



U.S. Congressman  
**Nick Rahall**  
*WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MARCH 24, 1992**

**CONTACT: STEVE SPINA**

**PHONE: (202) 225-3452**

**RAHALL TELLS EDUCATORS TO "SEIZE THE DAY"  
-- RURAL EDUCATION FACES UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY --**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) yesterday told the National Association of State School Boards of Education that education in rural America is on the decline but has an unprecedented opportunity to turn that around.

"None of our problems are inevitable. I've read the Bible, and no where does it say anything indicating that it is God's will that there be rural decline," said Rahall.

Speaking at the State Boards' 14th Annual Legislative Conference held in Washington, D.C., Rahall spoke to the Education officials about the crisis going on in rural America's schools: "Rural communities allocate large percentages of their resources for education, but their low tax and enrollment bases limit what they can provide.

"Without adequate funding, rural schools cannot recruit and retain good teachers, offer a broad range of subjects or purchase necessary materials and equipment, especially computers," said Rahall.

Rahall urged the federal government to start opening up some the defense budget for education needs, and offered part of the House Democratic Budget resolution as a solution.

"We can gain access to \$300 billion in defense dollars, removing at least \$50 billion for starters, using 40 percent for deficit reduction and the other 60 percent for a Fiscal Year 1993 investment in America. Using that money create jobs and provide quality education from cradle to grave," said Rahall.

Rep. Rahall also complimented West Virginia State Superintendent, Henry Marockie, who he said has "already begun for West Virginia what the rest of rural America must undertake to do -- use computers to bring new hope to rural schools." Dr. Marockie's program hopes to put a computer in every West Virginia classroom by the end of the century. He has already invested \$70 million in putting at least one computer in every first grade classroom.

--30--





**National Association of State Boards of Education**  
 1012 Cameron Street  
 Alexandria, VA 22314  
 (703) 684-4000  
 FAX (703) 836-2313

- President**  
Patricia E. Hammet  
West Virginia
- Past President**  
A. Walter Eschale  
Connecticut
- President-Elect**  
Caroline Hildsoll  
Kansas
- Vice-President**  
Felicie Velez  
Oregon
- Secretary-Treasurer**  
Marilyn Dabine  
New Jersey
- Northeastern Area Directors**  
Ann S. Dillman  
New Jersey  
  
Lange J. Coan  
Massachusetts
- Southern Area Directors**  
Keith Johnson  
Louisiana  
  
Rene Nunez  
Texas
- Central Area Directors**  
Forest W. Reece, Jr.  
Oklahoma  
  
Susan Noutan  
Ohio
- Western Area Directors**  
Thomas M. Howerton  
Colorado  
  
Keith Checketts  
Utah
- Pacific Islands Area Director**  
Peter Alexis Aala  
Guam

**March 16, 1992**

**Representative Nick Joe Rahall, II**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**2104 Rayburn House Office Building**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3452**

**Dear Congressman Rahall,**

Thank you for accepting our invitation to speak at the National Association of State Boards of Education/Council of Chief State School Officers 14th Annual Joint Legislative Conference on Monday, March 23, 1992 at noon. The conference will be held at the Washington Vista Hotel; the address is 1400 M Street, NW, Washington, DC.

We would like to hear your views on "Prospects for the American Family". As a Representative from a very rural and poor state that is economically depressed, and given the current economy, we would like to hear your views on this topic from your own personal perspective. More often than not, the news focuses on urban plights and ignores rural America. We feel that your presentation will lend some balance.

The lunch will begin at noon, but we suggest that you plan to speak at 12:15. That will give the audience time to get settled and be served. The luncheon will be held in Ballroom A and the East Room and one of our staff will meet you at the entrance to the hotel to escort you in. However, if you prefer to come at noon, we would be delighted to have you join us for lunch.

If you or your staff have any questions about this presentation, please feel free to contact me at (703) 684-4000. I will be calling your office just prior to the event to check with you about any last minute questions you may have.

Again, thank you for agreeing to speak. We look forward to seeing you on March 23rd.

Sincerely,

*Helen K. Fox*  
 Helen K. Fox  
 Associate Director  
 Governmental Affairs

*Copy to H.K.F. & BK  
 3/13/92*

*Now  
 3/23  
 12:00 noon  
 DC*

SPEECH BY  
HONORABLE NICK J. RAHALL, II  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
STATE SCHOOL BOARDS OF EDUCATION  
"PROSPECTS FOR THE  
RURAL AMERICAN FAMILY"

THANK YOU, DR. MAROCKIE, FOR YOUR GENEROUS INTRODUCTION.

