

identifies those needs, and works to find solutions.

Each year Devotion to Children recognizes an individual who has made extraordinary contributions by promoting public awareness of the organization and local needs, providing funding for programs and services, and who has collaborated with other community organizations to support local children. I am pleased to join Devotion to Children in congratulating and thanking this year's honoree, Mr. Mark Silverwood, for his service to our community.

Mark Silverwood is President and CEO of Silverwood Associates, Inc. and Silverwood Management, Inc., affiliated real estate development and management companies, as well as a partner in Silverwood Investments, LLC.

Since founding Silverwood Associates in 1993, Mr. Silverwood has been responsible for the acquisition, renovation, and management of several thousand apartments in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, North Carolina, and West Virginia. Mr. Silverwood has more than 35 years of experience in the real estate industry, building more than 4,000 residential units and one million square feet of commercial space.

In addition to his work as a developer, Mr. Silverwood has served on the Board of Directors of the Arlington Free Clinic and the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization, as co-chair of the Urban Land Institute Workforce Housing Committee and as a member of the Governor's Housing Policy Advisory Committee. Currently, he is a member of the Urban Land Institute's Washington District Council Advisory Board, the Virginia Housing Development Authority's Northern Virginia Advisory Board, and the Fairfax County Economic Advisory Commission.

Mr. Speaker, the dedicated work of citizens like Mark Silverwood and the volunteers, staff, and sponsors of Devotion to Children are some of the many reasons why Fairfax County and Northern Virginia as a whole remains one of the best places in the country in which to live, work, raise a family, and start a business. I ask my colleagues to join me in commending Devotion to Children for their dedication to future generations and in congratulating Mark Silverwood on receiving this award.

GARY BROZ

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 10, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this summer will mark the end of Gary Broz's tenure as city manager of Liberty, Texas.

Gary has been a valuable asset for the city of Liberty since he took over as city manager in 2009. He revamped the city's infrastructure by authorizing the reconstruction of the city electrical grid and the replacement of the decades-old sewage plant and pipes system. He is responsible for the new, modern police station, upgraded parking meters, and the city's new municipal golf course and country club.

Above all, his leadership and poise helped the city navigate the challenges brought by Hurricanes Rita, Ike, and Harvey, as well as additional floods. The city's levy withstood Hurricane Harvey last fall, preventing millions of dollars of damage to the city and requiring only minimal repairs afterwards.

When Gary leaves his post in June, he will leave the city of Liberty better than he found it. The city's financial situation is promising, with deep reserves and a new fixed asset fund set aside for the purchase of new equipment. Liberty is also more recognizable as a city than it was in 2009 and has a stronger sense of community.

Gary's idea of a retirement? Taking on a new role as the city manager of Eagle Lake. Not that this comes as too much of a surprise, since hard work has always been a staple of Gary's life.

From working the Houston Rodeo to pay his way through college and his experience working as a farmer and rancher to his decades-long career in city governments across Texas, Gary has always met challenges in life head-on, leaning on an indefatigable work ethic and the uncanny ability to get even the toughest job done.

In his new post, Gary will be able to spend more time with his wife, Georgia, whom he married 39 years ago, as his office will only be a brief fifteen minutes away from his house in Columbus.

Mr. Speaker, it is individuals like Gary whose hard work done on behalf of our communities makes our country great.

And that is just the way it is.

HONORING AMBASSADOR VASILIOS PHILIPPOU

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 10, 2018

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me as I rise to pay tribute to H.E. Ambassador Vasilios Philippou as he begins his new position as the High Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus in Ottawa, Canada.

Ambassador Philippou began his career in the National Guard for the Republic of Cyprus. He went on to receive his B.A. in Economics, Social Administration, and Political Science at University of Montpellier France in 1989, followed by a Master's degree in International Politics from Free University of Brussels in 1999, and most recently a Master of Arts in International Relations from Alliant International University in 2013. Ambassador Philippou served in the Foreign Service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus in 1991. He was later appointed as the Consul General of Cyprus in New York, in addition to later being appointed Counsellor to Economic Affairs, Multilateral Affairs, and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Cyprus to various other countries. He also served as High Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus to Antigua, Barbuda, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago in 2016.

Ambassador Philippou has been honored and recognized by many different government entities and organizations. The United States Congress honored him for his dedication to peace, understanding, and positive communication for human rights. Ambassador Philippou was awarded the "The International Good Scout Award" from the greater New York Councils of Boy Scouts of America. He has been honored by the Cyprus Children's Fund for his commitment to aiding the needy

children of Cyprus, and the Ambassador is an Honorary Fellow of the Foreign Policy Association of New York. Ambassador Philippou has dedicated his life to the service of the country of Cyprus, its international relations, and the well-being of Cypriot children.

Mr. Speaker, I know that my fellow members of the U.S. House of Representatives agree that Ambassador Vasilios Philippou deserves to be recognized for all of his hard work and dedication to the lives of others both in his country and internationally.

PROTECTING CIVIL SOCIETY,
FAITH-BASED ACTORS, AND POLITICAL SPEECH IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 10, 2018

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, our hearing today will explore U.S. policy responses to the growing trend of government incursions on the space for non-state actors in Sub-Saharan Africa. As authoritarian regimes and backsliding democracies have entrenched themselves in countries such as Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi, governments have increasingly encroached upon the mediating space between individuals and the state, particularly against religious groups and journalists, who often stand as independent institutional checks to authoritarian rule.

