

6/14 Natural Resources Committee - Mining Schools Act

Chairmen Stauber, Ranking member Ocasio-Cortez, thank you for allowing to come to your subcommittee hearing today to briefly talk about my bipartisan bill, H.R. 2685, the Mining Schools Act of 2023.

Dr. Copan, thank you for offering to speak on behalf of this important legislation.

At a time when a strong mining workforce is needed more than ever, our mining workforce is dwindling. Many of America's miners are retiring and there aren't enough students to make up for these losses... making finding qualified Mining Engineers and Geologists a big challenge.

Unfortunately, in 2018 and 2019, graduation rates for university and college mining and geological programs dropped by over 21%, signaling a big risk for our domestic supply chain, economic and national security, and the future of American mining.

Right now, there are roughly 600 students currently enrolled in mining programs across 11 colleges and universities, including the University of Utah School of Mining and Engineering in my home state.

Compare this to China's 1.4 million students in similar programs. We can't compete on a global scale if we don't strengthen these programs.

That's why I introduced the Mining Schools Act ... to create a grant program to recruit students

and carry out important programs dedicated to the production of minerals.

It would also establish the Mining Professional Development Advisory Board to evaluate applications and recommend recipients. This is crucial to building our economy and re-establishing domestic energy independence.

My district is home to Kennecott Copper Mine, the largest excavation and open-pit copper mine in the world.

At the end of the day, we should be working to secure America's energy security and national security.

Mining is a major priority for my district and many communities nationwide, and I'll continue fighting to ensure this important bill becomes law.

Thank you, again, for allowing me to speak during this important hearing, and I appreciate your support.