

**JOINT STATEMENT OF THE FAMILIES OF THE MINERS LOST IN
THE CRANDALL CANYON MINE DISASTER TO THE COMMITTEE
ON EDUCATION AND LABOR, UNITED STATES HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES**
October 3, 2007

The families of those men lost in the Crandall Canyon Mine Disaster want to thank Chairman George Miller and the Committee on Education and Labor for having these important hearings and inviting the families back to have a voice in this process. The families also extend their heartfelt gratitude to the United Mine Workers of America who assisted in bringing the families from Utah to Washington, D.C. for these important hearings, despite the unfortunate fact that the Crandall Canyon Mine was not unionized. The members of these families include three widows, four fatherless children, four siblings who lost brothers, and three in-laws to lost miners. One of the greatest pains and frustrations to the families is they have felt that they do not have a voice in what has occurred since the tragedy. They thank this Committee for giving them a voice.

While the pain of losing their loved ones remains ever present, the families have traveled to Washington, D.C. because now is the time to make change. It is the families' hope and purpose that through these proceedings, change can occur that will prevent such tragedies from ever happening again to other mining families. The United States Government needs to assure that the Mine Safety and Health Administration ("MSHA") is truly enforcing safety in the mining industry and regulating the industry, and not turning a blind-eye to dangerous mining practices. The mining industry likewise needs to place the safety of its miners above

dangerous practices that increase profits at the peril of the miners and their families. MSHA needs to return to being an independent eye above the industry.

It is likewise the families' desire that they, and others so unfortunate as them, are treated with respect by mine owners and MSHA. Rescue and retrieval plans need to include family input and verification and independent entities to assure that human lives are placed above profit. Involvement of the United Mine Workers Association is an important part of this process.

The families again extend their heartfelt gratitude to this committee for moving for change. It is their hope that such change will occur that will prevent such tragedies from ever occurring in the future. MSHA and the mining industry must be responsible in the first instance, and then accountable when tragedies occur. While the loved ones of these mining families remain entombed in the Crandall Canyon Mine outside of Huntington, Utah, it is the families' desire that no one ever has to suffer what they have suffered the last two months and will continue to suffer throughout their lives.

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