



WASHINGTON BUREAU · NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
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May 21, 2019

The Honorable Richard Neal, Chairman
The Honorable Kevin Brady, Ranking Member
U.S. House Ways and Means Committee
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: NAACP Strong Support for *The Miner Pension Protection Act (H.R. 935)*
and the *Benefits for Miner Act of 2019 (H.R. 934)***

Chairman Neal and Ranking Member Brady:

On behalf of the NAACP, our nation's oldest, largest and most widely-recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization, with over 2,200 membership units throughout our Nation, including units located on military bases throughout Europe and Asia, we strongly urge you to support through passage, *The Health Benefits for Miners Act of 2019 (H.R. 934)* and the *Miner Pension Protection Act (H.R. 935)* as they come before your committee.

The Health Benefits for Miners Act of 2019 (H.R. 934), as introduced by Congressman Bobby Scott (VA), works to save healthcare benefits for Mine Worker retirees who are likely to lose their benefits as a result of 2018 bankruptcy filings. *H.R. 934* reaffirms the language adopted by the Congress in 2017 to save the healthcare of 22,600 retirees, their dependents and widows.

In conjunction with *H.R. 934, the Miner Pensions Protection Act (H.R. 935)*, as introduced by Representative David McKinley (WV), advances efforts to address the entire multi-employer pension crisis in a way that does not penalize affiliate unions or their retired members. Passage of this legislation to preserve retired miners' pensions is a key- legislative priority of the NAACP.

In short, we recognize that, at no fault to the miners or other pension participants, the UMWA 1974 Pension Plan has been devastated by a series of coal company bankruptcies, and is projected to become insolvent in the year 2022. There is only one major employer remaining in the Fund, and if that employer also enters bankruptcy, the Funds collapse will happen even sooner, resulting in a full-blown economic disaster.

Among the many great things about the legislative approach we are advocating, is that it does not require the creation of a new structure. The final provision needed to complete this solution is to provide the resources necessary to prevent this impending catastrophe.

As such, we strongly urge you to advance these bills through your committee and on to the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives as quickly as possible.

Thank you for allowing me to present the position of the NAACP on this crucial matter. If there is anything I or the NAACP can do to help expedite *The Miner Pension Protection Act (H.R. 935)* and *the Benefits for Miners Act of 2019 (H.R. 934)* through passage and on to implementation, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 463-2940.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hilary O. Shelton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and "S".

Hilary O. Shelton
Director, NAACP Washington Bureau &
Senior Vice President for Policy and Advocacy

cc: Hon. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House
Hon. Kevin McCarthy, House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee