

United Mine Workers of America

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INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT



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January 29, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of the United Mine Workers of America, I am delighted to extend heartfelt congratulations on your election! The UMWA membership campaigned hard for you, and we are proud to have played a key role in states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and elsewhere. I personally was honored to share the stage with you in southwest Virginia.

I am writing to express my strong support for Joe Main to serve as the Department of Labor's Assistant Secretary for the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). I know Joe very well: after he began working in the mining industry in Pennsylvania, the Union hired him in 1974. Joe proceeded to work 30 years for the UMWA, most of that time as the Director of the UMWA's Department of Occupational Health and Safety. Joe Main has dedicated his life to protecting and improving miners' health and safety; he offers an extraordinary and unique depth and breadth of experience.

Joe has been involved in every aspect of miners' health and safety: he investigated mine disasters and testified before Congress about them; he pushed for the development of key improvements in the equipment miners use to protect them from mining hazards, such as self-contained self rescuers; he appreciates the problem of increasing black lung disease among even young miners; and he helped with the development of MSHA regulations. Joe has offered a steady voice in support of miners, never hesitating to challenge MSHA when it failed to aggressively protect miners. Since leaving the Union in 2004, Joe has remained fully-engaged in the mining industry, consulting both domestically and internationally.

In short, Joe has been a consistent and untiring advocate for workers' health and safety, both nationally and internationally. He is truly an expert on miners' health and safety, and Joe enjoys 100% of the UMWA's support.

As you know, over the last eight years, we experienced significant and devastating health and safety problems in our nation's mines. Under the last administration, MSHA focused on "compliance assistance," rather than aggressive enforcement. That attitude was a logical consequence of an Agency run by former mining executives - men who were too concerned about mining company productivity and not sufficiently attentive to the needs of our nation's miners. Miners' health and safety suffered as a result of their mis-directed priorities. Indeed, after years of decreasing fatal accident rates, the Bush years were marked by numerous and devastating multi-fatal accidents throughout the coal industry. The legacy of the former administration's misguided policy is still fresh in our minds as we recall the disasters at Jim Walters No. 5 mine in Alabama (2001), the back-to-back disasters at Sago and Aracoma in West Virginia, followed by Kentucky's Darby (all in 2006), and then Utah's Crandall Canyon (2007).

It is time for MSHA to return to the primary mission Congress established: an agency dedicated to the health and safety of our nation's miners; an agency that promulgates strong and protective regulations, and an agency that fully and consistently enforces its regulations. Indeed, it is time for MSHA to be led by a miner who is dedicated to protecting miners.

Mr. Main would be a perfect choice to serve as Assistant Secretary for MSHA: he has a long and distinguished career in the field of mine health and safety. He is a well-known health and safety expert who would ensure that MSHA took seriously its primary obligation, as Congress declared: "the first priority and concern of all in the coal or other mining industry must be the health and safety of its most precious resource – the miner." (29 USC Sec 801).

Joe Main not only has our unequivocal support, but he would be a credit to your Administration. I am attaching Joe Main's resume, and hope you will give him your most serious consideration. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



Cecil E. Roberts

Enclosure

cc: Hilda Solis, Nominated Secretary of Labor
Harry Reid, Senate Majority Leader
Senator Richard Durbin
Senator Ted Kennedy
Senator Robert C. Byrd
Senator Jay Rockefeller
Senator Robert Casey
Senator Arlen Specter
Senator Roland Burris

Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House
Representative George Miller
Representative Nick Rahall
Representative Allan Mollohan
Representative Jerry Costello
Representative John P. Murtha
Representative Mike Doyle
Senate Committee on Health Education, Pensions and Labor
House Committee on Education and Labor
John Sweeney, AFL-CIO President
Richard Trumka, Secretary-Treasurer, AFL-CIO
Arlene Holt-Baker, Vice President, AFL-CIO

January 2009

Biography / Curriculum Vitae

Joseph A. Main

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E-mail: jmain3009@aol.com

Born - November 7, 1948

Location - Waynesburg, Pa.

Education - Graduated, West Greene High School, 1966

National Mine Health and Safety Academy / Mine Safety and Health Inspector Course, 1980

Employment:

* 1967 to 1974 - Employed in the mining industry and held several labor occupations including, driller, hoist operator, miner, equipment operator, and laborer at several mining operations. Held various elected local union positions including Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Mine Health and Safety Committee, and Coal Miners Political Action Committee (COMPAC).

* 1974 to 1975 - Served as Special Assistant to United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) International President. Appointed to serve as a chief negotiator of 1974 National Coal Mine Construction (collective) bargaining agreement and conducted research on working conditions in the mining construction industry.

* 1976 to 1982 - Served in UMWA Safety Division as Safety Inspector, Administrative Assistant, and Deputy Director. Conducted inspections of mines, investigated mine accidents, researched mining health and safety hazards, developed legislative and regulatory proposals, and developed and conducted miner representatives' training programs. Appointed as a negotiator for the 1981 National Mine Construction Agreement.

* 1982 to 2004 - Served as Administrator of the UMWA Department of Occupational Health and Safety. Developed and administered UMWA Health and Safety program nationally and internationally. Responsible for oversight of field health and safety operations, which included inspection of mines, mine rescue and recovery operations, and investigations following mine accidents and disasters; training of miner's representatives; development and implementation of the UMWA legal, legislative, regulatory and research agenda on mining health and safety; and coordination of international health and safety affairs.

Current:

Retired / Self employed as an international mining health and safety advisor / consultant.

Past and present international advisor / consultant work (2005 to current) include:

* (2005) Prepared for the International Labor Organization (ILO), a draft that revised and updated the *ILO Code of Practice - Safety and Health in Coal Mines* (international guidelines and standards for mine health and safety);

*(2005/ 2007) Consultant to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) on mining health and safety research, particularly mine disaster prevention and response;

*(2006) Served as a mine safety expert on the ILO, Meeting of Experts on Safety and Health in Coal Mines on the adoption of the ILO *Code of Practice - Safety and Health in Coal Mines* (Geneva Switzerland, May 2006);

*(2006) Advised the National Academies of Science, Division on Earth and Life Studies committee reviewing the *NIOSH Mining Safety and Health Research Program* and selected and served as a reviewer of the Academy Committee draft report;

*(2006) Selected and served as a reviewer of the National Academies, Institute of Medicine Board on Health Sciences Policy, a committee draft report on the review of the *NIOSH Hearing Loss Research Program*;

*(2006) Selected and served as a reviewer of the draft report by the *Mine Safety Technology Commission* established by the U. S. mining industry to improve mine safety in the U.S.;

*(2006 / 2007) Provided mine safety and health technical assistance to various representatives of affected mining families, news media, and others following the 2006 Sago, Alma #1 and Darby #1 and 2007 Crandall Canyon coal mine accidents.

* (2006 / 2007) Served as the mining safety expert on the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center, China Project;

* (2007) Training Consultant to the United Mine Workers of America Careers Centers Inc. (UMWACC) - coordinating training programs in the Pennsylvania mining industry and for the Pennsylvania Mining Industry Partnership (MIP) and consulted on development of mining training programs and facilities, including design of a simulated coal mine for skills mine rescue and mine emergency response training at the Mining Technology and Training Center (MTTC) at Ruff Creek, Pennsylvania. Provided comments to the National Academy of Sciences, Board on Environmental Studies and Toxicology, review of the National Institute of Occupational Science and Health (NIOSH) occupational respiratory disease activities. Attended the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate's 3rd Coal Mining Task Force Meeting, June 11-13 2007 in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, USA on behalf of the Jackson Hole Center for Global Affairs. Served as Project Technical Manager for development of an MSHA Brookwood / Sago (grant) training program on historical behaviors and experiences of miners during mine emergencies.

* (2008) Continued as Training Consultant to the UMWACC - coordinating training programs in the Pennsylvania mining industry and the MIP and development of mining training and mine rescue programs and facilities, including development of a simulated coal mine for skills, mine rescue and mine emergency training at the MTTC. Continued as Project Technical Manager for development of an MSHA Brookwood / Sago (grant). Served as Project Technical Manager for development of MSHA Brookwood / Sago (grant) training programs on (1) Mine emergency "command and control" responders and; (2) "Command and control" training for mine rescue teams. Reviewer of 2 chapters of a National Commission on Energy Policy initiated study by Virginia Technical Institute entitled - *Meeting Projected Coal Production Demands in the U.S.A. -- Upstream Issues, Challenges and Strategies*. Provided consultations on the August 6 and 13 2007 Crandall Canyon (Utah) mining accident(s) including testimony before the Utah

Safety Commission. Participated in NIOSH review of mine rescue training programs and facilities in the United States and evaluated several mine rescue training events, contests.

Current Professional organizations; United Mine Workers of America, Holmes Safety Association (Executive Committee), National Mine Rescue Association, Pennsylvania Bituminous Safety Association. Pittsburgh Coal Mining Institute of America, and the Mine Rescue Veterans of the Pittsburgh District (President).

