

On August 27, 2009 the 133<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing Maintenance building filled with students, parents and military volunteers. The room swelled with anticipation as the final graduation of the STARBASE Minnesota summer program commenced. Students processed in as their pictures flashed throughout the room, foreshadowing their future careers in science, technology, engineering and math. Throughout the summer STARBASE and the Minnesota Air Guard hosted 615 students in six sessions, and enlisted over 100 military members who logged 480 volunteer hours.

In addition to all of the students and volunteers, STARBASE Minnesota also invited special guest speakers to address the new STARBASE graduates. Guest speakers, all advocates of STEM, included leaders in business and industry, the military and government. The guest speaker for the final graduation was Minnesota Congressman Keith Ellison of the Fifth Congressional District of MN. Representative Ellison enthusiastically encouraged the students to continue pursuing excellence and the spirit of innovation and discovery that the STARBASE program is all about.

In his remarks Rep. Ellison congratulated and thanked all the members of the STARBASE team, Air Guard, volunteers, parents and participants from the STEM community, and made sure to point out that the success of STARBASE is directly related to the team aspect and orientation of the STARBASE mission. The congressman gave recognition to the powerful teamwork that the students participated in during their week at STARBASE and asked them to take those skills and experiences into their future endeavors.

Keith Ellison has had a strong interest in STARBASE Minnesota since the moment he learned about the organization. Prior to his induction into the U.S. House of Representatives Mr. Ellison visited STARBASE Minnesota and his experience left a lasting impression. Since elected to the U.S. Congress, Ellison has been a strong advocate for STARBASE and has led congressional support for a \$1.9 million improvement and expansion of its facility.

Congressman Keith Ellison has represented the Fifth Congressional District of MN in the US House of Representatives since Jan 2007. He is serving his second term in Congress and is a member of the Financial Services Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee. Congressman Ellison served in the Minnesota State House from 2003-07 and was a practicing attorney in Minneapolis from 1990-2006. He received his Bachelor's degree in Economics from Wayne State University and his Doctorate from the University of Minnesota Law School. Congressman Ellison and his wife, Kim have four children and live in Minneapolis.