

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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RAHALL CALLS FOR FASTER PROCESSING OF SOCIAL SECURITY CLAIMS

WASHINGTON D.C. --- "WEST VIRGINIANS WHO HAVE PAID INTO SOCIAL SECURITY WITH EACH PAYCHECK, DESERVE TO HAVE THEIR CLAIMS PROCESSED IN A TIMELY MANNER," STRESSED FOURTH DISTRICT CONGRESSMAN NICK J. RAHALL, WHO HAS ANNOUNCED HIS SUPPORT FOR A BILL TO MANDATE TIME LIMITS ON THE PROCESSING OF SOCIAL SECURITY CLAIMS.

"PAST EFFORTS TO SPEED UP PROCESSING OF SOCIAL SECURITY HEARINGS AND APPEALS HAVE NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL," RAHALL POINTED OUT, "THEREFORE THE TIME HAS COME TO SET LIMITS ON THE PROCESSING OF CLAIMS, JUST AS WITH OTHER BENEFIT PROGRAMS."

CONGRESSMAN RAHALL HAS JOINED HIS COLLEAGUE, REP. JOHN SEIBERLING, (D-OHIO), IN SPONSORING HR 4775, WHICH WOULD REQUIRE INITIAL AND RECONSIDERATION DECISIONS TO BE MADE WITHIN 90 DAYS, AND HEARINGS AND APPEALS DECISIONS TO BE MADE WITHIN 120 DAYS.

"ACCORDING TO RECENT SURVEYS," RAHALL OBSERVED, "THE NUMBER OF APPEALED SOCIAL SECURITY DECISIONS PENDING FOR HEARINGS IS AT AN ALL TIME HIGH, 128,551."

"NATIONWIDE," RAHALL SAID, "THE AVERAGE PROCESSING TIME FOR HEARINGS IS 168 DAYS WHICH IS TOTALLY UNCALLED FOR."

HR 4775, WOULD ALSO PROVIDE EMERGENCY SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS TO AN INDIVIDUAL, BASED ON HIS OR HER EARNINGS, IF A DECISION ON AN APPEALED CLAIM IS NOT REACHED WITHIN 120 DAYS.

"THE FRUSTRATION I HEAR FROM PEOPLE IN SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA IS UNDERSTANDABLE WITH REGARD TO THEIR CLAIMS. IT IS AN UNJUST PRACTICE AND I PLAN TO WORK DILIGENTLY FOR THE PASSAGE OF THIS MEASURE," CONGRESSMAN RAHALL STATED.