

January 15, 2008

Rep. George Miller, Chairman
U.S. House Education & Labor Committee
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Miller:

We are widows, parents, adult children and other family members of coal miners who have been killed while working in Kentucky's underground mines, as well as working coal miners and our family members. We want to thank you for the excellent work you have done in Washington to make sure that we learn from the senseless coal mine tragedies that have occurred in Kentucky and to better protect our miners.

For the past 1½ years, we have worked diligently to get the legislators in Washington and Frankfort to improve federal and state mine safety laws so that other mining families will not have to suffer the anguish that we have endured - and the pain that we continue to suffer.

Unfortunately, America's coal mining families and communities continue to experience tragedies that could easily have been prevented. That is why we support your efforts, through H.R. 2768, the S-Miner Act, to strengthen the federal mine safety law.

Miners and their families shouldn't have to worry about threats to their jobs - or their personal safety - if they speak up when they encounter safety or health problems underground.

Miners should also have every available tool to make sure that if an accident does happen, they have the ability to escape harm.

Coal companies should be required to build stronger mine seals with substantial materials that will withstand a mine explosion and protect the miners who are working in the active areas underground.

And mine operators should be held accountable when they don't live up to their legal obligation to protect their employees who work every day under difficult circumstances.

Our coal miners deserve the very best protections that Congress can provide. There simply is no reason that miners should die underground while trying to provide for their families.

We therefore urge Congress to pass H.R. 2768 as soon as possible. The miners of Kentucky and the rest of our nation deserve the strongest possible protections, and we believe the S-Miner Act will provide those protections.

Thank you again for your work in championing the safety of America's miners in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

Melissa Lee, widow of Jimmy Lee 1213 Thomas Road Speedwell, TN 37870
Mary Middleton, widow of Roy Middleton 2126 Highway 1601 Evarts, KY 40828
Dan & Nellie Middletown, parents of Roy Middleton 2114 Highway 1601 Evarts, KY 40828
Priscilla Petra, widow of George "Bill" Petra P.O. Box 225 Kenvir, KY 40847
Tilda Thomas, widow of Paris Thomas P.O. Box 271 Evarts, KY 40828
Tracy North, daughter of Paris Thomas P.O. Box 271 Evarts, KY 40828
Paul and Nora Ledford, coal miner & wife/survivor of Kentucky Darby mine disaster P.O. Box 6 Dayhoit, KY 40824
Stella Morris, widow of David "Bud" Morris, Jr. 45 Court Road Cumberland, KY 40823
David Morris, Sr., father of Bud Morris & disabled coal miner P.O. Box 345 Benham, KY 40807
Claudia Cole, widow of Russell Cole P.O. Box 285 Cumberland, KY 40823
Vivian Caudill, widow of Timothy Caudill P.O. Box 1617 Viper, KY 41774
Tammy Charles, widow of Ronnie Charles P.O. Box 173 Shelbiana, KY 41562
Vivian Bolen, mother of David Bolen P.O. Box 423 McCarr, KY 41544
Geraldine Merrill, widow of Gary Merrill 6694 East Highway 221 Bledsoe, Ky 40810
Ed & Pauline Merrill, parents of Gary Merrill 6688 East Highway 221 Bledsoe, KY 40810
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Everett & Elsie Pennington, parents of Edwin Pennington 275 Lone Mountain Road Tazewell, TN 37879
Beulah Hayden, widow of James Gibson 43 Emerald Drive Corbin, KY 40701
Ora Slone, widow of Bobby Slone 3366 Highway 160 South Hindman, KY 41822
April Sandlin, daughter of Bobby Slone 1329 Burgey's Creek Road Mallie, KY 41836
Jerry Michael & Sharon Caudill, coal miner & wife 625 Hicks Branch Road Cornettsville, KY 41731
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Tony Simpson, coal miner P.O. Box 32 Cranks, KY 40820
David & Lynn Helton, coal miner & wife/brother-in-law & sister of Roy Middleton 2098 Highway 1601 Evarts, KY 40828
Teddy & Donna Stewart, disabled coal miner & wife/brother-in-law & sister of Roy Middleton 769 Stewart Lane Evarts, KY 40828
Preston & Lisa Stewart, disabled coal miner & wife/in-laws of Roy Middleton 56 Dean Lane Evarts, KY 40828