

TESTIMONY FOR JODI GOLDBERG ON H.R. 2166, THE GOOD SAMARITAN SEARCH
AND RECOVERY ACT OF 2013
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS
JUNE 6, 2013

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Grijalva, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify before you all today regarding my family's experience with Red Rock Search and Rescue and its efforts to recover the remains of my brother, Keith Goldberg. This testimony includes input from both myself, my other brother Jeffrey Goldberg and my 81-year old mother, Lee Goldberg

I'd like to tell you a story about my dear brother, Keith Goldberg. I hope his story and the events that followed will lead to policy changes so no other family will have to experience the unnecessary prolonged pain and suffering that ours did.

Keith, a resident of Henderson, NV, disappeared on January 31, 2012. It was the Tuesday before Super Bowl weekend. He was last seen that afternoon at the apartment he once shared with his former girlfriend, Georgene Ross.

The Giants were in the Super Bowl that year, and our family, being from New Jersey, was very excited our home team made it to the big game. Keith had plans to spend Super Bowl weekend with my brother Jeffrey at Caesar's in Las Vegas. When Jeff couldn't reach Keith the days leading up the weekend, he knew something was terribly wrong. Keith was not the type of person to have his phone off or not call or text back. Jeff called Keith's employer, Lucky Cab, to find out if Keith had been to work and was told Georgene called him in sick on Tuesday, the 31st and they had not heard from him since. Jeff landed in Las Vegas on February 3rd and called the police.

Foul play was suspected immediately and as the days turned into weeks, more evidence confirmed Keith had been murdered and his body was discarded somewhere out in the Sunrise Mountain/Lake Mead area. On April 9, 2012 Georgene and her estranged husband Christopher Ross were arrested for murder and conspiracy to commit murder. They remain in custody at the Clark County Detention Center. And even to this day, they have not provided any information as

to the whereabouts of Keith's remains.

The police had done their job. They had conducted initial searches and once the arrests were made, and they felt the case was strong, they had called off any future searches for Keith. They would, of course, follow up on "strong" leads or a confession if they got one (which didn't happen).

Our family lives on the east coast, thousands of miles from Las Vegas. There was little we could do help find Keith from so far away. The not knowing is hard. We felt that if Keith had died from an accident, illness or even if they had left him to be found, we could have managed, accepted and at least have given Keith the proper and dignified burial he deserved. This situation was unbearable it is virtually impossible for anyone to understand the stress, pain, anxiety and sadness family members feel when they are missing a loved one.

I had learned about Red Rock Search and Rescue when Darrell Kirk, the brother of the missing hiker, Ron Kirk called me. He and I connected when our brothers were both missing, comparing notes on working with the police, etc. He told me I should call their commander, Dave Cummings. They are an all-volunteer search team and would take our case at no cost to us.

I called Dave Cummings in early April 2012. The arrests had been made and we had police reports with more information. I had asked the police to share their maps and data with Dave so he can plan and have his team begin searches. Jeff and I were in Las Vegas in April after the arrests were made and we were at one of RRSAR's first searches for Keith. Their first search was on April 14, 2012 and over the past year, RRSAR has conducted nearly 50 searches for my brother and covered 200+ square miles.

RRSAR was armed with information from the cell phone tower pings on Chris' phone the day after Keith went missing and from the condition of Keith's car which was driven in the desert and found abandoned about 10 days after he disappeared. RRSAR's first searches were conducted on BLM land and on private land. Their volunteers told us that each search is successful in that they clear and eliminate one more area. In May of 2012, RRSAR realized they needed to search Lake Mead National Park and on May 17, 2012, they filled out a permit request and were told of the need for 1 million dollars of liability insurance. They started the process of trying to find affordable insurance. They continued with other searches covering mines, more desert and Lake Las Vegas. They never stopped.

In early February, I was approached by a woman who was hiking in Lake Mead Park last September and had found clothing wrapped in a shower curtain and tied up in rope. She thought it was suspicious and she did report it to the police. On the one-year anniversary of Keith's disappearance, she saw the news reports and decided to contact me. She had taken a pair of foldable reading glasses from the clothes and still had them. I called Dave and he met with her, felt she was credible and got the coordinates of where she found the clothes. He sent me a photo of the glasses and I was able to find someone who remembered seeing Keith with a pair just like them. In addition, the clothes found but not recovered, seemed to match what Keith was wearing that day. That was more than enough to reinforce Lake Mead was a high-probability search area. If anything, this discovery helped hone in which areas of Lake Mead had the highest probability.

In February of this year, All Nevada Insurance was able to find an affordable insurance policy and our family raised the funds to help pay for it. RRSAR finally got their permit to search Lake Mead.

Red Rock Search and Rescue deployed on April 14, 2013. In less than two hours, Keith's remains were found in Lake Mead National Park. To this day, Red Rock continues to search the park so we can bring home the remainder of Keith's remains.

Volunteer search teams fill the void left when police searches end due to limited resources. Barriers and regulations prevent qualified individuals from helping their communities and families of missing loved ones. If Red Rock Search and Rescue weren't so dedicated to solving Keith's case and so tenacious, there would have been no more coordinated searches for Keith. He may not have ever been found.

Families of missing loved ones go through so much pain and despair. Keith and our family are victims, not only of a terrible crime but of bureaucratic roadblocks that impeded search efforts and prolonged our pain and suffering and the ability to get closure and bring Keith home.

Our communities are so very fortunate to have organizations like Red Rock Search and Rescue. Keith's story is a tragic one and it is not over. We have a trial in 2014 and his remains have still yet to be returned home. But the one positive shining light, perhaps Keith's legacy, is that this legislation passes so other families of missing loved ones can search without restrictions, red tape and delay so they can too, bring home their loved ones and get closure sooner.

Thank you.