

# Congress Considers \$23 Billion for Education Jobs

Iowa's own Senator Harkin introduced legislation earlier this month that will help states minimize the layoffs in school districts and institutions of higher education all across the country.

Senator Harkin is calling on Congress to act quickly to minimize the number of layoffs. The Keep Our Educators Working Act will create a \$23 billion "Education Jobs Fund," modeled after the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) that was established in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Representatives from Senator Harkin's office indicated that the bill would be brought up as an amendment to the upcoming Afghanistan War Supplemental, scheduled to be brought to the Senate floor in early May. If approved Iowa's share of the funding is estimated to be \$224 million.

The SFSF is currently supporting more than 300,000 education jobs, such as teachers, principals, librarians, and counselors, and is widely credited with mitigating the impact of the recent recession. However, even with the SFSF, many districts and institutions of higher education across the country have laid off workers, and the job outlook is worse for the 2010-2011 school year. Additional resources are needed to help States and districts avoid a "funding cliff" that would result in even more layoffs.

The \$23 billion included in the Keep Our Educators Working Act is roughly half of the amount dedicated to state aid in the SFSF, and the same as what was passed by the House in its December 2009 jobs legislation. Funding could be used for:

- Compensation and benefits and other expenses necessary to retain existing employees, and for the hiring of new employees, in order to provide early childhood, elementary, secondary, or postsecondary educational and related services; or
- On-the-job training activities for education-related careers.