

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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RAHALL PRAISES VETERANS, SAYS VA CABINET POSITION LONG OVERDUE

Barboursville, W.Va. - In an address to the Mid-Winter Conference of the West Virginia Veterans of Foreign Wars, U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) praised West Virginia's veterans and applauded the new status of the Veterans Administration to Cabinet-level status. Rahall told delegates from throughout West Virginia that the American Veteran is to be honored for his work on behalf of his country, and it is now the country's turn to serve the veteran.

"We cannot forget our Veterans. You guarded America when called, and now it is America's time to help you in times of need," Rahall said. "It is only adequate that we, the American people, provide the best possible treatment and care for our Veterans."

Rahall also spoke to the conference about the elevation of the Veterans Administration to a Cabinet-level position. "I am proud to have been a strong supporter in Congress of legislation creating a Cabinet position for the Veterans Administration," Rahall stated. "Across this nation there are more than 27 million veterans and 47 million survivors and dependents who are eligible to receive services and compensation from the Veterans Administration. If you add those two groups together, you have nearly one-third of the American population. Effective in March of this year, the VA will become the 14th Cabinet level department in the United States government."

Rahall also spoke about the expansion projects at the Beckley and Huntington Veterans Administration Medical Centers and several provisions in former President Reagan's 1990 budget proposal. "Projects are currently underway at both the Huntington and Beckley VAMC's which will enable our veterans to receive better health care. Those two facilities serve more than 200,000 veterans throughout Southern West Virginia, Southwestern Virginia, Eastern Kentucky and Southeastern Ohio."

Rahall concluded his speech by informing the veterans of legislation that passed the Congress in 1988. He said the most important bill other than the one creating the Department of Veterans Affairs, was the judicial review bill.

"This bill created a federal court to handle appeals cases brought by veterans who think they have been unfairly denied government benefits. It also removes the board of Veterans' Appeals and replaces it with a Court of Veterans Appeals which will have exclusive jurisdiction over the consideration of factual, legal and constitutional questions on claims for benefits," Rahall said.

Saturday night, Rahall spoke to a gathering of the West Virginia American Legion in Beckley.