

Richard D. Walton
538 Broadway Avenue
Bridgeport, WV 26330

October 7, 2012

The Honorable Shelley C. Chapman
One Bowling Green
Courtroom 621
New York, New York 10004-1408

Dear Judge Chapman:

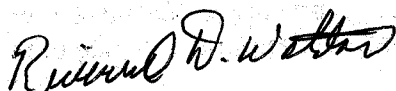
I write you today as a retiree of the Patriot Mining Corporation. My union has informed me that you are the Judge presiding over this matter and I'd like to express my opinion to you for your consideration.

I have worked at several mines during my career and was fortunate to retire from Patriot in September 2008. I am a proud husband and father and coal mining has provided for my family for years. There are certain tradeoffs you make in life to choose a career in coal mining like I did. The benefits are easy to see. I was able to make a very good living for myself and my family for many years. I received a good wage, health benefits, and retirement. The costs were that I gave many odd hours and extended hours to the mine, I sacrificed my health (broken arm, poor knees, and other health issues from the type of work I did), the down times with the coal market when I suffered through layoffs, etc. These are the types of sacrifices I accept as part of the career path I chose. These are the good and the bad of the industry and I accept that.

I am finding it very hard to accept that Patriot is attempting to cut my healthcare and pension. This was never part of the deal. They were able to receive a lot of hard work from me in the best years of my life only to try and abandon me when I need my benefits most. I am a veteran of the United States Army. I have worked in factories and other labor intensive jobs and I have a total of 24 years in the coal mine. As you can see I have served my country and I have been a productive member of society my entire life. Now as a senior, and as a result of many years of manual labor, I have some health issues. I have had to battle prostate cancer, high blood pressure, high cholesterol. In addition to myself, my wife, in which I have been married to for 46 years has a lot of health issues as well. She is a diabetic, has had strokes, blocked arteries, high blood pressure, and other things. If it is not apparent from my letter, neither of us are in the physical condition to return to the workforce. The situation ahead of me if I lose my pension and healthcare is to have to return to work knowing that I can't. I made the sacrifices that I made by working for 24 years in the mine so that my wife and I could retire without these worries. To be honest with you ma'am I believe we have earned these benefits and deserve them.

Thank you for your time and for the ability to voice my concerns with you. I appreciate your consideration of my opinion very much.

Sincerely,



Richard D. Walton