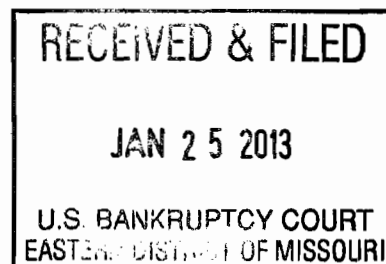


Richard D. Walton
538 Broadway Avenue
Bridgeport, WV 26330

January 20, 2013

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



Dear Judge Surratt-States:

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.

I have done manual labor my entire life, all of it in a factory and a coal mine. There are a lot of worries that I've had to endure over the course of my career, most of which related to layoffs. I made it through many layoffs, all of which are untimely, some more untimely at others when they occur at Christmas. Therefore, I was always worried about providing for my family. I was forced to leave my home and move to Tuscaloosa for a period of ten years leaving behind friends and family so that I could earn a living. Working in a mine itself causes worry not knowing if you are going to suffer a workplace accident or explosion. What I'm trying to express to you that I've had to worry my entire life about providing for my family and when I retired with full benefits and medical card I felt my worry was over. This lawsuit with Patriot has brought back that worry. The worry that I won't provide

adequately for myself and my family. I earned the right for that to not be the case. I made the sacrifices that I made in life, working at hard manual labor jobs, relocating from my home for 10 years, working shift work, many years working 6 days a week, etc., so that I could see that light at the end of the tunnel when I retired and have no worries any more.

I've never asked for anything that I didn't earn and won't start today. I believe I have earned these benefits and this comfort for myself and my family. I deserve to be free of these worries in my retirement. Myself and my fellow miners have earned that.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard D. Walton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Richard D. Walton

Richard Walton
538 Broadway Ave
Bridgeport, WV 26330-1202

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

CLARKSBURG, WV 263

22 JAN 2013 PM 3 T



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

63102+1125

