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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To improve compliance with mine safety and health laws, empower miners to raise safety concerns, prevent future mine tragedies, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To improve compliance with mine safety and health laws, empower miners to raise safety concerns, prevent future mine tragedies, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Robert C. Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act of 2025”.

6 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
7 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. References.

TITLE I—ADDITIONAL INSPECTION AND INVESTIGATION
AUTHORITY

- Sec. 101. Independent accident investigations.
- Sec. 102. Subpoena authority and miner rights during inspections and investigations.
- Sec. 103. Designation of miner representative.
- Sec. 104. Additional amendments relating to inspections and investigations.

TITLE II—ENHANCED ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY

- Sec. 201. Judicial review of regulations.
- Sec. 202. Findings of violations.
- Sec. 203. Procedures and criteria for determining a pattern of violations.
- Sec. 204. Injunctive authority.
- Sec. 205. Revocation of approval of plans.
- Sec. 206. Challenging a decision to approve, modify, or revoke a coal or other mine plan.

TITLE III—PENALTIES

- Sec. 301. Civil penalties.
- Sec. 302. Civil and criminal liability of officers, directors, and agents.
- Sec. 303. Criminal penalties.
- Sec. 304. Commission review of penalty assessments.
- Sec. 305. Delinquent payments and prejudgment interest.

TITLE IV—MINERS' RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS

- Sec. 401. Protection from retaliation.
- Sec. 402. Protection from loss of pay.
- Sec. 403. Underground coal miner employment standard for mines placed in pattern of violations status.

TITLE V—MODERNIZING HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

- Sec. 501. Pre-shift review of mine conditions.
- Sec. 502. Rock dust standards.
- Sec. 503. Atmospheric monitoring systems.
- Sec. 504. Refresher training on miners' rights and responsibilities.
- Sec. 505. Authority to mandate additional training.
- Sec. 506. Brookwood-Sago Mine Safety Grants.
- Sec. 507. Certification of personnel.
- Sec. 508. Electronic records requirement.

TITLE VI—ADDITIONAL MINE SAFETY PROVISIONS

- Sec. 601. Definitions.
- Sec. 602. Assistance to States.
- Sec. 603. Authorization of cooperative agreements by NIOSH Office of Mine Safety and Health.
- Sec. 604. Double encumbrance; succession plan.

1 **SEC. 2. REFERENCES.**

2 Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in
3 this Act an amendment is expressed as an amendment to
4 a section or other provision, the reference shall be consid-
5 ered to be made to a section or other provision of the Fed-
6 eral Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 (30 U.S.C. 801
7 et seq.).

8 **TITLE I—ADDITIONAL INSPEC-**
9 **TION AND INVESTIGATION**
10 **AUTHORITY**

11 **SEC. 101. INDEPENDENT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 103(b) (30 U.S.C.
13 813(b)) is amended by striking “(b) For the purpose” and
14 inserting the following:

15 “(b) ACCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS.—

16 “(1) IN GENERAL.—For all accident investiga-
17 tions under this Act, the Secretary shall—

18 “(A) determine why the accident occurred;

19 “(B) determine whether there were viola-
20 tions of law, mandatory health and safety
21 standards, or other requirements, and if there
22 is evidence of conduct that may constitute a
23 violation of Federal criminal law, the Secretary
24 may refer such evidence to the Attorney Gen-
25 eral; and

1 “(C) make recommendations to avoid any
2 recurrence.

3 “(2) INDEPENDENT ACCIDENT INVESTIGA-
4 TIONS.—

5 “(A) IN GENERAL.—There shall be, in ad-
6 dition to an accident investigation under para-
7 graph (1), an independent investigation by an
8 independent investigation panel (referred to in
9 this subsection as the ‘Panel’) appointed under
10 subparagraph (B) for—

11 “(i) any accident involving 3 or more
12 deaths; or

13 “(ii) any accident that is of such se-
14 verity or scale for potential or actual harm
15 that, in the opinion of the Secretary of
16 Health and Human Services, the accident
17 merits an independent investigation.

18 “(B) APPOINTMENT.—

19 “(i) IN GENERAL.—As soon as prac-
20 ticable after an accident described in sub-
21 paragraph (A), the Secretary of Health
22 and Human Services shall appoint 5 mem-
23 bers for the Panel required under this
24 paragraph from among individuals who
25 have expertise in accident investigations,

1 mine engineering, or mine safety and
2 health that is relevant to the particular in-
3 vestigation.

4 “(ii) CHAIRPERSON.—The Panel shall
5 include, and be chaired by, a representative
6 from the Office of Mine Safety and Health
7 Research, of the National Institute for Oc-
8 cupational Safety and Health (referred to
9 in this subsection as NIOSH).

10 “(iii) CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.—
11 Panel members, and staff and consultants
12 assisting the Panel with an investigation,
13 shall be free from conflicts of interest with
14 regard to the investigation, and be subject
15 to the same standards of ethical conduct
16 for persons employed by the Secretary.

17 “(iv) COMPOSITION.—The Secretary
18 of Health and Human Services shall ap-
19 point as members of the Panel—

20 “(I) 1 operator of a mine or indi-
21 vidual representing mine operators,
22 and

23 “(II) 1 representative of a labor
24 organization that represents miners,

1 and may not appoint more than 1 of either
2 such individuals as members of the Panel.

3 “(v) STAFF AND EXPENSES.—The Di-
4 rector of NIOSH shall designate NIOSH
5 staff to facilitate the work of the Panel.
6 The Director may accept as staff personnel
7 on detail from other Federal agencies or
8 re-employ annuitants. The detail of per-
9 sonnel under this paragraph may be on a
10 non-reimbursable basis, and such detail
11 shall be without interruption or loss of civil
12 service status or privilege. The Director of
13 NIOSH shall have the authority to procure
14 on behalf of the Panel such materials, sup-
15 plies or services, including technical ex-
16 perts, as requested in writing by a majority
17 of the Panel.

18 “(vi) COMPENSATION AND TRAVEL.—
19 All members of the Panel who are officers
20 or employees of the United States shall
21 serve without compensation in addition to
22 that received for their services as officers
23 or employees of the United States. Each
24 Panel member who is not an officer or em-
25 ployee of the United States shall be com-

1 compensated at a rate equal to the daily equiv-
2 alent of the annual rate of basic pay pre-
3 scribed for level IV of the Executive Sched-
4 ule under section 5315 of title 5, United
5 States Code, for each day (including travel
6 time) during which such member is en-
7 gaged in the performance of duties of the
8 Panel. The members of the Panel shall be
9 allowed travel expenses, including per diem
10 in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized
11 for employees of agencies under subchapter
12 1 of chapter 57 of title 5, United States
13 Code, while away from their homes or reg-
14 ular places of business in the performance
15 of services for the Panel.

16 “(C) DUTIES.—The Panel shall—

17 “(i) assess and identify any factors
18 that caused the accident, including defi-
19 ciencies in safety management systems,
20 regulations, enforcement, industry prac-
21 tices or guidelines, or organizational fail-
22 ures;

23 “(ii) identify and evaluate any con-
24 tributing actions or inactions of—

25 “(I) the operator;

1 “(II) any contractors or other
2 persons engaged in mining-related
3 functions at the site;

4 “(III) any State agency with
5 oversight responsibilities;

6 “(IV) any agency or office within
7 the Department of Labor;

8 “(V) the Federal Mine Safety
9 and Health Review Commission; or

10 “(VI) any other person or entity
11 (including equipment manufacturers);

12 “(iii) review the determinations and
13 recommendations by the Secretary under
14 paragraph (1);

15 “(iv) prepare a report that—

16 “(I) includes the findings regard-
17 ing the causal factors described in
18 clauses (i) and (ii);

19 “(II) identifies any strengths and
20 weaknesses in the Secretary’s inves-
21 tigation; and

22 “(III) includes recommendations,
23 including interim recommendations
24 where appropriate, to industry, labor
25 organizations, State and Federal

1 agencies, or Congress, regarding pol-
2 icy, regulatory, enforcement, adminis-
3 trative, or other changes, which in the
4 judgment of the Panel, would prevent
5 a recurrence at other mines; and

6 “(v) publish such findings and rec-
7 ommendations (excluding any portions
8 which the Attorney General requests that
9 the Secretary withhold in relation to a
10 criminal referral) and hold public meetings
11 to inform the mining community and fami-
12 lies of affected miners of the Panel’s find-
13 ings and recommendations.

14 “(D) HEARINGS; APPLICABILITY OF CER-
15 TAIN FEDERAL LAW.—The Panel shall have the
16 authority to conduct public hearings or meet-
17 ings, but shall not be subject to the Federal Ad-
18 visory Committee Act. All public hearings of the
19 Panel shall be subject to the requirements
20 under section 552b of title 5, United States
21 Code.

22 “(E) MEMORANDUM OF UNDER-
23 STANDING.—Not later than 90 days after the
24 date of enactment of the Robert C. Byrd Mine
25 Safety Protection Act of 2025, the Secretary of

1 Labor and the Secretary of Health and Human
2 Services shall conclude and publically issue a
3 memorandum of understanding that—

4 “(i) outlines administrative arrange-
5 ments which will facilitate a coordination
6 of efforts between the Secretary of Labor
7 and the Panel, ensures that the Secretary’s
8 investigation under paragraph (1) is not
9 delayed or otherwise compromised by the
10 activities of the Panel, and establishes a
11 process to resolve any conflicts between
12 such investigations;

13 “(ii) ensures that Panel members or
14 staff will be able to participate in inves-
15 tigation activities (such as mine inspections
16 and interviews) related to the Secretary of
17 Labor’s investigation and will have full ac-
18 cess to documents that are assembled or
19 produced in such investigation, and en-
20 sures that the Secretary of Labor will
21 make all of the authority available to such
22 Secretary under this section to obtain in-
23 formation and witnesses which may be re-
24 quested by such Panel; and

1 “(iii) establishes such other arrange-
2 ments as are necessary to implement this
3 paragraph.

