

U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 26, 1992

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RAHALL OPPOSES CONGRESS' RAIL STRIKE PROPOSAL

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) issued the following statement following his vote on the rail strike settlement:

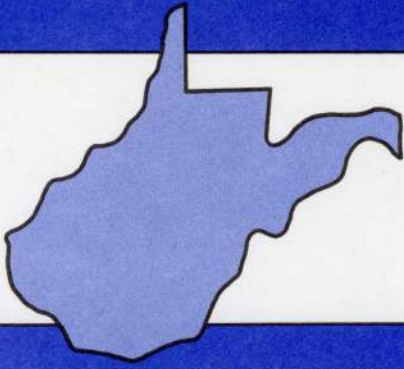
"I did not, and still do not, support immediate intervention by Congress concerning the rail lock-out.

"Management has many resources to fight the good fight, but they should never forget their most precious resource -- the American worker.

"If corporations want to break the backs of our workers by using Congress as a lackey then this is one Member who says 'no'. The railroad workers have been four years without a wage increase, forced to live in camp cars that are filthy and infested, and received very little in per diem payments.

"I supported the cooling-off period but was not satisfied with the binding arbitration requirement. It sets a dangerous precedent and leads railroad management to believe that they can lock out their employees, come to Congress screaming 'national emergency' and expect that we will force strikers back to work."

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~~"Early this morning, I voted against sending the striking railroad workers back to work. My reasoning is based on my fundamental belief that this was a lock-out.~~

"Management has many resources to fight the good fight, but they should never forget their most precious resource -- the American worker.

"If corporations want to break the backs of our workers by using Congress as a lackey then this is one Member who says 'no'./ The railroad workers have been four years without a wage increase, forced to live in camp cars that are filthy and infested, and received no per diem payments. ask Bk little

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CMAW

A majority of Tri-State members of Congress vote to stop rail strike ✓

By KEITH WHITE
Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON — A majority of Tri-State Area members of the Congress voted Thursday night in favor of sending railroaders back to work.

Democratic Sens. Robert C. Byrd and Jay Rockefeller voted for the resolution in the Senate, joining Republican Reps. Clarence Miller and Bob McEwen of Ohio and Jim Bunning of Kentucky, who voted for the bill in the House.

All of the immediate Tri-State Area's Democratic House members — Nick J. Rahall and Bob Wise of West Virginia and Chris Perkins of Kentucky — voted against the bill.

Rahall said he would have supported a "cooling-off" period under which workers would have returned to their jobs, but balked at the binding arbitration requirement.

"It sets a very dangerous precedent and sets the idea in railroad management's head and other industries that they can lock out their employees, come to Congress screaming 'national emergency' and expect that we will then force workers back to work," he said.

"Management can't forget about their most precious resource — the American worker. They've been four years without a wage increase, forced to live in camp cars that are filthy and infested, no per diem payments," Rahall said.

Despite his vote, Rahall said he hopes the binding arbitration will produce an agreement in favor of railroad workers. "It's passed now and you have to be optimistic," he said. "That's the only game now."

Most Tri-State members haven't

been enthusiastic from the start about getting Congress into the railroad dispute, saying they don't believe settlements imposed from outside are good for the collective bargaining process.

"I think you have to let the process work a little bit," Rockefeller said. "I don't think the first instinct always ought to be to intervene because it takes the pressure off them (to negotiate a settlement)."

Wise predicted Congress would try to further negotiations between the railroads and unions rather than impose a settlement as it did the last time railroads were brought to a halt.

"The concern I have is that if indeed a collective bargaining situation exists, then Congress mandating a return weighs in on one side or the other and gives one side or the other a definite incentive not to negotiate," he said.

Back home, reaction to the Congressional edict was in a sense anticlimactic since it was expected.

George Hunter, chairman of Machinists Local 104 and one of six employees manning the 27th Street gate at the Huntington Locomotive Shops, said he was very disappointed.

"We are disappointed that our attempt to earn a decent raise is once again in a cooling-off period," Hunter said just before midnight. "We will serve our company and the economy and go return to work if ordered."

"Why on God's green Earth can't we get this issue settled?" Hunter asked.

Jim Ross and Dana Tones of The Herald-Dispatch contributed to this report. 7-7/ 6/26/92

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If you want
to call Hunter,

523-2469(H)