

**CONGRATULATING THE UPPER PENINSULA LAND CONSERVANCY FOR RECEIVING LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION**

**HON. JACK BERGMAN**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 30, 2018*

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it's my honor to recognize the Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy for receiving Land Trust Accreditation. Through its dedication to wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, and its local community, the U.P. Land Conservancy has become an indispensable part of Michigan's First District.

Locally focused land conservation undertaken by community-based land trusts has become increasingly important across the country. Accreditation by the independent Land Trust Accreditation Commission is given to those organizations that have proven to be trusted, strong, and effective in their land conservation efforts. Through its tremendous work in Michigan, the Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy has shown that it is more than deserving of this seal. First started in 1999, the organization currently protects more than 6,600 acres of forest and wetlands across the Upper Peninsula. Its work to protect wildlife habitats, water quality, working farms and ranches, and healthy communities has been invaluable for the people of Michigan's First District. Our region is home to some of the most pristine natural landscapes in the country, and I'm grateful for the U.P. Land Conservancy's efforts to ensure that future generations can enjoy the same natural beauty we so deeply treasure.

Mr. Speaker, it's my honor to congratulate the Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy for receiving Land Trust Accreditation. Michiganders can take immense pride in knowing that the First District is home to such a trusted organization working to promote land conservation. On behalf of my constituents, I wish the U.P. Land Conservancy all the best in its future endeavors.

**VIOLENT ATTACK ON JEWISH COMMUNITY IN PENNSYLVANIA**

**HON. TED POE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 30, 2018*

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, October 27, as worshippers gathered to celebrate the naming of a new baby at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh's Squirrel Hill neighborhood, a gunman burst into the temple wielding three handguns and an AR-15 assault rifle shouting "All Jews Must Die." He murdered three women and eight men before he was subdued by the police in what authorities are calling the worst attack on the Jewish community in American history.

The eleven congregants killed and the six others who were wounded in this act of pure evil were targeted because of one reason only: they were Jews. Peaceful law abiding Americans were killed in a holy place on the Jewish Sabbath simply for being Jews. That this would happen in 2018 is appalling and is a tragic reminder that anti-Semitism is unfortu-

nately alive and well. The Jewish American community dates back to before the founding of our country, as this often persecuted religious community sought shelter in the hope of the American promise. In his 1790 letter to the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, George Washington famously wrote, "The government of the United States . . . gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance. May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants—while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid."

Mr. Speaker, what happened on Saturday was an assault on the very foundations of America. It was an assault on freedom of religion guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. I always say that the First Amendment is first because it is the most important—it is the very basis of what historically has made this country different than all others. It is because of that amendment that Jews and people of all other faiths have made this country their home.

This deranged killer sought not only to kill Jews on the Sabbath, he sought to kill America as we know it. His violent and murderous actions should be treated as a hate crime, and he should be brought to justice swiftly. If he is indeed convicted, this man should be meted out the most severe punishment under the law.

Just days following this heinous attack, the Rabbi of the Tree of Life Synagogue summed up the significance of what occurred well. "Many just see this as an attack on the Jewish community. It's not. When American citizens cannot freely and safely worship in their house of worship and celebrate the Sabbath, it concerned me because it challenges the safety and security of all Americans in any house of worship. It was an attack on America."

And that's just the way it is.

**RECOGNIZING EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR CHRIS LAVAGNINO**

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 30, 2018*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career achievements of Mr. Chris Lavagnino, a fourth-grade teacher at Ronald Reagan Elementary School in Chowchilla, California. Chris is being honored by the Madera County Farm Bureau with the 2018 Educator of the Year Award. This award is given to an educator who has guided and supplied their students and has devoted their time to teach about farming and agriculture. It is both fitting and appropriate that we honor Chris today for his years of service to our Valley.

Chris, a native of San Leonardo, moved to the Central Valley at age 8. He attended local schools in Fresno and Clovis, where his fourth-grade teacher at Viking Elementary School, Mr. Sepetjian, inspired him to become a teacher himself.

Chris attended California State University, Fresno, where he received a bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies. He went on to obtain his teaching credential at National University.

Chris returned to Fresno State and received his master's degree in Education. After completing his education, Chris began to live his dream of teaching and taught at several schools throughout Fresno Unified School District from 2000 to 2005.

In 2005, Chris was hired as a fourth-grade teacher at Ronald Reagan Elementary in Chowchilla. Since then, he has made every school year a "unique learning experience" for his students. In the past three years, Chris began teaching his students about the importance of farming and agriculture. He strongly believes that agriculture is of vital importance to our region, therefore insists in teaching his students about farming and agriculture.

This school year, Chris and his students have conducted experiments and planted plants at their school's onsite greenhouse, where they plot and track the growth of their plants. Also, last year, his students transplanted a variety of succulents, which were entered into the Chowchilla Fair and received a first-place ribbon.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in recognizing Mr. Chris Lavagnino for receiving the Educator of the Year Award. Chris has been an inspiration, not only to his students, but also through his community leadership. I ask that you join me in wishing Chris and his wife Jennifer continued success and happiness.

**TRIBUTE TO NORMA AND RON DANT**

**HON. DAVID YOUNG**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 30, 2018*

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Norma and Ron Dant of Atlantic, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary.

Norma and Ron's lifelong commitment to each other and their family truly embodies Iowa values. As they reflect on their 50th anniversary, I hope it is filled with happy memories. May their commitment grow even stronger as they continue to love, cherish, and honor one another for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 50th year together, and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

**COMMEMORATING THE SESQUICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE MIDDLE EASTERN DISTRICT OF THE ORIGINAL FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH**

**HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 30, 2018*

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Middle Eastern District of the Original Free Will Baptist Church, which is headquartered in my congressional district in Wilson, North Carolina. The Middle Eastern District has been