



KENTUCKY STATE AFL-CIO

140 Kings Daughter Drive
Suites 100 - 200
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
Phone: 502-696-9002 - Fax: 502-696-9030

VOTE NO ON SB224

SB224 attempts to change the annual Mine Foremen safety training requirements which were passed in 2007 Regular Session in HB207. **HB 207 passed amid a spike in coal miner deaths**, including the May 20, 2006 Kentucky Darby Disaster which claimed the lives of five miners, and **passed both chambers unanimously**.

SB224 **loosens the requirements for annual Mine Foreman safety training** by making the current requirement that this training be conducted by the Kentucky Division of Mine Safety **optional**.

Under current statute, Mine Foremen must take **six (6) hours of specialized annual training** on: changes in mine safety laws, safe retreat mining practices, disciplinary cases litigated before the Mine Safety Review Commission, changes in mine safety technology and ways to improve safe working procedures.

Effective and regular Mine Foremen safety training is a necessity for safer mines as Mine Foremen are responsible for the safety of every miner on their crew.

The Kentucky Division of Mine Safety has been conducting annual Mine Foremen **training efficiently for the past eight years at no cost to coal companies**.

The options for Mine Foremen safety training in SB224 include: 1) *a Kentucky certified instructor, or 2) an instructor certified by the United State Department of Labor, Mine Safety and Health Administration.*

Other than this reference to "a Kentucky certified instructor" this position does not appear elsewhere in the statute, lacks a definition and any specificity as to who certifies "a Kentucky certified instructor" and what constitutes such certification.

The second option, which indicates that MSHA could certify Mine Foremen safety training instructors, is not a viable option either since **MSHA lacks provisions for training Mine Foremen that are equivalent to Kentucky's** since our mine safety training involves Kentucky specific training on retreat mining, current disciplinary cases and technological changes. **HB 207 implemented a higher level of training for Mine Foremen than is required by MSHA.**

The current annual Mine Foremen safety training program administered by the Kentucky Division of Mine Safety is **neither costly nor burdensome to the coal industry**. There is **no demonstrable reason to loosen the current Mine Foremen safety training requirements** by introducing the option for so-called "certified instructors" because it: 1) lacks definitional specifics of how and by whom training instructors are certified; and 2) MSHA has no certification process for Mine Foreman safety training based on Kentucky-specific statutes and regulations. **SB224 puts Kentucky's miners at greater risk of death or serious injury.**

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST WEAKENING KENTUCKY'S MINE SAFETY LAWS!