

U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 13, 1990

CONTACT: STEVE SPINA

Phone: (202) 225-3452

RAHALL SEEKS END TO TEACHERS' LABOR DISPUTE

WASHINGTON, D.C.— U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) today offered a three point plan that would end the teachers strike that has been raging in increased intensity over the last week.

"I have spoken with several teachers over the weekend and today, and the feeling that I get is that they are uncomfortable in their role as strikers," said Rahall. "They have never engaged in more than one-day symbolic walk-out, and I truly believe that they would rather be in the classroom where their obligation is to teach."

Rahall added that he has contacted the Governor, Kayetta Meadows, president of the West Virginia Education Association (WVEA), and Robert Brown, President of the West Virginia Chapter of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). He has proposed a three point plan to settle the strike.

"First, we have to set up a teachers committee. Each county should pick one representative to represent them. Secondly, the Governor should sit down with this committee without imposing any pre-set conditions on the teachers. It should be an old fashioned "roll up your sleeves" meeting, no one at any advantage over the other. Third, the remaining teachers who are not involved in the negotiations should return to the classrooms as a sign of good faith," said Rahall.

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"It behooves both the Governor and the teacher representatives to negotiate in good faith so that we can resolve this dispute quickly and quietly," said Rahall. "What matters most is the best interests of our children. We must always think about their welfare first, last, and always."

RAHALL POSITION ON TEACHER STRIKE, WEST VIRGINIA

"I HAVE SPOKEN WITH NUMEROUS TEACHERS OVER THE WEEKEND AND TODAY. THEY ARE NOT COMFORTABLE IN THE ROLE OF STRIKER, FOR THEY HAVE NEVER DONE MORE THAN A ONE DAY, SYMBOLIC WALK-OUT IN OUR STATE. THEY WANT TO BE IN THE CLASSROOM WHERE THEIR OBLIGATION IS TO TEACH CHILDREN.

"WE HAVE TO LOOK AT THE BEST INTEREST OF OUR CHILDREN, WHICH WE MUST ALWAYS THINK ABOUT, FIRST, LAST AND ALWAYS," SAID RAHALL.

"IT BEHOOVES BOTH THE GOVERNOR OR HIS REPRESENTATIVE AND TEACHER REPRESENTATIVES TO NEGOTIATE IN GOOD FAITH.

"THE TEACHERS SHOULD HAVE THEIR FIVE PERCENT RAISE. IT IS MODEST CONSIDERING WEST VIRGINIA IS 49TH IN THE NATION WITH THE LOWEST TEACHER SALARIES," RAHALL CONTINUED.

"I BELIEVE THAT FIRST THE TEACHERS SHOULD SELECT A COMMITTEE OF TEACHERS, ONE FROM EACH COUNTY IF NECESSARY, TO CONDUCT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GOVERNOR.

"SECOND, THE GOVERNOR SHOULD AGREE TO SIT DOWN WITH THIS COMMITTEE, WITHOUT PRE-SET CONDITIONS BEING IMPOSED ON THE TEACHERS.

"THIRD, THE REMAINDER OF THE TEACHERS NOT SERVING AS NEGOTIATORS SHOULD RETURN TO WORK, AWAITING THE OUTCOME OF THE NEGOTIATIONS."

NICK J. RAHALL II
4TH DISTRICT, WEST VIRGINIA

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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SUBCOMMITTEE:
ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY
AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The Honorable Gaston Caperton, III
Governor
State of West Virginia
State Capitol
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dear Governor Caperton:

I am writing with regard to the current statewide teacher strike in West Virginia.

I have spoken with numerous teachers over the weekend and today. I know that teachers in WV are not comfortable being on strike, and that they feel obligated to be in the classroom teaching our children. I strongly believe teachers deserve a five percent raise.

I believe also that it behooves both the Governor and the Teacher Representatives to get back to the table to negotiate a settlement to this strike as soon as possible, and for both parties to do so in good faith. In order for there to be a good faith effort, however, I strongly believe that both parties must be able to negotiate on a level playing field. To achieve that parity, these are the steps I respectfully, but strongly, recommend:


First, the teachers should select a committee of teacher representatives, one from each county or region if necessary, to negotiate with the Governor.

Second, the Governor should agree to sit down with this Committee, without imposing any pre-set conditions on the teachers.

Third, the remaining teachers (not serving as negotiators) should return to the classrooms immediately, awaiting the outcome of negotiations on their behalf.

With assurances that I stand ready to assist in any way I can, and with warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,


NICK J. RAHALL, II
Member of Congress

NRJ/bk

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Ms. Kayetta Meadows
President
West Virginia Education Association
1558 Quarrier Street
Charleston, West Virginia 25311

Dear Kayetta:

I am writing with regard to the current statewide teacher strike in West Virginia.

I have spoken with numerous teachers over the weekend and today. I know that teachers in WV are not comfortable being on strike, and that they feel obligated to be in the classroom teaching our children. I strongly believe teachers deserve a five percent raise.

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Mr. Robert Brown
President
WV Chapter, American Federation of
Teachers
501 Broad Street
Charleston, West Virginia 25301

Dear Mr. Brown:

I am writing with regard to the current statewide teacher strike in West Virginia.

I have spoken with numerous teachers over the weekend and today. I know that teachers in WV are not comfortable being on strike, and that they feel obligated to be in the classroom teaching our children. I strongly believe teachers deserve a five percent raise.

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