



U.S. Congressman

**Nick Rahall***WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****JULY 20, 1990****CONTACT: STEVE SPINA****PHONE: (202) 225-3452****RAHALL APPOINTED VOC ED CONFeree**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall announced today that he is serving on the House and Senate Conference on the reauthorization of the Vocational Education Act. Rahall noted that the conference has made great headway in clearing the path for further consideration by both houses.

"Under the bill, we have authorized more than a billion dollars for vocational education," Rahall noted. "This is the first time in the 89 year history of this Act that funding has gone over a billion dollars. This acknowledges the fact that all students graduating from high school are not college-bound, as much as we wish that they all were going on to college. If fully funded, West Virginia's vocational education basic grant would rise from \$7.48 million to \$9.01 million. This raises our per capita grant from \$5.96 per student to \$7.18 per student." Rahall said.

For the first time, Vocational Education will be 100 percent Federally funded, with no state matching requirements. "This was done for two reasons," said Rahall. First, it is the states that fund vocational education the most, with 92 percent of all funds. Federal funds represent only about 8 percent. However, we wanted to be able to target where those funds would be spent, and we have focused on disadvantaged students and special populations, such as the disabled and other minority students."

The new Act has been renamed the Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, in recognition of an increasingly high-tech society and the need to educate and train both high school and postsecondary students for jobs requiring not only basic academic skills in reading, math, science and computer technology, but normal every day interpersonal job skills that are not now being taught. "We must begin now," said Rahall, "to prepare both young and older students for the world of work in the 21st Century."

We are attempting to remove the stigma from being a "vocational student" rather than a college bound student, by preparing these young people academically, as well as for occupational skills. For that reason, Rahall said, "we have a provision in the bill that will begin with students in their junior year of high school and take them all the way through 2 years of community college, resulting in their having an Associate Degree in a vocation of their choosing, that has included intensive academic as well as technical training."

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# SUGGESTED PRESS RELEASES

Rep. Nick Rahall announced today that the House and Senate Conference on the reauthorization of the Vocational Education Act neared completion, with only a few technical amendments to be worked out in the next few days.

The conference agreement retains the state councils as they are now constituted, which Rahall noted had been an issue of grave concern at the State and National levels. While the original House bill sought to create a Human Resources Investment Council to coordinate several programs, particularly vocational education and job training partnership programs, the inclusion of the Vocational Rehabilitation councils under that umbrella raised unforeseen concerns. "Going back to current law with regard to state councils was in the best interests of all concerned," Rahall said.

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