

## Sen. Tom Harkin (D–Iowa)

Junior Senator from Iowa



**Residence:** Cumming

**Born:** Nov. 19, 1939; Cumming, Iowa

**Religion:** Roman Catholic

**Family:** Wife, Ruth Harkin; two children

**Education:** Iowa State U., B.S. 1962 (government & economics); Catholic U. of America, J.D. 1972

**Military Service:** Navy 1962-1967; Naval Reserve 1968-1974

**Career:** Lawyer; congressional aide

**First Elected:** 1984 (5th term)

**Latest Election:** 2008 General (62.66%)

**Note:** Will retire at end of current term (announced Jan. 26, 2013)

**Political Highlights:** Democratic nominee for U.S. House, 1972; U.S. House, 1975-85; sought Democratic nomination for president, 1992

### Committees:

- Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry (Commodities & Markets; Conservation, Forestry & Natural Resources; Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Food & Agricultural Research)
- Appropriations (Agriculture; Defense; Energy-Water; Labor-HHS-Education - chairman; State-Foreign Operations; Transportation-HUD)
- Health, Education, Labor & Pensions - Chairman

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## Sen. Tom Harkin (D–Iowa)

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### CQ Politics in America Profile

(Updated: April 4, 2013)

Harkin is a product of the populist tradition of Iowa. While respecting the state's conservative leanings, he has been a devoted proponent of spending for the poor, agriculture programs and health care. But the 113th Congress will be his last — he said in early 2013 that “it’s somebody else’s turn.”

A proud old-school progressive, Harkin boasted that during his 1992 presidential candidacy, he was the “only Democrat in the race,” tacking to the left of eventual winner Bill Clinton. In January 2013, he was one of only three Democratic senators voting against a measure to extend lower income tax rates on earnings under \$450,000 for married couples. Harkin said it didn't bring in enough money to meet the needs of government programs and spared too much income for the wealthy. “If you're making more than \$250,000, you're not middle class,” he said on the Senate floor.

Harkin is chairman of both the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee. Those assignments make him the principal Senate Democratic spokesman for health and education policy. He passed up the opportunity to chair the full Appropriations Committee for the 113th Congress (2013-14) — he said the HELP Committee is “where my passion lies.”

“The erosion of the middle class and growing income inequality are among our most pressing issues as a country,” he said in late 2012. “To that end, I am committed to doing everything I can to reverse those trends.”

Harkin took the gavel of the HELP Committee in 2009, succeeding the late Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts just as the Senate was putting the final touches on its version of the Democrats’ health care overhaul measure.

He considers the passage of the final health bill one of the defining votes of his career — although he had hoped, like many liberals, for inclusion of a government-run insurance plan in the final package. Harkin was largely responsible for prevention provisions in the law. Harkin in the 112th Congress (2011-12) firmly lectured Obama administration officials that “not one more nickel” will be transferred from funding for enhanced preventive health services outlined in the law. He opened the 113th Congress by introducing a sprawling package of preventive health programs meant to encourage healthier food offerings and increased exercise for schoolchildren, create community gardens, establish new sports programs for the disabled and boost taxes on tobacco, among other things.

For the home stretch of his four-decade congressional career, Harkin is promoting an overhaul of pension law, based on the premise that the retirement system should be “universal and automatic.” He says his plan combines the advantages of defined-benefit and defined-contribution plans. It would complement Social Security — for that program, Harkin favors higher benefits and elimination of the cap on income subject to its payroll taxes.

He also will tackle reauthorizations of federal programs for primary, secondary and post-secondary education. Harkin is not averse to applying federal leverage to try to make college education more affordable. He might use a rewrite of the Higher Education Act — which deals with the entire federal student loan system, Pell grants and other scholarship programs — to achieve one of his personal goals: overhauling regulation of for-profit colleges.

