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CONTACT: JERRY BURKOT
202-225-3452

RAHALL SAYS AIRLINE BILL PASSED BY HOUSE WILL HELP TRAVELERS

WASHINGTON - U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) says the passage of the Airline Passenger Protection Act of 1987 is a bill designed to help and protect those using the nations airways. The bill contained some provisions which were originally part of Rahall's legislation cracking down on the airlines.

"It is high time that we in Congress pass legislation to protect airline passengers from chronic overbooking, excessive delays, and chronic flight cancellations and missed connections that have become the norm in the industry today," Rahall said. "I feel that the legislation we have before us today will go a long way toward ensuring that the industry becomes more responsive to the needs and concerns of the traveling public and that service, and therefore safety, improves."

H.R. 3051 requires the Secretary of Transportation to publish a monthly report on airline performance that would include information about on-time performance, lost and damaged baggage, cancelled flights, over-booking, missed connections at hub airports and consumer complaints. The bill also requires two provisions similar to legislation introduced by Rahall.

"The bill directs DOT to establish maximum takeoff and landing limits at major airports and prohibits the cancellation of flights for economic reasons," Rahall commented. "Those two provisions were in my legislation, H.R. 1701 and they will hopefully help cut down on the massive delays caused by unrealistic scheduling by the airlines and the cancellation of flights strictly for monetary reasons."

Rahall said H.R. 3051 contains a provision requiring DOT to impose labor protection in the case of airline mergers which have an adverse impact on employees.

"These labor protection provisions are needed to insure the fair treatment of the industry's workers, who, through no fault of their own, have been subject to the unstability of the industry," Rahall said.

The measure now goes to the Senate for consideration.