with IDEA—the individuals with Disabilities Education Act. There are other alternatives available. As is often the case, Mr. Speaker, this Republican-controlled House lacks imagination when confronting important issues.

It is ironic that on National Teacher's Day we are pitting disabled children against their non-disabled classmates. Instead of depriving our schools of important funds from other federal education programs, as the Republicans suggest, I propose that we use an existing federal program to meet the obligations of IDEA. I think the Medicaid program is ideal for this approach.

The concept of my legislation is simple: after any school district has spent $3,500 on a student who is eligible for IDEA funds, the school district can receive full federal funding from the Medicaid program for additional required services mandated under IDEA.

The idea behind IDEA was that children who are disabled must receive the assistance they need to achieve their academic potential. That's the right thing for those children and their families. It's also the right thing for America—so that every individual has the maximum chance to be a contributor.

But who pays has been a problem for many years. Especially problematic for cash-strapped schools are situations where extraordinary expenses are required for a severely disabled child. These expenses can ''bust the budget'' and pit the parents of disabled children against the parents of non-disabled children. Because of the high costs of providing special assistance to the disabled, it is believed that some school districts tend to overlook findings that assistance is needed. That is counter-productive to the goal of helping disabled children succeed in school. But it's hard to blame the schools. The necessary funding has never been provided by the state or federal governments for this great IDEA.

The use of Medicaid to fund IDEA solves most of these problems. Since the Federal government funds 50% of Medicaid, shifting extraordinary expenses to the Medicaid program would ensure that the Federal government does its part. Because the rest of Medicaid funding comes from the states, the use of Medicaid also would ensure that states do their fair share and don't shirk their obligations to local schools. Adoption of this proposal would remove the disincentive now in place for schools to avoid providing help to disabled children. Additionally, it would remove the animosity that can develop between the parents of disabled and non-disabled children for scarce resources.

I think this change makes a lot of sense and hope that a bipartisan majority can put solutions ahead of politics and pursue this plan. Let's not allow a lack of imagination and compassion to short-change all our kids and schools.

A TRIBUTE TO THE CITY OF LATON

HON. CALVIN M. DOOLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 1999

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the community of Laton on celebrating their 100 year anniversary.

In 1902, Lewelyn A. Nares and Charles A. Laton acquired land near Kingsburg known as ''The Laguna De Tache''. Nares and Laton transferred title of their holdings to ''Laguna Lands Limited'' and Charles A. Laton soon disappeared from the local scene. Years later, a man named T.J. Saunders, an Iowa native, brought a group of businessmen to the area forming the nucleus for the city of Laton.

Laton has a rich history of community service. That tradition is exemplified by the strong ongoing commitment of the Volunteer Fire Department, the Lyon's Club, and other local organizations. In addition to providing a range of public services, each year the Laton community comes together for the Building Our Neighborhoods Drug Free (BOND) festival, which brings families together to celebrate Laton's drug-free environment. Community programs, including the BOND festival have made Laton one of the Central Valley's best places to raise a family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the city of Laton in celebrating their 100th year as a successful and prosperous community.

HONORING THE JACK C. HAYS HIGH SCHOOL REBEL BAND

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 1999

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, the Jack C. Hays High School Rebel Band of Austin, Texas, recently earned the distinct honor of being selected for the 1999 Sudley ''Flag of Honor'' award from the John Philip Sousa Foundation. This award is the highest recognition of excellence in concert performance that a high school band can receive. During the 17 years the award has been in existence, only 39 bands from the entire United States and Canada have been selected for the Flag of Honor. Conductor Gerald Babbitt and his Rebel band deserve our praise and recognition on the occasion of receiving this prestigious award.

The John Philip Sousa Foundation designed this award to identify and recognize high school concert band programs of very special excellence at the international level. To be eligible for nomination, a band must have maintained excellence over a period of many years in several areas including concert, marching, small ensemble and soloists. The director must have been the conductor of the band for at least the previous seven consecutive years including the year of the award.

Each recipient receives a four-by-six foot ''Flag of Honor'' which becomes the property of the band, The flag is designed in red, white and blue and bears the logo of the John Philip Sousa Foundation. The conductor receives a personal plaque and each student in the band receives a personalized diploma.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honor to have such an outstanding high school band in the 14th Congressional District. I am delighted to extend my hearty congratulations to them. Their hard work and dedication is an inspiration to us all.

REPORT FROM WHITLEY COUNTY

HON. DAVID M. McINTOSH

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 1999

Mr. McINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give my ''Report from Indiana'' where I honor distinguished Hoosiers who are actively engaged in their communities helping others.

Mr. Speaker, it has always been my strong belief that individuals and communities can do a better job of caring for those who need help in our society than the federal government. The wonderfully kind and committed Hoosiers who I have met traveling around Indiana have not changed my view.

Ruthie and I have met hundreds of individuals who are committed to making our communities a better place in which to live and raise our children—we call them ''Hoosier Heroes''.

I recognized this genuine Hoosier Hero in Whitley County, Indiana at a Lincoln Day dinner speech. She is Genny Walter-Thomson, whose devotion to her community has been unfailing. She has worked for decades to improve the lives of the mentally ill. By working tirelessly on behalf of the less fortunate, Genny epitomizes a Hoosier Hero.

Genny's special love is for children. She has worked hard to build the new YMCA so the youth of this community can direct their energies in a positive direction. She also serves on the Welfare-to-Work board to help people with the transition from dependence to dignity.

Genny's work has given many people the most precious gift possible, hope. She doesn't help people for the pay, which is zilch, she does it for the smiles and laughter. You are a true hero in my book, doing good works for others with no other motive than Christian charity.

Genny Walter-Thomson deserves the gratitude of the country, state, and nation, and I thank her here today on the floor of the House of the Representatives.

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM BLILEY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 29, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House of the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1480) to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the United States Army Corps of Engineers to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors of the United States, and for other purposes:

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 1480, a bill to authorize the United States Army Corps of Engineers to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors of the United States, and for other purposes.

Section 326 of the legislation, which addresses the modification of a project on the West Bank of the Mississippi River for flood control and storm damage reduction, contains