate term expiring in 2014. In doing so, he thanked Iowans for their dedication over the course of his career in public service and outlined his agenda for the HELP Committee over the next two years:

“I have been thinking hard about the decision whether to run for a sixth term in the United States Senate for a number of months - even more these last few weeks. I’ve reached a decision, and what I’ve decided really boils down to two things,” said Harkin. “First, I’m going to fulfill a promise that I made to my wife Ruth, and that I also made to myself. It’s a promise that we’re going to do certain things together - and that we’re going to live together in a way we’ve often talked about - before it gets too late. That’s a decision I believe many Iowans can relate to, either because of their own circumstances, or perhaps those of their parents. I have the privilege to be able to make this decision on my own terms, which not everyone can, and I’m deeply grateful to the people of Iowa that I do have that opportunity. I’ve been extremely fortunate. I was born here in Cumming in modest circumstances. My father was a coal-miner with just an 8th-grade education. My mother arrived to this country as an immigrant with virtually no earthly possessions. This state and this country have allowed me to enjoy a life and career beyond anything I imagined as a boy or young man.

“Second, I’m 73 years old right now. At the end of this term I’ll be 75. When the current Congress is over, I will have served in the United States House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate for a total of 40 years. After 40 years, I just feel it’s somebody else’s turn. I can’t put into words what an honor it is to serve Iowa. And I don’t by any means plan to retire completely from public life at the end of this Congress. But I am going to make way for someone new in this Senate seat. I think that is right not just for me, but for Iowa, as well.”

In announcing his plans, Harkin said that over the next two years in Congress, he would continue to advance a policy agenda that benefits Iowa. Among his priorities:

- Moving forward with bills to ensure that all Americans are able to achieve the promise of a quality education – beginning in early childhood, continuing through elementary and high school, and culminating with higher education.
- Working to significantly increase the employment of individuals with disabilities, in order to

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continue to fulfill the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- Advancing his proposal of a new type of pension plan, the USA Retirement Fund, to provide Americans with a secure source of retirement income for life.
- Ensuring the successful implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

As an appropriator and as chair of the Appropriations subcommittee that funds health, education, and labor, Harkin would ensure these initiatives have the funding necessary for implementation. So too would he continue to advance farm policy that improves, and strengthens a number of initiatives that we included in previous farm bills to assist and promote opportunities for farmers and good nutrition for consumers through farmers markets and increased local production and marketing of food.

“More than 40 years ago, I came to Washington with a simple goal: help people. It was that goal that has inspired me throughout my career and one that will continue to inspire my work. Iowans entrusted me with a great responsibility when they first elected me to public office in 1974. It is a responsibility I have never forgotten as I represented them in both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate,” Harkin concluded.

Tom Harkin has represented Iowa in Congress for 38 years. First winning election to the U.S. House in 1974, he represented Iowa's Fifth Congressional District until 1984, when he challenged an incumbent Senator and won. Iowans returned him to the Senate in 1990, 1996, 2002 and 2008. He is the first Iowa Democrat to win as many consecutive terms in the U.S. Senate.

Harkin has a lengthy record of achievements, among the highlights of his career:

- Advancing the Rights of Individuals with Disabilities;
- Strengthening the Middle Class through Health, Education, and Retirement Security Policies and Investments;
- Promoting a Strong Agriculture Economy, Sound Conservation, and Renewable Energy;
- Protecting Human Rights and Combatting the Worst Forms of Child Labor;
- Providing Funding to Maintain Modern Schools & Access to Healthier Communities;
- Ensuring Iowans have access to Disaster Relief and Flood Prevention and Mitigation;
- In Iowa, his office holds a record of strong constituent services, having logged its 100,000th constituent case earlier this year.

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