

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL COURT
REPORTING AND CAPTIONING
WEEK

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2013

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to acknowledge the hard work of court reporters and broadcast captioners nationwide, as well as the recognition of the National Court Reporting and Captioning Week from February 17–23, 2013.

Court reporters and broadcast captioners have the unique skill of translating the spoken word into text to record history, preserve judicial proceedings, assist individuals who are deaf and hard-of-hearing with access to audio communications, and even capture the work of Congress in committees and on the floor of the House and Senate. They are truly the guardians of the record.

The profession of court reporting is thousands of years old; its roots can be traced back to 63 B.C., when Marcus Tullius Tiro created shorthand reporting to service the Roman philosopher, lawyer, and orator Cicero. Since the dawn of civilization, the desire to capture the spoken word and record our history has been the responsibility of the scribe, known today as the court reporter.

The scribe has been an essential part of history from times in Ancient Egypt, to the drafting of the Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights, the Emancipation Proclamation and the recording of our entire American history.

Since the advent of shorthand machines, these scribes are now known as court reporters and have played a prominent and invaluable role in courtrooms, state legislatures, and in Congress preserving Members' words and actions.

Court reporters and captioners are also responsible for the closed captioning seen scrolling across television screens, at sporting stadiums and in other community and educational settings, bringing information to almost 40 million deaf and hard-of-hearing Americans every day.

Congress has continuously worked with the National Court Reporters Association to make increasing this access a reality and to ensure that every American has access to the spoken word.

Whether called the scribes of yesterday or the court reporters and captioners of today, the individuals who preserve our Nation's history are truly the guardians of our national record. They have a tough profession but continue to excel through their dedication and expertise. With that, it is my honor to acknowledge February 17–23 as National Court Reporting and Captioning Week across the country.

HONORING BENJAMIN JACKSON
MATT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2013

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Benjamin Jackson Matt. Benjamin is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 314, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Benjamin has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Benjamin has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned 32 merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Benjamin has led his troop in various positions including Troop Guide, has earned the rank of Warrior in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say and is a Brotherhood Member in the Order of the Arrow. Benjamin has also contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout Project. Benjamin led a team of more than 30 people in designing and constructing a trail at Parkville Nature Sanctuary in Parkville, Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Benjamin Jackson Matt for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

FEDERAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE
NONPROFIT FAIRNESS ACT OF 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, Superstorm Sandy inflicted unprecedented damage on communities in the Northeast including my district in New Jersey. Congress and the President have responded by providing \$60 billion in emergency and recovery aid.

Today's debate and vote however isn't at all about whether or how much funding Congress appropriates to mitigate the impact of Sandy. We've had that vote.

Rather, it is about those who are being unfairly left out and left behind. It's about those who helped feed, comfort, clothe and shelter tens of thousands of victims now being told they are ineligible for a FEMA grant.

It is unconscionable that foundational pillars of our communities damaged by Sandy—synagogues, churches, mosques, temples and other houses of worship—have been categorically denied access to these otherwise generally-available relief funds. Current FEMA policy is patently unfair, unjustified and discrimi-

natory and may even suggest hostility to religion.

FEMA has a policy in place to aid nonprofit facilities damaged in the storm, but the agency has excluded houses of worship from this support. That is wrong. And it's time Congress ensures fundamental fairness for these essential private nonprofits.

The bipartisan Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013—H.R. 592—will ensure that churches, synagogues, mosques, temples and other houses of worship are eligible for federal funds to effectuate repairs, restoration and replacement of damaged facilities.

Madam Speaker, it's worth noting here that FEMA's discriminatory policy of exclusion isn't prescribed by any law. Nothing in the Stafford Act or any other law including the Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief Appropriations Act precludes funds to repair, restore or replace houses of worship. Indeed, congressional precedent favors enacting H.R. 592 as there are several pertinent examples of public funds been allocated to houses of worship.

For example:

FEMA grants were explicitly authorized by Congress and provided to churches damaged in the Oklahoma City terrorist attack;

Homeland Security Department and UASI provides funding to houses of worship for security upgrades;

Interior Department provides funding for grants for historically significant properties including churches and synagogues;

It is important to note that a controlling Justice Department Office of Legal Counsel Memorandum explains in detail the legal principles which make H.R. 592 constitutional. In a September 25, 2002, written opinion, the Office of Legal Counsel concluded it was constitutional for Congress to provide disaster relief and reconstruction funds to a religious Jewish school, along with all sorts of other organizations, following a devastating earthquake.

The same principles apply to protect religious organizations following a devastating hurricane. As the Office of Legal Counsel memo concluded "provision of disaster assistance to [religious organizations] cannot be materially distinguished from aid programs that are constitutional under longstanding Supreme Court precedent establishing that religious institutions are fully entitled to receive generally available government benefits and services, such as fire and police protection."

The Supreme Court handed down its first modern Establishment Clause decision in *Everson v. Board of Education*, which involved a program in my own state of New Jersey. In that case the Court held that religious institutions are entitled to receive "general government services" made available on the basis of neutral criteria.

The Court held that the Establishment Clause does not bar students attending religious schools from receiving generally available school busing services provided by the government. In reaching its decision, the Court

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.