

News  
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CONGRESSMAN

# Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 6, 1977

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Washington D.C. --- U.S. Representative Nick J. Rahall (D-4th), today said that he is upset with the way Congress has handled the Black Lung legislation so far this year.

"I am shocked that some of my colleagues would let this very important legislative matter gather dust for almost two months," Rahall stated, "and I can't keep telling constituents who have toiled for years in the mines that help is still many months away."

Rahall pointed out that, "The Education and Labor Committee passed the Black Lung Reform Act of 1977 on March 31, and the House Rules Committee has yet to even set a date for consideration by the full House."

Congressman Rahall explained that the Rules Committee serves the role as gate-keeper for all legislation. "The Rules Committee is suppose to see to it that the legislative process flows smoothly, but at the present time the only role the Committee is serving, is one of a Road-Block."

"The Black Lung Act will set up the criteria for benefit payments to those Americans who suffer from black lung disease," Rahall observed, "but the longer it takes Congress to act, the more victims will suffer."

Congressman Rahall did say that he was pleased with Sen. Randolph's (D-WV) commitment to see the U.S. Senate act on the Black Lung bill quickly, however Rahall believes that the House must take the first step towards seeing the legislation passed.

"In the 94th Congress," Rahall said, "the House approved a black lung measure only to see the Senate not take action. This year I feel the House of Representatives has dropped the ball."

Rahall went on to say, "When I took office, I said I wanted to see a Black Lung bill passed as soon as possible to help those black lung victims in my Congressional district, and I will do all I can still to see this very worthwhile measure approved."

Congressman Rahall has already been given time to testify on the importance of the Black Lung Reform Act, when the Rules Committee considers the measure, however Rahall said, no date has yet been set for the hearing.