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For two long years, the men and women who are demonstrating here today have fought for the decency of a fair contract with ASARCO. And here at the finish line of those negotiations, these workers are being told that a fair contract is too much to ask. They are being told that their pensions will be reduced, their health coverage cut back, and their protections against outsourcing will be weakened.

All of this comes from a company – and its parent company, Grupo Mexico – that already has an abysmal record of caring for its employees. Lives have been lost at the hands of their negligence in mine safety. Workers have faced violence in retaliation for striking for their rights. And employees in Mexico are treated with the indignity of being fired and rehired every 29 days so the company can avoid the responsibilities that come hand-in-hand with having full-time employees.

These actions are nothing short of despicable. As a Member of Congress concerned about labor rights, human rights and a fair economy, and as a representative of constituents who have expressed concern about the issues raised by Asarco and Grupo Mexico's conduct, I have watched these negotiations with great interest. This was ASARCO's opportunity to show the world that they are better than the abusive and inhumane employer we all see them to be.

We may be in the final stretches, but it's not too late for them to do the right thing. I am proud of everyone demonstrating today, for having the will to fight for what's right; for taking a stand in the face great personal risk; and for reminding ARSACO one more time that it's not too late to do the right thing. I regret that my work in Washington is keeping me away today, but I assure you my thoughts are with each and every one of you fighting for a just workplace right now!

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress