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I rise in support of H. Res. 1363, which gives the Committee on Education and Labor, on which I sit, the ability to investigate the Upper Big Branch mine disaster. This resolution allows us to do our work, and I would like to speak about that subject.

In a greater sense, this resolution honors the coal miners who perished in the tragedy and works to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again. We owe it to the remaining families and to all mining families.

I feel strongly and personally about the concerns of miners because I was born and reared in West Virginia where my father, the late U.S. Senator many decades ago, was known as one of the best friends the miner has ever had.

There's no question that mining has been a dangerous job. Although the number of deaths in America's mines has been reduced, today coal mining is rated still among the most dangerous jobs in America, and it does not have to be that way.

I support the Education and Labor Committee's work to investigate any possible health and safety violations at Upper Big Branch and to see if laws were circumvented and miners' lives were put recklessly at risk. 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 investigate fully the factors that led to these tragedies. We need to investigate fully the deficiencies in laws, regulations, and enforcement that may have contributed. We owe it to the families of the miners lost and the miners who work every day to take action.

We must prevent these accidents from happening again, and I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 1363.