



**KENTUCKIANS FOR THE
COMMONWEALTH**

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HOUSE BILL 239

BLACK LUNG BENEFITS

House Bill 239 is a bipartisan bill to replace language in the 2018 workers' comp legislation that prohibits radiologists – those most qualified to read x-rays – from certifying x-rays for state black lung benefits claims, which makes it much harder for miners with black lung disease to receive compensation.

HB 239 shows our support miners with black lung disease, making sure that the care and benefits they earned are easier to access, not made more difficult.



BLACK LUNG ON THE RISE IN KENTUCKY

Black lung is a fatal, incurable, and preventable disease caused when coal miners breathe rock dust and coal dust over time. After health and safety regulations passed in the 1970s, the rate of black lung disease among veteran miners declined significantly. But, starting in 2000, health professionals and researchers in Central Appalachia began to observe alarming trends. A recent federal report has confirmed:

- Younger miners are getting sick at higher rates than before
- The rate of black lung disease among Central Appalachian coal miners is now twice the national average for all coal miners
- The most severe form of black lung disease, called progressive massive fibrosis (PMF), is affecting a larger share of the region's miners than at any time in history

SUPPORT MINERS

We are Kentuckians. We believe all working people, including coal miners who risk their health and safety, should earn a good living and live a good life with excellent health care and a secure retirement.

KFTC members and our allies work at the state and federal levels to ensure that the epidemic in black lung disease is properly addressed, and that miners are protected, cared for and fairly compensated.

Ensuring that folks who've worked in the mines have the health care, income and retirements they deserve requires you to support and vote **yes on HB 239**.



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SENATE BILL 27

WAGE BONDS FOR MINING PERMITS

Senate Bill 27 would prohibit the approval of mining permit applications for coal companies that are not compliant with wage performance bonding requirements in state law. Penalties collected for violations of this requirement would be paid to employees harmed by the employer's failure to post the required performance bond.

As we saw over the summer when Blackjewel declared bankruptcy, the state of Kentucky didn't enforce an existing bond law to ensure that miners would receive all the pay that was coming to them. Senate Bill 27 would try to prevent that from happening to other workers by ensuring coal companies cannot get or maintain a permit to mine coal unless they have a bond to pay severance pay to their workers.

“I’m about to lose everything. I got a sick kid and no insurance – no money to feed him.”

*- Harlan County miner Stacy Trotter after losing pay owed him by Blackjewel
(as reported by Sydney Boles, Ohio Valley ReSource)*

