

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4606

July 12, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I write on behalf of the 450 coal miners, their families and communities across Southwest Virginia affected by Blackjewel LLC's decision to declare bankruptcy on July 1, 2019. As the bankruptcy proceedings advance, I urge you to consider the impact this proceeding is having on these communities and to do everything within your power to ensure that workers and their families are not financially penalized for circumstances beyond their control. These workers are blameless and I strongly urge you to provide any and all available resources to assist them during this difficult time.

Blackjewel LLC's bankruptcy filing has upended the lives of over 1,100 of its employees in Virginia, Kentucky, and West Virginia. In Virginia alone, nearly 450 coal miners have been impacted by this decision. Many of these workers have not received payroll checks. This problem is compounded by the fact that Blackjewel has not laid off affected employees, prohibiting them from applying for unemployment benefits.

The consequences of even a single missed paycheck can be devastating. Some workers don't know how they will put food on the table, pay their electrical and utility bills, or pay their mortgage. I strongly believe that affected families should not be penalized financially for circumstances for which they bear no responsibility.

Virginia, as well as other states, have begun to take action to support affected miners. The Virginia Employment Commission has convened a rapid-response team to address the issue. I hope that between strong pressure from the Commonwealth, the federal government, and support from your organizations, we will be able to minimize the negative consequences for affected miners and their families.

I urge you to make the well-being and financial security of Blackjewel coal miners and their families a top priority during these difficult times. Thank you for your attention to this matter of critical importance to me and my constituents.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator

cc: Virginia Bankers Association  
Virginia Association of Community Banks  
TruPoint Bank  
New Peoples Bank  
Creditors to affected Blackjewel miners