

News

From _____

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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RAHALL BLASTS REAGAN BUDGET AS A "DISASTER" FOR WEST VIRGINIA

Washington, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) today characterized the President's proposed budget as a "disaster" for West Virginia and called for changes to re-establish the American people as this nation's number-one budget priority.

"While the trillion-dollar figure reached by this budget may be a first, the President's budget proposals and priorities are as old and worn out as some of his movies," Rahall said. "This is another in a long line of Reagan re-runs. It proposes no new taxes and seeks broad and deep reductions in domestic programs, from school lunches to medical care for the aged, and increases in spending for defense and foreign aid."

"The President has taken particular aim on our students," Rahall pointed out. "Once again, he is seeking deep cuts in the various student loan and assistance programs, cutting the heart out of programs that are designed to promote our best hope for the future -- our youth." The budget also calls for the elimination of the vocational education program.

"Nor has the coal industry been spared," Rahall observed. "Once again, the Administration is planning an assault on the black lung program through another attempt to impose a 50% increase in the black lung excise tax paid by coal producers despite the fact that Congress passed only a 10% increase last year." There is also the possibility of black lung benefits being taxed for the first time.

Also targeted for deep cuts are many programs vital to West Virginia such as the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Economic Development Administration, Urban Development Action Grants (UDAGs), many housing programs, as well as the Community Services Block Grant which many West Virginia Communities rely upon.

"Overall, I feel that enactment of this budget as it stands would be a disaster for us in West Virginia," Rahall stated. "While I will not declare this proposal dead-on-arrival, I will say that its vital signs are very, very weak, and only major reconstructive surgery can save this plan."

The 100th Congress convenes this day and will formally receive the President's budget proposal.

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