



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 12, 1991

CONTACT: STEVE SPINA

PHONE: (202) 225-3452

RAHALL LENDS SUPPORT TO BILL REPEALING SOCIAL SECURITY TEST

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) today announced that he has lent his support to legislation to end age discrimination against senior citizens who continue to work after they reach retirement age.

The bill, "The Older Americans Freedom to Work Act," introduced by Congressman J. Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.), would repeal the Social Security Earnings Test, a Depression-era relic that was designed to discourage older people from remaining in the workforce.

Under earnings test restrictions, seniors over age 65 who make more than \$9,720 per year must forfeit \$1 in Social Security benefits for every \$3 they earn over that limit. A senior making \$10,000 annually, for example, would face an effective marginal tax rate of 56 percent -- nearly twice that of millionaires.

"I am proud to be part of the congressional and national movement to repeal this discriminatory law," said Rahall. "We allow wealthier seniors to supplement their social security with income earned from interest dividends. How can we justify penalizing those who work to supplement their social security?"

"This is a bill that strongly affects West Virginia and how we are changing as a state," said Rahall. Many of today's seniors can no longer get by on Social Security alone. Congress must set public policy that reflects those changes. We should welcome seniors into the workforce, not drive them out."

During the 101st Congress, the "Older Americans Freedom to Work Act" garnered 267 House cosponsors, but never had hearings or floor debate. The bill has 174 House cosponsors and 27 Senate cosponsors so far in the 102nd Congress.

"As the 102nd Congress gets further and further under way, this topic will heat up," said Rahall. "We as a nation should not penalize our older Americans for their hard work, but rather seek to protect them and encourage their growth."

--30--