



For Immediate Release
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Congress Urged to Remember Mine Workers who Risked Their Lives as New Budget Deadline Looms

Statement of Robert Roach, Jr., President of the Alliance for Retired Americans, on the critical need to address the pensions of the United Mine Workers of America as plans are made to fund the government before the next deadline of February 8:

“As Congress works to develop legislation to fully fund the government, it is critical that the pension rights of thousands of retired United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) covered by the 1974 Pension Plan are addressed.

“Since 1946, the United States government has lived up to the promise it made to retired miners: ‘If you will bring out the coal that provides the foundation for the American economy, then the government will make sure you have a secure retirement.’

“Legislation is the only option that will prevent insolvency and preserve benefits for these retired mine workers. They earned their pensions by risking their lives in a dangerous line of work to meet the country’s energy requirements. Their average pension is just \$586 per month. Many pension recipients are widows who depend on that pension to meet their most basic needs.

“It is not the workers’ fault that their pension plan is in trouble. In fact, just ten years ago the plan was 93% funded, and on a path to 100% funding. However, the 2008-09 recession and a series of bankruptcies in the coal industry over the last six years have decimated the fund. Several coal companies were relieved of further pension obligations by bankruptcy courts and contributions were wiped out.

“Our government must meet that commitment that was made generations ago. Preserve these pensions, so that thousands of our seniors can live in dignity.”

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