

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 374 Session of
2000

INTRODUCED BY DeWEESE, GEORGE, DALEY, GEIST, HESS, BEBKO-JONES, CALTAGIRONE, CAPPABIANCA, CASORIO, HALUSKA, MELIO, PETRARCA, READSHAW, STABACK, TANGRETTI, TRAVAGLIO, YOUNGBLOOD, PESCI, GIGLIOTTI, PETRONE, LAUGHLIN, M. COHEN, SOLOBAY, BELFANTI, BELARDI, HORSEY, WOJNAROSKI, JOSEPHS, COSTA, HARHAI, LEVDANSKY, LUCYK, SHANER, TIGUE, TRELLO, WOGAN, FRANKEL, EACHUS, BUNT, MANDERINO AND YUDICHAK, FEBRUARY 15, 2000

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, MARCH 20, 2000

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the President and the Congress of the United States to
2 work together to reform the financial structure of the Coal
3 Act to ensure that retired coal miners continue to receive
4 the health care benefits they were promised and rightly
5 deserve.

6 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is a coal-producing and coal-consuming
7 state that has benefited tremendously from the hard, dangerous
8 work of retired coal miners; and

9 WHEREAS, The United States Government entered into a contract
10 with coal miners in 1946 that created the United Mine Workers of
11 America Health and Retirement Funds; and

12 WHEREAS, This contract was signed in the White House in a
13 ceremony with President Harry Truman; and

14 WHEREAS, A Federal commission established by Secretary of
15 Labor Elizabeth Dole concluded in 1990:

16 "Retired coal miners have legitimate expectations of

1 health care benefits for life; that was the promise they
2 received during their working lives and that is how they
3 planned their retirement years. That commitment should be
4 honored";

5 and

6 WHEREAS, This promise became law in 1992 when the Congress of
7 the United States passed and President George Bush signed the
8 Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefit Act (the Coal Act); and

9 WHEREAS, The Coal Act reiterated the promise of lifetime
10 health benefits for retired coal miners and their dependents;

11 and

12 WHEREAS, Congress intended the Coal Act to:

13 "(1) remedy problems with the provision and funding of
14 health care benefits with respect to the beneficiaries of
15 multiemployer benefit plans that provide health care benefits
16 to retirees in the coal industry;

17 (2) allow for sufficient operating assets for such
18 plans; and

19 (3) provide for the continuation of a privately financed
20 self-sufficient program for the delivery of health care
21 benefits to the beneficiaries of such plans";

22 and

23 WHEREAS, Certain court decisions have eroded the financial
24 structure Congress put in place under the Coal Act; and

25 WHEREAS, These court decisions have placed the continued
26 provision of health benefits to retired coal miners in jeopardy;

27 ~~therefore be it~~ AND

<—

28 WHEREAS, THE PRESIDENT HAS INCLUDED IN HIS PROPOSED BUDGET
29 \$346 MILLION IN GENERAL FEDERAL FUNDS OVER TEN YEARS TO PROTECT
30 THE LONG-TERM INTEGRITY OF THE COMBINED BENEFIT FUND FOR RETIRED

1 MINERS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS; THEREFORE BE IT

2 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the

3 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania urge the President and the Congress

4 of the United States to work together to ENACT LEGISLATION TO <—

5 reform the financial ~~structure of the Coal Act to ensure that~~ <—

6 ~~retired coal miners continue to receive the health care benefits~~

7 ~~they were promised and so rightly deserve; and be it further~~

8 STRUCTURE OF THE COAL ACT BY PROVIDING FOR AN ANNUAL TRANSFER OF <—

9 GENERAL FEDERAL FUNDS TO THE COMBINED BENEFIT FUND ADDRESSING

10 THE SHORTFALL CREATED BY THE ABOVE-MENTIONED COURT CASES; AND BE

11 IT FURTHER

12 RESOLVED, THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONTRACT OF 1946, THE

13 HEALTH CARE BENEFITS PROMISED TO RETIRED COAL MINERS BE

14 CONTINUED, PRESERVED AND ENSURED; AND BE IT FURTHER

15 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be sent to the

16 President of the United States and to each member of Congress

17 from Pennsylvania.