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September 14, 2010

## Support H.R. 5663, the Robert C. Byrd Miner Safety and Health Act of 2010

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Dear Representative:

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations that seeks to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, is writing to urge you to support H.R. 5663, the Robert C. Byrd Miner Safety and Health Act of 2010. This bill, which would make improvements in both the existing Mine Safety and Health Act ("MSHA") and the Occupational Safety and Health Act ("OSHA"), is a necessary response to the ongoing safety and health crisis in the American workplace.

MSHA and OSHA were enacted in 1977 and 1970, respectively, and are badly out of date. The worker protections that they provide are inadequate, particularly for dealing with the most serious statutory violations.

H.R. 5663 would:

- amend MSHA to give government the enforcement tools necessary to take effective action against employers who commit serious violations, particularly those who are repeat offenders and have a pattern of violations;
- strengthen the MSHA and OSHA whistleblower protections so that workers could raise safety and health concerns without fear of retaliation;
- increase criminal penalties for employers whose workers are killed due to a safety violation, and update civil penalties, which have not been updated since 1990.

The recent tragedies at the Upper Big Branch mine in West Virginia, the Tesoro Refinery in Washington State, and the Horizon Oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico underscore the need for stronger and more rigorous enforcement of safety and health laws. These tragedies deservedly received wide national attention, but they must be viewed in the broader context of the continuing toll that job-related death, injury, and disease take on American workers. In 2008, more than 5,200 workers were killed on the job, and over a million more were injured or contracted a serious disease. Every day, an average of 14 workers die from workplace injuries.

We urge you to support H.R. 5663, and give this important legislation the expeditious consideration that it deserves. Congress should act now to protect the nation's workers from further unnecessary death, injury, and disease.

Compliance/Enforcement  
Committee Chairperson  
Karen K. Narasaki  
Asian American Justice Center  
President & CEO  
Wade J. Henderson

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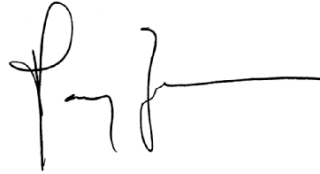


For additional information, or if you want to cosponsor the bill, please contact Richard Miller at  
at . If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Lexer Quamie  
or Nancy Zirkin at .

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson  
President & CEO



Nancy Zirkin  
Executive Vice President