

BUSH HAS LET MINERS DOWN: CALLAGHAN

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Congressional candidate **Mike Callaghan** on Tuesday called for Congress to provide the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration with sufficient funding to hold coal operators accountable for safety violations.

"As your congressman, I will hold people accountable for actions that endanger people," Callaghan said during an announcement at the miner's statue on the state Capitol grounds.

Callaghan, seeking the Democratic nomination for the 2nd Congressional District, said the Bush administration has failed coal miners by cutting MSHA funding over the past four years. Bush's 2006-07 budget plan would provide \$288 million for the agency, an increase of 3.69 percent.

"As a Cabinet secretary for the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection and as a federal prosecutor, I held people accountable," Callaghan said. "I closed mines down and put coal operators in jail for violating the law."

As an assistant U.S. attorney, Callaghan noted that he prosecuted cases of instructors selling miner safety training certificates without conducting the required safety classes. Callaghan's comments will be the theme for a television ad to begin airing today.

As a congressman, Callaghan said he will push for increased fines for mine safety violations and for greater authority for MSHA inspectors to immediately shut down mines for unsafe conditions.