

C.J.'s act gains support in D.C.

House approves weather radio bill

By John Martin

Originally published 12:00 a.m., October 31, 2007

Updated 11:51 p.m., October 30, 2007

Legislation known as C.J.'s Home Protection Act, which would require manufactured and mobile homes to be equipped with weather radios, passed the U.S. House of Representatives in a voice vote Tuesday.

The measure now goes to the Senate.

Named for C.J. Martin, a 2-year-old boy who was killed in the Nov. 6, 2005, tornado in Vanderburgh and Warrick counties, the legislation would change federal manufactured home construction and safety standards to require each home delivered for sale to be supplied with a weather radio.

"C.J. Martin is the reason we are here," Rep. Brad Ellsworth, D-Ind., said Tuesday on the House floor. "He is a reminder of the destruction that comes to families and communities when severe weather strikes without warning."

Ellsworth sponsored the legislation along with three other House members — Reps. Spencer Bachus, R-Ala., Dennis Moore, D-Kan., and Kay Granger, R-Texas.

Weather radios provide immediate broadcasts of severe weather messages and emergency messages, including tornado and flood warnings, alerts about child abductions and chemical spill notifications.

A radio costs from \$20 to \$80.

"Severe weather doesn't distinguish between Democrats and Republicans. It doesn't care whether you live in Indiana or Alabama or Kansas or California. ... If we prevent just one mother from losing her son, a \$30 weather radio is not too much to ask," Ellsworth said.

Kathryn Martin, C.J.'s mother, has campaigned for legislation at the state and federal levels requiring radios in mobile and manufactured homes. Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels signed such a law.

Senate sponsors of the federal legislation still have not been identified, said Liz Farrar, Ellsworth's press secretary.

Bill would require emergency radios in manufactured homes

DOUG ABRAHMS

Gannett News Service

October 30, 2007 5:46 pm

WASHINGTON – New manufactured homes would have to be equipped with emergency weather radios to try to prevent tornado and flood deaths under a bill passed Tuesday by the House.

People living in mobile homes face 10 times the risk of dying when a tornado hits than those in other housing, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Tornadoes kill about 80 Americans a year, the agency said.

"This will save lives," said Rep. Spencer Bachus, R-Ala. "We have a shot of significantly reducing over half the deaths from tornadoes."

The legislation would require NOAA radios to be installed in manufactured homes, where about 20 million Americans live.

The bill still must pass the Senate and be signed into law by President Bush.

The legislation leaves it up to the Department of Housing and Urban Development to set regulations on these radios, including a start date. The radios are expected to cost between \$20 and \$80.

South Carolina, New Mexico, Mississippi and North Carolina had the highest percentage of residents living in manufactured housing in 2005, according to the Census Bureau.

Rep. Brad Ellsworth, D-Ind., introduced the legislation at the behest of Kathryn Martin, whose 2-year-old son, C.J., was killed when a tornado ripped through a southwest Indiana trailer park in 2005.

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Hoosier tornado death spurs trailer radio law

Staff, news services

WASHINGTON – The death of a 2-year-old Indiana boy prompted the House to vote Tuesday to require weather radios be installed in all new manufactured homes.

C.J. Martin was killed in a tornado that struck an Evansville mobile home park without warning two years ago. The Indiana legislature later passed a law to require weather radios in manufactured housing but only if the structures were placed in manufactured home communities.

The federal bill was modeled on the Hoosier law but would apply to all manufactured homes.

“For a mere \$30 or \$80, we can perhaps save the next 2-year-old boy from devastation,” said Rep. Brad Ellsworth, D-8th, who was sheriff of Vanderburgh County when the tornado hit.

Indiana is one of the top producers of manufactured homes, with most of the factories in the Elkhart County area. The industry didn’t oppose the legislation, said Jim Keller, manufactured housing director of the Indiana Manufactured Housing Association.

The House bill, approved unanimously, will be sent to the Senate.

House passes bill requiring weather radios in manufactured homes

By Ben Evans, Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — New manufactured homes would be required to come equipped with weather radios to warn occupants of severe storms under legislation spurred by a deadly tornado in southern Indiana.

Sponsors said the measure that passed the House Tuesday would help prevent deaths from tornadoes that disproportionately occur in manufactured housing, including mobile homes. The bill would require builders to install National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather radios capable of picking up direct broadcasts from the National Weather Service. Such broadcasts provide official storm warnings and watches — as well as general weather information — 24 hours a day.

"With today's technology, we have the science to predict a severe storm, sometimes as much as a half hour before it arrives," said Rep. Spencer Bachus, an Alabama Republican who sponsored the bill. "The cost of installing these radios is very small, but it will save lives."

The bill passed by voice vote without opposition. It has not passed the Senate.

Democratic Rep. Brad Ellsworth of Indiana, who was one of several cosponsors, said the radios would cost \$30 to \$80 apiece.

The bill is named "CJ's Home Protection Act" after a 2-year-old Evansville, Ind., boy who was among 20 people living in a mobile home park who were killed in the November 2005 tornado. His mother helped push through a state law in Indiana and has lobbied Congress to adopt a similar measure.

According to the bill, some 20 million Americans live in manufactured homes and the fatality rate for such homes during storms is more than 10 times that of permanent structures.

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