



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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Kind Introduces Legislation to Ensure Closed-Captioning Available to the Hearing Impaired

'Training for Realtime Writers Act of 2007' Will Promote Careers in Closed-Captioning to Meet Vital Need for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Americans

Washington, DC – U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) today will introduce legislation to help ensure there are closed-captioning services available for deaf and hearing impaired residents by training more “realtime” writers for work in media outlets and as court reporters. The bill enjoys broad bipartisan support, with 29 original cosponsors.

“Court reporters are the guardians of the public record, and closed-captioners help our hearing impaired residents stay informed,” Rep. Kind said. “Right now we are educating only half the realtime writers we need to fill these jobs, and the *Training for Realtime Writers Act* will increase awareness and interest in these vital professions.”

Over 30 million Americans are deaf or hard-of-hearing, and approximately 90 percent of them rely on captioning services for news and information. The captioning industry is strained to capacity in its effort to ensure that the round-the-clock news and information is accessible to this community.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 mandated that all television programming be fully captioned by 2006. However, with schools educating only half the captioners needed, thousands of hours of programming are left unavailable to the deaf or hard of hearing. *The Training for Realtime Writers Act of 2007* will provide competitive grants to schools to educate prospective students to become proficient captioners.

“Without closed-captioning, our deaf and hard-of-hearing residents could be left without critical information during a national crisis,” Rep. Kind said. “After crises like September 11 and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, our nation has vowed not to be caught unprepared again. This service was mandated more than a decade ago, and it is time we make good on the promise we made to deaf and hard of hearing Americans by ensuring information access for all.”

Rep. Kind’s wife, Tawni, works as an official court reporter for the County Court System in La Crosse.