

My name is Robert "LJ" Smith. I'm from Gillette Wyoming, representing the Boys and Girls Club of Campbell County. So I would like to shorten my speech and say thank you for allowing me to be here and setting this time to me. Again, greetings. My name is LJ Smith, and I am honored to be here amongst these fine folks today as a champion of coal and all the men and women who help produce it. I also am here today in representation of a particular group of citizens, a group of citizens that is often voiceless, a group that is under-represented in Washington politics, but a vital group that is necessary for our future. As the executive director of the Boys and Girls Club of Campbell County, today I am here in representation of our youth, the youth which are also friends of coal. Since my arrival in Gillette nearly 60 days ago, I have witnessed the devastation Washington's energy agenda has had on Wyoming families. I have seen families divided as fathers are displaced, as mothers struggle with two or three jobs. I witness the effect these have on our community as we shift and how that affects our children. Our Wyoming youth have observed the attack on coal, the attack on their way of life. I have seen their frustration. I have heard their anger. Their grades and behavior are indicators of this. The absence of coal in our community is not only hurting our economy but our nation. As a nonprofit CEO, I rely on the donations that I receive from coal and the industry that everything is about and everything about it. These donations help me to provide all the necessary aspects to the community that strengthen those components, and currently I'm struggling to do so. Putting coal out of business is putting children's futures out of touch. So what do we do with this? Let us not regret tomorrow what we should have chosen to do today.