



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 21, 1991

CONTACT: STEVE SPINA

PHONE: (202) 225-3452

RAHALL ANNOUNCES \$3.7 MILLION FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) today announced that the Department of Justice has awarded a grant of \$3.7 million to West Virginia to fight crime and drugs.

The award, from the Department's Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA) formula grant program, represents a five percent increase, a full \$197,000, over the amount the state received last year.

"We in West Virginia are blessed with one of the lowest crime rates in the country," said Rahall. "Funding like this helps us to keep that way."

For more information, you may contact the West Virginia Criminal Justice and Highway Safety Office in Charleston at (304) 348-8814.

--30--



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1991

BJA
202-307-0703

**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ANNOUNCES \$3.7 MILLION GRANT
FOR WEST VIRGINIA LAW ENFORCEMENT**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Attorney General Dick Thornburgh today announced that the Justice Department has awarded West Virginia more than \$3.5 million to fight crime and drugs.

The award, from the Department's Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA) formula grant program, represents a five percent increase over the amount the state received last year.

"These vital funds represent one of our most effective weapons in protecting neighborhoods from drug trafficking and the violence it spawns," the Attorney General said. "With a \$28 million increase in funding over last year, BJA grants will continue to augment state and local law enforcement agencies' budgets with federal funds, thus allowing us to concentrate our crime fighting efforts where they are needed the most."

The grant was made under the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program, which allows state and local law enforcement agencies the opportunity to draw funds from BJA as needed, much like money is withdrawn from a checking account. Under the program, West Virginia will receive \$3,748,000 a \$197,000 increase over last year.

-MORE-

"This program works well because it gives state and local law enforcement officials the flexibility they need to solve their own unique problems," Thornburgh added. "In meshing the needs of individual communities with the state's overall strategy for combatting drugs, we can target our resources to maximize our effectiveness."

As an important part of the fight against drugs, the program has seen dramatic growth in the Bush Administration. President Bush's first budget requested \$350 million to fund these grants, which was later increased by \$100 million by Congress. Over the last two years, there has been a 218 percent increase in available resources.

In fiscal 1991, the Administration's entire \$490 million request was appropriated by Congress, with \$17 million earmarked for the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) 2000 project. The remaining \$473 million will go toward funding the grants.

The Department, in administering these funds, is encouraging states to incorporate National Drug Control Strategy recommendations into their programs.

West Virginia plans to use its federal funds to support enforcement initiatives such as financial investigations and the development of sophisticated, automated information and record-keeping systems. Other programs the state will support include expedited court management of narcotics cases, marijuana eradica-

tion, and expanded drug testing of prisoners and parolees. Victims of crimes will also be given assistance and training for law enforcement officials and prosecutors will be funded as well.

BJA has received and is currently reviewing grant applications from the states and territories. BJA approved West Virginia's application within seven weeks of receiving it.

The Department of Justice's Asset Forfeiture Fund is another important source of funds for state and local law enforcement agencies in their war against drugs. In fiscal 1990, joint state-local-federal operations and adoptive forfeitures in West Virginia amounted to \$444,000 in cash from the fund.

Nationwide, the program has collected more than \$1.5 billion in the last six years and returned more than \$500 million to the nation's state and local law enforcement agencies.

Additional information about this award is available from the West Virginia Criminal Justice and Highway Safety Office, Charleston, West Virginia, (304) 348-8814.

###