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HARRISON TOWN CLERK DENOUNCES OBAMA REMARK CALLS LATE NIGHT TALK SHOW SLUR INSENSITIVE TO DISABLED AMERICANS' CENTURIES-LONG FIGHT FOR RESPECT

HARRISON , N.Y. — Harrison Town Clerk Joseph Acocella recently denounced a remark made by President Obama during an appearance on “The Tonight Show with Jay Leno” on March 19. Obama, who was describing his bowling score to Leno and joking about his poor performance, said that even though he practiced in the White House, “it’s like — it was like Special Olympics, or something,” to a laughing studio audience.

“As a disabled American who has worked tirelessly to overcome challenges in today’s society, I was disappointed with President Obama’s remarks on the ‘Tonight Show,’” Acocella said. “The president is a leader who must serve all Americans, despite their race, religion, political views or disability. When you make a comment like he did, comparing his bowling score of 129 to that of the Special Olympics, it shows you do not understand the people you were elected to serve.

“People with disabilities have had to fight for centuries to prove themselves in a world that fears the uncommon,” said Acocella, who was born with Lumbar Sacral Agenesis, a condition that led to both of his legs being amputated at the age of 3. “The president’s insensitive remarks echoed just how uninformed he and others can be toward a group of individuals who have had to overcome life-altering obstacles. Our disabled population has already proven its true value to this society, and as a result, deserves the respect of all Americans, including its presidents,” he said.

Acocella went on to say that Obama “could learn a thing or two about 'hope' and 'change' from the Special Olympics.”

According to published reports, immediately following the taping, prior to the show being aired, Obama phoned Special Olympics Chairman Tim Shriver to issue an apology.