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From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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BUSH BUDGET BOUND TO BE BETTER, RAHALL BELIEVES

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Upon receipt of President Reagan's final budget, U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) could only look to a George Bush Administration with hope and guarded optimism.

Reagan's final budget, sent to Congress today, heavily targets many programs vital to West Virginia. "From his first days in office to his last, Ronald Reagan has sought to slash and eliminate programs that have been so instrumental in building and strengthening the heart of America, particularly in the Appalachian region," Rahall said. "When it comes to his ill-fated attempts to balance the budget, he has always looked first at the working men and women of this nation to make the sacrifices while the huge corporations have gotten bigger and bigger while shouldering less and less of the burden."

Rahall lamented the President's repeated (and failed) attempts at budget-cutting over the last eight years, including today's budget proposal. "Once again, the President is proposing to eliminate the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Economic Development Administration, Amtrak, Urban Development Action Grants, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Community Service Block Grants, and Essential Air Service, which is crucial to our airports in Beckley and Bluefield," Rahall said.

Also targeted for substantial reductions are Medicare and Medicaid, mass transit programs, low income energy assistance, aid for institutional development (Title III), guaranteed student loans, and other educational programs as well. "These are all vital programs to West Virginia," Rahall noted. "For example, the cuts in the Title III educational program will mean a substantial reduction in a program which goes to support historically black colleges, such as Bluefield College and West Virginia State."

Rahall expressed his cautious optimism for President-elect Bush's budget priorities. "Hopefully, with George Bush pledging to be the 'education president' we will be successful in restoring some of these cuts in educational programs," Rahall added. "We must remember that Reagan's budget is not much more than a farewell statement of his priorities. The key will be to see what George Bush's priorities are and how they will affect us in West Virginia. It can't get any worse."

"I would be remiss if I failed to point out that, once again, this president, who campaigned on a pledge to balance the budget, has submitted a budget with a huge deficit," Rahall said. "Right up to the end, Ronald Reagan maintained his reputation as the Babe Ruth of budget deficits."

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