

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

For Immediate Release
January 27, 1977

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WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

Washington D.C. --- U.S. Representative Nick Rahall (D-4th), today held a meeting in the nation's capital of federal, state and local agencies and organizations concerned with the health and safety of miners.

Congressman Rahall stated that the session's purpose was, "to discuss the problems in the current Black Lung law and to make recommendations on the proposed Black Lung Reform Act of 1977."

Organizations and agencies represented at the meeting were, the Black Lung Division of the Social Security Administration, Department of Labor Black Lung Division, Black Lung Review Board, West Virginia Black Lung Association, Regional Black Lung Association, United Mine Workers of America, Black Lung Associations from Kentucky, Ohio and Virginia; and staff members of Congressmen interested in black lung.

"For a nation reputed to be kind and compassionate, I believe we all should go much further than we have in meeting the needs of the miners who have given so much of themselves in their life of work," the Raleigh County Democrat said to the group.

"In talking with my colleagues," Rahall went on to say, "I am convinced that the problems encountered by my constituents are similar to the many difficulties faced by others who live and work in coal mining states."

"The fact that we are relying on coal more and more as a way to help meet our domestic energy needs," Rahall stated, "serves to highlight the health problems of those who extract it from the Earth."

Congressman Rahall also addressed the problem of processing black lung claims. "The Labor Department's process for reviewing black lung claims is grossly inefficient. The Department's own statistics show that 51,200 black lung claims that date back to 1973, have not yet been reviewed."

Rahall pointed out that on Jan. 17, 1977, he introduced a resolution in Congress to provide for additional hearing officers to review and process black lung claims. The measure has been referred to the House Committee on Education and Labor.

"It was a very useful session," Rahall said. "I intend to discuss these

concerns and other problems of my constituents when I return home this weekend."
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