

UMWA Members Fight to

“KEEP THE PROMISE”

UMWA Members Renew Commitment with New Congress



MISSY HUNT



MISSY HUNT

President Roberts discusses the Miners Protection Act with Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) during a March 22, 2017 meeting on Capitol Hill. Senator Manchin is the sponsor of S-175, the Miners Protection Act, in the U.S. Senate.

UMWA Members from Local Unions in Kentucky, Virginia, southern West Virginia and Illinois stand on the steps of the U.S. Capitol on February 28, 2017. They spent the week on Capitol Hill lobbying members of Congress in support of the Miners Protection Act.

The start of the year brought with it a new Congress and the renewal of the United Mine Workers of America's efforts to forge a permanent solution to the looming health care and pension crisis that hangs over the heads of retirees and their families. The Continuing Resolution approved by the 114th Congress is set to expire on April 30, 2017, creating uncertainty and anxiety for tens of thousands of these individuals. The Union has expressed its appreciation for the action Congress took to continue health care coverage through April and also for recognizing its responsibility to these Members and their families, but they must also be aware of the need to live up to the terms of the Krug-Lewis Agreement and pass legislation to correct the problem permanently. ►

“The Continuing Resolution (CR) passed in the final days of the last Congress included language that secured health care benefits for coal miners who would have otherwise seen those benefits terminated on December 31, 2016. While we are grateful members of Congress took this action, it does not address the long-term problem these miners and their families are facing. This Congress now has a responsibility to create a permanent solution and live up to the promise made in the Truman White House in 1946. These miners have kept their part of the bargain, and they have a right to expect Congress to fulfill its obligation.”

— CECIL E. ROBERTS

Beginning in early February, the first of several waves of UMWA retirees and family members began to arrive on Capitol Hill to talk with their Congressional delegations about the importance of passing the Miners Protection Act. Both pieces of legislation were reintroduced at the start of the new Congressional session. Representative David McKinley dropped his bill, HR-179, on January 3, 2017, and Senator Joe Manchin introduced S-175 on January 17, 2017. The Union has plotted out a strategy to educate members of Congress on the need to pass the House and Senate bills and finally offer relief to the retirees and widows who so desperately need the health care and pensions they have earned.

International District 20 Vice President Larry Spencer along with Jimmy Thomas, L.U. 1928; James Crawford, L.U. 7918; William Holley, L.U. 2245 and Curtis Turner, L.U. 2427 met with Representative Martha Roby (R-AL) to discuss the Miners Protection Act.



ERIN BATES

“The UMWA has been fighting for more than four years to secure the benefits these retirees, widows and dependents have worked for and earned all their lives,” said Secretary-Treasurer Scaramozzino. “Honestly, the stakes could not be higher. We are looking at a situation where tens of thousands of people who worked hard all their lives could see the health care they were promised taken away from them. This is not how America is supposed to treat working people, it is not what the American government promised these miners. We will not rest until the American government lives up to its obligation.”

The Membership Continues to Fight for Fairness

On February 14, 2017 Members from UMWA Local Unions in Pennsylvania, Ohio, northern West Virginia and Alabama arrived at the International Headquarters to prepare for meetings with Congressional members from their respective states. The UMWA delegation, which included miners affected by the legislation and some of their spouses, met with more than thirty members of Congress. Members met in Congressional offices and even in the halls of the House and Senate office buildings to press home the need for an immediate solution to the pension and health care crisis. Their message was well received by Congressional members and their staff.



At-Large International Vice President Donnie Samms with Local Union 2300 Members David Van Sickle, Anthony Kodric and Anthony Rosky in the lobby of the U.S. Senate Hart office building in preparation for meetings with Senators to build support for S-175.

ERIN BATES



President Roberts lead a delegation of UMWA Members from Districts 17 and 31 on March 22, 2017 to meet with Senator Shelly Moore-Capito (R-WV). The Senator is the original co-sponsor of S-175, the Miners Protection Act, in the U.S. Senate. (l-r) James Sanders, L.U. 1570; Shirley Inman, L.U. 2286; Joe Brown, L.U. 1570; President Roberts; Senator Capito; Robert Wade, L.U. 7635; Rick Ryan, L.U. 2286; Ronald Payne, L.U. 8843; John Mason, L.U. 1570 and Marion Tennant, L.U. 1570.

MISSY HUNT

“I was extremely impressed with the way our Members conducted themselves. Their ability to hold the attention of the people they talked to about the need to pass this legislation was remarkable,” said International District 20 Vice President Larry Spencer. “The connections they made with the Senators and House members is critical to the Union’s efforts and they did a wonderful job. They made the issues personal to each person they talked with.”

