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CJ's Bill Gets a Second Look Lawmakers Reintroduce Measure to Install Weather Radios, Save Lives

WASHINGTON – In the aftermath of one of the deadliest tornado seasons in recent history, Congress will have a second chance to consider legislation to provide Americans in the path of dangerous storms with life-saving warnings. Reps. Brad Ellsworth (D-IN), Spencer Bachus (R-AL), Dennis Moore (D-KS) and Kay Granger (R-TX) reintroduced CJ's Home Protection Act today. The bill requires manufactured and mobile homes to be equipped with emergency weather radios.

The group of lawmakers first introduced the bill in 2007. Although it received unanimous support in the House, the bill's momentum was halted when the Senate was forced to turn its attention to the growing financial crisis last year.

According to National Weather Service data, 125 people were killed in tornadoes in 2008, the most since 1998.

"This bill is about public safety. When it comes to surviving these violent storms, a warning can make all the difference," said Rep. Ellsworth. "We are going to keep pushing for this bill because if it prevents just one mother from losing her son, a \$30 weather radio is not too much to ask."

"With today's technology, we have the science to predict a severe storm, sometimes as much as a half hour before it arrives. We are building more storm shelters. Now, we must address the missing link for people who live in manufactured housing, making sure that people get emergency warnings in time to seek shelter from the storm," said Rep. Baucus, Ranking Member of the House Financial Services Committee.

"Congress has made great progress in addressing wind hazards, including creating the National Wind Hazard Reduction Program, which calls for better design and construction practices of buildings, improves emergency response and increases public education relating to wind hazards. But there is more to be done. We may not be able to stop tornadoes, but together we can certainly lessen the impact of these deadly storms," said Rep. Moore.

"North Texas has had its share of severe weather. In many cases a storm can strike quickly and with little notice," Rep. Granger said. "The built-in technology this bill provides would ensure that people are getting the information they need before a severe storm hits. This bill will help save lives and prevent needless injuries from occurring."

Summary of Legislation:

CJ's Home Protection Act would change the Federal manufactured home construction and safety standards to require every manufactured home delivered for sale to be supplied with a weather radio. Weather radios provide immediate broadcasts of severe weather warnings and civil emergency messages, including tornado and flood warnings, AMBER alerts for child abductions, and chemical spill notifications. Prices vary from \$20-\$80.

The bill is named after CJ Martin, a two-year-old boy, whose life was taken by an F3 tornado in southwest Indiana in 2005. His mother, Kathryn, turned her grief into a state-wide advocacy campaign that resulted in an Indiana law requiring NOAA Weather Radios be installed in all new mobile and manufactured housing, which then prompted the federal initiative.

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