

**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CESAR SANCHEZ,  
BROTHER OF MANUAL SANCHEZ,  
TO THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR  
October 3, 2007**

I want to thank Chairman Miller for the opportunity to testify and give life to the memory of my brother, Manual Sanchez, or as I called him – “Manny.” I also want to thank the United Mine Workers Association for its generosity in making it possible to be here.

As a family, we have many questions. We want to know how the mine owners got a permit to do this kind of mining. We want to know how MSHA put a rubber stamp on the mining plans submitted by the mine owners. We want to know how often this mine got inspected by MSHA, especially because there were more than one complaint made by the miners about the bumps and their severity. The company ignored these complaints.

When he died, my brother had been a miner for 17 years. He was concerned about safety and asked for a meeting. The meeting never happened. Manny said the mine safety was not right. My brother was so concerned about safety at the mine that he had asked me to get him a job at the mine I was working at in Wyoming. The Sunday/Monday shift was his last scheduled workday for him. Unfortunately he did not leave soon enough.

I worked for this company ten months ago and the company’s goal is production over safety. With this company the number one goal is to cut coal and to out-mine the long wall production at the West Ridge mine. When you get people that all they care about is production and competition and worry about safety later, the results have been devastating. It was very hard to learn that after this tragedy happened, one of the old mine supervisors said in a meeting that he had told them not to cut the barriers out.

As families, we want the truth of what happened. MSHA said that the company is thinking about sealing this portal of the mine. I feel like this is not being investigated at all. It has appeared that MSHA and Murray were together on this in both the mining and the rescue. Someone needed to look after our interests both before the collapse, which would have prevented

it, and after the collapse, to assure that everything possible was being done to rescue and now to assure everything possible is being done to find my brother and the other miners. It is very frustrating now to learn that MSHA has prevented the United Mine Workers Association from participating in its investigation. Someone needs to hear and represent us, the victims.

My brother and I were really good friends. He gave me a hard time and I gave it back to him also. I know that the company that I worked for in Wyoming would hire him right now. Unfortunately, he is not here to do so.

Thank you again for letting me be here..