

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 13, 1980

CONTACT: Michael Serpe
202-225-3452

Williamson, WV --- In testimony before a House Education and Labor Committee field hearing, West Virginia's Fourth District Congressman Nick J. Rahall said, "Miners are being penalized for something that is beyond their control, with regards to the off-set of black lung benefits by social security disability payments."

Congressman Rahall's statement came in the hearing chaired by Congressman Carl D. Perkins, (D-KY), at the Williamson Memorial Fieldhouse. Also attending the hearing was Congressman Musto, (D-PA).

Congressman Rahall, in expressing support for legislation he and Cong. Perkins introduced, stated, "This measure to rectify the off-set problem is necessary because miners who deserve both their social security disability compensation and black lung benefits, are in most cases being disallowed their black lung."

"The 1977 Black Lung Reform Act was a good law," Congressman Rahall stated, "but we see from time to time the need to improve it further, and this is one of those situations."

The problem is that miners under the age of 62, who have qualified for social security disability, and are also eligible to receive black lung from the Department of Labor. Since they would receive payment from both Labor and Social Security, their benefits are off-set by social security.

"These are administrative problems between two agencies," Rahall observed, "and as is often the case, Congress must step in to reaffirm the Congressional intent of the law. That is what we are doing with this legislation."