

RAHALL *Report*

DRUNK DRIVING

by Congressman Nick Rahall

Would you be shocked to learn that--

- * one quarter of a million Americans lost their lives in alcohol related auto crashes over the past decade;
- * nearly 26,000 citizens are killed in drunk driving incidents yearly;
- * almost 70 Americans are killed every day in drunk driving incidents;
- * one American life is lost every 21 minutes in alcohol-related crashes;
- * drunk driving is the nation's #1 highway traffic safety problem.

As weather conditions become worse during this time of the year, it is even more important for everyone to realize the threat created by drinking drivers.

On the National front, I have been working with a number of my colleagues to deal with this tragic problem. We are convinced that much of the pain and suffering inflicted on innocent Americans families by drinking drivers is needless and preventable. In a country as great as ours, with our wealth of resources and talent, there is no sane reason to let this carnage continue. Drinking drivers can be removed from the highways. Death and destruction can be substantially reduced.

Earlier this year, legislation was introduced to encourage the states to confront their basic responsibilities for law enforcement and rehabilitation in the area of drunk driving. This bill does not create any new federal programs, or authorize the expenditure of additional federal funds. But it would require the states to take action, or risk the loss of federal highway safety funds which they presently receive.

As the Holiday Season approaches, our concern for safe driving conditions intensifies. It is my hope, as I am sure it is your's, that this be a safe time for travel and that no southern West Virginia family need to be hurt by tragedy.