BEFORE I BEGIN, JUST LET ME CONGRATULATE DR. MAROCKIE -- INDEED ALL WV TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL, PARENTS AND STUDENTS -- FOR THE GAINS THEY HAVE MADE OVER THE PAST YEAR IN SPITE OF THE RECESSION, DESPITE THE ONE PERCENT CUTBACK IN WV SCHOOL FUNDING.

AT THE START, I THINK WE CAN ALL AGREE THAT AMERICA'S FUTURE IS FORECAST IN THE LIVES OF ITS CHILDREN AND THE ABILITY OF THEIR FAMILIES TO RAISE THEM.

OUR JOB -- EACH OF US IN OUR OWN DIFFERENT AND COLLECTIVE WAYS -- IS TO HELP WHERE WE CAN AND WHERE APPROPRIATE TO HELP THOSE FAMILIES RAISE THOSE CHILDREN -- AND I MEAN THE HEALTHY INTACT FAMILIES AS WELL AS THE BROKEN, FRAGMENTED, NOT-SO-HEALTHY FAMILIES.

IT IS TIME FOR US TO PAUSE AND TO TAKE A LOOK AT OUR IMAGE AS A NATION. WE ARE A NATION THAT IS ON THE ONE HAND SO VERY CAPTIVATED BY YOUTH, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND IS LEAVING ITS YOUNG BEHIND.

THESE DAYS, IN BOTH POPULAR CULTURES AND IN THE ACTIONS OF PROMINENT CITIZENS, THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH POSITIVE MESSAGES OR IMAGES TO GUIDE OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH. THERE IS MUCH GOING ON TODAY THAT UNDERMINES THE VALUES OF HONESTY, HUMAN DIGNITY, AND SERVICE TO OTHERS.

I KNOW THAT THOSE OF YOU HERE TODAY ARE NOT JUST CONCERNED ABOUT THE SCHOOL HOUSE, OR JUST CONCERNED ABOUT THE SCHOOL CAMPUS, OR EVEN JUST CONCERNED ABOUT EDUCATION.

LIKE A LOCAL DOCTOR, YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE WHOLE PATIENT -- YOU HAVE TO DEAL NOT WITH JUST STUDENTS BUT WITH WHOLE FAMILIES AND ENTIRE COMMUNITIES.

BUT THE BOTTOM LINE APPEARS TO BE -- AND WE CAN BE THANKFUL FOR THIS -- THAT ANY TIME WE START TO SET THE TONE FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY, OR INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS, OR NATIONAL SECURITY -- IT ALWAYS HINGES ON ONE WORD:

EDUCATION

I AM GOING TO SPEAK TO YOU TODAY ABOUT RURAL EDUCATION FOR THE MOST PART, BECAUSE IF I TRY TO BRING IN ALL THE RELATED NEEDS IN RURAL AMERICA -- SUCH AS HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY, SUCH AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY, OR SUCH AS ITS UNIQUE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, I WILL BE HERE ALL DAY. AND SO WILL YOU.



FIRST LET US PUT RURAL AMERICA INTO ITS PROPER GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE. OF THE 3,100 COUNTIES IN THE UNITED STATES, 2,400 ARE RURAL COUNTIES. THAT MEANS THAT 77 PERCENT OF THE UNITED STATES IS RURAL.

IN OUR COMMUNITIES, URBAN AND RURAL, WE FIND KIDS STRUGGLING AGAINST SERIOUS DRUG ADDICTION, OR HEAVY PEER PRESSURE TO BECOME USERS. IN OUR COMMUNITIES WE FIND CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE WITH NO PLACE TO CALL HOME. AND WE FIND FRIGHTENED TEENAGERS ON VIOLENT STREETS OF OUR CITIES -- AND NOT JUST LAS VEGAS AND NEW YORK, BUT IN, OF ALL PLACES, KANSAS CITY.

WHY "OF ALL PLACES?"

BECAUSE THERE ARE FEW OF SOCIETY'S PROBLEMS THAT AFFECT ONLY INNER-CITY SCHOOLS, STUDENTS, OR COMMUNITIES. THEY APPLY TO RURAL AMERICA AS WELL.

THE EDUCATIONAL OBSTACLES CREATED BY POVERTY, SCARCE RESOURCES, AND ISOLATION IN RURAL AMERICA ARE ENORMOUS. THEY SIMPLY CANNOT BE ADDRESSED FROM A REGIONAL BASIS ALONE.

