

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

1
2 ENROLLED, House Joint Resolution,
3 KEEPING AMERICA'S PROMISE TO OUR RETIRED COAL MINERS
4 AND WIDOWS.
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6 WHEREAS, in 1946, faced with the prospect of a long
7 strike that could hamper post-war economic recovery, President
8 Harry Truman issued an Executive Order directing the Secretary
9 of the Interior to take possession of all bituminous coal
10 mines in the United States and to negotiate with the United
11 Mine Workers of America (UMWA) "appropriate changes in the
12 terms and conditions of employment"; and

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

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

23 WHEREAS, for the next 70 years, the federal
24 government repeatedly confirmed its role in guaranteeing
25 retirement benefits for coal miners; and

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

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

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

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

21 WHEREAS, Senator Joe Manchin has introduced S. 27,
22 the American Miners Act; Senator Shelley Moore Capito has
23 introduced S. 671, the Miners Pension Protection Act, to amend
24 the Coal Act to repurpose the balance of an existing
25 appropriation to provide funding for the UMWA Pension Plan;

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

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

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

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

23 RESOLVED FURTHER, That copies of this resolution be
24 provided to each member of the Alabama Congressional

1 Delegation so that the strong sentiments of this body on this
2 important issue shall be known.

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Speaker of the House of Representatives

President and Presiding Officer of the Senate

House of Representatives

I hereby certify that the within Act originated in
and was adopted by the House 22-MAY-19.

Jeff Woodard
Clerk

Senate

23-MAY-19

Adopted