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Ms. Melton

Government CC, 2nd Block

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Tom Harkin

Tom Harkin is a Democratic Senator from Iowa. He was first elected to the Senate in 1984. He currently serves as the chairman of the Committee on Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. He was a presidential candidate for his party in 1992, but he lost.

Harkin was born in Cumming, Iowa. His father, Patrick Harkin, was a coal miner and his mother Frances Harkin was an immigrant. Unfortunately, she died when he was only 10 years old. He attended and graduated from Dowling Catholic High School. Harkin attended Iowa State University on a Navy R.O.T.C. scholarship and was a member of Delta Sigma Phi fraternity. He graduated with a degree in government and economics in 1962, and served in the United States Navy as an active-duty jet pilot in 1962. He left active duty in 1967, but eventually went back and retired in 1989 with his rank being a commander.

In 1969, Harkin moved to Washington, D.C., and began work as an aide to Democratic Congressman Neal Smith. He received his J.D. from the Columbus School of Law in 1972. In 1972, the same year that he graduated from law school, Harkin returned to Iowa and immediately ran against William J. Scherle, but he lost. After his lost, he practiced law in Ames before running against him again in 1974, which he won. His victory meant he was the person who represented Iowa’s 5th congressional district. He was reelected in 1990, 1996, 2002, and 2008. He has made history for serving in the Senate longer than any Democrat in Iowa's history.

Some of his committees include the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, The Committee on Appropriations, The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (on which he is the chairman), and the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

He is an advocate of people with disabilities. Also, he supports legal abortions. Harkin has generally supported legalized abortion. He has opposed most efforts to place legal restrictions on abortion, including voting against a ban on late term abortion, while supporting birth control and education to reduce teen pregnancy. Harkin married Minnesota native Ruth Raduenz in 1968 and has two daughters: Amy and Jenny.