



National Court Reporters Association
12355 Sunrise Valley Drive, Suite 610
Reston, VA 20191-3484
Tel: 703-556-6272 · Fax: 703-391-0629
800-272-NCRA (6272) · NCRA.org

October 17, 2023

Joint Subcommittee on Commerce, Labor, Transportation and Agriculture
402 Cordell Hull State Office Building
Nashville, TN 37243

Re: Opposition of the Proposed Sunset of the Tennessee Board of Court Reporting

Dear Distinguished Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Commerce, Labor, Transportation and Agriculture:

As President of the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA), which represents more than 12,000 members, including those in the state of Tennessee, we are writing to oppose the proposed sunset of the Tennessee Board of Court Reporting, the licensing and regulatory entity for court reporting within the state. NCRA is the national accreditation body for stenographic court reporters and has been testing and certifying stenographic court reporters for more than 80 years.

We condemn the termination of the licensing authority for stenography in Tennessee and emphasize that such a dissolution will damage the accuracy and security of the record. Moreover, citizens of Tennessee will be denied access to the most accurate record. Furthermore, not only will it have disastrous implications for the hardworking and highly skilled stenographic reporters of Tennessee, their families, and their livelihood, but it will negatively impact the abilities of participants in the court to enjoy the highest level of record-making available.

The Tennessee Board of Court Reporting serves as the licensing body for stenographic court reporters in Tennessee. When a stenographic court reporter becomes licensed by the Board, the stenographer, the employer, and the public all benefit. Becoming a stenographic court reporter requires a high degree of skill – writing at up to 260 wpm – training, and accuracy. Absent a certification or licensure requirement, any individual can hold themselves out to be a stenographic court reporter.

Stenographic court reporters in Tennessee have operated effectively for years as certified stenographic reporters. Their certifications provide assurance to clients and consumers of reporting services – the courts, attorneys, and litigants – that the stenographic reporters who serve them either meet baseline and expected qualifications or have achieved even higher levels of certification available. The Tennessee Board of Court Reporting's licensure protects the investment that the public has in the justice system by ensuring that qualified individuals are working in Tennessee and ensuring accountability for the quality of the record in official proceedings. It must be noted that the consequences that follow from an insufficient record of proceedings in court are ultimately borne by the state.

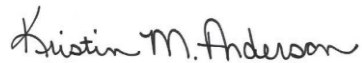
Terminating the licensing authority that regulates stenography will disrupt the court system in Tennessee from operating smoothly and efficiently. Further, we believe that dissolution of the Board will compromise the integrity of the court record. Lastly, allowing the sunset of the Tennessee Board of Court Reporting will indicate the Joint Committee's failure to protect a profession that is integral to the state's court system as well as its failure to ensure that certified

court reporters retain their ability to provide irreplaceable services in the state. More importantly, this action would remove access to the most accurate record making option for the citizens of Tennessee.

NCRA adamantly opposes the proposed sunset of the Tennessee Board of Court Reporting as the removal of this licensing authority will significantly harm the Tennessee court reporting community and ultimately deny the rights of citizens at large. If the accuracy and integrity of the record are of utmost importance, it is our stance that a stenographic court reporter is the best means of ensuring that the record is protected.

I and the staff of NCRA stand ready to be of assistance. If you have questions, concerns, or a need for clarification, please contact NCRA Director of Government Relations Jocelynn A. Moore, Esq., at jmoore@ncra.org.

Very Respectfully,



Kristin M. Anderson, RPR
2023-2024 NCRA President