

# MANCHIN, KAINÉ, WARNER, BROWN, JONES AND CASEY INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO SECURE MINERS PENSIONS AND HEALTHCARE

The American Miners Act of 2019 ensures the promise of lifetime health care and pensions to retired miners and their families.

Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Mark Warner (D-VA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Doug Jones (D-AL) and Bob Casey (D-PA) today introduced the American Miners Act of 2019, legislation to secure our nation's retired miners pensions by: 1) shoring up the 1974 Pension Plan which is headed for insolvency due to coal company bankruptcies and the 2008 financial crisis, 2) ensuring that the miners who are at risk due to 2018 coal company bankruptcies will not lose their healthcare, and 3) extending the Black

Lung Disability Trust Fund tax at \$1.10 per ton of underground-mined coal and \$0.55 per ton of surface-mined coal for ten years. This tax is critical for supporting the Black Lung Disability Trust fund, which provides healthcare and benefits to more than 25,000 miners and their dependents.

The American Miners Act of 2019 will amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to transfer funds in excess of the amounts needed to meet existing obligations under the Abandoned Mine Land fund to the 1974 Pension Plan to prevent its insolvency. It will also amend the Coal Act to include 2018 bankruptcies in the miners' healthcare fix that passed

in 2017, and extend the tax that funds the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund at 2018 levels for 10 years

"Our coal miners made a commitment to provide our nation with the energy we needed to power our nation to prosperity. They did so time and time again even when it risked their health and their lives. It is our turn now to keep our promise to them and ensure that we secure their hard earned pensions and their promised healthcare and black lung benefits. We cannot continue to allow these solutions to be put off again and again. Our retirees and their widows deserve better than that. For these retired miners, their pensions and healthcare benefits are the

difference between paying their mortgage or being kicked out of their home, it's the difference between putting food on their tables or going hungry. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to finally secure our miners pensions and healthcare," Senator Manchin said.

"Virginia's miners earned their pensions and health care benefits after years of difficult and dangerous work to provide us energy," Senator Kaine said. "I hope that Congress will quickly act on this legislation and give miners peace of mind." "Congress made a promise in 1946 to protect coal miners after a lifetime of arduous and dangerous work to help power this nation,"

said Senator Warner. "This legislation would ensure that we fulfill that promise by protecting retired coal miners across the country, including in Virginia, where roughly 500 miners and their dependents are at risk of losing their healthcare following the bankruptcy of Colorado-based Westmoreland Coal Company. This bill will also protect miners' hard-earned pensions, and makes important changes I've been pushing for to defend and strengthen the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund, which provides healthcare and benefits for thousands of retirees suffering from this deadly disease."

"Ohio miners put their health at risk for their country. And after years of backbreaking

and dangerous work, they deserve the health care and pension benefits they've earned," said Brown. "We need to be a country that values hard work and respects the people who do it. We can start by keeping our promise to these miners," Senator Brown said.

"It is our responsibility to keep our promises to the men and women who built our great nation. I won't stop fighting until we've secured healthcare benefits, pensions, and an extension of the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund for coal miners and their families. I hope Congressional Republicans will join our mission to address this crucial issue in rural America," Senator Casey said.

## Build the Wall

Congress reconvened and, while not on the official schedule, the focus is on resolving

the current government shutdown. Liberty Counsel Action is supporting the \$5 billion

dollars requested by President Trump to build a wall on the Mexican border

because of the increased safety and long-term financial savings this will provide to Americans.

If this wall stopped only 50 percent of those expected to enter the U.S. illegally over the next 10 years, it would save taxpayers nearly \$64 billion, according to the Center for Immigration Studies. This savings is several times the estimated cost to build the wall. On the southern border of Israel, a double wall has effectively stopped nearly 100 percent of Hamas terrorists, according to Daniel Horowitz. This would cut the time in half for taxpayers to see a return on their investment.

These numbers do not account for the priceless

value placed on the safety of Americans like Grant Ronnebeck, a 21-year-old who was shot and killed by an illegal immigrant over a pack of cigarettes. In addition, the U.S. Government Accountability Office averages that illegal aliens account for nine kidnappings, 15 murders, 43 sex offenses, 71 burglaries, and 131 assaults every day, according to the American Thinker.

While the data is hard to combine, it reported that the rate of murders committed by illegal aliens is "about 10 times that of U.S. citizens."

The U.S. government has freely spent \$2.5 billion dollars on the Mérida Initiative, which is a cooperation agreement between the U.S. and the countries of Central America on drug trafficking, organized crime, etc. This month marks the 10-year anniversary of this project, which has had little to no success in actually stopping drugs from flowing into the U.S. This money would be much better spent on the wall, which President Trump says

has been more than 90 percent effective at shutting down illegal trafficking into America.

"We lock our homes and install burglar alarms. We do not open the doors to our home to complete strangers," said Mat Staver, Founder and Chairman of Liberty Counsel Action. "Now when it comes to the doors of our nation, we know that terrorists, drugs, and gang members are entering illegally through Mexico. The wall is necessary to stop the flow of dangerous people and damaging drugs into our country," said Staver.

The U.S. government recently wasted \$2.6 million dollars caring for 139 chimpanzees through a project supported by the National Institutes for Health. The project was exposed by the oversight committee led by Sen. James Lankford. However, when it comes to the safety and security of Americans, suddenly liberal legislators stop their liberal spending habits.

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