



CONTACT:
Annemarie Roketenetz
aroketenetz@ncra.org
703-969-6363

National Court Reporters Association
12355 Sunrise Valley Drive, Suite 610
Reston, VA 20191-3492
Tel: 703-556-6272 • Fax: 703-391-0629
800-272-NCRA (6272) • NCRA.org

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Contact Annemarie Roketenetz, Director, Communications & Public Relations,
aroketenetz@ncra.org or 703/969-6363 (text or call)



Arkansas' Act 499 boosts state government court reporter pay *NCRA urges swift passage of SB628 to keep freelancers and small businesses competitive*

RESTON, Va., April 14, 2025 — Arkansas has bolstered its judicial system with [Act 499](#) (formerly SB392), [signed into law by Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders](#). The legislation supports Sanders' [employee retention goals](#) by providing financial relief to official court reporters, reclassified as SGS08 state employees. SGS08 is a newly introduced pay grade within [Arkansas's classification system](#), typically assigned to mid-level professional roles like court reporters. It defines salary ranges, job duties, and required qualifications, and now, the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA), the country's leading organization representing stenographic court reporters, captioners, and legal videographers, urges swift passage of SB628 to keep freelancers and small businesses competitive

"NCRA commends Sen. Breanne Davis, Reps. John Maddox and Jim Wooten for their leadership in advancing Gov. Sanders' priorities," said NCRA President Keith R. Lemons, FAPR, RPR, CRR (Ret.). "Act 499 strengthens Arkansas' commitment to a fair and effective judicial system."

Act 499 addresses the shortage of court reporters, essential for maintaining accurate judicial records through a meaningful salary increase as well as eligibility for a student loan forgiveness program. "Arkansas recognizes the critical role of court reporters as public servants," said NCRA Executive Director Dave Wenhold, CAE, PLC. "This legislation helps make Arkansas competitive in recruiting and retaining these dedicated professionals."

NCRA's State Government Relations Manager Colin Brehm noted that Act 499 delivered much needed reforms, and [SB628](#) is needed to level the field for freelance reporters and small businesses that serve in proximity to the state's circuit courts. "We'll work with Little Rock stakeholders to



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ensure [Arkansas remains business friendly](#) under Gov. Sanders for freelance court reporters and small firm owners with the passage of SB628.”

Sens. Ben Gilmore and Breanne Davis are sponsoring and cosponsoring SB628 respectively. It was introduced earlier this month and as of April 14, is scheduled to appear before the Senate Judiciary Committee today [per the official agenda](#).

The court reporting and captioning professions offer viable career choices that do not require a four-year college degree and yet offer good salaries, flexible schedules, and interesting venues. There is currently an increasing demand for more reporters and captioners to meet the growing number of employment opportunities available nationwide and abroad. Court reporters and captioners rely on the latest in technology to use stenographic machines to capture the spoken word and translate it into written text in real time. These professionals work both in and out of the courtroom recording legal cases and depositions, providing live captioning of events, and assisting members of the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities with gaining access to information, entertainment, educational opportunities, and more.

To arrange an interview with a working court reporter or captioner, or to learn more about the lucrative and flexible court reporting or captioning professions and the many job opportunities currently available, contact pr@ncra.org.

[About NCRA](#)

The National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) has been internationally recognized for promoting excellence among those who capture and convert the spoken word to text for 125 years. NCRA is committed to supporting its more than 12,000 members in achieving the highest level of professional expertise with educational opportunities and industry-recognized court reporting, educator, and videographer certification programs. NCRA impacts legislative issues and the global marketplace through its actively involved membership.

Forbes has named court reporting as one of the best career options that do not require a traditional four-year degree. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the court reporting field is expected to be one of the fastest areas of projected employment growth across all occupations. According to 247/WallSt.com, the court reporting profession ranks sixth out of 25 careers with the lowest unemployment rate, just 0.7 percent. Career information about the court reporting profession—one of the leading career options that do not require a traditional four-year degree—can be found at [NCRA DiscoverSteno.org](http://NCRA.DiscoverSteno.org).