

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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RAHALL CO-SPONSOR OF ETHICS LEGISLATION

Huntington, W.Va. - U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) has thrown his support behind legislation that will keep former Members of Congress and Senior Staff from lobbying their former committees or Congressman for a specified period of time.

The Ethics in Congress Act of 1988 would prohibit former Members and senior staff from personally lobbying current staff on issues within the jurisdiction of committees on which the former Member served or the staff person was employed. The prohibition would last for two years immediately following Congressional service.

The bill responds to the need for enhancing the public view of Congress all while preserving the Members' right to information. Rahall said the legislation is one designed to prevent abuse, not necessarily the result of influence peddling.

"There is a potential for unethical conduct in instances where former Members of Congress or senior staff had a substantial personal involvement in an issue and has the ability to influence legislation where there is a lack of accountability," Rahall said. "These two groups would unfairly have access to key people who make decisions and therefore be at an advantage to someone who did not have similar access."

The House bill differs from the Senate passed legislation in several ways. The measure Rahall supports does not restrict persons from retaining former members to represent them before the Federal Government or Congress; nor does it restrict a former member from pursuing political causes. What the bill does is set guidelines that are similar to those applying to executive branch workers.

"In short terms, this could keep Congress from having a Michael Deaver situation on its hands," Rahall commented.

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