



**Midwest Coalition for Responsible Investment**

6400 Minnesota Ave., St. Louis Missouri 63111

314.678.0471 [midwest.coalition@yahoo.com](mailto:midwest.coalition@yahoo.com) [www.midwestcri.com](http://www.midwestcri.com)

March 21, 2013

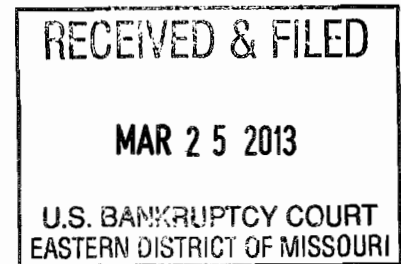
The Honorable Kathy A. Surratt-States

RE: Case NO. 12-51502

Thomas F. Eagleton US Courthouse

111 South 10 Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

St. Louis, MO 63102



Dear Judge Surratt-States:

We are writing you on behalf of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia (CCA) and religious leaders of the Appalachia area. We ask that you do everything in your power to retain the health benefits of the retired miners in the Patriot Coal Company bankruptcy.

Many of our members are aware of the dangers of both surface and underground mining. Through our healthcare and education ministries, we have known for years the effects of coal mining on lungs, heart, and limbs.

Catholic theology teaches that the welfare of workers comes before the maximization of profit, and that private property is not an absolute right. Corporations and workers are meant to work together for the common good. Catholic social teachings recognize Peabody and Arch coal as "indirect employers" (cf. *Laborem Exercens*, par. 17) whose obligations do not cease with the formation of Patriot, but take up when the first employer, Patriot, can no longer meet its obligations.

We respect that as a judge you will follow the bankruptcy code. But, we also understand that if you deem that Patriot Coal was formed intentionally or recklessly to dump huge obligations with little chance of Patriot's success, you can hold the former employers responsible. Dumping pensions and dumping benefits is now an established practice in many industries which means that workers who produce the product are defrauded of their full wage. This must not be allowed to continue.

Judge Surratt-States, we pray that you receive the spirit of wisdom during this difficult case. The security and health benefits of over 22,000 retired miners and their dependents rest in your hands. May God bless you with all the intelligence and discernment you will need!

*Sr. Carmen Schuyler*  
*Gale Hackney*  
*Debbie Gibson*  
*Mick Weese*  
*Paulette Zimmerman, SSND*  
*Mary Ann Hartman*

*Sister Cheryl Kemner, OSF*  
*S. Jean D. Schirmer*  
*Linda Jansen, SSND*  
*Anna Sandidge*  
*Sr. Barbara Jennings,*  
*Director*

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ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI-MR

Midwest Coalition  
for Responsible Investment  
6400 Minnesota Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63111-5207

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The Honorable Kathy A. Surratt-States  
Thomas F. Eagleton US Courthouse  
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St. Louis, MO 63102

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