RURAL COMMUNITIES ALLOCATE LARGE PERCENTAGES OF THEIR RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION, BUT THEIR LOW TAX AND ENROLLMENT BASES LIMIT WHAT THEY CAN PROVIDE FOR THE STUDENTS.

WITHOUT ADEQUATE FUNDING, RURAL SCHOOLS CANNOT RECRUIT AND RETAIN GOOD TEACHERS, OFFER A BROAD RANGE OF SUBJECTS, OR PURCHASE NECESSARY MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT, ESPECIALLY COMPUTERS.

AND, UNLIKE THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN URBAN AND SUBURBAN AREAS - RURAL SCHOOLS CANNOT CALL UPON THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO SUPPORT THEIR PROGRAMS, OR CALL UPON LOCAL BUSINESSES TO "ADOPT A SCHOOL," A POPULAR CONCEPT AND PRACTICE FOR INNER-CITY SCHOOLS.

RURAL AMERICA, AND ESPECIALLY ITS SCHOOLS, NEEDS QUALITY, HIGH COST ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, SUCH AS ADVANCED MATH AND SCIENCE, AS WELL AS APPROPRIATE VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS. RURAL AMERICA NEEDS APPROPRIATE TRAINING OF TEACHERS FOR RURAL SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS.

*Appropriate  
Education*

MOST OF ALL, RURAL AMERICA NEEDS COST EFFICIENT SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS OF ISOLATION.

TODAY, WITH THE NATION STILL IN RECESSION, AND WITH ALL SCHOOLS HAVING HAD THEIR RESOURCES SEVERELY DIMINISHED, RURAL SCHOOLS ARE BEING ASKED TO PLAY EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT ROLES IN THE RETRAINING AND RE-EDUCATION OF ADULTS DISLOCATED FROM TRADITIONAL FARMING AND INDUSTRIAL OCCUPATIONS.

RURAL FOLKS CAN'T MAKE THE JOB TRANSITION WITHOUT SOME PREPARATION -- AND THIS PREPARATION IS GOING TO REQUIRE NEW AND ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION SPECIFICALLY FOR RURAL SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTIONS.



MOST OF WEST VIRGINIA, IF I MAY BE PAROCHIAL FOR A MOMENT, IS RURAL -- ABOUT 63 PERCENT I BELIEVE. OUR STATE SUPERINTENDENT, HENRY MAROCKIE, HAS ALREADY BEGUN FOR WEST VIRGINIA WHAT THE REST OF RURAL AMERICA MUST UNDER TAKE TO DO -- AND THAT IS TO USE THE AVAILABLE ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGIES THAT OFFER CONSIDERABLE HOPE TO RURAL SCHOOLS. DR. MAROCKIE'S PROGRAM IS THE BASIC SKILLS/COMPUTER PROGRAM WHICH IS INTENDED TO PLACE A COMPUTER AND A TEACHER TRAINED IN ITS USE IN EVERY CLASSROOM IN OUR STATE. HE HAS ALREADY SUCCEEDED, WITH AN INVESTMENT OF \$70 MILLION, IN PUTTING AT LEAST ONE IN EVERY FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM - BUT ITS A 10 YEAR PROGRAM, AND MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE.

BUT SUCH TECHNOLOGIES INCLUDE INSTRUCTION IN ADVANCED MATH AND SCIENCE, AND IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES. AND IN RURAL AMERICA WHERE THERE ARE SHORTAGES OF TEACHERS ANYWAY -- AND PARTICULARLY TEACHERS WITH SPECIALIZED TRAINING -- THESE COMPUTERIZED INSTRUCTION PROGRAMS CAN ALMOST TAKE THE PLACE OF HIGHLY TRAINED TEACHERS. IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH TEACHERS, THEY ARE THE BEST, AND PERHAPS ONLY, SOLUTION THERE IS.

IN 1990, THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REPORTED, AND I QUOTE: "NO COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL SURVEY ON THE CONDITION OF RURAL EDUCATION HAS EVER BEEN UNDERTAKEN. MOREOVER, WHILE THERE ARE A NUMBER OF INFORMATION SOURCES, DATA ON RURAL EDUCATION ARE NOT CONSISTENT."

WELL, THAT IS NO LONGER QUITE TRUE. FIRST OF ALL, THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HAS UNDERTAKEN SUCH A STUDY OF RURAL EDUCATION, AND IT IS WELL UNDERWAY.

