

On May 18, Congressman David Price addressed the House of Representatives urging his colleagues to support H. Res. 1364 which remembers the Chatham County Courthouse in Pittsboro, North Carolina and expresses condolences to the community following the loss of the historic structure in a fire on March 25, 2010. The Congressman's remarks are below.

Madame Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 1364, recognizing and remembering the Chatham County Courthouse in Pittsboro, North Carolina. At 4:15 pm on March 25, 2010, the upper portion of the Courthouse caught fire. The blaze eventually destroyed much of the building, taking with it over 130 years of history and a source of pride and appreciation for Chatham County residents and visitors. The county the courthouse serves is divided between the second and fourth congressional districts and I am pleased to join Rep. Etheridge and my other North Carolina colleagues today in lamenting the severe damage to this landmark structure.

The Chatham County Courthouse dates back to September 1, 1881, when members of the Columbus Lodge 102 laid its cornerstone at the historic town center of Pittsboro. The building, which is known for its two-story classical portico topped by a three-stage cupola, was designed by Thomas B. Womack following the passage of legislation in the North Carolina General Assembly to provide the county with construction bonds of up to \$12,000.

The building was completed less than one year later, on Independence Day of 1882, and has served ever since as a landmark to visitors and residents alike and a symbol of constancy for the broader community.

Although the building will be rebuilt in time and many of the records lost will be recreated, I grieve with the Chatham County community today for the loss of the courthouse. County courthouses are the cornerstones of justice and the rule of law in our communities but attain a significance larger than their day-to-day role.

I would also like to recognize the local first responders who responded to the fire for their heroic actions in controlling the blaze and ensuring the safety of court personnel. Thanks to their efforts and a working fire alarm system, there were no injuries or fatalities as a result of the fire. I also commend the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts and the Chatham County and Town of Pittsboro governments, which have worked tirelessly to ensure the continuity of judicial operations and to develop a plan to restore the courthouse.

Madame Speaker, I thank my colleague Mr. Etheridge, who represents the Town of Pittsboro and the majority of Chatham County in Congress, for his leadership on this resolution. I join with him in expressing condolences to the community and expressing our hope and expectation that efforts to rebuild the destroyed portions of the building and to restore its archives will be swift and successful.