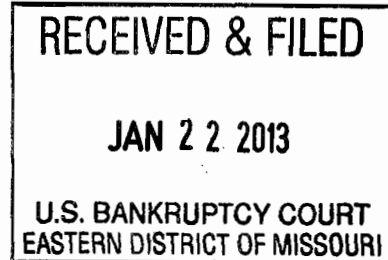


P.O. Box 253
Hilltop, WV 25855
January 18, 2013

The Honorable Kathy A. Surratt-States
Thomas F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse
111 South 10th Street, 4th Floor
St. Louis, MO 63102



RE: Case No. 12-51502 Patriot Coal Co.

Your Honorable Kathy A. Surratt-States,

I am writing to you in regards to the bankruptcy hearing of Patriot Coal Company and the effects it will have on my father, Billy Ford Sutphin, a 77 soon to be 78 year old Retired West Virginia Coal Miner.

My father was a mechanic and was proud of his job. He would often tell us of events of his day and how he would be praised by the bosses for saving the company money by being an efficient worker. Sometimes the "Big Wigs" would come into the shop and want something done, but my dad would explain why it wouldn't work or even suggest a better way to do something. Sometimes they would listen, sometimes they wouldn't. He was even approached on many occasions to become a boss, but he didn't want that type of job because he was a hands-on guy.

My father worked for Peabody Coal Company and retired from Peabody Coal Company in October 1996. However, Peabody Coal Company moved my father into Patriot Coal Company through some sort of acquisition. And now the company is trying to get out of the obligations it owes my father, as well as other miners, by filing bankruptcy under Patriot Coal Company

In late 2007, my father had to have a 5 way by-pass, and by the Grace of God, he is still doing well today. He is on numerous forms of medication, not only for his heart, but also for his prostate, cholesterol, and other medical conditions that come with age. If my father loses his medical coverage as well as his pension, he would be put in a very difficult financial situation especially if one major medical event would occur.

If you would indulge me, I would like to take you back a few years through the eyes of a daughter.

Every morning, my father would get up between 4:30 – 5:00 a.m. Have a cup of coffee, pack his lunch, and head out the door to go to work to provide for his family. His lunch would normally consist of a bologna and cheese sandwich, a Little Debbie cake, a small thermos of fruit, and a large thermos of coffee. And he would hit the road no later than 5:15 a.m. to drive over an hour to work.

If he didn't work over, he would normally arrive home between 6:00 – 6:30 p.m. He would get a quick bite to eat, tend to the pets and any other house hold chores that would require a man's attention, gather trash, and if it were summer, he would cut grass and/or tend to the garden prior to getting into bed by 9:30 p.m. at the latest.

He was promised medical coverage and a pension for all of the hard work he put in.

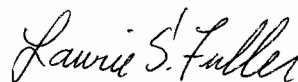
I think it is awful how companies can scheme to get out of their obligations by creating subsidiaries and then filing bankruptcy. I'm sure Patriot Coal Company was aware of the obligations they were purchasing.

One would think that the pensions and health benefits would be funded with a Trust.

Shouldn't the acquiring company have a **fiduciary duty** to **ensure the retirees' benefit obligations are met?**

I would appreciate if you would consider how hard these miners worked, and the effects that this Bankruptcy hearing is going to have on their families if they lose the health care and pensions that they worked so hard for.

Thank you,



Laurie S. Fuller
304-256-1209 – Work
304-469-6401 – Home
304-222-5368 – Cell

CC: UMWA International Union

