

## LARSON APPLAUDS FUNDING INCREASES FOR 'IDEA' EDUCATION PROGRAM; OTHER EDUCATION PRIORITIES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 12, 2001

### LARSON APPLAUDS FUNDING INCREASES FOR 'IDEA' EDUCATION PROGRAM; OTHER EDUCATION PRIORITIES

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today announced his strong support for several increases in funding for education in the Labor/Health and Human Services/Education Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2002. The legislation provides a 16% increase in funding for the Education Department over current levels, and 10% more than the Administration requested. The House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the legislation, 373-42.

The bill appropriates \$8.9 billion for the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), \$1.4 billion (19%) more than the current level and \$434 million (5%) more than the administration's request. Originally enacted in 1975, IDEA authorized the federal government to cover 40% of the cost of special education in order to provide all students with disabilities a free education that met their needs. The federal government has never covered more than 14.9%.

Larson stated: "It is well past time for the federal government to live up to its commitment to those that Congress has placed this burden on: state governments, municipal budgets, and taxpayers. This is a start, but it is certainly not enough. The Congress has a moral obligation to keep its word, and lift this massive financial burden off of local school systems and states by funding its share of the program."

Larson has introduced his own legislation on the IDEA program, called the Full Funding for IDEA Now Act of 2001, H.R. 1829, which would require the federal government to begin fully funding its share of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA).

"The appropriations bill also makes progress in funding other education priorities, such as teacher quality, reading, grant programs and education for disadvantaged children. We as a nation must ensure that our students, teachers and workforce as a whole are well equipped with the intellectual tools they need to power and maintain sustained economic growth, the defense of the nation, and our education system. In the wake of September 11, we must remember that there is certainly a connection to be made between the quality and comprehensiveness of our education system and the defense of the nation," said Larson.

-30-