Harkin started work in the 112th Congress on a rewrite of the 2002 education law known as No Child Left Behind. He advanced a bipartisan measure out of his committee in 2011 that would remove the much-criticized accountability system that requires all students to be proficient in math and reading by 2014. Instead, it would require states to adopt “college- and career-ready” standards and develop statewide accountability systems to receive federal funding. It went nowhere in the full Senate.

Prior to his leadership of the HELP Committee, Harkin alternated with Republicans for nine years in leading the Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee. That panel is a natural spot for an Iowa senator, as its major task is the supervision and reauthorization of agricultural

production and nutrition support programs. Harkin pressed for increased agricultural conservation incentives and led the committee through difficult bicameral negotiations leading up to the enactment of the 2002 farm bill. The 2008 farm bill provided enhanced biofuel production incentives — Harkin is a big supporter of the ethanol industry — and it was enacted over a veto by President George W. Bush.

Harkin's work on the HELP and Agriculture panels has often been tempered by other committees. The Finance Committee has jurisdiction over taxes, which frequently brings it into discussions of any broad reauthorization measures. Harkin at times has been frustrated by what he views as its interference with his agenda. There were reports that he was "boxed out" of negotiations on the 2008 farm bill, and he complained at the time: "Do the Ag Committee members run the Ag Committee, or does the Finance Committee?" Budget Chairman Kent Conrad, a North Dakota Democrat, shot down a 2002 Harkin effort to add \$6 billion to the agriculture budget.

His signature achievement prior to the health care overhaul was the 1990 Americans With Disabilities Act, which gave broad civil rights protections to an estimated 54 million Americans with mental and physical disabilities. At the time of its passage, Harkin said he was inspired by his brother, Frank, who was deaf. He repeated that sentiment in 2008 when Bush signed his bill expanding the number of people who qualify for the law's protections.

The son of a coal miner, Harkin grew up in a small, crowded house in Cumming. His life took a tragic turn at age 10 when his mother, a Slovenian immigrant, died. After working his way through college, Harkin spent five years as a Navy pilot during the 1960s.

Although interested in politics since college — he was president of the Young Democrats at Iowa State — he stumbled into the field as a career. In 1968, out of the Navy and out of work, he was watching TV at a diner when President Lyndon B. Johnson startled him by announcing he would not seek another term. The next morning, a friend working for the Iowa Democratic Party offered him a job. "I thought, 'I'm going broke, I've got no prospects for the future. Why not?'" Harkin recalled.

In 1969, he was hired by Iowa Democratic Rep. Neal Smith as an aide on the House select committee investigating the U.S. military's progress in Vietnam. He made a name for himself with his discovery of South Vietnam's "tiger cages." Outwitting a government official on a guided tour of a prison camp, Harkin found hundreds of men, women and children behind a hidden door and crammed into underground cells, with open grates on top through which guards poured skin-searing doses of the chemical lime. His photographs and story in Life magazine energized the anti-war movement. The move cost the 30-year-old Harkin his Capitol Hill job.

Harkin lost a race for the House in 1972, the same year he earned his law degree. But two years later he defeated Republican incumbent William J. Scherle by a slim margin. He held the seat until winning election to the Senate in 1984, ousting Republican Roger W. Jepsen with 56 percent of the vote.

His Senate campaigns haven't been cakewalks; in the races for his second, third and fourth terms, he won by less than 11 points. In 2008, Harkin eclipsed a 60 percent majority for the first time as senator.

Democratic Rep. Bruce Braley is running to become Harkin's successor. Harkin said he will not get involved in the primary, but he has complimented Braley's work as a lawmaker.

