



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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GOVERNOR

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September 24, 2026

Via Electronic Mail

Senator Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Rand Paul
295 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative James Comer
2410 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Brett Guthrie
2161 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Morgan McGarvey
1527 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Thomas Massie
2371 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Hal Rogers
2406 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Andy Barr
2430 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Kentucky Supports Legislation Expanding Black Lung Benefits

Dear Members of the Kentucky Congressional Delegation,

As Governor, I am committed to protecting the health and safety of all Kentuckians. For that reason, I request your full support of legislation expanding black lung benefits. For example, the *Support Our Miners Act* (H.R. 9556) would increase black lung benefits to match inflation for the first time.

Our Appalachian region is currently facing a resurgence of black lung disease, with 20% of veteran coal miners – one in five – suffering from this incurable respiratory condition. Now more than ever, miners need to receive the support they were promised, and this legislation is a step toward that goal.

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Recently, the Black Lung Association of Southeastern Kentucky urged Representative Rogers to support this legislation – to help our retired miners and widows.¹ I ask you to do the same.

The *Support Our Miners Act* would adjust black lung disability benefits to match the value, relative to inflation, that miners received when the Black Lung Benefits Act was first enacted in 1969. This adjustment would help ensure the miners who power our nation can cover the cost of care they need.

For decades, former coal miners and their families have used these federal benefits to manage the high costs of living with black lung disease. However, while inflation has surged, benefit levels have shrunk. Today, these benefits are worth 30% less than they were in 1969. Currently, a single miner is eligible for only \$794 per month; had these benefits kept pace with inflation that number would be over \$1,200 per month today.

Retired Miners and Widows can't survive on a \$400 pay cut

The *Support Our Miners Act* would increase monthly benefits, restore the value Congress intended, and establish annual cost-of-living adjustments to prevent future erosion.

Kentucky has the most active benefit recipients of any state. Recognizing this urgent need, dozens of city and county governments throughout our Commonwealth – represented by both Republicans and Democrats – have passed resolutions urging an increase in black lung benefits. These communities include:

- Carter County
- Knox County
- Laurel County
- Letcher County
- Magoffin County
- McCreary County
- Muhlenberg County
- Ohio County
- Pike County
- Webster County
- City of Cumberland
- City of Evarts
- City of Hazard
- City of Jenkins
- City of Whitesburg

¹ Letter to Representative Hal Rogers from the Black Lung Assoc. of Southeastern Ky, Aug. 25, 2026, available at <https://kentuckylantern.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Letter-to-Rep-Rogers-BLA-of-SE-Kentucky-82526.pdf>

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Kentucky mining families have watched the value of their benefits shrink for far too long as the costs of basic necessities like groceries, housing, and healthcare continue to rise. The *Support Our Miners Act* will restore these benefits to the level Congress originally intended, providing much-needed stability for our coal mining communities.

Kentuckians and the American people are looking for common-sense, bipartisan leadership from Congress. I urge you to provide that leadership and support this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your attention and prompt action on this important matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andy Beshear". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Andy" and last name "Beshear" clearly distinguishable.

Andy Beshear
Governor of Kentucky