



The Honorable Shelley Chapman,

I am a disabled female miner who was previously employed by Peabody Coal Co. My body has suffered irreparable damage due to a work related injury. Therefore, the health benefits and the UMWA pension play a major role in my life. My husband has also become disabled. We are on a fixed income so we cannot afford to allow Peabody - Patriot Coal Company to walk away from their agreed upon obligations to us and the many others who would be affected. We need these benefits and are entitled to them. The contract between the UMWA and Peabody Coal Co. should be enforced.

Large companies, like Peabody Coal Company, should not be able to spin off another company (such as Patriot) to assume financial obligations to allow the large company to essentially "write-off" a debt without any recourse. Peabody made a premeditated decision when Patriot was formed. The formation of Patriot started a master plan into motion. Peabody could "dump" their previous employees - UMWA retirees pension and health benefits into Patriot's obligations. Then, in a short time, Patriot could seek bankruptcy protection. Peabody only did this to increase their profits. This is a blatant illustration of corporate greed. Peabody has made tremendous profits for many years, especially since the formation of Patriot Coal. How can these companies be allowed to make mega bucks off the backs of their employees then cast

them to the side when they're done with them? I know you have heard the terminology that we are a "disposable society." I don't feel that any of these affected by this case should be thrown away like trash. The very existence of so many will be affected by the loss of their health benefits and pensions. It really isn't any different than a company squandering the retirement monies they have been entrusted to care for until the time the employees retire.

I hate to see a case like this happening. If it goes the way Peabody wants it to, it will set a terrible precedent for others. I would bet that we would see other large companies do the same thing. Why should contracts be signed if the involved parties can manipulate the system to be relieved of their obligations? Peabody should not be able to create a scapegoat (Patriot), with premeditation, for their profit. If an individual attempted a similar maneuver, it would never happen. The request for a change of venue to New York is ridiculous. The majority of people from New York have probably never heard of coal mines. If they have, they probably couldn't tell you where these mines were located. I know that Peabody-Patriot met the requirement for a request for a change because they had property holdings within the state, but these properties were only acquired a short time before the request for the change of venue was submitted. This case should be heard in the coal fields not New York or some other

state where no coal mines exist. This is just another manipulation of the system.

In closing, Judge Chapman, I beg you to take a close look at the people who are going to be hurt here. The people that will lose their health insurance benefits and pensions are not the only ones affected. Severe hardship will be cast on Peabody's previous employees as well as the economies of the affected areas. Please take care of us. We gave our blood, sweat, and tears to help Peabody make money. Held them to what they agreed to. My family cannot survive the devastation that will come from the loss of our health benefits and pensions. I know I am only one person, but I hope that I matter. Please show me and my union brothers and sisters that we do matter.

Thank you,
Sincerely,
Cheryl Stine

member of United Mine Workers of America
Local 2305

