

1 HJR236  
2 201447-1  
3 By Representatives Rowe and South  
4 RFD: Rules  
5 First Read: 16-MAY-19

KEEPING AMERICA'S PROMISE TO OUR RETIRED COAL MINERS  
AND WIDOWS.

WHEREAS, in 1946, faced with the prospect of a long strike that could hamper post-war economic recovery, President Harry Truman issued an Executive Order directing the Secretary of the Interior to take possession of all bituminous coal mines in the United States and to negotiate with the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) "appropriate changes in the terms and conditions of employment"; and

WHEREAS, the Krug-Lewis agreement created a welfare and retirement fund that guaranteed lifetime payments to miners and their dependents and survivors in cases of sickness, permanent disability, death or retirement; and also created a separate medical and hospital fund; and

WHEREAS, in 1947, the government returned control of the mines to their owners and a new collective bargaining agreement was reached with companies that guaranteed retirement benefits to miners and their dependents and survivors for life; and

1           WHEREAS, for the next 70 years, the federal  
2 government repeatedly confirmed its role in guaranteeing  
3 retirement benefits for coal miners; and

4           WHEREAS, in 1992, President George H.W. Bush signed  
5 into law the Coal Act, establishing an industry-funded  
6 mechanism for paying for the health care of retirees whose  
7 companies had gone out of business and in 2006, that act was  
8 expanded for the Pension Fund; and

9           WHEREAS, a depression and job eliminations reign in  
10 America's coal industry today, and multiple companies have  
11 filed for bankruptcy, and shed their retiree obligations,  
12 leaving more than 26,000 retirees without health care  
13 benefits; and

14           WHEREAS, the UMWA 1974 Pension Fund lost a  
15 significant portion of its value in the 2008-09 recession; due  
16 to the devastation of the coal industry it will not receive  
17 enough employer contributions to make up the shortfall,  
18 resulting in the fund becoming insolvent by 2022; and

19           WHEREAS, on December 9, 2016, Congress passed a  
20 Continuing Resolution to continue funding for federal programs  
21 and services until April 28, 2017, and a provision providing  
22 \$45 million for continued health care benefits for these  
23 retirees and their families until April 30, 2017; and

24           WHEREAS, Senator Joe Manchin has introduced S. 27,  
25 the American Miners Act; Senator Shelley Moore Capito has  
26 introduced S. 671, the Miners Pension Protection Act, to amend  
27 the Coal Act to repurpose the balance of an existing

1 appropriation to provide funding for the UMWA Pension Plan;  
2 and Representative David McKinley has introduced H.R. 935, the  
3 Miners Pension Protection Act, and Representative Robert Scott  
4 has introduced H.R. 934, the Health Benefits for Miners Act,  
5 which allows retirees from recently bankrupt companies,  
6 including Mission Coal in Alabama, to get health care coverage  
7 from the UMWA Health and Retirement Funds; and

8 WHEREAS, America's coal miners have made many  
9 sacrifices for our nation; more than 105,000 miners were  
10 killed on the job in the last century and more than 100,000  
11 have died from coal workers' pneumoconiosis, or black lung;  
12 and

13 WHEREAS, miners have continued to work every day to  
14 provide for their families, build a secure future for  
15 themselves, and produce the fuel that has allowed America to  
16 become the most powerful nation on earth; now therefore,

17 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH  
18 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That America has an obligation to  
19 our retired coal miners for the sacrifices they have made for  
20 our nation and the Alabama Legislature shall be on record as  
21 supporting S. 27, S. 671, H.R. 934 and H.R. 935 and we urge  
22 Alabama's entire Congressional delegation to become cosponsors  
23 of this legislation and work for passage.

24 RESOLVED FURTHER, That copies of this resolution be  
25 provided to each member of the Alabama Congressional  
26 Delegation so that the strong sentiments of this body on this  
27 important issue shall be known.

