

CONGRESSMAN

News
From _____

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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RAHALL SAYS FUNDS FOR BECKLEY VA APPROVED

WASHINGTON - U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) announced today that funding for improvements at the Beckley Veterans Administration Medical Center was included in H.R. 4800, the HUD-Independent Agencies appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 1989. Also included are funds for housing programs, the Community Development Block Grant program, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Veterans Administration.

"I am very happy to support this bill because it appropriates a total of \$28.2 billion in FY89 for the Veterans Administration," Rahall said. "A total of \$15.7 million of the funding for Major Construction Projects will be used for clinical improvements at the Beckley Area VA Medical Center in my hometown of Beckley. There are 57,000 veterans from eleven counties in W.Va. and one in Virginia with potential access to the Beckley VAMC. Money for clinical additions and alterations provided by the bill would create essential extra space to accommodate an increasing staff serving an ever-growing number of patients."

H.R. 4800 appropriates \$9.9 billion for housing programs, including \$7.4 billion for housing assistance and \$1.6 billion for public housing operating subsidies. "Once again the Appropriations Committee has wisely rejected the Reagan Administration's attempt to provide almost all low-income housing assistance in the form of five year voucher contracts," Rahall said. "This bill continues the present mix consisting of the voucher program, Section 8 rental subsidies, rehabilitation of rental housing and reconstruction or development of public housing."

The bill provides \$1.5 billion for 9,500 rental units for the elderly and handicapped and \$65 million for grants to renovate or convert buildings for use as emergency homeless shelters and to pay for certain operating and social services at such shelters.

Also included in H.R. 4800 is a program of immense assistance to West Virginia, the Community Development Block Grant Program for which \$3 billion is contained in the measure.

The bill also funds the Environmental Protection Agency at \$5.2 billion for FY89. Rahall pointed out that many West Virginia communities depend on EPA funds to develop sewage facilities.

"Of great importance to West Virginians is the \$2 billion contained in the bill for construction grants to municipal, state and interstate agencies to assist with planning, design, and construction of wastewater treatment facilities," Rahall said. "Many of our communities are struggling to comply with the secondary sewage treatment standards mandated by the Clean Water Act. The funding provided for the sewer grants program is critical for these and other communities throughout the country which simply do not have the resources to meet the sewage treatment requirements on their own."