

that damage of this magnitude does not qualify as a disaster. A comparable disaster in Washington, D.C. would have destroyed 96,196 homes and 15,575 businesses. Washington, D.C. would not function after such a catastrophe and neither can Kaycee, Wyoming. In fact, under today's criteria, a majority of Wyoming's communities could be destroyed without receiving a disaster designation, as Kaycee has shown. Rural America needs help and that's why I am introducing the Rural Disaster Assistance Fairness Act of 2005.

My bill will create a Small State Advocate who will participate in the disaster declaration process, assist small States in disaster declaration requests, and ensure the needs of rural communities are being addressed. Additionally, it would require the Department of Homeland Security to report to Congress regarding whether current regulations addressing small state disaster declarations are meeting the needs of states with populations of less than one million, and whether current disaster regulations are in compliance with statutory restrictions regarding arithmetic formulas and sliding scales.

This is an important bill and I urge my colleagues to join me in updating the laws and regulations that treat many rural States unfairly compared to their larger neighbors.

ON THE OCCASION OF ISRAEL
INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 12, 2005

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Israel Independence Day, the anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. Forged from the fire of conflict that raged through 3 continents in the mid-twentieth century, the State of Israel has survived and endured the cauldron of the Middle East to emerge as a strong and vibrant democracy—the only one of its kind in the region—with the resilient strength of tempered steel.

Israel was indeed born in a turbulent time and place in world history. Fifty-seven years ago from Saturday, the great Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion, proclaimed the birth of the State of Israel. The very next day, a mere 11 minutes after the official expiration of the British Mandate in Palestine, President Harry S. Truman announced the official recognition by the United States of the State of Israel. The bonds between our nation and Israel have endured throughout the history of the Zionist state, and today are stronger than ever.

Nothing, however, has come easily for the State of Israel. On the very day that President Truman made his historic announcement, 5 Arab states attacked Israel. The initial public radio address by the first Israeli Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, was made from an air-raid shelter in Tel Aviv, whose skies were darkened that very day by bombs dropped from Egyptian aircraft.

Yet despite all the odds, despite a history of being outnumbered and surrounded by hostile nations, the people and the State of Israel—which, geographically speaking, is slightly smaller than my own state of New Jersey—have endured, and thrived. Although Israel still faces tremendous challenges today to the security of its citizenry and its borders, the indomitable spirit that guided the pioneers of a new nation remains a source of powerful inspiration and an enduring legacy to the Israeli people.

My distinguished colleagues, I ask that you join me in recognizing the remarkable human achievement that is the State of Israel. As the representatives of a freedom-loving nation, we are proud to celebrate the anniversary of the birth of the State of Israel and its success as a beacon of democracy to all people.

CONGRATULATING WKRG-TV FOR
FIFTY YEARS OF BROADCAST
SERVICE

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 12, 2005

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and pleasure that I rise to honor the management and staff of WKRG-TV 5 in Mobile, Alabama, on the celebration of its 50th Anniversary of broadcast service.

WKRG was founded by Kenneth R. Giddens, a Mobile-area architect, in 1955, and the station's first broadcast was sent out on September 5 of that year. The station was sold 43 years later to Spartan Communications, and in 2000 it was sold once again to Media General of Richmond, Virginia. At present, the Media General group is one of the most successful communications companies in the Southeastern United States, with holdings in over 150 newspapers, television stations, and other media.

Throughout its 50-year history, WKRG has been on the cutting edge of providing the newest in television news, educational, and informational program, and has consistently been one of the top stations on Alabama's Gulf Coast. From its early years, the station has

strived to be a leading source of news and entertainment in south Alabama, and it has demonstrated a strong capability of making rapid adjustments to keep pace with changing broadcast trends. Beginning with such program as *I Love Lucy*, *The Andy Griffith Show*, and *The Ed Sullivan Show*, WKRG early on set a standard for good, family-oriented programming. At one time, station management also ensured that there was programming geared for the young people in the viewing audience and aired such child-friendly shows as *Rosie's Place* and *Small Fry News*. The station has continued its quality programming through the past 50 years to the present day.

To their credit, station management has also set a priority on providing the most up to the minute news with a total of nearly 6 hours of local news each weekday, with news programs at 5:30 and 9:00 a.m. as well as 12:00, 5:00, 6:00, and 10:00 p.m. The station news team has also performed in an outstanding manner, even in the most difficult of circumstances; in fact, WKRG was able to continue broadcasting important safety and weather information during Hurricane Frederic in 1979 and Hurricane Georges in 1998. During the period of time surrounding the arrival and landfall of Hurricane Ivan on the Gulf Coast in September, 2004, the station did around-the-clock live broadcasts for an astonishing 120 hours.

WKRG has also been consistently dedicated to providing the best in public affairs programming for its viewing audience. Since 1973, the station has carried "Congressional Report," a weekly program covering important issues and news from Washington, D.C. Beginning with original hosts and former Representatives TRENT LOTT, Jack Edwards, and Bob Sikes, the program has evolved into one of the leading congressional and public affairs shows in the nation and has the distinction of being the longest continually-running program of its type in the United States. It is chiefly as a result of the hard work of the management of WKRG and their desire to provide the best in public affairs and community service programming that this program has become so successful during its three decade history.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most important services which can be provided for the American people is an effective and efficient television broadcast organization. For the past 5 decades, WKRG in Mobile has provided just such an important and invaluable service to the residents of Alabama's First District and throughout the Gulf Coast region. I ask my colleagues to join with me in congratulating Mr. Joe Goleniowski, Vice President and General Manager of WKRG, and his entire team on 50 years of excellence.