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RAHALL SAYS DISABILITY LEGISLATION NEEDED

Washington D.C. --- "The Social Security Administration has terminated the disability benefits of countless West Virginians and Americans whose medical condition has not improved, and such a practice must stop," stressed West Virginia's Fourth District Congressman Nick J. Rahall.

Rahall's comments came during consideration of HR 3755, the Social Security Disability Reform Act of 1984, by the U.S. House of Representatives.

Congressman Rahall, a cosponsor of HR 3755, observed, "Back in 1980, Congress enacted legislation requiring that disability cases be reviewed at least once every three years. However, it was not anticipated that the procedure used would be as unfair and impersonal as the program we see today."

"Therefore, it is time for some fairness and good old common sense in the disability review process," Rahall stated.

In his statement, Congressman Rahall touched upon figures showing the need for more careful review of Social Security Disability cases:

"During FY 83, Social Security completed 436,498 disability investigations; and benefits were terminated in 182,074 (42%) of those cases. Yet, 61% of the terminations were reversed at the Administrative Law Judge level. This clearly indicates that disability cases are being terminated based on faulty evidence," Congressman Rahall said.

"During the numerous meetings I have had with constituents, who have been hurt by the current disability termination program, I have seen the agony, stress and pain they have gone through," Rahall pointed out.

"The provisions of HR 3755 will: direct the establishment of statutory standards on medical improvement; allows the continued payment of benefits during the appeal process; takes into account all of the individuals disabilities; and allows for face-to-face interviews," Congressman Rahall concluded.