As Introduced

132nd General Assembly Regular Session 2017-2018

H. C. R. No. 8

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Representative Cera

Cosponsors: Representatives Ramos, Boccieri, Howse, Sweeney, Bishoff, Antonio, Smith, K., Leland, Ginter, Sprague, Lepore-Hagan, Strahorn

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge t	che	Congress	of	the	United	States	to	enact	the	1
Miners	3 Pr	otection	Act	of	2017.					2

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF OHIO (THE SENATE CONCURRING):

WHEREAS, When faced with the prospect of a long strike that could hamper post-war economic recovery, President Harry Truman issued an Executive Order in 1946 directing the Secretary of the Interior to take possession of all bituminous coal mines in the United States and negotiate with the United Mine Workers of America for "appropriate changes in the terms and conditions of employment" of coal miners. After a week of negotiations, the Krug-Lewis agreement was announced and signed in the White House with President Truman as a witness; and

WHEREAS, The agreement created a welfare and retirement12fund that guaranteed lifetime payments to miners and their13dependents and survivors for retirement and in cases of14sickness, permanent disability, and death, and also created a15separate medical and hospital fund; and16

WHEREAS, The federal government returned control of the17mines to the companies in 1947 and a new collective bargaining18

agreement	was re	eached t	that g	uaranteed	retireme	nt ber	nefits	to	19
miners and	d their	depend	dents	and surviv	vors for	life;	and		20

WHEREAS, For the last 70 years, coal miners have bargained for funds to be dedicated to their health care in retirement because they knew that they would be sicker than the average senior citizen, with more nagging injuries and a greater risk of coal workers' pneumoconiosis, or black lung disease, or some other cardiopulmonary disease; and

WHEREAS, More than 105,000 miners have been killed on the job in the last century and more than 100,000 have passed from coal workers' pneumoconiosis or black lung disease, and knowing these risks, miners have continued to go to work every day to provide for their families and build a secure future for themselves and produce the fuel that has allowed America to become the most powerful nation on earth; and

WHEREAS, Congress passed and President George H.W. Bush signed the Coal Act into law in 1992, which established an industry-funded mechanism for paying for the health care of retired miners whose companies had gone out of business. In 2006, Congress and President George W. Bush amended the Coal Act to expand the financial resources available to the fund; and

WHEREAS, Tens of thousands of jobs have been eliminated in40America's coalfields and multiple companies have filed for41bankruptcy and received approval from bankruptcy courts to shed42their retiree obligations, leaving more than 26,000 retirees43confronting the loss of their health care benefits; and44

WHEREAS, The United Mine Workers of America 1974 Pension45Fund lost a significant portion of its value in the 200846recession and will not receive enough contributions from47employers to make up the shortfall, likely resulting in the Fund48becoming insolvent by 2022; and49

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WHEREAS, Congress passed a Continuing Resolution on December 9, 2016, to provide \$45 million for continued health care benefits for these retirees and their families until April 30, 2017; and

WHEREAS, The Miners Protection Act of 2017 (H.R. 179 and S. 175) is bipartisan legislation to amend the Coal Act to provide retirees of recently bankrupt companies with health care coverage from the United Mine Workers of America Health and Retirement Funds and re-purpose excess funds from an existing appropriation to shore up the Pension Plan; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the United States has an obligation to retired coal miners for the sacrifices they have made to provide the full measure of benefits that these retirees were promised and have earned; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we, the members of the 132nd General Assembly of the State of Ohio, in adopting this resolution, urge the Congress of the United States to enact the Miners Protection Act of 2017; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the House of Representatives transmit duly authenticated copies of this resolution to the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore and Secretary of the United States Senate, each member of the Ohio Congressional delegation, and the news media of Ohio.

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