

News  
From \_\_\_\_\_

CONGRESSMAN

# Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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202-225-3452

WASHINGTON D.C. --- U.S. REPRESENTATIVE NICK J. RAHALL (D-4TH) HAS ANNOUNCED THAT ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN TO ADD 100 PERMANENT POSITIONS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TO SPEED UP THE PROCESSING OF BLACK LUNG CLAIMS.

"I HAVE BEEN INFORMED BY CONGRESSMAN GEORGE MAHON, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, THAT THE LABOR-HEW BILL WILL CONTAIN AN ADDITIONAL \$2,500,000 FOR STAFF AT THE DIVISION OF COAL MINE WORKERS," RAHALL STATED.

CONGRESSMAN RAHALL POINTED OUT, "AT THE PRESENT TIME, THE AVERAGE PROCESSING TIME FOR A BLACK LUNG CLAIM IS 630 DAYS. A MINER COULD DIE IN THE TIME IT TAKES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TO HANDLE HIS CASE."

"THERE IS DOUBT ABOUT IT, THAT MORE STAFF IS NEEDED TO MOVE THE CASES ALONG, AND TO DO AWAY WITH THE BACKLOG OF ALMOST 50,000 CASES," RAHALL OBSERVED.

THE ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR WERE APPROVED BY THE HOUSE-SENATE CONFEREES ON THE LABOR-HEW APPROPRIATIONS BILL. THE MEASURE NOW GOES TO THE HOUSE AND SENATE FOR FINAL APPROVAL BEFORE GOING TO THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS SIGNATURE.

CONGRESSMAN RAHALL POINTED OUT, "THE NEW 100 STAFF MEMBERS, PLUS A NEW PROCESSING OPERATION AT THE LABOR DEPARTMENT, SHOULD CUT THE TIME IT TAKES TO REVIEW A BLACK LUNG CASE TO 90 DAYS. THIS IS A MUCH MORE ACCEPTABLE TIME FRAME TO WORK WITHIN."

"WITH A QUICKER PROCESSING OPERATION, NOW ALL THAT IS LEFT IS THE PASSAGE OF THE BLACK LUNG REFORM ACT OF 1977," RAHALL SAID, "WHICH WILL MEAN A MORE SOUND COMPENSATION POLICY FOR OUR NATION'S MINERS."

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