

general education budgets to make up for the shortfall in special education funding, all of America's students are losing out—and those with disabilities are being left behind.

Every year, access to education for students with disabilities is subjected to the federal appropriations process—and every year, it comes up short. I am dismayed that H.R. 1350 fails to provide for mandatory funding, and outraged that the leadership allowed for 14 amendments to be offered on this bill but denied my colleagues and me the opportunity to vote on two proposed amendments that would have guaranteed children with disabilities and their families the access to necessary resources for their education.

Further, H.R. 1350 makes significant substantive changes counter to the philosophy of IDEA. One of many alarming changes is the elimination of a key civil rights protection providing safeguards for students with disabilities in instances where behavior problems may be a manifestation of their disability. Currently, IDEA sets up a structure for initial assessments and intervention plans, so that disruptive or problematic behavior can be avoided or mitigated. In instances where students with disabilities do violate a school code, IDEA currently requires administrators to determine if the offending behavior is a manifestation of a student's disability. If that is the case, then the student, teachers and parents can return to the original behavior plan and find a way to work together to avoid further problems. If that is not the case, the student can then be subjected to the same penalties as a non-disabled student would.

I believe the current disciplinary review process is fair and in the best interest of all students. Even with these protections, students with disabilities are over-represented among students who are expelled. Yet, H.R. 1350 proposes to eliminate the provisions that require both consideration of a child's disability and use of functional behavioral assessments and intervention plans—denying students the safeguards that assure them access to educational services and placing them at significantly greater risk.

I have also heard a strong sentiment against the proposed changes in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) from my constituents, and parents and educators across the country. H.R. 1350 contains a provision to eliminate the requirement of short-term benchmarks, resulting in a negative impact on the effective collaboration between home and schools providing appropriate education and related services to students with disabilities. Measuring student progress against short-term objectives is needed to ensure that student evaluations are regular and based on multiple criteria. I hear stories of students who have achieved the goals set in their one-year IEP in less than that time—this is something that should be acknowledged, celebrated and encouraged—not overlooked. Any steps toward imposing a three-year IEP are steps toward overlooking the progress made in the collaborations that are essential to IDEA.

The reauthorizing legislation also fails to recognize a shortage of qualified personnel that has hampered the full implementation of IDEA for 25 years. H.R. 1350 eliminates language that sets standards for special education service providers. In the No Child Left Behind Act, Congress made it clear that every child should have a highly qualified teacher,

yet H.R. 1350 removes the highest requirement provision—at a time when high standards were never more important. Every contentious issue related to IDEA—discipline, disproportionate representation of minorities, over-identification of students referred to special education—could be better addressed by ensuring an adequate supply of appropriately trained and highly qualified personnel. Ultimately, highly trained professionals make all the difference in providing an appropriate education for any student—students with disabilities are no different.

I urge my colleagues to only support legislation that preserves the spirit and meaning of IDEA. I am disappointed that the reauthorizing legislation we are here to vote on today fails to live up to that standard, and I encourage my colleagues to vote against H.R. 1350.

HONORING LANCE MICHAEL
ARCHBOLD FOR EARNING THE
RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 1, 2003

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Lance Michael Archbold, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 134, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Lance has been very active with his troop, participating in such scout activities as Camp Geiger, Camp Bartle, Camp Jayhawk, High Adventures hiking in Colorado, floating down Buffalo River and Current River, biking 225 miles of the Katy Trail in Missouri, and Junior Leader Corp for Webelos Day Camp. Over the nine years he has been involved in scouting, he has earned numerous merit badges. Additionally, Lance has held several leadership positions, serving as scribe, den chief, patrol leader, assistant patrol leader, outdoor program manager, co-captain and captain. Lance also has been honored for his numerous scouting achievements with such awards as the Arrow of Light Award, Ordeal Member of the Order of the Arrow, Foxman in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say, the On My Honor Award, and the Duty to God Award.

For his Eagle Scout project, Lance helped the Independence visitors center for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints with their annual Christmas tree display for the community. He built stands for each tree they had on display so the trees would not tip over. The organization has used them for two years now.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Lance Michael Archbold for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

REINTRODUCTION OF THE VET-
ERANS HOUSING FAIRNESS ACT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 1, 2003

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce legislation that allows veterans to use their guaranteed VA loans to purchase co-operative housing units. FHA and other government agencies already have programs to give loans for co-operative residential units, and most banks accept co-operative shares as collateral. The Department of Veterans Affairs should do the same. For many veterans who live in communities where co-operative housing is common or where the cost of houses and condominiums can be high, a co-operative residential unit is an affordable alternative.

FARMERS INSURANCE GROUP'S
75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. EDWARD R. ROYCE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 1, 2003

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Farmers Insurance Group's 75th Anniversary and Diamond Jubilee, which it celebrated on March 28, 2003. This year commemorates the company's three-quarters of a century of serving tens-of-millions of policyholders and customers across the country. Founded in 1928 in Los Angeles by Thomas E. Leavey and John C. Tyler, true entrepreneurs and philanthropists, Farmers has grown into one of the largest and most successful insurance companies in America.

Nationally, Farmers Insurance employs nearly 20,000 individuals and has an insurance agent and district manager force of more than 15,000 strong. In California, Farmers is the largest state-based insurer and employs over 6,000 individuals and has in excess of 4,000 exclusive agents and district managers. These employees, agents and district managers are a valuable financial and insurance resource for their communities. They are also leaders in volunteer service. Over the years, Farmers Insurance Group's employees, agents and district managers have volunteered their time, personal finances and raised millions of dollars for local, state and national philanthropies and charities.

Today, Farmers Insurance remains committed to community service and providing excellence in financial advice and security. Throughout the last 75 years Farmers Insurance Group has emerged as the third largest property and casualty insurer in the country. It is my hope that the company will continue to make great strides forward and will remain a leader in the personal and commercial lines and life insurance industries.

As a Representative from California, where Farmers Insurance Group's home office is located, I am proud to congratulate all employees, agents and district managers on a successful 75 years of service to their communities.