4 “(F) PROCEDURES.—Not later than 90
5 days after the date of enactment of the Robert
6 C. Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act of 2025,
7 the Secretary of Health and Human Services
8 shall establish procedures to ensure the consist-
9 ency and effectiveness of Panel investigations.
10 In establishing such procedures, such Secretary
11 shall consult with independent safety investiga-
12 tion agencies, sectors of the mining industry,
13 representatives of miners, families of miners in-
14 volved in fatal accidents, State mine safety
15 agencies, and mine rescue organizations. Such
16 procedures shall include—

17 “(i) authority for the Panel to use evi-
18 dence, samples, interviews, data, analyses,
19 findings, or other information gathered by
20 the Secretary of Labor, as the Panel deter-
21 mines valid;

22 “(ii) provisions to ensure confiden-
23 tiality if requested by any witness, to the
24 extent permitted by law, and prevent con-

1 flicts of interest in witness representation;
2 and

3 “(iii) provisions for preservation of
4 public access to the Panel’s records
5 through the Secretary of Health and
6 Human Services.

7 “(G) SUBPOENAS; WITNESSES; CON-
8 TEMPT.—

9 “(i) SUBPOENA AUTHORITY.—For the
10 purpose of making any investigation of any
11 accident or other occurrence relating to
12 health or safety in a coal or other mine
13 under this paragraph, the Director of the
14 National Institute for Occupational Safety
15 and Health shall at the request of a major-
16 ity of the Panel or upon his own initiative
17 sign and issue subpoenas for the attend-
18 ance and testimony of witnesses and the
19 production of relevant papers, books, and
20 documents, and administer oaths. Wit-
21 nesses summoned shall be paid the same
22 fees and mileage that are paid witnesses in
23 the courts of the United States.

24 “(ii) CONTUMACY.—In case of contu-
25 macy or refusal to obey a subpoena served

1 upon any person under this section, the
2 district court of the United States for any
3 district in which such person is found or
4 resides or transacts business, upon applica-
5 tion by the United States and after notice
6 to such person, shall have jurisdiction to
7 issue an order requiring such person to ap-
8 pear and give testimony before the Direc-
9 tor or Panel, or to appear and produce
10 documents before the Director or Panel, or
11 both, and any failure to obey such order of
12 the court may be punished by such court
13 as a contempt thereof.

14 “(iii) ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATIVE AU-
15 THORITY.—In carrying out inspections and
16 investigations under this subsection, the
17 staff of the Director or Panel and attor-
18 neys representing the Director or Panel
19 are authorized to question any individual
20 privately. Under this subparagraph, any
21 individual who is willing to speak with or
22 provide a statement to the Director or
23 Panel’s staff or their attorneys, may do so
24 without the presence, involvement, or
25 knowledge of the operator or the operator’s

1 agents or attorneys. The Director or Panel
2 shall keep the identity of an individual pro-
3 viding such a statement confidential to the
4 extent permitted by law. Nothing in this
5 paragraph prevents any individual from
6 being represented by that individual's per-
7 sonal attorney or other representative.

8 “(H) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIA-
9 TIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated
10 to carry out this subsection such sums as may
11 be necessary.

12 “(3) POWERS AND PROCESSES.—For the pur-
13 pose”.

14 (b) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Section 511(a)
15 (30 U.S.C. 958(a)) is amended by inserting after “501,”
16 the following: “the status of implementation of rec-
17 ommendations from each independent investigation panel
18 under section 103(b) received in the preceding 5 years”.

19 **SEC. 102. SUBPOENA AUTHORITY AND MINER RIGHTS DUR-**
20 **ING INSPECTIONS AND INVESTIGATIONS.**

21 Section 103(b) (as amended by section 101) (30
22 U.S.C. 813(b)) is further amended by adding at the end
23 the following:

24 “(4) ADDITIONAL POWERS.—For purposes of
25 making inspections and investigations, the Secretary

1 or the Secretary's designee, may sign and issue sub-
2 poenas for the attendance and testimony of wit-
3 nesses and the production of information, including
4 all relevant data, papers, books, documents, and
5 items of physical evidence, and administer oaths.
6 Witnesses summoned shall be paid the same fees
7 that are paid witnesses in the courts of the United
8 States. In carrying out inspections and investiga-
9 tions under this subsection, authorized representa-
10 tives of the Secretary and attorneys representing the
11 Secretary are authorized to question any individual
12 privately. Under this section, any individual who is
13 willing to speak with or provide a statement to such
14 authorized representatives or attorneys representing
15 the Secretary may do so without the presence, in-
16 volvement, or knowledge of the operator or the oper-
17 ator's agents or attorneys. The Secretary shall keep
18 the identity of an individual providing such a state-
19 ment confidential to the extent permitted by law.
20 Nothing in this paragraph prevents any individual
21 from being represented by that individual's personal
22 attorney or other representative.”.

23 **SEC. 103. DESIGNATION OF MINER REPRESENTATIVE.**

24 Section 103(f) (30 U.S.C. 813(f)) is amended by in-
25 serting before the last sentence the following: “If any

1 miner is entrapped, disabled, killed, or otherwise prevented
2 as the result of an accident in such mine from designating
3 such a representative directly, such miner's closest relative
4 may act on behalf of such miner in designating such a
5 representative. If any miner is not currently working in
6 such mine as the result of an accident in such mine, but
7 would be currently working in such mine but for such acci-
8 dent, such miner may designate such a representative. A
9 representative of miners shall have the right to participate
10 in any accident investigation the Secretary initiates pursu-
11 ant to subsection (b), including the right to participate
12 in investigative interviews and to review all relevant pa-
13 pers, books, documents and records produced in connec-
14 tion with the accident investigation, unless the Secretary,
15 in consultation with the Attorney General, excludes such
16 representatives from the investigation on the grounds that
17 inclusion would interfere with or adversely impact a crimi-
18 nal investigation that is pending or under consideration.”.

19 **SEC. 104. ADDITIONAL AMENDMENTS RELATING TO IN-**
20 **SPECTIONS AND INVESTIGATIONS.**

21 (a) HOURS OF INSPECTIONS.—Section 103(a) (30
22 U.S.C. 813(a)) is amended by inserting after the third
23 sentence the following: “Such inspections shall be con-
24 ducted during the various shifts and days of the week dur-
25 ing which miners are normally present in the mine to en-

1 sure that the protections of this Act are afforded to all
2 miners working all shifts.”.

3 (b) REVIEW OF MINE PATTERN OF VIOLATIONS STA-
4 TUS.—Section 103(a) is further amended by inserting be-
5 fore the last sentence the following: “The Secretary shall,
6 upon request by an operator, review with the appropriate
7 mine officials the Secretary’s most recent evaluation for
8 pattern of violations status (as provided in section 104(e))
9 for that mine during the course of a mine’s regular quar-
10 terly inspection of an underground mine or a biannual in-
11 spection of a surface mine, or, at the discretion of the Sec-
12 retary, during the pre-inspection conference.”.

13 (c) INJURY AND ILLNESS REPORTING.—Section
14 103(d) (30 U.S.C. 813(d)) is amended by striking the last
15 sentence and inserting the following: “The records to be
16 kept and made available by the operator of the mine shall
17 include man-hours worked and occupational injuries and
18 illnesses with respect to the miners in their employ or
19 under their direction or authority, and shall be maintained
20 separately for each mine and be reported at a frequency
21 determined by the Secretary, but at least annually. Inde-
22 pendent contractors (within the meaning of section 3(d))
23 shall be responsible for reporting accidents, occupational
24 injuries and illnesses, and man-hours worked for each
25 mine with respect to the miners in their employ or under

1 their direction or authority, and shall be reported at a fre-
2 quency determined by the Secretary, but at least annually.
3 Reports or records of operators and contractors required
4 and submitted to the Secretary under this subsection shall
5 be signed and certified as accurate and complete by a
6 knowledgeable and responsible person possessing a certifi-
7 cation, registration, qualification, or other approval, as
8 provided for under section 118. Knowingly falsifying such
9 records or reports shall be grounds for revoking such cer-
10 tification, registration, qualification, or other approval
11 under the standards established under subsection (b)(1)
12 of such section.”.

13 (d) ORDERS FOLLOWING AN ACCIDENT.—Section
14 103(k) (30 U.S.C. 813(k)) is amended by striking “, when
15 present,”.

16 (e) CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN THE REPRESENTA-
17 TION OF MINERS.—Section 103(a) (30 U.S.C. 813(a)) is
18 amended by adding at the end the following: “During in-
19 spections and investigations under this section, and during
20 any litigation under this Act, no attorney shall represent
21 or purport to represent both the operator of a coal or other
22 mine and any other individual, unless such individual has
23 knowingly and voluntarily waived all actual and reasonably
24 foreseeable conflicts of interest resulting from such rep-
25 resentation. The Secretary is authorized to take such ac-

1 tions as the Secretary considers appropriate to ascertain
2 whether such individual has knowingly and voluntarily
3 waived all such conflicts of interest. If the Secretary finds
4 that such an individual cannot be represented adequately
5 by such an attorney due to such conflicts of interest, the
6 Secretary may petition the appropriate United States Dis-
7 trict Court which shall have jurisdiction to disqualify such
8 attorney as counsel to such individual in the matter. The
9 Secretary may make such a motion as part of an ongoing
10 related civil action or as a miscellaneous action.”.