“We all understand the magnitude of the situation with regard to our health care and pensions,” said Local Union 1188 Financial Secretary David Dilly. “Members of the last Congress, including some from my home state of Ohio, pushed very hard to secure the lifetime benefits we have worked for and earned. In the end, they passed legislation that continued health care benefits until the end of April, 2017. While we are grateful for everything they have done, it’s simply not enough. We need a permanent solution to this problem, and we need it now.”

“The situation facing these and thousands of other retirees and their families continues to weigh heavily on their minds, said President Roberts. “In October and November of 2016, letters were sent to thousands of VEBA and certain 1993 Plan participants notifying them that their health care benefits would be terminated at the end of the year. The CR passed by Congress blocks this action, but in March of 2017 these individuals, along with hundreds more, were again notified that the health care they were promised would effectively end on April 30, 2017. The continued uncertainty about these benefits has caused unbelievable stress on the aging population of miners and their families who should

have never been put in this position in the first place.”

“This has been a long, hard road for many of our pensioners,” said International District 12 Vice President Steve Earle. “They have had this cloud of uncertainty hanging

over their heads for far too long. The constant worry, day-in and day-out, wears on every one of them. It’s just not fair. But through it all they rise to the occasion time and time again. They march into those Capitol Hill offices and explain the reasons ▶

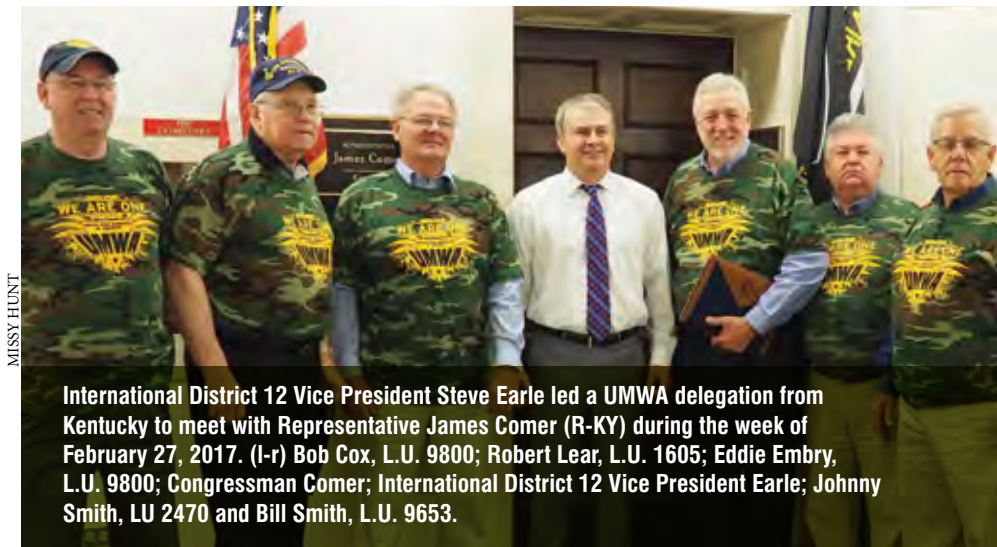


ERIN BATES

The UMWA’s Ohio delegation met with Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) in her Washington, DC office to discuss the pending termination of health care benefits to thousands of UMWA Members. Pictured (l-r) John Vargo, L.U. 1304; Jane Skinner wife of Norman Skinner, L.U. 1188; Congresswoman Kaptur; David Dilly, L.U. 1188 and Thomas Kacsmar, L.U. 6362.

“The situation miners and their families are facing with regard to the loss of benefits they have earned is becoming increasingly intolerable. At a time in their lives when relaxing and enjoying the pleasures of retirement that a lifetime of hard work should bring, they have no such comfort. They are continually confronted with the loss of health care and pensions they were promised long ago by the federal government. It is time to correct this problem and permit these individuals the opportunity to experience the retirement security they have worked for all their lives.”

– SECRETARY-TREASURER SCARAMOZZINO



MISSY HUNT

International District 12 Vice President Steve Earle led a UMWA delegation from Kentucky to meet with Representative James Comer (R-KY) during the week of February 27, 2017. (l-r) Bob Cox, L.U. 9800; Robert Lear, L.U. 1605; Eddie Embry, L.U. 9800; Congressman Comer; International District 12 Vice President Earle; Johnny Smith, LU 2470 and Bill Smith, L.U. 9653.



ERIN BATES

UMWA Members Keith Stephens and Ron Pauley, L.U. 2286 along with Lawson Shaffer and Tom Gibson, L.U. 2245 met with Representative Evan Jenkins (R-WV) at his Capitol Hill office in early March. Jenkins has been a strong supporter of the Miners Protection Act in the last several sessions of Congress.

Congress should pass the Miners Protection Act. They never cease to amaze me.”