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### CQ Politics in America: State Description

(Updated: May 2003)

#### STATE LEGISLATURE

General Assembly: Meets January-May

House: 100 members, 2-year terms  
2003 breakdown: 54R, 46D; 75 men, 25 women  
Salary: \$21,380  
Phone: (515) 281-3221

Senate: 50 members, 4-year terms  
2003 breakdown: 29R, 21D; 43 men, 7 women  
Salary: \$21,380  
Phone: (515) 281-3371

#### STATE TERM LIMITS

Governor: No

Senate: No

House: No

#### URBAN STATISTICS

City	Population
Des Moines	198,682
Cedar Rapids	120,758
Davenport	98,359
Sioux City	85,013
Waterloo	68,747

#### REGISTERED VOTERS

Nonaffiliated	38%
Republican	33%
Democrat	30%

#### POPULATION

2002 population (est.)	2,936,760
2000 population	2,926,324
1990 population	2,776,755
Percent change (1990-2000)	+5.4%
Rank among states (2002)	30

Median age	36.6
Born in state	74.8%
Foreign born	3.1%
Violent crime rate	266/100,000
Poverty level	9.1%
Federal workers	18,928
Military	14,329

REDISTRICTING

Iowa retained its five seats in reapportionment. The Legislative Service Bureau drew a new map, which the state legislature approved and the governor signed on June 22, 2001.

MISCELLANEOUS

Web: [www.state.ia.us](http://www.state.ia.us)  
 Capital: Des Moines

STATE ELECTION OFFICIAL  
 (515) 281-5865

DEMOCRATIC HEADQUARTERS  
 (515) 244-7292

REPUBLICAN HEADQUARTERS  
 (515) 282-8105

Dist.	White	Black	Asian	Hisp.
1	92%	4%	1%	2%
2	92	2	2	3
3	90	3	2	3
4	95	1	1	3
5	94	1	1	4
STATE	93	2	1	3
U.S.	69	12	4	13

Dist.	Median Income	White Collar	Blue Collar	Service Industry
1	\$38,727	56%	29%	15%
2	\$40,121	59	27	14
3	\$43,176	62	24	14
4	\$38,242	56	29	15
5	\$36,773	53	31	16
STATE	\$39,469	57	28	15
U.S.	\$41,994	60	25	15

Dist.	Over 64	Under 18	College Education	Rural	Sq. Miles
1	14%	25%	20%	34%	7,217
2	13	24	25	34	7,566
3	13	26	25	27	6,979

4	16	24	20	49	15,760
5	17	26	16	51	18,348
STATE	15	25	21	39	55,869
U.S.	12	26	24	21	3,537,438

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### Largest Companies

(Updated: January 2014)

	Company	Parent Company	Industry	Annual Income	Total Employees in the State
1	Transamerica Life Insurance Company	Aegon Usa, Inc	pension/health/welfare fund life insurance carrier	\$13,767,744,583	207
2	MidAmerican Energy Holdings Company	Berkshire Hathaway Inc.	electric & gas utility and real estate management	\$11,548,000,000	0
3	Principal Financial Group, Inc.		accident/health insurance carrier	\$9,215,100,000	0
4	Hy-Vee, Inc.		convenience store ret drugs & sundries alcoholic beverages	\$7,681,997,440	600
5	Casey's General Stores, Inc.		retails gasoline & groceries	\$7,250,840,000	75
6	Rockwell Collins, Inc.		avionics communications equipment and systems	\$4,610,000,000	0
7	MidAmerican Funding, LLC	MidAmerican Energy Holdings Company	electric & natural gas services	\$3,247,000,000	0
8	MidAmerican Energy Company	Mhc Inc.	electric & gas utility	\$3,242,000,000	300
9	Unitypoint Health		general hospital accounting/auditing/bookkeeping management services	\$2,380,167,000	4110
10	Monumental	Aegon Usa,	life insurance carrier	\$2,015,383,157	600