11 **TITLE II—ENHANCED**
12 **ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY**

13 **SEC. 201. JUDICIAL REVIEW OF REGULATIONS.**

14 Section 101(d) (30 U.S.C. 811(d)) is amended—

15 (1) in the first sentence—

16 (A) by striking “this section may” and in-
17 serting “this section or a regulation promul-
18 gated under this Act may”; and

19 (B) by striking “such standard” each place
20 it appears and inserting “such standard or reg-
21 ulation”;

22 (2) in the third sentence, by inserting “or regu-
23 lation” after “standard”;

24 (3) in the fifth sentence, by inserting “or regu-
25 lation” after “standard”; and

1 (4) in the sixth sentence, by inserting “or regu-
2 lation” after “standard”.

3 **SEC. 202. FINDINGS OF VIOLATIONS.**

4 Section 104(d)(1) (30 U.S.C. 814(d)(1)) is amend-
5 ed—

6 (1) in the first sentence—

7 (A) by striking “any mandatory health or
8 safety standard” and inserting “any provision
9 of this Act, including any mandatory health or
10 safety standard or regulation promulgated
11 under this Act”; and

12 (B) by striking “such mandatory health or
13 safety standards” and inserting “such provi-
14 sions, regulations, or mandatory health or safe-
15 ty standards”; and

16 (2) in the second sentence, by striking “any
17 mandatory health or safety standard” and inserting
18 “any provision of this Act, including any mandatory
19 health or safety standard or regulation promulgated
20 under this Act,”.

21 **SEC. 203. PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING**
22 **A PATTERN OF VIOLATIONS.**

23 Part 104 of chapter I of title 30, Code of Federal
24 Regulations, as revised by the Federal Mine Safety and
25 Health Administration and published at 78 Fed. Reg.

1 5073 (January 23, 2013) shall have the force and effect
2 of law and shall remain in effect subject to an Act of Con-
3 gress.

4 **SEC. 204. INJUNCTIVE AUTHORITY.**

5 Section 108(a)(2) (30 U.S.C. 818(a)(2)) is amended
6 by striking “a pattern of violation of” and all that follows
7 and inserting “a course of conduct that in the judgment
8 of the Secretary constitutes a continuing hazard to the
9 health or safety of miners, including violations of this Act
10 or of mandatory health and safety standards or regula-
11 tions under this Act.”.

12 **SEC. 205. REVOCATION OF APPROVAL OF PLANS.**

13 Section 105 (30 U.S.C. 815) is amended—

14 (1) by redesignating subsection (d) as sub-
15 section (e); and

16 (2) by inserting after subsection (c) the fol-
17 lowing:

18 “(d) REVOCATION OF APPROVAL OF PLANS.—

19 “(1) REVOCATION.—If the Secretary finds that
20 any program or plan of an operator, or part thereof,
21 that was approved by the Secretary under this Act
22 is based on inaccurate information or that cir-
23 cumstances that existed when such plan was ap-
24 proved have materially changed and that continued
25 operation of such mine under such plan constitutes

1 a hazard to the safety or health of miners, the Sec-
2 retary shall revoke the approval of such program or
3 plan.

4 “(2) WITHDRAWAL ORDERS.—Upon revocation
5 of the approval of a program or plan under sub-
6 section (a), the Secretary may immediately issue an
7 order requiring the operator to cause all persons, ex-
8 cept those persons referred to in section 104(c), to
9 be withdrawn from such mine or an area of such
10 mine, and to be prohibited from entering such mine
11 or such area, until the operator has submitted and
12 the Secretary has approved a new plan.”.

13 **SEC. 206. CHALLENGING A DECISION TO APPROVE, MOD-**
14 **IFY, OR REVOKE A COAL OR OTHER MINE**
15 **PLAN.**

16 Section 105(e) (as redesignated by section 204(1))
17 (30 U.S.C. 815(e)) is amended by adding at the end the
18 following: “In any proceeding in which a party challenges
19 the Secretary’s decision whether to approve, modify, or re-
20 voke a coal or other mine plan under this Act, the Com-
21 mission shall affirm the Secretary’s decision unless the
22 challenging party establishes that such decision was arbi-
23 trary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or otherwise not
24 in accordance with law.”.

1 **TITLE III—PENALTIES**

2 **SEC. 301. CIVIL PENALTIES.**

3 (a) **TARGETED PENALTIES.**—Section 110(b) (30
4 U.S.C. 820(b)) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
5 lowing:

6 “(3) A civil penalty of not more than \$220,000
7 may be assessed for—

8 “(A) any change to a ventilation system or
9 ventilation control in a coal or other mine,
10 where such ventilation system or control is re-
11 quired by a ventilation plan, safety standard, or
12 order, and such change is made without prior
13 approval of the Secretary and diminishes the
14 level of protection below the minimum require-
15 ments of the approved ventilation plan or appli-
16 cable safety standard or order;

17 “(B) a violation of a mandatory health and
18 safety standard requiring rock dusting in a coal
19 mine;

20 “(C) a violation of the statutory prohibi-
21 tion on providing advance notice of an inspec-
22 tion; or

23 “(D) a violation of a mandatory health and
24 safety standard requiring examinations of work
25 areas in an underground coal mine.”.

1 (b) INCREASED CIVIL PENALTIES DURING PATTERN
2 OF VIOLATIONS STATUS.—Section 110(b) (30 U.S.C.
3 820(b)) is further amended by adding at the end the fol-
4 lowing:

5 “(4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act,
6 an operator of a coal or other mine that is in pattern of
7 violations status under section 104(e) shall be assessed an
8 increased civil penalty for any violation of this Act, includ-
9 ing any mandatory health or safety standard or regulation
10 promulgated under this Act. Such increased penalty shall
11 be twice the amount that would otherwise be assessed for
12 the violation under this Act, including the regulations pro-
13 mulgated under this Act, subject to the maximum civil
14 penalty established for the violation under this Act.”.

15 (c) CIVIL PENALTY FOR RETALIATION.—Section
16 110(a) (30 U.S.C. 820(a)) is further amended—

17 (1) by redesignating paragraph (4) as para-
18 graph (5); and

19 (2) by inserting after paragraph (3) the fol-
20 lowing:

21 “(4) If any person violates section 105(c), the Sec-
22 retary shall propose, and the Commission shall assess, a
23 civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 or more than
24 \$100,000 for the first occurrence of such violation, and

1 not less than \$20,000 or more than \$200,000 for any sub-
2 sequent violation, during any 3-year period.”.

3 (d) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—Section 110(a)(1)
4 (30 U.S.C. 820(a)(1)) is amended by inserting “including
5 any regulation promulgated under this Act,” after “this
6 Act,”.

7 **SEC. 302. CIVIL AND CRIMINAL LIABILITY OF OFFICERS, DI-**
8 **RECTORS, AND AGENTS.**

9 Section 110(c) (30 U.S.C. 820(c)) is amended to read
10 as follows:

11 “(c) CIVIL AND CRIMINAL LIABILITY OF OFFICERS,
12 DIRECTORS, AND AGENTS.—

13 “(1) CIVIL PENALTIES.—Whenever an operator
14 engages in conduct for which the operator is subject
15 to civil penalties under this section, any director, of-
16 ficer, or agent of such operator who knowingly au-
17 thorizes, orders, or carries out such conduct, or who
18 knowingly authorizes, orders, or carries out any pol-
19 icy or practice that results in such conduct and hav-
20 ing reason to believe it would so result, shall be sub-
21 ject to the same civil penalties under this section as
22 if it were an operator engaging in such conduct.

23 “(2) CRIMINAL PENALTIES.—Whenever an op-
24 erator engages in conduct for which the operator is
25 subject to criminal penalties under subsection (d),

1 any director, officer, or agent of such operator who
2 knowingly authorizes, orders, or carries out such
3 conduct, or who knowingly authorizes, orders, or
4 carries out a policy or practice that results in such
5 conduct, and knowing that it will so result, shall be
6 subject to the same penalties under paragraph (1) or
7 (2) of subsection (d) as if such person were an oper-
8 ator engaging in such conduct.”.

9 **SEC. 303. CRIMINAL PENALTIES.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 110 (30 U.S.C. 820) is
11 amended by striking subsection (d) and—

12 (1) by inserting the following new heading:

13 “(d) CRIMINAL PENALTIES.—”;

14 (2) by inserting after the heading (as added by
15 paragraph (1) of this subsection), the following new
16 paragraph:

17 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Whoever, being an oper-
18 ator, knowingly—

19 “(A) violates a mandatory health or safety
20 standard, or

21 “(B) violates or fails or refuses to comply
22 with any order issued under section 104 or sec-
23 tion 107, or any order incorporated in a final
24 decision issued under this Act (except an order

1 incorporated in a decision under subsection
2 (a)(1) or section 105(e)),
3 shall, upon conviction, be fined not more than
4 \$250,000, or imprisoned for not more than 1 year,
5 or both, except that if the operator commits the vio-
6 lation after having been previously convicted of a
7 violation under this paragraph and if, the operator
8 knows or has reason to know that such subsequent
9 violation has the potential to expose a miner to risk
10 of serious injury, serious illness, or death, the oper-
11 ator shall, upon conviction, be fined not more than
12 \$1,000,000, or imprisoned for not more than 5
13 years, or both.”;

14 (3) by inserting after paragraph (1) (as added
15 by paragraph (2) of this subsection), the following
16 new paragraph:

17 “(2) SIGNIFICANT RISK OF SERIOUS INJURY,
18 SERIOUS ILLNESS, OR DEATH.—Whoever, being an
19 operator, knowingly—