“The UMWA has been very fortunate. We have not only been blessed with some of the greatest Labor Leaders in the world, we have the best members on the face of the earth,” said International District 17 Vice President Gary Trout. “They will fight and support one another and the Union with their last breath. It is absolutely remarkable, with everything they have on their minds, the patience and respect they demonstrate when discussing the issues with members of Congress.

The Membership is so reliable and dedicated, no one could ask for better representatives for the Union and all working people.”

UMWA Benefits are the Foundation for Many Communities

On February 27, 2017 retirees and their families, immediately impacted by the pending Congressional action, arrived in Washington, DC to visit their elected officials. This second wave of Members included delegations from Kentucky, Virginia, southern West Virginia and Illinois. Each was prepared to make their case

for passage of the Miners Protection Act to their respective Senators and Representatives, not only for each retiree and dependent, but for the communities where they live.

“Many of the coalfield areas where we come from have already been hard hit by the downturn in the industry and the overabundance of cheap natural gas,” said UMWA Local Union 1440 Financial Secretary Charles “Hawkeye” Dixon. “The pensions and health care legislation currently being discussed on Capitol Hill represents survival to these communities. These pension checks help pay the grocer and the butcher, they provide for trash collection and other city services. They help keep people working and local government functioning. The Commonwealth of Kentucky benefits from almost \$109 million in revenue from UMWA pensions and health care payments. This money is vital to every one of our communities.”

The health care benefits and pensions paid to miners and their families are critical to the wellbeing of each of these individuals. While the average UMWA pension to the

UMWA Members from across the coalfields met with Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-CA, House Minority Leader) in Washington, DC on March 2, 2017. Leader Pelosi has been a passionate supporter of the United Mine Workers of America and has worked tirelessly to assist working people across the Nation.



MISSY HUNT

retiree or their widow is around \$500 a month, the financial benefits to small coalfield communities is immeasurable.

“The possibility of losing retirement benefits is very real to every one of these individuals. This reality would have devastating effects on every family that is currently receiving health care and a pension as a result of their years of hard work in the mining industry,” said International Auditor/Teller Tanya James. “However, we must also recognize the fact that it would literally destroy the financial stability of many small towns and rural villages. The money that flows into these areas from the UMWA Health



MISSY HUNT

President Roberts and Representative David McKinley (R-WV) discuss HR-179 the U.S. House of Representatives version of the Miners Protection Act. Congressman McKinley submitted the Bill on January 3, 2017. Seated in the background (l-r) Joe Brown, L.U. 1570; Marion Tennant, L.U. 1570 and Robert Wade, L.U. 7635.

“This has been a long and bitter struggle for the Nation’s miners. They have worked hard to get these benefits and now must fight even harder to keep them. I know every one of them will fight to the end to secure these benefits and look after one another, but sometimes it just seems so cruel. I want the men and women of Congress to look into the eyes of these retirees and their families and then explain to all of us why they should be forced to fight for what they have already earned. How can they forsake the miner who gasps for air because his lungs are ravaged by pneumoconiosis or the widow whose husband left for work to provide for their family and never returned home? How can anyone look away from the child that will not see their parent again because the industry has taken them away? Have they not suffered enough and do they not deserve the benefits that were Promised?”

— CECIL E. ROBERTS

and Retirement Funds (the Funds) is the life blood of many doctors’ offices, clinics and hospitals. It allows grocery stores and other businesses to survive in the community. Congress needs to know how far reaching this crisis actually is.”

The UMWA Health and Retirement Funds pays out benefits to plan participants in all 50 states and many U.S. territories. These payments from the Funds, for health care benefits and retiree pensions, account for more than \$1.2 billion a year of

revenue into the U.S. economy. In West Virginia, benefits to funds participants and medical providers is almost \$460 million annually. Pennsylvania and Alabama’s average revenue from the Funds are \$180 million and \$85 million respectively every year.

“I have been in this fight to protect our hard-earned retirement benefits since it started over four years ago,” said UMWA local Union 9819 President Jody Hogge. “Everybody, especially members of

Congress, need to understand the importance of passing this legislation and fixing this problem once and for all. The situation not only affects the individual pensioner and their family, it has a rippling effect that could destroy entire communities. In Illinois, where I live, the benefits miners have earned generates \$112 million a year into small coalfield areas of the state. Losing that money would not only be devastating for the retiree, but would be the death knell for many communities.”

