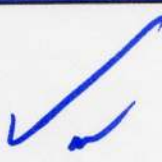


U.S. Congressman  
**Nick Rahall**  
*WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JANUARY 8, 1993



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**RAHALL BLASTS ADMINISTRATION FOR PROPOSED AG OFFICE CLOSINGS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Tagging it as "one last-ditch effort to put it to West Virginia," U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) today blasted the Bush Administration for attempting to close seven Department of Agriculture office in his 3rd Congressional District.

"I guess the Bush Administration wants to go out with a bang," said Rahall. "For twelve years we've watched as West Virginia's services were slashed to the bone while fighter jets and B-2 bombers were mass produced. So in an effort to be as ironic as possible, the outgoing Administration proposes closing USDA offices throughout West Virginia -- offices that help hard-working people and create jobs in the Mountain State."

West Virginia is slated to lose 24 of their 57 offices statewide. Office being closed in the 3rd congressional District are:

- \* The Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service -- Five offices will be closed in Cabell, Pocohontas, Fayette, Summers and Boone.
- \* The Soil Conservation Service -- One office in Summers county will be closed.
- \* The Farmer's Home Administration -- Three offices will be closed in Logan, Wyoming and Fayette counties.

"President-elect Clinton talked quite a bit about putting people first," said Rahall. "He was absolutely right. For too long, government has paid too little attention to the needs of real people. These offices were there for West Virginians, helping them to make the most of their lives and their land."

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