

## HR 3625

### Black Lung Benefits Improvement Act of 2015

**Congress:** 114 (2015–2017, Ended)

**Chamber:** House

**Policy Area:** Labor and Employment

**Introduced:** Sep 28, 2015

**Current Status:** Referred to the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections.

**Latest Action:** Referred to the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections. (Mar 23, 2016)

**Official Text:** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/3625>

### Sponsor

**Name:** Rep. Cartwright, Matt [D-PA-17]

**Party:** Democratic • **State:** PA • **Chamber:** House

### Cosponsors (3 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Rep. Scott, Robert C. "Bobby" [D-VA-3]	D · VA		Sep 28, 2015
Rep. Wilson, Frederica S. [D-FL-24]	D · FL		Sep 28, 2015
Rep. Courtney, Joe [D-CT-2]	D · CT		Oct 23, 2015

### Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Education and Workforce Committee	House	Referred to	Mar 23, 2016
Ways and Means Committee	House	Referred To	Sep 28, 2015

### Subjects & Policy Tags

#### Policy Area:

Labor and Employment

### Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
114 S 2096	Related bill	Sep 29, 2015: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

## Black Lung Benefits Improvement Act of 2015

This bill amends the Black Lung Benefits Act to revise requirements for miners' claims for pneumoconiosis (black lung) benefits.

A mine operator must give a copy of the examining physician's report to miners required to have a medical examination of their respiratory condition.

The Department of Labor must pay the attorneys' fees of prevailing parties on a qualifying black lung benefit claim.

This bill revises: (1) the standards of medical evidence that establish a presumption that a miner is totally disabled by black lung, and (2) payments to miners (including their dependents) totally disabled by black lung.

Black lung clinics may use federal funds to help individuals file black lung benefit claims.

A person may not: (1) make a false statement or misrepresentation in increasing or reducing black lung benefits, or (2) threaten or mislead a participant in a proceeding regarding black lung benefits.

Labor, upon request, must give a claimant the opportunity to substantiate a claim for benefits through a pulmonary evaluation of the miner.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) must establish a pilot program to assure accurate classifications of chest radiographs in black lung cases where the diagnosis is at issue.

Labor, in coordination with NIOSH, must educate certain individuals who work on black lung benefits about medical evidence relevant to claims.

A previously denied claimant may file a claim for black lung benefits within one year after enactment of this Act.

Labor must report to Congress a strategy to reduce the backlog of black lung cases pending before the Office of Administrative Law Judges.

The Government Accountability Office must report on any barriers to health care faced by coal miners with black lung.

The bill amends the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 to direct Labor to use data from continuous personal dust monitors to determine whether to make changes to respirable dust concentration standards, controls, and measurements.

Establishment of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs is codified.

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## Actions Timeline

- **Mar 23, 2016:** Referred to the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections.
- **Sep 28, 2015:** Introduced in House
- **Sep 28, 2015:** Referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.