20 “(A) tampers with or disables a required
21 safety device (except with express authorization
22 from the Secretary),

23 “(B) violates a mandatory health or safety
24 standard, or

1 “(C) violates or fails or refuses to comply
2 with an order issued under section 104 or 107,
3 or any order incorporated in a final decision
4 issued under this Act (except an order incor-
5 porated in a decision under subsection (a)(1) or
6 section 105(c)),

7 and thereby recklessly exposes a miner to significant
8 risk of serious injury, serious illness, or death, shall,
9 upon conviction, be fined not more than \$1,000,000
10 or imprisoned for not more than 5 years, or both,
11 except that if the operator commits the violation
12 after having been previously convicted of a violation
13 under this paragraph, the operator shall, upon con-
14 viction, be fined not more than \$2,000,000, or im-
15 prisoned for not more than 10 years, or both.”; and

16 (4) by inserting after paragraph (2) (as added
17 by paragraph (3) of this subsection), the following
18 new paragraph:

19 “(3) CRIMINAL PENALTIES FOR RETALIA-
20 TION.—Whoever knowingly—

21 “(A) with the intent to retaliate, interferes
22 with the lawful employment or livelihood of a
23 person, or the spouse, sibling, child, or parent
24 of a person, because any of them provides infor-
25 mation to an authorized representative of the

1 Secretary, to a State or local mine safety or
2 health officer or official, or to other law en-
3 forcement officer, in reasonable belief that the
4 information is true and related to an apparent
5 health or safety violation, or to an apparent
6 unhealthful or unsafe condition, policy, or prac-
7 tice under this Act, or

8 “(B) interferes, or threatens to interfere,
9 with the lawful employment or livelihood of a
10 person, or the spouse, sibling, child, or parent
11 of a person, with the intent to prevent any of
12 them from so providing such information,

13 shall be fined under title 18 or imprisoned for not
14 more than 5 years, or both.”

15 (b) ADVANCE NOTICE OF INSPECTIONS.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 110(e) (30 U.S.C.
17 820(e)) is amended to read as follows:

18 “(e) Whoever knowingly, with intent to give advance
19 notice of an inspection conducted or to be conducted under
20 this Act, and thereby to impede, interfere with, or frus-
21 trate such inspection, engages in, or directs another per-
22 son to engage in, conduct that a reasonable person would
23 expect to result in such advance notice, shall be fined
24 under title 18, United States Code, or imprisoned for not
25 more than 5 years, or both, except that a miner (other

1 than a director, officer or agent of the operator involved)
2 who commits the offense at the direction of a superior
3 shall be fined under title 18, or imprisoned not more than
4 1 year, or both, unless the miner commits a second or
5 subsequent offense under this subsection (without regard
6 to whether the offense was committed at the direction of
7 a superior) in which case the miner shall be fined for such
8 second and subsequent offense under title 18, United
9 States Code, or imprisoned for not more than 5 years, or
10 both.”.

11 (2) POSTING OF ADVANCE NOTICE PEN-
12 ALTIES.—Section 109 (30 U.S.C. 819) is amended
13 by adding at the end the following:

14 “(e) POSTING OF ADVANCE NOTICE PENALTIES.—
15 Each operator of a coal or other mine shall post, on the
16 bulletin board described in subsection (a) and in a con-
17 spicuous place near each staffed entrance onto the mine
18 property, a notice stating, in a form and manner to be
19 prescribed by the Secretary—

20 “(1) that it is unlawful pursuant to section
21 110(e) for any person, with the intent to impede,
22 interfere with, or frustrate an inspection conducted
23 or to be conducted under this Act, to engage in, or
24 direct another person to engage in, any conduct that

1 a reasonable person would expect to result in ad-
2 vance notice of such inspection; and

3 “(2) the maximum penalties for a violation
4 under such subsection.”.

5 **SEC. 304. COMMISSION REVIEW OF PENALTY ASSESS-**
6 **MENTS.**

7 Section 110(i) (30 U.S.C. 820(i)) is amended by
8 striking “In assessing civil monetary penalties, the Com-
9 mission shall consider” and inserting the following: “In
10 any review of a citation and proposed penalty assessment
11 contested by an operator, the Commission shall assess not
12 less than the penalty derived by using the same method-
13 ology (including any point system) prescribed in regula-
14 tions under this Act, so as to ensure consistency in oper-
15 ator penalty assessments, except that the Commission may
16 assess a penalty for less than the amount that would result
17 from the utilization of such methodology if the Commis-
18 sion finds that there are extraordinary circumstances. If
19 there is no such methodology prescribed for a citation or
20 there are such extraordinary circumstances, the Commis-
21 sion shall assess the penalty by considering”.

22 **SEC. 305. DELINQUENT PAYMENTS AND PREJUDGMENT IN-**
23 **TEREST.**

24 (a) PRE-FINAL ORDER INTEREST.—Section 110(j)
25 (30 U.S.C. 820(j)) is amended by striking the second and

1 third sentences and inserting the following: “Pre-final
2 order interest on such penalties shall begin to accrue on
3 the date the operator contests a citation issued under this
4 Act, including any mandatory health or safety standard
5 or regulation promulgated under this Act, and shall end
6 upon the issuance of the final order. Such pre-final order
7 interest shall be calculated at the current underpayment
8 rate determined by the Secretary of the Treasury pursu-
9 ant to section 6621 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986,
10 and shall be compounded daily. Post-final order interest
11 shall begin to accrue 30 days after the date a final order
12 of the Commission or the court is issued, and shall be
13 charged at the rate of 8 percent per annum.”.

14 (b) ENSURING PAYMENT OF PENALTIES.—

15 (1) AMENDMENTS.—Section 110 (30 U.S.C.
16 820) is further amended—

17 (A) by redesignating subsection (l) as sub-
18 section (m); and

19 (B) by inserting after subsection (k) the
20 following:

21 “(l) ENSURING PAYMENT OF PENALTIES.—

22 “(1) DELINQUENT PAYMENT LETTER.—If the
23 operator of a coal or other mine fails to pay any civil
24 penalty assessment that has become a final order of
25 the Commission or a court within 45 days after such

1 assessment became a final order, the Secretary shall
2 send the operator a letter advising the operator of
3 the consequences under this subsection of such fail-
4 ure to pay. The letter shall also advise the operator
5 of the opportunity to enter into or modify a payment
6 plan with the Secretary based upon a demonstrated
7 inability to pay, the procedure for entering into such
8 plan, and the consequences of not entering into or
9 not complying with such plan.

10 “(2) WITHDRAWAL ORDERS FOLLOWING FAIL-
11 URE TO PAY.—If an operator that receives a letter
12 under paragraph (1) has not paid the assessment by
13 the date that is 180 days after such assessment be-
14 came a final order and has not entered into a pay-
15 ment plan with the Secretary, the Secretary shall
16 issue an order requiring such operator to cause all
17 persons, except those referred to in section 104(c),
18 to be withdrawn from, and to be prohibited from en-
19 tering, the mine that is covered by the final order
20 described in paragraph (1), until the operator pays
21 such assessment in full (including interest and ad-
22 ministrative costs) or enters into a payment plan
23 with the Secretary. If such operator enters into a
24 payment plan with the Secretary and at any time
25 fails to comply with the terms specified in such pay-

1 ment plan, the Secretary shall issue an order requir-
2 ing such operator to cause all persons, except those
3 referred to in section 104(c), to be withdrawn from
4 the mine that is covered by such final order, and to
5 be prohibited from entering such mine, until the op-
6 erator rectifies the noncompliance with the payment
7 plan in the manner specified in such payment
8 plan.”.

9 (2) *APPLICABILITY AND EFFECTIVE DATE.*—
10 The amendments made by paragraph (1) shall apply
11 to all unpaid civil penalty assessments under the
12 Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 (30
13 U.S.C. 801 et seq.), except that, for any unpaid civil
14 penalty assessment that became a final order of the
15 Commission or a court before the date of enactment
16 of this Act, the time periods under section 110(l) of
17 the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 (as
18 amended) (30 U.S.C. 820(l)) shall be calculated as
19 beginning on the date of enactment of this Act in-
20 stead of on the date of the final order.

21 **TITLE IV—MINERS’ RIGHTS AND** 22 **PROTECTIONS**

23 **SEC. 401. PROTECTION FROM RETALIATION.**

24 Section 105(c) (30 U.S.C. 815(c)) is amended to read
25 as follows:

1 “(c) PROTECTION FROM RETALIATION.—

2 “(1) RETALIATION PROHIBITED.—

3 “(A) RETALIATION FOR COMPLAINT OR
4 TESTIMONY.—No person shall discharge or in
5 any manner discriminate against or cause to be
6 discharged or cause discrimination against or
7 otherwise interfere with the exercise of the stat-
8 utory rights of any miner or other employee of
9 an operator, representative of miners, or appli-
10 cant for employment (including the spouse, sib-
11 ling, child, or parent of such miner or employee,
12 if such individual is employed or is applying for
13 employment at a mine under the control of the
14 operator), because—

15 “(i) such miner or other employee,
16 representative, or applicant for employ-
17 ment—

18 “(I) has filed or made a com-
19 plaint, or is about to file or make a
20 complaint, including a complaint noti-
21 fying the operator or the operator’s
22 agent, or the representative of the
23 miners at the coal or other mine of an
24 alleged danger or safety or health vio-
25 lation in a coal or other mine;

1 “(II) instituted or caused to be
2 instituted, or is about to institute or
3 cause to be instituted, any proceeding
4 under or related to this Act or has
5 testified or is about to testify in any
6 such proceeding or because of the ex-
7 ercise by such miner or other em-
8 ployee, representative, or applicant for
9 employment on behalf of him or her-
10 self or others of any right afforded by
11 this Act, or has reported any injury or
12 illness to an operator or agent;

13 “(III) has testified or is about to
14 testify before Congress or any Federal
15 or State proceeding related to safety
16 or health in a coal or other mine; or

17 “(IV) refused to violate any pro-
18 vision of this Act, including any man-
19 datory health and safety standard or
20 regulation;

21 “(ii) such miner is the subject of med-
22 ical evaluations and potential transfer
23 under a standard published pursuant to
24 section 101; or

1 “(iii) where the discharge, discrimina-
2 tion or other retaliation was based on a
3 suspicion or belief that such miner or other
4 employee, representative, or applicant en-
5 gaged in or is about to engage in any of
6 the activities described in clause (i).

