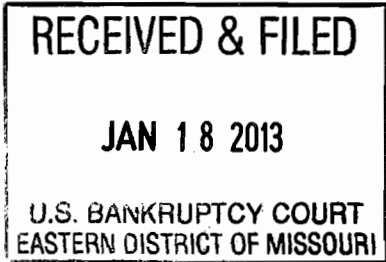


January 15, 2013

TO: The Honorable Kathy A. Surratt-States

**Re: Case No. 12-51502**

Dear Honorable Judge Surratt-States:



This is to respectfully request that when you make your decision in regard to Patriot Coal Corporations request to file for bankruptcy that you take into consideration the negative effect this will have on UMWA families throughout the nation's coalfields. Patriot's goal is to continue mining coal and making big profits, but they want to shed themselves of their health care obligations to UMWA retirees, widows and their dependents.

I worked midnight shift for a UMWA coal mines in West Virginia for 24 years as an underground longwall miner. It became necessary for me to take an early retirement due to health problems as a result of working in the coal mines. I am currently on 7 prescription medications. Without my prescription coverage, I would not be able to afford to buy all these medications. My current health problems require me to see my physician every 2-3 months. Without medical insurance coverage, I would not be able to see my physician as often as needed. This could lead to my health condition deteriorating. On average I have been in the hospital two times per year during the last couple years. I could not afford to pay for the procedures I have had to undergo without my health care benefits.

Recently, I have had breathing difficulties and must use an inhaler. My doctor indicated that working in the coal mines on the longwall has definitely contributed to my breathing difficulties.

I had a serious accident while working in the coal mines. My jaw was broken when a cable broke and hit me in the jaw. My mouth was completely wired shut for 3 months and my teeth were knocked loose. I could not eat anything that was not liquefied. I got bronchitis while I had my mouth wired shut. To say the least, this was very devastating.

My wife is also on several medications and she is not old enough to get Medicare health care benefits so she will have no insurance whatsoever if we lose our benefits. She cannot return to work due to health problems so this seems like a no win situation for the miners and their families.

As you can see, working in the coal mines has taken its toll on my health. Up to this point we have not had to worry about having health care benefits, but now we are extremely stressed wondering what we will do if we lose our health care benefits. It is to the point it affects our sleep and we are afraid to make any purchases that are not absolutely necessary. In other words, our lives are "on hold". If we lose our health care benefits, our lives will be turned upside down.

We have worked hard and put our lives on the line and now Patriot wants to turn their back on us. We pray you will not let this happen and you will hold Patriot Coal Corporation fully responsible for their obligations.

Again, we respectfully request that you will consider the hardship that will be placed on UMWA retirees and their families if Patriot is allowed to go bankrupt. Your consideration of our concerns is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles D. Hoover".

Charles D. Hoover

Retiree, UMWA L.U. 1570

