

Kirby Youngblood  
1643 N CR 650W  
Richland IN 47634

Honorable Kathy A. Surratt-States  
Thomas F. Eagleton US Court House  
111 South Tenth Street 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
St. Louis Mo. 63102

RE: Case # 12-51502

Honorable Kathy Surratt-States:

I am writing to you to express my concerns regarding Patriot Coal filing bankruptcy, and their attempts to terminate the health benefits and pensions of thousands of retirees and employees. This action would be devastating to approximately 23,000 individuals.

My husband worked for Peabody Coal Company his senior year in high school, on a survey team. He joined and served his term in the military, and immediately upon discharge, resumed working for Peabody Coal Company as a welder and heavy equipment operator at Squaw Creek Mine in Boonville, Indiana until it closed in 1998. When Peabody closed the mine, there was still coal that could be mined there, and even before the closure, there were already non-union miners removing the coal that remained to be mined. That was the plan to rid themselves of union employees.

My husband risked his life and health working for Peabody Coal for 32 years. An investigation and hearing concerning Alcoa dumping 69 million gallons of coal tar pitch, a known carcinogen, along with chromium sludge at Squaw Creek Mine was brought to light in 2008, with miners developing cancers and other health issues. My husband had worked in the areas of dumping, with our concern that health problems could still arise from that exposure.

We received a letter in 2007, notifying us that Peabody had created a "spin off" company, Patriot Coal, that would be assuming our health care benefits. Why was this allowed when my husband, and thousands of miners never worked a day in their life for Patriot? We had a binding contract that Peabody Coal was responsible for our health care and pensions for life. We were very skeptical with the transition, fearing Peabody was simply abandoning their obligations to us, knowing that Patriot Coal could not continue to provide our benefits.

My husband and I are both ineligible for Medicare, and will be devastated if both Patriot and Peabody Coal are allowed to terminate our health care benefits and pension. We have health problems, with costly prescriptions and procedures, as most of the retirees probably have. A lot of those dedicated retirees and employees will have to resort to bankruptcy, and more health problems as we will not be able to afford our health care.

I implore you to please not allow this to happen. It was a designated scheme by Peabody Coal, and either Patriot Coal or Peabody Coal should be held accountable to continue providing our health care and pensions, as was promised to us through a legal contract.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Your decision is critical to us and all the UMWA members that have dedicated their lives to help Peabody prosper, and I pray you will hold Peabody Coal and Patriot accountable for their promises and obligations.

Respectfully,

*Kirby Youngblood*  
*Margaret Youngblood*

Kirby and Margaret Youngblood

Kirby Youngblood  
18413 NCR 6500  
Richland SC 291634

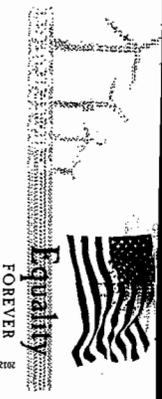
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