

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 28, 2017

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman
Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Hatch:

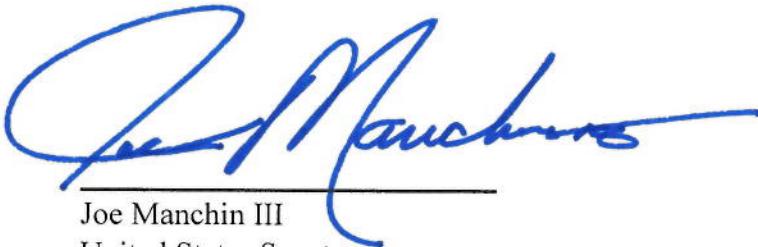
On March 1, approximately 22,800 of our nation's retired coal miners will receive notices like the one attached here informing them that their healthcare benefits will be terminated at the end of April. This will be the third such notice that has been issued over the past four months. Our miners did everything we asked of them, and it is time that we uphold our end of the bargain and provide them with the permanent benefits they earned through a lifetime of work.

Last year, on September 21st, the Miners Protection Act was passed by the Committee on Finance on a bipartisan vote of 18 to 8 with your support. As you know, we worked closely with our colleagues to ensure that the bill was fully offset and that no funding was diverted away from either abandoned mine reclamation efforts or annual payments to certified states. Despite unanimous support from Senate Democrats, the Miners Protection Act was not included in the Continuing Resolution last December, and we seek your support today for a permanent solution that gives our miners and their families peace of mind.

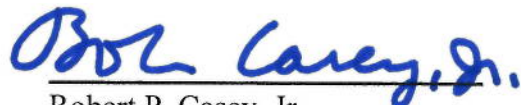
We request that the Finance Committee attach the Miners Protection Act of 2017 (S. 175) to the statutorily-required waiver needed for the nomination of Mr. Robert Lighthizer to be the United States Trade Representative. Attaching the Miners Protection Act to this waiver will help ensure quick action so that thousands of our nation's coal miners no longer face the insecurity that comes with the loss of their hard-earned health and retirement benefits.

The Miners Protection Act is a responsible, bipartisan solution to a real problem facing the American people, and we look forward to working with you to find a path forward for this critical legislation.


Sincerely,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator




Claire McCaskill
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator




Bill Nelson
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator




Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



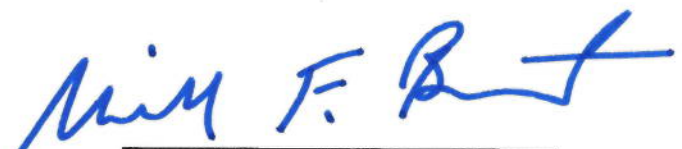
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator




Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator