

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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B-2 "BATMOBILES" OUGHT TO FLY BEFORE WE BUY RAHALL WARNS

WASHINGTON, DC -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) today announced his opposition to most of the funding in the Department of Defense Authorization bill which will be brought to the House floor within the next week. A major objection of Rahall's to the bill is continued funding for the B-2, or stealth bomber.

"I am going to support an amendment to put an end to the production of additional B-2 aircraft beyond those currently funded. I am implementing a 'fly before you buy' policy. Batmobiles are fine for the movies, but if they can not perform in the real world, they sure do not deserve to be purchased with real tax dollars." Rahall said.

Early this year, Rahall signed onto a proposal demanding that the Department of Defense declassify and disclose basic information about the B-2 bomber. The Air Force released a minimum of information just two days before a Committee markup. "All we learned is that \$23 billion has been spent on the B-2 bomber, but until yesterday it never had done more than taxi to the end of the runway. What the Air Force did not comment on, because it is still 'classified' information, is the schedule for full operation.

"Now we hear that it has actually flown for two hours somewhere over the California desert. Two hours of flight for \$23 billion. What does that prove? Statistics strongly suggest that if we leave it on the spending track, it will overspend by \$125 billion over the next 10 years. Each stealth bomber already costs \$600 million -- over a half billion dollars apiece. When DOD comes to the floor next week, I intend to support Section 111 language that will fence procurement funds for the B-2 until the Secretary of Defense can provide an unclassified report on the cost and schedule of the B-2.

"When I think of the billions of dollars already spent, and those contemplated to be spent on this aircraft alone - an aircraft that is a very risky technological challenge to begin with -- and when I think of all the domestic programs, in themselves important to our nation's strength and defense, that will have to be deferred in order to pay for it -- I can only conclude that the B-2 is obviously not a program that is fiscally warranted," Rahall said.

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