	<b>Company</b>	<b>Parent Company</b>	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Annual Income</b>	<b>Total Employees in the State</b>
	Life Insurance Inc Company		accident/health insurance carrier		
11	Hni Corporation		mfg furniture and hearth products	\$2,004,003,000	65
12	Danfoss Power Solutions Inc.		electrical contractor	\$1,916,094,000	0
13	The University of Iowa		college/university	\$1,803,600,000	0
14	American Equity Investment Life Holding Co		life insurance services	\$1,588,558,000	0
15	Farmers Cooperative Company		whol grain/field beans whol farm supplies	\$1,198,113,152	35
16	Heartland Co-Op		whol grain/field beans farm management services mfg prepared feeds	\$1,184,279,872	28
17	CRST International, Inc.		trucking operator-nonlocal	\$1,143,058,000	250
18	Big River Resources, LLC		mfg industrial organic chemicals	\$1,135,955,535	20
19	Renewable Energy Group, Inc.		biodiesel production & industrial organic chemicals	\$1,015,034,000	3
20	Perishable Distributors of Iowa, Ltd.	Hy-Vee, Inc.	whol fish/seafoods whol poultry/products whol meats/products	\$1,007,826,547	500
21	Krause Holdings, Inc.		ret groceries	\$1,000,000,000	300
22	Wells Fargo Financial Security Services, Inc.	Wells Fargo & Company	personal credit instn s-term bus credit instn surety insurance carrier	\$833,800,000	569

<b>Company</b>	<b>Parent Company</b>	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Annual Income</b>	<b>Total Employees in the State</b>
23 United Fire & Casualty Company	United Fire Group, Inc.	property/casualty and life insurance	\$813,243,000	0
24 Wells Fargo Financial Ca, Inc	Wells Fargo Financial Security Services, Inc.	personal credit instn s-term bus credit instn surety insurance carrier	\$807,000,000	650
25 Winnebago Industries, Inc.		mfg motor homes & recreation vehicle	\$803,165,000	0

Notes:

- Only primary industries are listed for any company, although a company may be active in others.
- Annual figures for privately-held companies (including privately-held subsidiaries) are estimated.

Source: Dun & Bradstreet (D&B)

## Sen. Tom Harkin (D–Iowa)

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### Contact Information, Staff and Social Media

(Updated: February 2014)

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Dubuque Office

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## Sen. Tom Harkin (D–Iowa)

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### Committees, Leadership Positions and Caucus Memberships

(Updated: February 2014)

#### Committee and Subcommittee Assignments

- Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry (3rd of 11 Democrats)
  - Commodities & Markets
  - Conservation, Forestry & Natural Resources
  - Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Food & Agricultural Research
- Appropriations (3rd of 16 Democrats)
  - Agriculture
  - Defense
  - Energy-Water
  - Labor-HHS-Education (chairman)
  - State-Foreign Operations
  - Transportation-HUD
- Health, Education, Labor & Pensions - Chairman

#### Leadership Positions and Party Committee Assignments

- Senate Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee

#### Selected Caucus and Special Organization Memberships

- Congressional Fire Services Caucus
- Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus
- Senate National Guard Caucus
- Senate Rural Health Caucus (co-chairman)

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### Elections & Vote for President

(Updated: April 2009)

<b>Election</b>	<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Percent</b>
2008 General	Tom Harkin (D)	941,665	62.7%
	Christopher Reed (R)	560,006	37.3%

	write-ins	1,247	.1%
2008 Primary	Tom Harkin (D)	90,785	100.0%
2002 General	Tom Harkin (D)	554,278	54.2%
	Greg Ganske (R)	447,892	43.8%
	Timothy A. Harthan (GREEN)	11,340	1.1%
	Richard J. Moore (LIBERT)	8,864	.9%
	write-ins	701	.1%
2002 Primary	Tom Harkin (D)	83,505	99.3%
	write-ins (D)	555	.7%
1996 General	Tom Harkin (D)	634,166	51.8%
	Jim Ross Lightfoot (R)	571,807	46.7%
	Sue Atkinson (I)	9,768	.8%
	Fred Gratzon (NL)	4,248	.3%
	Joe Sulentic (I)	1,941	.2%
	Shirley E. Pena (SW)	1,844	.2%
	write-ins	280	.0%
1996 Primary	Tom Harkin (D)	98,737	99.2%
1990 General	Tom Harkin (D)	535,975	54.0%
	Tom Tauke (R)	446,869	45.0%
1990 Primary	Tom Harkin (D)		unopposed
1984 General	Tom Harkin (D)	716,883	56.0%
	Roger W. Jepsen (R)	564,381	44.0%
1984 Primary	Tom Harkin (D)		unopposed
1982 General	Tom Harkin (D)	93,333	58.9%
<i>IA-05 representative</i>	Arlyn E. Danker (R)	65,200	41.1%
1980 General	Tom Harkin (D)	127,895	60.2%
<i>IA-05 representative</i>	Cal Hultman (R)	84,472	39.8%
1978 General	Tom Harkin (D)	82,333	58.9%
<i>IA-05 representative</i>	Julian B. Garrett (R)	57,377	41.1%

