

The Honorable Kathy A. Surratt-States

Re: Case No. 12-51502

Thomas F. Eagleton U. S. Courthouse

111 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

St. Louis Mo 63102

Your Honor in all due respect,  
Please allow me to introduce myself, my name is Joe Reynolds, my wife, Peggy and I reside in Marion county West Virginia in the community of Rivesville and will be affected by your decision in the Patriot Bankruptcy case.

I graduated from high school in 1975 and went to work at Eastern Associated Coal Corporation's Federal 2 mine on July 26<sup>th</sup> 1977. I was employed at the Federal 2 mine for a little over 30 years. In that time I witnessed the company change hands more than once during my tenure at Federal 2. About 1987 Eastern Associated Coal Corporation became a subsidiary of Peabody Coal Company, the largest in the world at that time and still is. I continued to work at the Federal 2 mine and was recognized regularly as a Peabody employee and was given a certificate as a 30 year employee and a fishing rod and reel to go along with it about July of 2007.

In August of 2007 I accepted a position with the United Mine Workers of America, which I still hold. In November of that same year Peabody, in their corporate offices in St. Louis completed its spin-off of mostly union mines into Patriot Coal Company. I am now considered a member of Patriot Coal Company. This was and continues to be a deliberate

attempt by Peabody to shed their obligations of pensions and retiree health care that they agreed to over several consecutive wage agreements between Peabody Coal Company and the United Mine Workers of America. In many of these wage agreements I and my fellow employees in order to secure a retirement with pensions and health care agreed to forego higher wages and other benefits.

I worked hard over my 30 years at the Federal 2 mine, now only to have Peabody / Patriot to renege on our agreements and try to deny me a retirement with pension and health care. I however cannot renege on our agreements because I can't take back all my years of hard work.

In the last political cycle we heard some candidates talk about job creators; I think it is appropriate at this time to share with you some my thoughts on this issue. It is true that for thirty years I held a job at Federal 2 which I was grateful for, but I was a bit like the job creators in that I was a WEALTH GENERATOR, my hard work and that of my fellow workers made a lot of people rich. I do not begrudge anyone of their wealth that came by it fairly and honestly.

I do have a problem with CEO's and other executives that manipulate or circumvent the law in order to increase their own net worth by shedding themselves of long term legacy costs that they have agreed to for decades. One example of this is that Patriot set up dummy corporations in New York trying to avoid the courts where their employees live and work.

About fall of 2000 I was diagnosed with cancer and had to have my appendix and a tumor removed and a partial bowel resection. In 2011, I had throat cancer and had to have surgery and extensive radiation treatments, even though I never used any tobacco products. My family has been plagued with a history of cancer. I faced death down twice

and won because of faith in God and adequate health care. But what does the future hold me?

As recently as 2011 Patriot agreed to the terms and conditions of the national Coal Wage Agreement carrying many of the same conditions forward. I understand that you are obligated to rule within the law, but you are also obligated to dispense justice equally and fairly. I do not envy you of your task, knowing many coal field residents as I do; your decision will be one of life or death. I also believe that much of Patriot Coal Company's request are unethical, immoral and unreasonable and to grant them could very likely sound a death knell for the members of the United Mine Workers of America and could put the American Middle Class on a slippery slope to oblivion.

Until the filing of the Patriot Bankruptcy I had been living, working and earning the American Dream. I was doing all the things that so many the world over yearn for and wish to achieve by coming to America. Please don't let Patriot Coal Company take all of this away from me. Please don't let Patriot Coal Company destroy the dream.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Reynolds". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. To the right of the signature, the date "2-15-13" is handwritten in the same ink.

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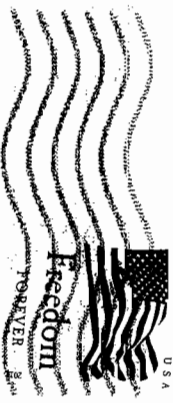
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