The Membership Keeps Marching to Capitol Hill

On March 21, 2017 the steady stream of dedicated UMWA Members continued the trek from across the Nation’s mountainous coal mining regions to the center of power in Washington, DC. Members from northern West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and western Kentucky were joined by delegations from as far away as Alabama and Indiana to walk the halls of Congress and meet with their representatives. ▶



MISSY HUNT

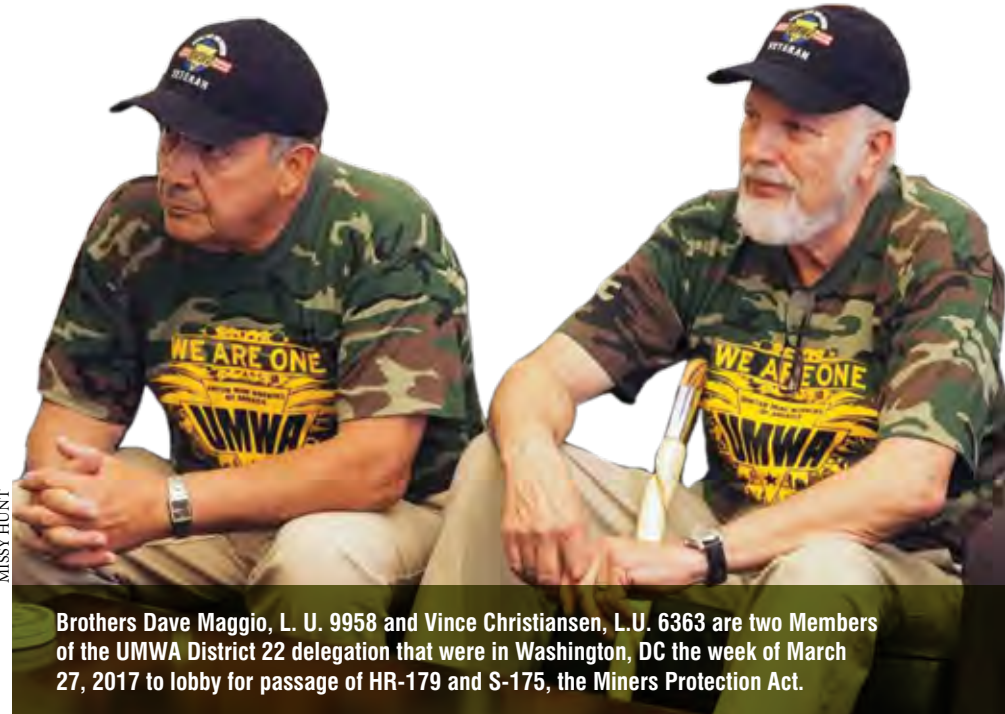
International District 22 Vice President Mike Dalpiaz lead a delegation of UMWA Members on Capitol Hill to meet with members of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate urging them to pass the Miners Protection Act. (L to r) Dave Maggio, L.U. 9958; Vince Christiansen, L.U. 6363; Congressman Tom O'Halleran (D-AZ); Vice President Dalpiaz; Robert Thomas, L.U. 6788 and David Deporto, L.U. 9958.

They, like the Members who came in the weeks before, talk about their own circumstances and the frustration and worry the continuing problem is causing their family and friends. The message they brought was polite but abundantly clear. We have earned our benefits, we toiled in the Nation's mines with the knowledge that pensions and health care would be part of the deal when we retired. We have held up our end of the bargain, now it is time for Congress to stand by its Promise.

Members from Virginia, eastern Kentucky, Illinois and Utah arrived in Washington, DC the week of March 27, 2017 and continued to press members of Congress to pass a permanent solution that finally protects their health care and pension benefits. This group of UMWA Members marks the 4th time since the beginning of the year that Union Members and their families have traveled to Capitol Hill to secure the benefits they have earned.

"This whole situation is a travesty," stated International District 22 Vice President Mike Dalpiaz. "None of this should have happened. These retirees and their families were

promised health care and pensions by the United States government. Unfortunately, we have come to expect corporations in this country to use whatever means necessary to beat down workers and steal away their retirement benefits, but not our own government. This problem has a viable solution, but just like everything UMWA Members have ever received, we must fight for it. That's why we are here in Washington, DC to fight for what is ours."



MISSY HUNT

Brothers Dave Maggio, L. U. 9958 and Vince Christiansen, L.U. 6363 are two Members of the UMWA District 22 delegation that were in Washington, DC the week of March 27, 2017 to lobby for passage of HR-179 and S-175, the Miners Protection Act.

The UMWA Membership has waged this struggle in federal bankruptcy courts, in the streets of major cities and small communities across the country. The government's Promise to honor their obligations to these miners and their families is closer than ever because of the Mem-

"I have told you on many occasions that, if you continue to march, if you continue to rally and if you continue to fight, we will reach our goals together. The struggle may be long and it surely will be difficult, but if we never stop and we never give up, we will win. Brothers and Sisters, we are going to win."

— CECIL E. ROBERTS

bership's unceasing efforts. UMWA Members and their families will continue to arrive in the Nation's Capital and demand justice for themselves, their families, their neighbors and their communities. The Promise of 1946 will be honored. ■