1976 General <i>IA-05 representative</i>	Tom Harkin (D) Kenneth R. Fulk (R)	135,600 71,377	64.9% 34.1%
1974 General <i>IA-05 representative</i>	Tom Harkin (D) William J. Scherle (R)	81,146 77,683	51.1% 48.9%
1972 General <i>IA-05 representative</i>	William J. Scherle (R) Tom Harkin (D)	108,596 87,937	55.3% 44.7%

[Political Party Abbreviations](#) | [Explanation of Primary Elections](#)

## Vote for President

Year	Republican		Democratic		Independent	
2012	730,617	46%	822,544	52%	29,019	2%
2008	682,379	44%	828,940	54%	25,804	2%
2004	751,957	50%	741,898	49%	--	--
2000	634,373	48%	638,517	49%	29,374	2%
1996	490,949	40%	615,732	50%	104,462	9%
1992	504,891	37%	586,353	43%	253,468	19%
1988	545,355	44%	670,557	55%	--	--
1984	703,088	53%	605,620	46%	--	--
1980	676,026	51%	508,672	39%	115,633	9%
1976	632,863	49%	619,931	48%	--	--
1972	706,207	58%	496,206	41%	--	--

## Sen. Tom Harkin (D–Iowa)

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### Interest Group Ratings

(Updated: May 2013)

Year	AFL-CIO	ADA	CCUS	ACU
2012	100%	95%	38%	4%
2011	100%	95%	27%	5%
2010	100%	100%	9%	0%
2009	100%	100%	43%	0%
2008	100%	95%	50%	4%
2007	100%	95%	36%	8%

2006	100%	100%	36%	8%
2005	100%	100%	33%	4%
2004	100%	100%	59%	8%
2003	100%	95%	32%	15%
2002	100%	80%	45%	15%
2001	100%	100%	38%	8%
2000	75%	95%	57%	4%
1999	89%	100%	47%	4%
1998	100%	95%	50%	5%
1997	71%	85%	70%	12%
1996	86%	80%	38%	10%
1995	92%	95%	44%	9%
1994	88%	100%	30%	0%
1993	73%	90%	27%	0%
1992	91%	85%	17%	0%
1991	90%	100%	14%	0%
1990	78%	94%	17%	22%
1989	100%	95%	38%	14%
1988	92%	95%	36%	0%
1987	90%	95%	44%	4%
1986	93%	90%	28%	14%
1985	90%	100%	24%	5%

**House Service:**

<b>Year</b>	<b>AFL-CIO</b>	<b>ADA</b>	<b>CCUS</b>	<b>ACU</b>
1984	46%	75%	33%	21%
1983	88%	90%	20%	5%
1982	95%	95%	24%	0%
1981	73%	85%	5%	7%
1980	47%	78%	64%	%
1979	79%	74%	33%	%
1978	70%	60%	22%	%
1977	71%	85%	25%	%
1976	75%	85%	13%	%

1975	77%	95%	18%	%
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Source: Compiled by Congressional Quarterly based on information provided by each participating group.  
[Interest Group Descriptions](#)

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