7 “(B) RETALIATION FOR REFUSAL TO PER-
8 FORM DUTIES.—

9 “(i) IN GENERAL.—No person shall
10 discharge or in any manner discriminate
11 against a miner or other employee of an
12 operator for refusing to perform the min-
13 er’s or other employee’s duties if the miner
14 or other employee has a good-faith and
15 reasonable belief that performing such du-
16 ties would pose a safety or health hazard
17 to the miner or other employee or to any
18 other miner or employee.

19 “(ii) STANDARD.—For purposes of
20 clause (i), the circumstances causing the
21 miner’s or other employee’s good-faith be-
22 lief that performing such duties would pose
23 a safety or health hazard shall be of such
24 a nature that a reasonable person, under
25 the circumstances confronting the miner or

1 other employee, would conclude that there
2 is such a hazard. In order to qualify for
3 protection under this paragraph, the miner
4 or other employee, when practicable, shall
5 have communicated or attempted to com-
6 municate the safety or health concern to
7 the operator and have not received from
8 the operator a response reasonably cal-
9 culated to allay such concern.

10 “(2) COMPLAINT.—Any miner or other em-
11 ployee or representative of miners or applicant for
12 employment who believes that he or she has been
13 discharged, disciplined, or otherwise discriminated
14 against by any person in violation of paragraph (1)
15 may file a complaint with the Secretary alleging
16 such discrimination not later than 180 days after
17 the later of—

18 “(A) the last date on which an alleged vio-
19 lation of paragraph (1) occurs; or

20 “(B) the date on which the miner or other
21 employee or representative knows or should rea-
22 sonably have known that such alleged violation
23 occurred.

24 “(3) INVESTIGATION AND HEARING.—

1 “(A) COMMENCEMENT OF INVESTIGATION
2 AND INITIAL DETERMINATION.—Upon receipt
3 of such complaint, the Secretary shall forward
4 a copy of the complaint to the respondent, and
5 shall commence an investigation within 15 days
6 of the Secretary’s receipt of the complaint, and,
7 as soon as practicable after commencing such
8 investigation, make the determination required
9 under subparagraph (B) regarding the rein-
10 statement of the miner or other employee.

11 “(B) REINSTATEMENT.—If the Secretary
12 finds that such complaint was not frivolously
13 brought, the Commission, on an expedited basis
14 upon application of the Secretary, shall order
15 the immediate reinstatement of the miner or
16 other employee until there has been a final
17 Commission order disposing of the underlying
18 complaint of the miner or other employee. If ei-
19 ther the Secretary or the miner or other em-
20 ployee pursues the underlying complaint, such
21 reinstatement shall remain in effect until the
22 Commission has disposed of such complaint on
23 the merits, regardless of whether the Secretary
24 pursues such complaint by filing a complaint
25 under subparagraph (D) or the miner or other

1 employee pursues such complaint by filing an
2 action under paragraph (4). If neither the Sec-
3 retary nor the miner or other employee pursues
4 the underlying complaint within the periods
5 specified in paragraph (4), such reinstatement
6 shall remain in effect until such time as the
7 Commission may, upon motion of the operator
8 and after providing notice and an opportunity
9 to be heard to the parties, vacate such com-
10 plaint for failure to prosecute.

11 “(C) INVESTIGATION.—Such investigation
12 shall include interviewing the complainant
13 and—

14 “(i) providing the respondent an op-
15 portunity to submit to the Secretary a
16 written response to the complaint and to
17 present statements from witnesses or pro-
18 vide evidence; and

19 “(ii) providing the complainant an op-
20 portunity to receive any statements or evi-
21 dence provided to the Secretary and to
22 provide additional information or evidence,
23 or to rebut any statements or evidence.

24 “(D) ACTION BY THE SECRETARY.—If,
25 upon such investigation, the Secretary deter-

1 mines that the provisions of this subsection
2 have been violated, the Secretary shall imme-
3 diately file a complaint with the Commission,
4 with service upon the alleged violator and the
5 miner or other employee, representative of min-
6 ers, or applicant for employment alleging such
7 discrimination or interference and propose an
8 order granting appropriate relief.

9 “(E) ACTION OF THE COMMISSION.—The
10 Commission shall afford an opportunity for a
11 hearing on the record (in accordance with sec-
12 tion 554 of title 5, United States Code, but
13 without regard to subsection (a)(3) of such sec-
14 tion) and thereafter shall issue an order, based
15 upon findings of fact, affirming, modifying, or
16 vacating the Secretary’s proposed order, or di-
17 recting other appropriate relief. Such order
18 shall become final 30 days after its issuance.
19 The complaining miner or other employee, rep-
20 resentative, or applicant for employment may
21 present additional evidence on his or her own
22 behalf during any hearing held pursuant to this
23 paragraph.

24 “(F) RELIEF.—The Commission shall have
25 authority in such proceedings to require a per-

1 son committing a violation of this subsection to
2 take such affirmative action to abate the viola-
3 tion and prescribe a remedy as the Commission
4 considers appropriate, including—

5 “(i) the rehiring or reinstatement of
6 the miner or other employee with back pay
7 and interest and without loss of position or
8 seniority, and restoration of the terms,
9 rights, conditions, and privileges associated
10 with the complainant’s employment;

11 “(ii) any other compensatory and con-
12 sequential damages sufficient to make the
13 complainant whole, and exemplary dam-
14 ages where appropriate; and

15 “(iii) expungement of all warnings,
16 reprimands, or derogatory references that
17 have been placed in paper or electronic
18 records or databases of any type relating
19 to the actions by the complainant that
20 gave rise to the unfavorable personnel ac-
21 tion, and, at the complainant’s direction,
22 transmission of a copy of the decision on
23 the complaint to any person whom the
24 complainant reasonably believes may have
25 received such unfavorable information.

1 “(4) NOTICE TO AND ACTION OF COMPLAIN-
2 ANT.—

3 “(A) NOTICE TO COMPLAINANT.—Not
4 later than 90 days of the receipt of a complaint
5 filed under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall
6 notify, in writing, the miner or other employee,
7 applicant for employment, or representative of
8 miners of his determination whether a violation
9 has occurred.

10 “(B) ACTION OF COMPLAINANT.—If the
11 Secretary, upon investigation, determines that
12 the provisions of this subsection have not been
13 violated, the complainant shall have the right,
14 within 30 days after receiving notice of the Sec-
15 retary’s determination, to file an action in his
16 or her own behalf before the Commission,
17 charging discrimination or interference in viola-
18 tion of paragraph (1).

19 “(C) HEARING AND DECISION.—The Com-
20 mission shall afford an opportunity for a hear-
21 ing on the record (in accordance with section
22 554 of title 5, United States Code, but without
23 regard to subsection (a)(3) of such section),
24 and thereafter shall issue an order, based upon
25 findings of fact, dismissing or sustaining the

1 complainant's charges and, if the charges are
2 sustained, granting such relief as it deems ap-
3 propriate as described in paragraph (3)(F).
4 Such order shall become final 30 days after its
5 issuance.

6 “(5) BURDEN OF PROOF.—In adjudicating a
7 complaint pursuant to this subsection, the Commis-
8 sion may determine that a violation of paragraph (1)
9 has occurred only if the complainant demonstrates
10 that any conduct described in paragraph (1) with re-
11 spect to the complainant was a contributing factor
12 in the adverse action alleged in the complaint. A de-
13 cision or order that is favorable to the complainant
14 shall not be issued pursuant to this subsection if the
15 respondent demonstrates by clear and convincing
16 evidence that the respondent would have taken the
17 same adverse action in the absence of such conduct.

18 “(6) ATTORNEYS' FEES.—Whenever an order is
19 issued sustaining the complainant's charges under
20 this subsection, a sum equal to the aggregate
21 amount of all costs and expenses, including attor-
22 ney's fees, as determined by the Commission to have
23 been reasonably incurred by the complainant for, or
24 in connection with, the institution and prosecution of
25 such proceedings shall be assessed against the per-

1 son committing such violation. The Commission
2 shall determine whether such costs and expenses
3 were reasonably incurred by the complainant without
4 reference to whether the Secretary also participated
5 in the proceeding.

6 “(7) EXPEDITED PROCEEDINGS; JUDICIAL RE-
7 VIEW.—Proceedings under this subsection shall be
8 expedited by the Secretary and the Commission. Any
9 order issued by the Commission under this sub-
10 section shall be subject to judicial review in accord-
11 ance with section 106. Violations by any person of
12 paragraph (1) shall be subject to the provisions of
13 sections 108 and 110(a)(4).

14 “(8) PROCEDURAL RIGHTS.—The rights and
15 remedies provided for in this subsection may not be
16 waived by any agreement, policy, form, or condition
17 of employment, including by any pre-dispute arbitra-
18 tion agreement or collective bargaining agreement.

