

S 854

Robert C. Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act of 2017

Congress: 115 (2017–2019, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Labor and Employment

Introduced: Apr 5, 2017

Current Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Latest Action: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. (Apr 5, 2017)

Official Text: https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/854

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Casey, Robert P., Jr. [D-PA]

Party: Democratic • State: PA • Chamber: Senate

Cosponsors (2 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Brown, Sherrod [D-OH]	D · OH		Apr 5, 2017
Sen. Manchin, Joe, III [D-WV]	D · WV		Apr 5, 2017

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee	Senate	Referred To	Apr 5, 2017

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Labor and Employment

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
115 HR 1903	Related bill	Apr 5, 2017: Referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

## **Robert C. Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act of 2017**

This bill amends the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 to revise requirements governing: (1) investigations of mine accidents, (2) miners' rights and protections (e.g., whistle-blower rights and protections), (3) mine health and safety standards, (4) underground coal mines, and (5) health and safety training for miners.

The Department of Labor, when investigating coal or other mines, must: (1) determine why an accident occurred and whether there were violations of law, mandatory health and safety standards, or other requirements; (2) refer to the Department of Justice cases involving violations of federal criminal law; and (3) make recommendations to avoid a recurrence of an accident.

The bill expands Labor's enforcement authority, including by requiring Labor to: (1) revoke the approval of mine operators' plans or programs based on certain criteria, and (2) order mine operators to withdraw all persons from a mine until Labor approves a new plan. The bill revises civil and criminal penalties, including by subjecting a mine operator who knowingly violates health or safety standards to a felony punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$1 million fine.

Underground coal mines operators must implement a communication program to brief miners of current mine conditions and install atmospheric monitoring systems.

The bill amends the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSH Act) to expand its coverage to government employees and increase civil and criminal penalties for violations of the Act. The bill also expands whistle-blower rights and protections against retaliation under the OSH Act, establishes employee rights with respect to work-related bodily injuries or death, and establishes procedures for correcting serious, willful or repeated violations of occupational safety and health standards.

## **Actions Timeline**

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- **Apr 5, 2017:** Introduced in Senate
- **Apr 5, 2017:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.