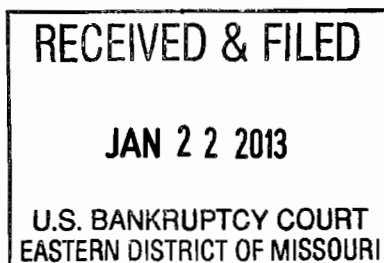


January 17, 2013

The Honorable Kathy A. Surratt-States
Re: Case No. 12-51502
Thomas F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse
111 South 10th Street, 4th Floor
St. Louis, MO 63102



Your Honor:

I am writing to let you know how our lives would be affected if Patriot Coal Co. were to be allowed to break the agreement made by Peabody Coal Co. years ago to cover me and my wife, along with my fellow co-workers and their families, with retirement and health insurance for life.

I worked for Peabody Coal Company at the Gibraltar Coal Mine in Mulerburg County, Kentucky for 19 years and 9 months—three months short of receiving a full retirement. I was laid off and had to retire in order to keep my insurance card. We paid \$500 each month to Cobra for several months, then realized we couldn't continue to do so. My retirement check each month is \$509.23 gross. I have worked at various jobs in carpentry to supplement that income when I could find the work. I am nearing my 80th birthday and am unable to supplement it as I once did.

Although my retirement check is minimal, we have felt that we were fortunate to have the health insurance that Peabody agreed would be ours.

When we received word that our insurance would be changing from Peabody Coal Co. to a new company called Patriot Coal, I was surprised and concerned. My wife told me she believed that it was an attempt on Peabody Coal Company to renege on their promise. I assured her the agreement was binding and not to worry. I'm afraid she was correct.

I have been fortunate to have good health, but two years ago, I had trouble with my heart and had to have a couple of stents put in. I take Plavix for my heart and another medication for high blood pressure. My wife has been diagnosed with the progressive disease of Parkinson's, has a seizure disorder for which she needs daily medication to control, has to have her urethrae stretched 2x each year, needs shot for her knees quarterly, and is facing surgery soon.

There is no way we could buy the medications we need each month to cover our health issues nor pay for office calls if we lose our insurance.

I know there are many things you will need to consider as you decide whether to allow Patriot Coal to file Bankruptcy.

Thank you for letting us be a part of your considerations.

Sincerely,



Ernest Barber

Ernest R. Barber
271 Latham Lane
Island, KY 42350

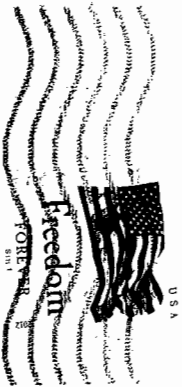
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CLERK, US BANKRUPTCY COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI - MR

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Re: Case No. 12-51502
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