MORE RECENTLY, THE CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND HAS PUBLISHED ITS FIRST-EVER IN-DEPTH STUDY OF RURAL AMERICA, ENTITLED: "FALLING BY THE WAYSIDE: CHILDREN IN RURAL AMERICA."

IF YOU HAVEN'T READ IT, GET IT AND READ IT.

THE DEPARTMENTS STUDY WHICH IS UNDERWAY, AND THE C.D.F. STUDY I JUST CITED, ARE IMPORTANT -- BECAUSE THE FOCUS ON EDUCATION REFORM THAT BEGAN IN 1983 WITH THE RELEASE OF "A NATION AT RISK" HAS DONE VERY LITTLE TO EXAMINE THE PROBLEMS FACING RURAL SCHOOLS.

TO STATE THE OBVIOUS: RURAL STUDENTS FACE LONGER COMMUTES, AS DO PARENTS WHO ARE INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES. RURAL STUDENTS ATTEND OLDER, OFTEN DILAPIDATED SCHOOLS IN NEED OF MUCH REPAIR AND RENOVATION. RURAL STUDENTS HAVE LESS ACCESS TO NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATIVE TEACHING METHODS, AND MUCH LESS ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES, AND TO PRE-SCHOOL, EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

IF SCHOOL READINESS IS OUR BATTLE CRY -- AS IT SHOULD BE -- WE HAVE GOT TO DO MORE TO PROVIDE PRE-SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL PRE-SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN. THAT IS A MUST.

AND LEST I FORGET TO MENTION IT -- ONE OUT OF EVERY FOUR CHILDREN IN RURAL AMERICA LIVES BELOW THE POVERTY LINE. MANY OF THESE CHILDREN STILL LIVE IN SUBSTANDARD HOUSING, WITH NO ELECTRICITY IN SOME CASES, AND MORE OFTEN WITHOUT INDOOR PLUMBING.



FINALLY, LET ME EMPHASIZE THE NEED TO IMPROVE THE PRE-COLLEGIATE PREPARATION OF RURAL STUDENTS TO ALLOW THEM TO PURSUE CAREERS, SUCH AS VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE, IN A MANNER SUITED FOR THE 21ST CENTURY.

I HAVE NOW IDENTIFIED MANY OF THE RURAL PROBLEMS -- ESPECIALLY THOSE DEALING WITH EDUCATION. AND YOU ARE WONDERING:

WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE WE DOING ABOUT IT, OR WHAT DO WE PLAN TO DO ABOUT IT?

WELL, FIRST WE HAVE TO ASSURE THAT ATTENTION IS PAID TO SPECIFIC RURAL IMPACT WHEN WE DISCUSS ANY REFORMS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL WHETHER IT IS REFORM OF EDUCATION, REFORM OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES, OR OTHER REFORMS AIMED TO BRING ABOUT ECONOMIC RECOVERY.

IT WILL REQUIRE MASSIVE INVESTMENT OF FUNDS -- OF DOLLARS -- FROM GOVERNMENT, FROM BUSINESS, FROM INDUSTRY.

VERY SIMPLY, IF WE DON'T GET ACCESS TO DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AID FUNDS, ALL BETS ARE OFF. WE HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO SOURCE OF REVENUES WITH WHICH TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR EXISTING PROGRAMS OF GREAT NEED, SUCH AS CHAPTER ONE AND HEAD START AND STUDENT AID, MUCH LESS FOR NEW INITIATIVES OR INNOVATIVE WAYS IN WHICH TO ADDRESS ALL OUR NEEDS.

COMING OUT OF THE DEEPEST RECESSION WE'VE HAD SINCE WORLD WAR II -- STILL DOESN'T ALTER ANY OF THE REASONS FOR OUR HAVING GOTTEN INTO SUCH A RECESSION IN THE FIRST PLACE. ONE OF THOSE REASONS IS THAT FOR TOO MANY YEARS THE UNITED STATES HAS REDUCED ITS INVESTMENT IN AMERICA -- DOWN FROM NEARLY TWO PERCENT OF GNP IN 1958 TO SEVEN TENTHS OF ONE PERCENT TODAY.

AND WE NEED TO GAIN ACCESS TO, AND TO THEN SPEND THOSE FREED-UP DEFENSE DOLLARS IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS -- BUT ESPECIALLY TO SUPPORT FAMILIES -- BY PROVIDING JOBS, FOOD, SHELTER, HEALTH CARE AND YES, EDUCATION FOR EVERY AGE GROUP, EVERY ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL, THROUGHOUT AMERICA.

WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR RURAL AMERICAN FAMILIES?

I DIDN'T BRING MY CRYSTAL BALL WITH ME, BUT RIGHT NOW, AS WE MAKE A VERY SLOW CLIMB OUT OF A VERY DEEP RECESSION -- THE PROSPECTS FOR RURAL AMERICA ARE GOOD, PROVIDED WE KEEP THE DIFFERENCES IN MIND AS WE STRIVE TO BRING ECONOMIC STABILITY BACK TO AMERICA.

STATES, CITIES AND COUNTIES ARE STILL PICKING UP THE TAB AND FILLING THE HOLES LEFT BY DISAPPEARING FEDERAL FUNDING ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF ALL POSSIBLE DOMESTIC PROGRAMS -- TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY HAVE TAXED THEMSELVES TO THE HILT -- AND THEY CAN'T AFFORD TO ADD ANOTHER PENNY TO THE TAX COLUMN BACK HOME.

WELL, WE LEARNED A LONG TIME AGO THAT MONEY DOESN'T GROW ON TREES. WE ARE ALSO LEARNING THAT WE MUST GET DEFICIT SPENDING DOWN. WE CAN DO THAT AND IMPROVE THE PROSPECTS OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY AT THE SAME TIME -- BOTH RURAL AND URBAN -- BY GETTING ACCESS TO \$300 BILLION IN



DEFENSE DOLLARS, REMOVING AT LEAST \$50 BILLION FOR STARTERS, USING 40 PERCENT OF THAT ON DEFICIT REDUCTION, AND THE OTHER 60 PERCENT FOR A FY 1993 NEW BEGINNING -- BEGINNING TO INVEST IN AMERICA -- CREATING JOBS, MAKING EQUAL, QUALITY EDUCATION AVAILABLE FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE, PROVIDING BASIC HEALTH CARE TO ALL, AND JUST PLAIN CARING ABOUT EACH OTHER.

ENOUGH BAD NEWS. ENOUGH DOOM AND GLOOM. ALONGSIDE ALL OUR FAILINGS AND ALL OUR UNPRECEDENTED PROBLEMS, WE ALSO HAVE UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITIES BEFORE US. THE CHALLENGE IS TO MAKE GOOD USE OF THOSE OPPORTUNITIES -- RIGHT HERE AND RIGHT NOW.

THE QUESTION IS: WHETHER WE WILL ACCEPT THE GRACE WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN. THERE IS GRACE IN ALL OUR LIVES -- BOTH PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL.

ONE OF THE EXAMPLES OF GRACE IS THAT NONE OF OUR PROBLEMS ARE INEVITABLE. RURAL DECLINE, WHETHER ECONOMICALLY OR EDUCATIONALLY, IS NOT INEVITABLE. I'VE READ THE BIBLE, AND NO WHERE DOES IT SAY ANYTHING INDICATING THAT IT IS GOD'S WILL THAT THERE BE RURAL DECLINE.

I'M NO SCIENTIST, BUT I CAN'T FIND A THING THAT POINTS TOWARD A NATURAL LAW SOMEWHERE THAT DICTATES INEVITABLE RURAL DECLINE. BECAUSE WE CAN BE INVOLVED IN EDUCATION, WE HAVE THE MOST POWERFUL FORCE KNOWN TO MAN IN OUR HANDS. WE HAVE THE CHOICE, AND THE CHANCE, TO USE THAT POWER TO FOSTER LASTING INSTITUTIONAL REFORM, AND SPARK THE REJUVENATION OF OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES.

I WOULD LIKE NOTHING MORE THAN TO AT LEAST GIVE YOU A VISION OF A BETTER TOMORROW, A BETTER SOCIETY -- AND TO CHALLENGE YOU TO BELIEVE IN THAT VISION.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CANNOT BEAR THE FULL COSTS, NOR TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR TOMORROW'S FAMILIES AND THE CHILDREN THEY ARE RAISING.

BUT WHEN AMERICANS HAVE BEEN CONFRONTED WITH WHAT IS REAL, AND WHAT ISN'T -- THEY INVARIABLY HAVE DONE THE THINGS TO MAKE IT RIGHT. IN THE CASE OF THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY -- AND THE PROSPECTS FOR THEM AND FOR RURAL FAMILIES -- MY MONEY IS ON THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

THANK YOU.