19 “(9) SAVINGS.—Nothing in this subsection shall
20 be construed to diminish the rights, privileges, or
21 remedies of any miner or employee who exercises
22 rights under any Federal or State law or common
23 law, or under any collective bargaining agreement.”.

1 **SEC. 402. PROTECTION FROM LOSS OF PAY.**

2 Section 111 (30 U.S.C. 821) is amended to read as
3 follows:

4 **“SEC. 111. ENTITLEMENT OF MINERS.**

5 “(a) PROTECTION FROM LOSS OF PAY.—

6 “(1) WITHDRAWAL ORDERS.—If a coal or other
7 mine or area of such mine is closed by an order
8 issued under section 103, 104, 107, 108, or 110, all
9 miners working during the shift when such order
10 was issued who are idled by such order shall be enti-
11 tled, regardless of the result of any review of such
12 order, to full compensation by the operator at their
13 regular rates of pay for the period they are idled,
14 but for not more than the balance of such shift. If
15 such order is not terminated prior to the next work-
16 ing shift, all miners on that shift who are idled by
17 such order shall be entitled to full compensation by
18 the operator at their regular rates of pay for the pe-
19 riod they are idled, for not more than one half of
20 such shift, or four hours, whichever is greater. If a
21 coal or other mine or area of such mine is closed by
22 an order issued under section 104, 107 (in connec-
23 tion with a citation), 108, or 110, all miners who are
24 idled by such order shall be entitled, regardless of
25 the result of any review of such order, to full com-
26 pensation by the operator at their regular rates of

1 pay and in accordance with their regular schedules
2 of pay for the entire period for which they are idled,
3 not to exceed 60 days.

4 “(2) CLOSURE IN ADVANCE OF ORDER.—If the
5 Secretary finds that such mine or such area of a
6 mine was closed by the operator in anticipation of
7 the issuance of such an order, all miners who are
8 idled by such closure shall be entitled to full com-
9 pensation by the operator at their regular rates of
10 pay and in accordance with their regular schedules
11 of pay, from the time of such closure until such time
12 as the Secretary authorizes reopening of such mine
13 or such area of the mine, not to exceed 60 days, ex-
14 cept where an operator promptly withdraws miners
15 upon discovery of a hazard, and notifies the Sec-
16 retary where required, and within the prescribed
17 time period.

18 “(3) REFUSAL TO COMPLY.—Whenever an op-
19 erator violates or fails or refuses to comply with any
20 order issued under section 103, 104, 107, 108, or
21 110, all miners employed at the affected mine who
22 would have been withdrawn from, or prevented from
23 entering, such mine or area thereof as a result of
24 such order shall be entitled to full compensation by
25 the operator at their regular rates of pay, in addi-

1 tion to pay received for work performed after such
2 order was issued, for the period beginning when
3 such order was issued and ending when such order
4 is complied with, vacated, or terminated.

5 “(b) ENFORCEMENT.—

6 “(1) COMMISSION ORDERS.—The Commission
7 shall have authority to order compensation due
8 under this section upon the filing of a complaint by
9 a miner or his representative and after opportunity
10 for hearing on the record subject to section 554 of
11 title 5, United States Code. Whenever the Commis-
12 sion issues an order sustaining the complaint under
13 this subsection in whole or in part, the Commission
14 shall award the complainant reasonable attorneys’
15 fees and costs.

16 “(2) FAILURE TO PAY COMPENSATION DUE.—
17 Consistent with the authority of the Secretary to
18 order miners withdrawn from a mine under this Act,
19 the Secretary shall order a mine that has been sub-
20 ject to a withdrawal order under section 103, 104,
21 107, 108, or 110, and has reopened, to be closed
22 again if compensation in accordance with the provi-
23 sions of this section is not paid by the end of the
24 next regularly scheduled payroll period following the
25 lifting of a withdrawal order.

1 “(c) EXPEDITED REVIEW.—If an order is issued
2 which results in payments to miners under subsection (a),
3 the operators shall have the right to an expedited review
4 before the Commission using timelines and procedures es-
5 tablished pursuant to section 316(b)(2)(G)(ii).”.

6 **SEC. 403. UNDERGROUND COAL MINER EMPLOYMENT**
7 **STANDARD FOR MINES PLACED IN PATTERN**
8 **OF VIOLATIONS STATUS.**

9 The Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 is
10 further amended by adding at the end of title I the fol-
11 lowing:

12 **“SEC. 117. UNDERGROUND COAL MINER EMPLOYMENT**
13 **STANDARD FOR MINES PLACED IN PATTERN**
14 **OF VIOLATIONS STATUS.**

15 “(a) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of ensuring min-
16 ers’ health and safety and miners’ right to raise concerns
17 thereof, when an underground coal mine is placed in pat-
18 tern of violations status pursuant to section 104(e), and
19 for 3 years after such placement, the operator of such
20 mine may not discharge or constructively discharge a
21 miner who is paid on an hourly basis and employed at
22 such underground coal mine without reasonable job-re-
23 lated grounds based on a failure to satisfactorily perform
24 job duties, including compliance with this Act and with
25 mandatory health and safety standards or other regula-

1 tions issued under this Act, or other legitimate business
2 reason, where the miner has completed the employer's pro-
3 bationary period, not to exceed 6 months.

4 “(b) CAUSE OF ACTION.—A miner aggrieved by a
5 violation of subsection (a) may file a complaint in Federal
6 district court in the district where the mine is located
7 within 1 year of such violation.

8 “(c) REMEDIES.—In an action under subsection (b),
9 for any prevailing miner the court shall take affirmative
10 action to further the purposes of the Act, which may in-
11 clude reinstatement with backpay and compensatory dam-
12 ages. Reasonable attorneys' fees and costs shall be award-
13 ed to any prevailing miner under this section.

14 “(d) PRE-DISPUTE WAIVER PROHIBITED.—A min-
15 er's right to a cause of action under this section may not
16 be waived with respect to disputes that have not arisen
17 as of the time of the waiver.

18 “(e) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall
19 be construed to limit the availability of rights and rem-
20 edies of miners under any other State or Federal law or
21 a collective bargaining agreement.”.

1 **TITLE** **V—MODERNIZING**
2 **HEALTH AND SAFETY STAND-**
3 **ARDS**

4 **SEC. 501. PRE-SHIFT REVIEW OF MINE CONDITIONS.**

5 Section 303(d) (30 U.S.C. 863(d)) is amended by
6 adding at the end the following:

7 “(3)(A) Not later than 30 days after the issuance of
8 the interim final rules promulgated under subparagraph
9 (B), each operator of an underground coal mine shall im-
10 plement a communication program at the underground
11 coal mine to ensure that each miner is orally briefed on
12 and made aware of, prior to traveling to or arriving at
13 the miner’s work area and commencing the miner’s as-
14 signed tasks—

15 “(i) any conditions that are hazardous, or that
16 violate a mandatory health or safety standard or a
17 plan approved under this Act, where the miner is ex-
18 pected to work or travel; and

19 “(ii) the general conditions of that miner’s as-
20 signed working section or other area where the
21 miner is expected to work or travel.

22 “(B) Not later than 180 days after the date of enact-
23 ment of the Robert C. Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act
24 of 2025, the Secretary shall promulgate interim final rules
25 implementing the requirements of subparagraph (A). The

1 Secretary shall issue a final rule not later than 2 years
2 after such date.”.

3 **SEC. 502. ROCK DUST STANDARDS.**

4 (a) STANDARDS.—Section 304(d) (30 U.S.C. 864(d))
5 is amended—

6 (1) by striking “Where rock” and inserting the
7 following: “ROCK DUST.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Where rock”;

9 (2) by striking “65 per centum” and all that
10 follows and inserting “80 percent. Where methane is
11 present in any ventilating current, the percentage of
12 incombustible content of such combined dusts shall
13 be increased 0.4 percent for each 0.1 percent of
14 methane.”; and

15 (3) by adding at the end the following:

16 “(2) METHODS OF MEASUREMENT.—

17 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Each operator of an
18 underground coal mine shall take accurate and
19 representative samples which shall measure the
20 total incombustible content of combined coal
21 dust, rock dust, and other dust in such mine to
22 ensure that the coal dust is kept below explosive
23 levels through the appropriate application of
24 rock dust.

1 “(B) DIRECT READING MONITORS.—In
2 order to ensure timely assessment and compli-
3 ance, the Secretary shall, not later than 180
4 days after the date of enactment of the Robert
5 C. Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act of 2025,
6 require operators to measure total incombust-
7 tible content (or an equivalent measure of
8 explosibility) in samples of combined coal dust,
9 rock dust, and other dust, using direct reading
10 monitors that the Secretary has approved for
11 use in an underground coal mine, such as coal
12 dust explosibility monitors.

13 “(C) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall,
14 not later than 180 days after the date of enact-
15 ment of the Robert C. Byrd Mine Safety Pro-
16 tection Act of 2025, promulgate an interim
17 final rule that prescribes methods for operator
18 sampling of total incombustible content (or an
19 equivalent measure of explosibility) in samples
20 of combined coal dust, rock dust, and other
21 dust using direct reading monitors and includes
22 requirements for locations, methods, and inter-
23 vals for mandatory operator sampling.

24 “(D) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than
25 1 year after the date of enactment of the Rob-

1 ert C. Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act of
2 2025, the Secretary of Health and Human
3 Services shall, based upon the latest research,
4 recommend to the Secretary of Labor any revi-
5 sions to the mandatory operator sampling loca-
6 tions, methods, and intervals included in the in-
7 terim final rule described in subparagraph (B)
8 that may be warranted in light of such re-
9 search.

