

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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RAHALL'S MINING EDUCATION BILL PASSES HOUSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The U.S. House of Representatives today passed legislation introduced by U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) that would reauthorize the Mining and Mineral Resources Research Institute Act for an additional four years. The current authorization for this program expires at the end of the year.

Under this Act, Mineral Institute programs located at public institutions of higher learning such as West Virginia University receive federal grants to support graduate student research programs in the mining and minerals fields. The legislation also provides federal assistance to a number of mineral technology centers such as the Generic Mineral Technology Center on Respirable Dust which conducts research into methods of mitigating black lung disease. West Virginia University is one of the lead institutions in this center.

"When we speak of international competitiveness, we often fail to emphasize the fundamental importance the education of our young plays in this arena. We have set many goals for ourselves in this country, from a manned lunar landing to giant strides in organ transplants and genetics, but without a body of trained professionals these feats could not have been accomplished," Rahall said on the House Floor. "The same applies to our current concerns in the areas of mineral resource competitiveness and dependency."

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In arguing for his bill, Rahall stated: "Will we be able to develop new technologies to reduce our dependency on mineral imports from politically unstable countries? Will we continue to make advancements in more safe and efficient mining techniques? Or, will this Nation be reduced to relying on an army of mercenaries educated and trained in foreign lands to fight these battles for us.

"I would submit that the answer lies in the strength of our national commitment to education. This is the basis for the Mineral Institute program."

The legislation, which was recently approved by Rahall's Mining Subcommittee, passed the House by voice vote.