

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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RAHALL SAYS CONTINUING RESOLUTION TO AID WEST VIRGINIA

WASHINGTON - U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) said today that the Continuing Resolution passed late last night by the House of Representatives will aid many programs and the people of West Virginia.

Included in the bill is aid for displaced workers, language to allow for a new Sixth Street Bridge in Huntington and construction at the Raleigh County Airport, the continuation of Amtrak through West Virginia, funds for the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Economic Development Administration, a clinical addition to the Huntington Veterans Administration Medical Center, and money to help education and the handicapped.

Rahall spoke in favor of an amendment to the resolution that reallocates unspent Title III formula funds of the Job Partnership Training Act.

"While many states currently do not utilize their entire allotment of funds, certain states such as my home state of West Virginia are in desperate need of additional funding," Rahall said from the House floor. "The rate of unemployment in my Congressional District in the southern part off the State is close to 14%! The dislocated workers of West Virginia are in dire need of Title III retraining funds and it is only common sense to spread unspent funds to those states which are in such desperate need of assistance."

The bill also contains funding for Trade Adjustment Assistance. The program provides funds to help workers who have lost their jobs as a result of imports. Many West Virginia coal miners have used the program.

The bill also contains language directing the Secretary of the Department of Transportation to give priority consideration to the replacement of Huntington's Sixth Street Bridge and an application by the Raleigh County Airport for construction funds. Rahall has been actively pursuing funds to replace the bridge which has the lowest safety rating of any span in West Virginia.

"With the passage of this bill, funds are available for a new Huntington bridge," Rahall said. "It is now up to the state administration to submit the necessary plans and applications so the U.S. Department of Transportation can consider the forms and approve the funding of the project. Urgency is important. We do not want to have another Silver Bridge tragedy when expedience can keep such from occuring. The D.O.T. also will consider an application for a multi-year project to construct a taxiway parallel to the existing runway at the Raleigh County airport. This will not only provide greater safety at the Beckley airport, but will also allow for further expansion of air service which will hopefully increase tourism and business ventures in the region."

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Rahall adds that the measure provides funding to keep "the Cardinal," Amtrak's train that runs through Southern West Virginia from White Sulphur Springs through Beckley and Huntington on to points west, in operation.

Two programs of extreme importance to West Virginia, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the Urban Development Action Grant Program (UDAG) have been given new life through the legislation.

"Many communities rely on the ARC and UDAG," Rahall commented. "Right now, the city of Huntington has applied for a UDAG for its Super Block project located along the river, and many communities receive funds from the ARC for road, water and sewage projects."

Speaking on the expansion project at the Huntington VAMC, Rahall said the area's Veterans are deserving of adequate health care near their homes.

"I have testified before two committees on the importance of the Huntington VAMC to Southern West Virginia, Eastern Kentucky and Southern Ohio," Rahall said. "The 144,000 veterans served each year at that facility have served their country when called upon. It is only fair that the country now serves these veterans when they call on us. Expanded services in Huntington will allow many who previously traveled to Chillicothe, Ohio and Salem, Virginia, to remain close to families and friends while undergoing treatment for various conditions."

A strong supporter of education, Rahall said the bill includes money for head start programs, the handicapped, and college students.

"It is vital that we provide for the education of our youth from the earliest possible moment," Rahall said. "We have many bright minds which are yearning to be fine tuned in college, but many cannot afford the opportunity. Pell Grants will help these students. Furthermore, we have many people, who because of their physical incapacities, are unable to obtain an adequate education. We have included in this measure funding to help the handicapped."

Rahall also said included in the package is funding to various water works, including the Tug Fork/Levisa flood control project in Mingo County and construction of new locks at the Gallipolis Locks and Dam on the Ohio River, which will greatly aid the movement of traffic on the Ohio River. The Congressman recently attended groundbreaking ceremonies for the new locks and dam.

The resolution, which passed the House 248-170 now goes to the Senate for consideration.