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I rise in support of H. Res. 1236, which honors the coal miners who perished in the Upper Big Branch Mine--South in Raleigh County, West Virginia, extends condolences to their families, and recognizes the valiant efforts of emergency response workers at the mine disaster.

On April 5, America witnessed the worst coal mining disaster in 40 years when an explosion occurred at the Upper Big Branch--South Mine. Twenty-nine miners were killed in this tragedy, and my thoughts and prayers go out to their families, friends and colleagues during this difficult time.

I also would like to commend the rescue teams who bravely risked life and limb to search for missing miners after the disaster, and thank the volunteers who supported the community through this tragedy.

I feel strongly about the concerns of the mining industry because I was born and raised in West Virginia, where my father as a U.S. Senator, was known as one of the best friends a miner ever had. There is no question that mining has been a dangerous job. Today, coal mining is rated among the most dangerous jobs in America. It does not have to be that way.

Chairman *Miller* has assured me that the Education and Labor Committee will be investigating any possible health and safety violations at the Upper Big Branch--South Mine to see if laws were circumvented and miners' lives were recklessly put at risk. If that was indeed the case, those responsible must be held accountable.

Too many families have suffered the loss of a loved one in a mining disaster. We in Congress need to fully investigate the factors that led to these tragedies. We need to investigate the deficiencies in laws, regulations and enforcement that may have contributed to these disasters.

We owe it to the families of miners lost in these disasters and the miners that work every day to take action to prevent these accidents from happening again. I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 1236.