

As I continue monitoring this situation, I will continue pursuing the issue until we have solutions and funding on a Federal level to protect our children.

Water is not a luxury, it is a necessity for life. And the least of ours, our children, should not be put in danger.

RECOGNIZING BRIDLE PATH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a school in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, that has played a critical role in molding the lives of countless young citizens.

Bridle Path Elementary, located in Lansdale, is part of the North Penn School District. The staff at this school understands that the elementary age group encompasses some of the most formative years of a child's life. As such, Bridle Path provides a myriad of opportunities for students to grow, thrive, and explore their interests.

One area in which Bridle Path consistently shines is in the area of music education. Just last year, Bridle Path Elementary School Chorus, under the leadership of band director Michael Klenk, won the 101.1 FM's ninth annual Christmas Choir Competition.

From my experience with this community, I have witnessed their warmth and their dedication to helping each other, and I applaud the work of Principal Heather Mann and her dedicated team of educators and staff, and I wish them continued success.

RECOGNIZING PEBBLE HILL CHURCH

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a house of worship in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, that last month celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Pebble Hill Church in Doylestown was founded in 1968. In its first decade, the church became known for its fierce advocacy for peace and its willingness to show independence from conventional norms.

In 1983, the Reverend Gary Culp joined the congregation, quickly cementing the church's reputation of community service and mutual understanding.

Each year, Pebble Hill Church honors an individual with the Harold and Alma Able Peace Award. This year's winner was Janet Berkowitz for her work with the organization Suicide Anonymous. September, Mr. Speaker, is Suicide Prevention Month, and I commend Pebble Hill for recognizing Janet and for her work in shining a light on the plight of mental illness.

I applaud the entire Pebble Hill Church family for their sustained commitment to making our world brighter and more peaceful. I wish the current celebration coordinator, the Reverend Larry Hall, and all dedicated members

of the staff, volunteers, and worshippers continued success for years to come.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF RICHARD STRICKER

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a community icon in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

Richard Stricker, who passed away in late 2015, spent decades dedicated to public service. A former council member who served on the Lansdale Cemetery Board of Directors for over 50 years, Richard was a fixture in Lansdale.

He was fittingly recognized on this year's Founders Day, receiving the Lansdale Borough's Lifetime Achievement Award. Throughout his storied career as a small businessman and a contractor and a politician, and as a driving force in the revitalization of the Lansdale Cemetery, Richard always treated all of his fellow citizens with kindness and with respect.

Said Lansdale Historic Society officer Dick Shearer, you would be "hard-pressed to find someone who gave as much to Lansdale as he did."

I am proud to honor Richard Stricker for a lifetime of service, and would like to thank the Lansdale Borough Council and Councilwoman Mary Fuller and all of the ceremony attendees for their work in honoring the life of this fine citizen.

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SHAWKAN AND FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak out in support of international press freedom and to highlight, in particular, two egregious cases of government assaults on the rights of journalists.

This Saturday, a court in Egypt will decide whether to execute an award-winning photojournalist for doing his job. While in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, the Nobel Prize-winning former political prisoner, Aung San Suu Kyi, has overseen the imprisonment and sentencing of two Reuters reporters who were attempting to shed light on the atrocities committed by the Burmese military against the Rohingya minority.

In Egypt, Mahmoud Abou Zeid, who is known professionally as Shawkan, was taken into custody along with two other journalists while photographing the violent dispersal of a protest in Rabaa Square on August 14, 2013. The other journalists were foreign nationals and were released within hours, while Shawkan, an Egyptian, has been abused and beaten, denied his freedom, due process, and adequate medical treatment ever since—simply for doing his job.

In 2016, the U.N. Human Rights Council Working Group on Arbitrary Deten-

tion issued a report on his case, calling his detention "arbitrary" and recommending that he be released immediately.

Shawkan received the 2018 UNESCO Freedom Prize and has been recognized by press freedom organizations worldwide for his outstanding contributions to the profession in the face of danger.

In July, I sent a letter to President Sisi of Egypt urging him to support the immediate release of Shawkan or, at the very least, to support an individual trial instead of the mass trial that serves as a basis of his detention so that evidence specific to his case can be heard and considered. The Egyptian Government has not responded to this letter, and they are planning to sentence Shawkan as early as this week-end.

Unfortunately, Egypt is not alone in its harassment and imprisonment of members of the press. Just this week a Burmese court sentenced Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, reporters working for Reuters, to 7 years in prison following their arrest while reporting on the mass killing of 10 Rohingya Muslim men in the village of Inn Din, Rakhine State, last September.

This decision is a significant step backward in Burma's transition to democracy and reflects poorly on the Aung San Suu Kyi government's commitment to those same democratic ideals for which he was punished not so long ago.

The freedom to express oneself is a fundamental right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The freedom of the press and the public's right to information are paramount to the success of a democracy. The censorship and degradation of the press is among the most effective tools for oppression and control.

Thomas Jefferson captured this sentiment when he said, and I paraphrase, if forced to choose, he would prefer newspapers without a government rather than a government without newspapers.

Today, authoritarian rule has targeted members of the press in order to stifle dissent and maintain power. According to Freedom House, only 13 percent of the world's population enjoys a free press. Global press freedom has declined to its lowest point since 2013 amid unprecedented threats to journalists in major democracies and attempts by authoritarian states to control the media, even beyond their borders.

We are witnessing a new era in press suppression as even politicians in democracies attempt to shape news coverage by undermining traditional media outlets, exerting influence over public broadcasters, and favoring friendly private outlets.

Unfortunately, the current President of the United States has led the charge against the press with nearly daily tirades against the media, branding them as the enemy of the state and rejecting the news media's role in holding public servants accountable. Just