Other Professional Activities

- * 1984 to 2004 - Union chairman on Joint Industry, UMWA / National Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) Health and Safety Committee.
- * 1984 to 2004 - Union chairman on Joint Industry UMWA / BCOA Training Committee.
- * 1990 - President, National Holmes Safety Association.
- * 1994 to 2004 - Member, AFL-CIO Staff committee on Health and Safety.
- * 1999 to 2004 - Board of Directors, National Black Lung Association.
- * 2000 to 2004 - Board of Directors, National Black Lung and Respiratory Disease Clinics Association.
- * 1999 to 2004 - Union Chairman, UMWA / BCOA / Industry / NIOSH Partnership on diesel in underground mines. (also served as the Union Chairman on labor / industry / government partnerships on noise; and development of a person wearable, continuous monitoring respirable coal mine dust sampling device)

Federal Advisory Committee Appointments

- * 1995 - Appointed by U.S. Secretary of Interior to U.S. Bureau of Mines Advisory Committee on mining health and safety research.
- * 1995 / 1996 - Appointed by U.S. Secretary of Labor to Federal Advisory Committee to provide recommendations to eradicate pneumoconiosis.
- * 1998 to 2004 - Appointed (and re-appointed) by U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services to Center for Disease Control / NIOSH, Federal Advisory Committee on Mine Safety and Health Research.

Testimony and Appearance Before U.S. Congress.

- * U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Education and Labor, Subcommittee on Health and Safety / Oversight of 1977 Federal Mine Safety and Health Act. (May 6, 1980)
- * U. S. Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources / Senate Subcommittee hearing on Senate Bill 1173, amending the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act. (July 26, 1983)
- * U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources / Oversight of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Administration. (September 25, 1986)
- * U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources / Hearing on 1984 Wilberg Mine disaster. (April 27, 1987)
- * U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Health and Safety / Hearings on 1984 Wilberg Mine disaster (June 16, 23, and 24, 1987)

- *U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources / Oversight of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (March 11 and 12, 1987)
- * U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Mining and Natural resources, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. (July 24, 1990)
- * U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Health and Safety, Committee on Education and Labor / Coal dust sampling. (April 15, 1991)
- * U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Committee on Appropriations / Appropriations for Mine Safety and Health Administration. (July 22, 1992)
- * U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Employment, Safety and Training, Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions / Oversight hearing on Federal Mine Safety and Health Act. (May 26, 1999)
- * U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Workforce Protections / Oversight of Federal Mine Safety and Health Act / State of the Industry. (September 14, 2000)
- * U.S. Senate Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations / Quecreek Mine Accident, (October 21, 2002).
- * U.S. Senate Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations / Proposed MSHA coal dust rules (July 31. 2003)

Comment and/or Testimony on Regulations before the Federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) (Partial list)

TITLE 30 CFR (mining health and safety pre-proposals and proposed standards)

- * Underground coal mine roof control. (1983 / 1986)
- * Explosives and blasting in underground coal mines. (1984 / 1986)
- * Underground coal mine ventilation. (1986 / 1988 / 1994)
- * Certification and qualification of persons [at coal mines]. (1988)
- * Hazard communication [of chemicals/ harmful agents in the work place]. (1988 / 1992)
- * Air quality standards [for underground coal mines]. (1989)
- * Diesel- powered equipment for underground coal mines. (1991)
- * Experienced miner and supervisor training. (1992)
- * Longwall equipment, including use of high voltage. (1992)
- * Single shift sampling [of coal mine dusts]. (1994)
- * Health standards for occupational noise exposure in coal, metal, and non-metal mines. (1997)
- * Black Lung Benefits Act / Federal Mine Health and Safety Act (1997)
- * Diesel particulate exposure of underground coal miners and metal non-metal miners. (1999)
- * Training and retraining of miners [at select] surface non-coal mines. (1999)
- * Respirable Coal Dust - concentrations, plan verification, and sampling (2000)
- * Respirable Coal Dust - concentrations, plan verification, and sampling (2003)

Noted International Activities

- * 1992 - Coordinator and presenter, Miners International Federation (MIF), “*International Conference on Health and Safety in Mining*” (on development of international mining health and safety standards), Haltren, Germany. (April 1992)

- * 1994 and 1995 - Served as U.S. Worker Representative to the International Labor Organization (ILO) Geneva conferences to develop recommendations and convention (176) on international mining health and safety standards. Elected in 1994 as Vice Chairman for the workers international group. Appointed as a chief negotiator for workers representatives at both ILO conferences.
- * 1996 to 1999 - Advisor to Partners in Economic Reform (PIER) on health and safety in Eastern Europe (primarily Poland, Russia and Ukraine)
- * 1996 - Participant in Partnership in Economic Reform conference on International Safety Management, Poland. (October 1996)
- * 1996 - Coordinator for training program of health and safety of labor representatives in Lima, Peru for the Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Union (ICEM). (December 1996)
- * 1997 - Participated in discussions with Russian Miner's independent union officials, PIER officials, and Russian government on capitalization of Russian coal mines Moscow, Russia (June 1997).
- * 1997 - Addressed and participated in mine safety seminar on mining safety in Poland at the Technical University of Silesia / Gliwice, Poland (June 1997)
- * 1997 - Led technical mine health and safety team at request of the U S Ambassador to Bulgaria to evaluate conditions in several Bulgarian coal mines following mine disasters. (October 1997)
- * 1997 / 1998 - Coordinator, ICEM Global Health and Safety Project, South America.
- * 1998 Appointed to serve as U.S. Worker Representative at ILO Geneva conference on small scale mining health and safety.
- * 1999 - Member of U.S. Delegation, U.S. National Administrative Office conference on "*Future Culture of Mining Safety and Health in North America*" Winnipeg, Canada. (September 1999)
- * 2000 - Evaluated health and safety, and health care conditions in Ukraine coal mines with the Pittsburgh / Donetsk Primary Health Care Partnership which included an underground mine examination at the Barokova Mine following the March mine explosion / disaster (March 2000)
- * 2004 - Member of the U.S. delegation on the U.S. / China, Clean Energy Initiative, sponsored by the Jackson Hole Center for Global Affairs in Shanxi Province and Beijing China, on joint cooperation on improving mine safety in China.(June 2004)
- * 2006 – Attended International Conference on Mining Accidents and Mining Safety Legal Regulation - Beijing, China (October 2006)

Mine Fire, Explosion, Disaster Recovery and / or Investigations (Partial List)

- * June 21, 1983 - Explosion - McClure # 1 Mine, VA
- * July 3, 1983 - Explosion - Homer City Mine / Homer City, PA
- * February 16, 1984 - Explosion - Greenwich # 1 Mine / Indiana County, PA
- * December 19, 1984 - Mine Disaster - Wilberg Mine / Orangeville, UT
- * March 19, 1992 - Explosion - Blacksville # 1 Mine / Blacksville, WV
- * June 1999 - Mine Fire - Loveridge Mine / Fairview, WV
- * September 21, 2001 - Mine Disaster - Jim Walter Resources # 5 Mine / Brookwood, AL
- * January 22, 2003 - Explosion - McElroy Mine (shaft) / Moundsville, WV

* February 13, 2003 - Mine Fire - Loveridge Mine / Fairview, WV

Awards and Other Achievements

- * Awarded lifetime membership in the *Black Lung Association* for contributions to improve the lives of coal mining black lung victims. (November 1999)
- * Honored with the establishment of the *Joseph A. Main AFGE / UMWA Scholarship* at the University of California, Pennsylvania, as the result of personal contributions and efforts to preserve the U S Bureau of Mines, mining safety research program (July 1996)
- * A joint recipient of the national *2004 R&D 100 Award* for development of a personal respirable dust sampling monitor device used to continuously sample coal mine dust that miners breathe. (October 14, 2004)
- * Recipient of the 2005 “*Mike South Award*” Presented by the *National coalition of Black Lung and Respiratory Disease Clinics Inc., National Black Lung Association and United Mine Workers of America* for work and dedication on mining health and safety. (October 27, 2005)
- * Recipient of the 2007 Pittsburgh Coal Mining Institute, Donald S Kingery Memorial Award for outstanding achievements in Mine Safety.
- * Recommended by the U. S. Senate Democratic leadership and interviewed by the U. S. White House for appointment as a Commissioner to the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission. (June / July 2006)

Additional training Activities

- * Developed training and education programs designed for miners / miners’ representatives for use in quarterly safety meetings, throughout the United States. (1983 - 2004)
- * Developed training courses and programs for miners’ representatives delivered as 5 days of instruction at the National Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beckley, WV. (1988 -2004)
- * Developed 40-hour Joint Industry [UMWA & BCOA] training Health & Safety Committee training programs 1983-2004.
- * Served as training instructor / presenter in the previously described training programs and courses.