

United Mine Workers of America

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UNITED MINE WORKERS' HEADQUARTERS
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United States Senators from coal-producing regions

Re: Dangerous impacts to coalfield residents of reconciliation legislation before the Senate

Dear Senator:

As you consider the reconciliation legislation to provide extraordinary tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans and corporations, the UMWA believes it is imperative that you also consider the ramifications of the passage of this legislation on your constituents. Although the final language of the legislation remains in flux, the overall targets under consideration to pay for these tax cuts will be devastating to millions of people, including those in your state.

The consequences of cuts to Medicaid funding under consideration will fall heaviest on rural hospitals and clinics, causing many to reduce services or even close. The vast majority of our members and their families live in rural areas; these closures will have a direct effect on them whether they qualify for Medicaid or not. Tragically, many of them will die needlessly and prematurely.

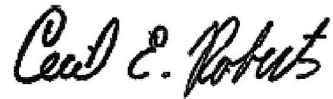
The impacts of Medicaid cuts will fall especially hard on those clinics serving Black Lung victims, most of whom qualify for Medicaid. These victims have nowhere else to go to get the treatments and diagnoses they need from qualified professionals trained to deal with Black Lung disease. At a time when black lung is on the rise in America's coal mines, even among younger workers, we should not be considering the elimination of these clinics. Yet that will be the likely effect of this legislation.

As you know, the rural areas of America provide a proportionately higher percentage of those who have served in our nation's armed forces than the more urban areas. Many of these veterans – often dealing with the consequences of wounds received in battle, PTSD or other combat-related illnesses – rely on Medicaid and food benefits provided by the SNAP program to sustain themselves. The cuts under consideration will cause significant harm to these people who proudly wore our nation's uniform and served us all. That is a travesty.

There are many other things in this legislation that will have negative effects on working people, like punishing those who have chosen to serve our nation as government employees by eliminating workplace protections and increasing costs for those who keep their jobs; slashing the potential for millions of new energy and manufacturing jobs in the coal-producing areas of the country; and more.

It is frankly unconscionable that any of these things are under consideration just so the wealthiest Americans and big corporations can continue to enjoy huge tax cuts the rest of us pay for. The UMWA urges you to consider the full consequences of the language in the reconciliation legislation and stand up to protect your constituents who will be put at grave risk if it passes in any variation of its current form.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cecil E. Roberts". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Cecil E. Roberts