

TAPE FOR WEEK OF MARCH 11

THIS IS YOUR CONGRESSMAN NICK RAHALL.

A RECENT GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE REPORT INDICATED THAT IT WOULD TAKE THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR 9 YEARS TO REDUCE THE EXISTING BACKLOG OF BLACK LUNG CASES AT THE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES, AND 6 YEARS AT THE BENEFITS REVIEW BOARD.

I DO NOT FEEL THAT THIS IS ACCEPTABLE. FOR THIS REASON, I RECENTLY COSPONSORED LEGISLATION WHICH WILL DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF LABOR TO REDUCE THE TIME NEEDED TO ELIMINATE THE BACKLOG TO TWO YEARS. THE BILL SUGGESTS THAT THE SECRETARY EITHER HIRE ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES OR CONTRACT WITH ADDITIONAL RETIRED A.L.J.'S.

BY BEEFING UP THE A.L.J. FORCE, WE CAN BEGIN TO DIG INTO THE MONUMENTAL MOUNTAIN OF PAPERWORK AND START REACHING THE SETTLEMENT STAGE ON THESE CASES. SO MANY PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN AFFLICTED WITH BLACK LUNG ARE COUNTING ON THESE BENEFITS TO HELP MEET THEIR MEDICAL EXPENSES AND IT IS THE OBLIGATION OF THE GOVERNMENT TO DO ALL WE CAN TO HELP THEM. I PLEDGE MY FULL SUPPORT IN THIS EFFORT.

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