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CONGRESSMAN


Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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RAHALL GOES AFTER AIRLINE DELAYS

Washington, D.C. -- Citing a 25% increase in flight delays last year and growing chaos in our airports, U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) today announced he will introduce legislation to restore some order to airline scheduling.

"I and so many of my fellow citizens are fed up with the airlines," Rep. Rahall observed. "Their haphazard flight scheduling has resulted in never-ending delays, appointments missed, opportunities lost, time wasted and blood pressures reaching new and dangerous levels."

"Flight delays increased by 25% in 1986, resulting in an average of 1,144 flights each day being delayed by more than fifteen minutes," Rahall added.

Rahall's legislation would prohibit air carriers from scheduling flights to leave the same airport at the same time. The Secretary of Transportation would be directed to determine whether the scheduling practices of airlines at major hub airports are such that one or more flights are not likely to depart on time. The Secretary would also be authorized to investigate any airport at their discretion.

"In addition, my bill stipulates that if an airline cancels a flight for any reason other than weather or safety, that airline would have to refund the purchase price of the ticket to all passengers and also provide them with a free ticket on the next available flight to the same destination," Rep. Rahall pointed out. "No more flights cancelled due to lack of a full plane."

Rahall likened the situation in airports to chaos. "In any major airport we are confronted with hundreds of irate passengers engaged in verbal combat with overwhelmed ticket agents, passengers running around like chickens with their heads cut off trying to make a connection, and, of course, the customary, arbitrary cancellation of flights for weather or equipment problems -- the standard euphemism for a flight that is not booked to the satisfaction of the airline," Rahall commented. "My bill will put an end to all that. I, like so many others, have been on flights that have been cancelled due to weather problems when it is eighty degrees and sunny at both the departure and destination points."

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