



National Court Reporters Association
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Delegate JB Akers
Room 418M, Building 1
State Capitol Complex
Charleston, WV 25305

Re: WV House Bill 3274 - Relating to reports of circuit court proceedings

March 21, 2025

Dear Delegate Akers,

On behalf of the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA), I write to express our serious concerns regarding the proposed changes in West Virginia House Bill 3274, which seeks to permit the use of approved electronic means to record circuit court proceedings. While we appreciate efforts to address judicial processes, we strongly caution against the risks posed by relying on electronic means in place of certified professional court reporters. Such a shift could undermine the administration and restoration of justice for West Virginians, compromising the accuracy, integrity, and accessibility of the judicial record.

Certified court reporters are trained professionals who ensure the verbatim accuracy of legal proceedings, safeguarding the rights of all parties involved. NCRA's extensive resources, including studies and position papers available through our Government Relations Department, highlight the significant downfalls of substituting human expertise with automated systems. Unlike electronic recordings, court reporters provide real-time transcription, immediate clarification of unclear testimony, and a meticulous record that preserves nuances critical to judicial outcomes—capabilities that technology alone cannot replicate. Errors or failures in electronic systems, such as inaudible audio, equipment malfunctions, or lack of contextual understanding, can result in incomplete or unreliable records, jeopardizing due process and the fair administration of justice.

Moreover, the increasing reliance on automatically generated transcriptions raises additional concerns considering President Donald J. Trump's 2025 Executive Order, which calls for American dominance in artificial intelligence. Many automated transcription services are performed by foreign-based entities, offering no clear chain of custody or watermark to verify authenticity. This lack of oversight threatens the judicial integrity of state courts, potentially exposing sensitive proceedings to security risks and undermining the rights of Americans to a transparent and accountable legal process. Certified court reporters, by contrast, provide a secure, domestic solution grounded in professionalism and accountability.

Thank you for your dedication to the people of West Virginia. We respectfully request that you preserve the use of court reporters as the gold standard for circuit court proceedings, ensuring the continued strength and reliability of the state's judicial system.

Sincerely,

Keith Lemons

Keith R. Lemons, FAPR, RPR, CRR (Ret.)
President, National Court Reporters Association