10 “(3) LIMITATION.—Until a final rule is issued
11 by the Secretary under section 502(b)(2) of the Rob-
12 ert C. Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act of 2025, any
13 measurement taken by a direct reading monitor de-
14 scribed in paragraph (2) shall not be admissible to
15 establish a violation in an enforcement action under
16 this Act.

17 “(4) REPORT AND RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.—

18 “(A) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years
19 after the date of enactment of the Robert C.
20 Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act of 2025, the
21 Secretary of Health and Human Services, in
22 consultation with the Secretary of Labor, shall
23 prepare and submit, to the Committee on Edu-
24 cation and the Workforce of the House of Rep-
25 resentatives and the Committee on Health,

1 Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate,
2 a report—

3 “(i) regarding whether any direct
4 reading monitor described in paragraph
5 (2)(B) is sufficiently reliable and accurate
6 for the enforcement of the mandatory
7 health or safety standards by the Secretary
8 of Labor under such Act, and whether ad-
9 ditional improvement to such direct read-
10 ing monitor, or additional verification re-
11 garding reliability and accuracy, would be
12 needed for enforcement purposes; and

13 “(ii) identifying any limitations or im-
14 pediments for such use in underground
15 coal mines.

16 “(B) AUTHORITY.—If the Secretary deter-
17 mines that such direct reading monitor is suffi-
18 ciently reliable and accurate for the enforce-
19 ment of mandatory health and safety standards
20 under this Act following such report or any up-
21 date thereto, the Secretary shall promulgate a
22 final rule authorizing the use of such direct
23 reading monitor for purposes of compliance and
24 enforcement, in addition to other methods for
25 determining total incombustible content. Such

1 rule shall specify mandatory operator sampling
2 locations, methods, and intervals.”.

3 (b) ROCK DUST RECORDKEEPING.—Section 304 is
4 further amended—

5 (1) by redesignating subsection (e) as sub-
6 section (f) and inserting after subsection (d) the fol-
7 lowing:

8 “(e) ROCK DUST RECORDKEEPING.—Each coal mine
9 shall be required to maintain and continuously update a
10 record of the amount of rock dust purchased.”; and

11 (2) in subsection (f) (as so redesignated), by
12 striking “Subsection (b) through (d)” and inserting
13 “Subsections (b) through (e)”.

14 **SEC. 503. ATMOSPHERIC MONITORING SYSTEMS.**

15 Section 317 (30 U.S.C. 877) is amended by adding
16 at the end the following:

17 “(u) ATMOSPHERIC MONITORING SYSTEMS.—

18 “(1) REGULATIONS REQUIRED.—Not later than
19 1 year after the date of enactment of the Robert C.
20 Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act of 2025, the Sec-
21 retary shall, following consultation with the National
22 Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, pro-
23 mulgate regulations requiring that each operator of
24 an underground coal mine install atmospheric moni-
25 toring systems that—

1 “(A) protect miners where the miners nor-
2 mally work and travel;

3 “(B) will assist in mine emergency re-
4 sponse and the conduct of accident investiga-
5 tions;

6 “(C) provide real-time information regard-
7 ing methane, oxygen, and carbon monoxide lev-
8 els, and airflow direction, as appropriate, with
9 sensing, annunciating, and recording capabili-
10 ties; and

11 “(D) can, to the maximum extent prac-
12 ticable, withstand explosions and fires.

13 “(2) CONTENT OF REGULATIONS.—The Sec-
14 retary shall evaluate and, as appropriate, require—

15 “(A) the installation of atmospheric moni-
16 toring and recording devices on mining equip-
17 ment;

18 “(B) the implementation of redundant sys-
19 tems, such as the bundle tubing system, that
20 can continuously monitor the mine atmosphere
21 following incidents such as fires, explosions, en-
22 trapments, and inundations; and

23 “(C) the implementation of other tech-
24 nologies available to conduct continuous atmos-
25 pheric monitoring.”.

1 **SEC. 504. REFRESHER TRAINING ON MINERS' RIGHTS AND**
2 **RESPONSIBILITIES.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 115(a)(3) (30 U.S.C.
4 825(a)(3)) is amended to read as follows:

5 “(3) all miners shall receive not less than 9
6 hours of refresher training not less frequently than
7 once every 12 months, and such training shall in-
8 clude one hour of training on the statutory rights
9 and responsibilities of miners and their representa-
10 tives under this Act and other applicable Federal
11 and State law, pursuant to a program of instruction
12 developed by the Secretary and delivered by an em-
13 ployee of the Administration or by a trainer ap-
14 proved by the Administration that is a party inde-
15 pendent from the operator;”.

16 (b) NATIONAL HAZARD REPORTING HOTLINE.—Sec-
17 tion 115 (30 U.S.C. 825) is further amended—

18 (1) by redesignating subsections (c) through (e)
19 as subsections (d) through (f), respectively; and

20 (2) by inserting after subsection (b) the fol-
21 lowing:

22 “(c) Any health and safety training program of in-
23 struction provided under this section shall include dis-
24 tribution to miners of information regarding miners’
25 rights under the Act, as well as a toll-free hotline tele-
26 phone number, which the Secretary shall maintain to re-

1 ceive complaints from miners and the public regarding
2 hazardous conditions, discrimination, safety or health vio-
3 lations, or other mine safety or health concerns. Informa-
4 tion regarding the hotline shall be provided in a portable,
5 convenient format, such as a durable wallet card, to enable
6 miners to keep the information on their person.”.

7 (c) **TIMING OF INITIAL STATUTORY RIGHTS TRAIN-**
8 **ING.**—Notwithstanding section 115 of the Federal Mine
9 Safety and Health Act (as amended by subsection (a)) (30
10 U.S.C. 825) or the health and safety training program ap-
11 proved under such section, an operator shall ensure that
12 all miners already employed by the operator on the date
13 of enactment of this Act shall receive the one hour of stat-
14 utory rights and responsibilities training described in sec-
15 tion 115(a)(3) of such Act not later than 180 days after
16 such date.

17 **SEC. 505. AUTHORITY TO MANDATE ADDITIONAL TRAINING.**

18 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 115 (30 U.S.C. 825) is
19 further amended by redesignating subsections (e) and (f)
20 (as redesignated) as subsections (f) and (g) and inserting
21 after subsection (d) (as redesignated) the following:

22 “(e) **AUTHORITY TO MANDATE ADDITIONAL TRAIN-**
23 **ING.**—

24 “(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary is authorized
25 to issue an order requiring that an operator of a

1 coal or other mine provide additional training be-
2 yond what is otherwise required by law, and speci-
3 fying the time within which such training shall be
4 provided, if the Secretary finds that—

5 “(A)(i) a serious or fatal accident has oc-
6 curred at such mine;

7 “(ii) such mine has experienced accident
8 and injury rates, citations for violations of this
9 Act (including mandatory health or safety
10 standards or regulations promulgated under
11 this Act), citations for significant and substan-
12 tial violations, or withdrawal orders issued
13 under this Act at a rate above the average for
14 mines of similar size and type; or

15 “(iii) an operator has a history of failing to
16 adequately train miners as required by the Act
17 or regulations promulgated under this Act; and

18 “(B) additional training would benefit the
19 health and safety of miners at the mine.

20 “(2) WITHDRAWAL ORDER.—If the operator
21 fails to provide training ordered under paragraph
22 (1) within the specified time, the Secretary shall
23 issue an order requiring such operator to cause all
24 affected persons, except those persons referred to in
25 section 104(c), to be withdrawn, and to be prohib-

1 ited from entering such mine, until such operator
2 has provided such training.”.

3 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 104(g)(2)
4 (30 U.S.C. 814(g)(2)) is amended by striking “under
5 paragraph (1)” both places it appears and inserting
6 “under paragraph (1) or under section 115(e)”.

7 **SEC. 506. BROOKWOOD-SAGO MINE SAFETY GRANTS.**

8 Section 14(e)(2) of the Mine Improvement and New
9 Emergency Response Act of 2006 (30 U.S.C. 965(e)(2))
10 is amended by inserting before the period “, and under-
11 ground mine rescue training activities which simulate
12 mine accident conditions”.

13 **SEC. 507. CERTIFICATION OF PERSONNEL.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—Title I is further amended by add-
15 ing at the end the following:

16 **“SEC. 118. CERTIFICATION OF PERSONNEL.**

17 “(a) CERTIFICATION REQUIRED.—Any person who is
18 authorized or designated by the operator of a coal or other
19 mine to perform any duties or provide any training that
20 this Act, including a mandatory health or safety standard
21 or regulation promulgated pursuant to this Act, requires
22 to be performed or provided by a certified, registered,
23 qualified, or otherwise approved person, shall be permitted
24 to perform such duties or provide such training only if
25 such person has a current certification, registration, quali-

1 fication, or approval to perform such duties or provide
2 such training consistent with the requirements of this sec-
3 tion.

4 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF CERTIFICATION REQUIRE-
5 MENTS AND PROCEDURES.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after
7 the date of enactment of the Robert C. Byrd Mine
8 Safety Protection Act of 2025, the Secretary shall
9 issue mandatory standards to establish—

10 “(A) requirements for such certification,
11 registration, qualification, or other approval, in-
12 cluding the experience, examinations, and ref-
13 erences that may be required as appropriate;

14 “(B) time limits for such certifications and
15 procedures for obtaining and renewing such cer-
16 tification, registration, qualification, or other
17 approval; and

18 “(C) procedures and criteria for revoking
19 such certification, registration, qualification, or
20 other approval, including procedures that en-
21 sure that the Secretary (or a State agency, as
22 applicable) responds to requests for revocation
23 and that the names of individuals whose certifi-
24 cation or other approval has been revoked are
25 provided to and maintained by the Secretary,

1 and are made available to appropriate State
2 agencies through an electronic database.

3 “(2) COORDINATION WITH STATES.—In devel-
4 oping such standards, the Secretary shall consult
5 with States that have miner certification programs
6 to ensure effective coordination with existing State
7 standards and requirements for certification. The
8 standards required under paragraph (1) shall pro-
9 vide that the certification, registration, qualification,
10 or other approval of the State in which the coal or
11 other mine is located satisfies the requirement of
12 subsection (a) if the State’s program of certification,
13 registration, qualification, or other approval is no
14 less stringent than the standards established by the
15 Secretary under paragraph (1).

16 “(c) OPERATOR FEES FOR CERTIFICATION.—

17 “(1) ASSESSMENT AND COLLECTION.—Begin-
18 ning 180 days after the date of enactment of the
19 Robert C. Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act of 2025,
20 the Secretary shall assess and collect fees, in accord-
21 ance with this subsection, from each operator for
22 each person certified under this section. Fees shall
23 be assessed and collected in amounts determined by
24 the Secretary as necessary to fund the certification
25 programs established under this section.

1 “(2) USE.—Amounts collected as provided in
2 paragraph (1) shall only be available to the Sec-
3 retary, as provided in paragraph (3), for making ex-
4 penditures to carry out the certification programs
5 established under this subsection.

6 “(3) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In
7 addition to funds authorized to be appropriated
8 under section 114, there is authorized to be appro-
9 priated to the Secretary for each fiscal year in which
10 fees are collected under paragraph (1) an amount
11 equal to the total amount of fees collected under
12 paragraph (1) during that fiscal year. Such amounts
13 are authorized to remain available until expended. If
14 on the first day of a fiscal year a regular appropria-
15 tion to the Administration has not been enacted, the
16 Administration shall continue to collect fees (as off-
17 setting collections) under this subsection at the rate
18 in effect during the preceding fiscal year, until 5
19 days after the date such regular appropriation is en-
20 acted.

21 “(4) COLLECTING AND CREDITING OF FEES.—
22 Fees authorized and collected under this subsection
23 shall be deposited and credited as offsetting collec-
24 tions to the account providing appropriations to the
25 Mine Safety and Health Administration and shall

1 not be collected for any fiscal year except to the ex-
2 tent and in the amount provided in advance in ap-
3 propriation Acts.

4 “(d) CITATION; WITHDRAWAL ORDER.—Any oper-
5 ator who permits a person to perform any of the health
6 or safety related functions described in subsection (a)
7 without a current certification which meets the require-
8 ments of this section shall be considered to have com-
9 mitted an unwarrantable failure under section 104(d)(1),
10 and the Secretary shall issue an order requiring that the
11 miner be withdrawn or reassigned to duties that do not
12 require such certification.”

13 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 318 (30
14 U.S.C. 878) is amended—

15 (1) by striking subsections (a) and (b);

16 (2) in subsection (c), by redesignating para-
17 graphs (1) through (3) as subparagraphs (A)
18 through (C), respectively;

19 (3) in subsection (g), by redesignating para-
20 graphs (1) through (4) as subparagraphs (A)
21 through (D), respectively; and

22 (4) by redesignating subsections (c) through (j)
23 as paragraphs (1) through (8), respectively.

1 **SEC. 508. ELECTRONIC RECORDS REQUIREMENT.**

2 Section 103 is amended by adding at the end the fol-
3 lowing:

4 “(l) Not later than 180 days after the date of enact-
5 ment of the Act, the Secretary shall promulgate regula-
6 tions requiring that mine operators retain records and
7 data required by this Act, or otherwise required by the
8 Secretary, that are created, stored or transmitted in elec-
9 tronic form. Such records shall include records pertaining
10 to miner safety and health, tracking and communications,
11 atmospheric monitoring of methane, carbon monoxide, ox-
12 ygen, coal dust and other mine conditions, equipment
13 usage history and operating parameters, equipment cali-
14 bration and maintenance, and other information relevant
15 to compliance with Federal mine health and safety laws
16 and regulations. Not later than 2 years after the date of
17 enactment of the Act, the Secretary shall promulgate a
18 regulation regarding the minimum necessary capabilities
19 of equipment to retain, store, and recover data created or
20 transmitted in electronic form.”.

21 **TITLE VI—ADDITIONAL MINE**
22 **SAFETY PROVISIONS**

23 **SEC. 601. DEFINITIONS.**

24 (a) DEFINITION OF OPERATOR.—Section 3(d) is
25 amended to read as follows:

26 “(d) ‘operator’ means—

1 “(1) any owner, lessee, or other person
2 that—

3 “(A) operates or supervises a coal or
4 other mine; or

5 “(B) controls such mine by making or
6 having the authority to make management
7 or operational decisions that affect, directly
8 or indirectly, the health or safety at such
9 mine; or

10 “(2) any independent contractor per-
11 forming services or construction at such mine;”.

12 (b) DEFINITION OF AGENT.—Section 3(e) (30 U.S.C.
13 802(e)) is amended by striking “the miners” and inserting
14 “any miner”.

15 (c) DEFINITION OF IMMINENT DANGER.—Section
16 3(j) (30 U.S.C. 802(j)) is amended—

17 (1) by striking “means the” and inserting
18 “means—

19 “(1) the”;

20 (2) by striking the semicolon at the end and in-
21 serting “; or”; and

22 (3) by adding at the end the following:

23 “(2) the existence of multiple conditions or
24 practices (regardless of whether related to each
25 other) that, when considered in the aggregate, could

1 reasonably be expected to cause death or serious
2 physical harm before such conditions or practices
3 can be abated;”.

4 (d) DEFINITION OF MINER.—Section 3(g) (30 U.S.C.
5 802(g)) is amended by inserting after “or other mine” the
6 following: “, and includes any individual who is not cur-
7 rently working in a coal or other mine but would be cur-
8 rently working in such mine, but for an accident in such
9 mine”.

10 (e) DEFINITION OF SIGNIFICANT AND SUBSTANTIAL
11 VIOLATIONS.—Section 3 (30 U.S.C. 802) is further
12 amended—

13 (1) in subsection (m), by striking “and” after
14 the semicolon;

15 (2) in subsection (n), by striking the period at
16 the end and inserting a semicolon;

17 (3) in subsection (o), by striking the period at
18 the end and inserting “; and”; and

19 (4) by adding at the end the following:

20 “(p) ‘significant and substantial violation’
21 means a violation of this Act, including any manda-
22 tory health or safety standard or regulation promul-
23 gated under this Act, that is of such nature as could
24 significantly and substantially contribute to the

1 cause and effect of a coal or other mine safety or
2 health hazard as described in section 104(d).”.

3 **SEC. 602. ASSISTANCE TO STATES.**

4 Section 503 (30 U.S.C. 953(a)) is amended—

5 (1) in subsection (a)—

6 (A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1),
7 by striking “, in coordination with the Sec-
8 retary of Health, Education, and Welfare and
9 the Secretary of the Interior,”;

10 (B) in paragraph (2), by striking “and”
11 after the semicolon;

12 (C) in paragraph (3), by striking the pe-
13 riod and inserting “; and”; and

14 (D) by adding at the end the following:

15 “(4) to assist such State in developing and im-
16 plementing any certification program for coal or
17 other mines required for compliance with section
18 118.”; and

19 (2) in subsection (h), by striking “\$3,000,000
20 for fiscal year 1970, and \$10,000,000 annually in
21 each succeeding fiscal year” and inserting
22 “\$20,000,000 for each fiscal year”.

1 **SEC. 603. AUTHORIZATION OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS**
2 **BY NIOSH OFFICE OF MINE SAFETY AND**
3 **HEALTH.**

4 Section 22(h)(3) of the Occupational Safety and
5 Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 671(h)(3)) is amended—

6 (1) in subparagraph (B), by striking “and” at
7 the end;

8 (2) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as sub-
9 paragraph (D); and

10 (3) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the fol-
11 lowing:

12 “(C) enter into cooperative agreements or
13 contracts with international institutions and
14 private entities to improve mine safety and
15 health through the development and evaluation
16 of new interventions; and”.

17 **SEC. 604. DOUBLE ENCUMBRANCE; SUCCESSION PLAN.**

18 (a) **AUTHORIZATION.**—Notwithstanding any per-
19 sonnel procedures, rules, or guidance, the Secretary of
20 Labor is authorized to double encumber a position or uti-
21 lize early replacement hiring for authorized representa-
22 tives and technical specialist positions in the Mine Safety
23 and Health Administration. The number of such positions
24 shall be consistent with the staffing requirements set forth
25 in the succession plan under subsection (b).

1 (b) SUCCESSION PLAN.—Not later than 90 days after
2 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Labor
3 shall develop and provide to Congress a succession plan
4 for the Mine Safety and Health Administration for the
5 next five years to assure timely replacement of qualified
6 employees critical to maintaining the agency’s mission
7 which shall—

8 (1) estimate employee turnover for each year;

9 (2) set benchmarks for maximum allowable per-
10 centage of vacancies, and a maximum ratio of train-
11 ees to authorized representatives;

12 (3) utilize double encumbrance or early replace-
13 ment hiring for authorized representatives and tech-
14 nical specialists;

15 (4) implement tracking systems to assure that
16 staffing levels of authorized representatives and
17 technical specialists do not fall below the minimum
18 required to conduct necessary inspections, thor-
19 oughly review mine plans, and conduct accident and
20 special investigations; and

21 (5) identify resources necessary to implement
22 such plan. Such succession plan shall be updated bi-
23 ennially.