Protecting non-governmental sector in Sub-Saharan Africa is critical to preserving civil and political rights within the region. As we learned from the U.S. civil rights movement, groups such as churches and independent journalists are the safekeepers of civil liberties. Through sanctions and public diplomacy tools, the international community can protect the space for these safe-keepers to operate in Sub-Saharan Africa.

For example, the Catholic Church in the Democratic Republic of Congo is the only organization with a nationwide institutional presence and moral authority capable of checking Kabila's growing authoritarian rule. The National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO, per its French acronym) is the only civil society institution that pressures the Kabila regime to respect human rights and democratic principles. CENCO mediated the Saint Sylvester political agreement in 2016. It also oversees the Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace (CEJP) which conducts voter-education and election-observer training programs and is a recipient of USAID funding, and has expressed "moral support" for pro-democracy protests.

The Catholic Church's leadership in the Congo does not come without a cost. Priests, nuns and parishioners have been targeted, attacked, and killed in retaliation for its leadership. A few months ago, Father Sebastien Yebo, parish priest of St. Robert in an outer eastern suburb of Kinshasa, was abducted by Congolese security forces. Interviewed on RFI radio, Father Joseph Bema from St. Kisito's parish said he has rarely slept at home since the brutal suppression of the protest marches organized by the Lay Coordination Committee on Jan. 21.

The closing of space for faith based organizations and other civil society organizations is a worrying trend in a number of Sub-Saharan African countries. Humanitarian aid workers, journalists, priests and political candidates (and their families), have been increasingly targeted and threatened by governments in Sub-Saharan Africa.

If we look north of the DRC, we can see that in South Sudan, a country I visited twice since its independence, we see humanitarian organizations are harassed by government forces. Last year, humanitarian organizations reported over 700 cases of humanitarian access incidents. The environment for humanitarian operations grows increasingly difficult and dangerous as the geographic scope of humanitarian need continues to expand. South Sudan currently have over 1.7 million IDPs.

There is also growing concern throughout the region on the closing of independent and objective media sources. Most recently, Burundi suspended Voice of America and BBC earlier this week for a period of six months, according to the announcement made at a press conference by the Conseil Nationale de la Communication (CNC). The CNC claims that this suspension is in response to "biased reporting." This suspension comes two weeks before a referendum allowing Burundi's president to serve into the 2030s, in apparent violation of constitutional term limits. VOA's local correspondent told US Embassy Bujumbura that the decision was a complete surprise and we will hear more from VOA's Africa Director as one of our witnesses today.

All of the witnesses today bring us an on-the-ground perspective of the closing space for non-governmental organizations, though they will provide a snapshot of conditions in several countries, their testimony's will provide evidence of the growing regional trend of incursions against civic space. My hope is that this hearing will inform our view of possible U.S. policy responses to better protect fundamental civil and political rights in Sub-Saharan Africa, which includes using sanctions, greater support for faith-based actor via USAID, and support media independence, specifically Voice of America—Africa (VOA).

INTRODUCTION OF THE RECOVER ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 10, 2018

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Reducing the Effects of the Cyberattack on OPM Victims Emergency Response Act of 2018 (the RECOVER Act), which would require the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to make permanent the free identity protection coverage that Congress required OPM to provide for 10 years to individuals whose Social Security Numbers were potentially compromised during the OPM data breaches. In 2015, OPM reported that the personally identifiable information of as many as 25.7 million current, former and prospective federal employees and contractors was stolen in two data breaches. I appreciate that Representative C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER is co-sponsoring this bill.

After OPM announced that it would offer identity protection coverage of limited duration

and value, Senator BEN CARDIN and I introduced the RECOVER Act in July 2015, which would have provided affected individuals lifetime protection and at least \$5 million in identity theft insurance. Congress subsequently included a version of our bill in an enacted appropriations bill, but limited the duration of the protection. Under current law, OPM is only required to provide identity protection coverage through fiscal year 2026. Under the bill we are introducing today, OPM would be required to provide the coverage for the remainder of the life of affected individuals.

The current coverage is inadequate, particularly considering that there is no limit to when the thieves (or those they have shared the stolen data with) may exploit the data. Therefore, there should be no limit to the duration of the coverage provided to affected individuals. This bill would give current, former and prospective federal employees and contractors who were affected both some peace of mind and protection. OPM failed to protect these people. It follows that the government must do the right thing to make up for its mistake.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

RECOGNIZING THE 2018 WEST POINT LEADERSHIP ETHICS AND DIVERSITY IN STEM WORKSHOP

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 10, 2018

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the West Point Leadership Ethics and Diversity in STEM (LEADS) Program, and to congratulate the students who have participated in the 2018 LEADS Workshop.

The LEADS program began in 2011 and was designed to engage students in the 6th through 10th grades to help prepare them for the challenging academic courses required for acceptance into top tier schools like West Point, focusing primarily on underserved and minority school populations. While a focus on STEM education has been a top priority in many schools, the West Point LEADS program adds another very important dimension—the role that ethics plays in effective leadership. In addition to robotics and coding workshops, students in the LEADS program also participate in activities to explore and begin their journeys to become not only educated leaders, but also ethical leaders.

Students from forty-five schools are participating in the 2018 LEADS program. I congratulate each of these students and am honored to recognize the following schools who have provided them with this opportunity:

BASIS DC; Bishop O'Connell High School, Colonial Forge High School, DC International School, Deer Park Middle Magnet School, Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School, Episcopal High School, Fairview Elementary School, Forest Park High School, Fort Foote Elementary School, Friendship Collegiate Academy, Frost Middle School, Georgetown Visitation Prep School, Great Explorations School, Hayfield Secondary School, HH Poole Middle School, Imagine Foundation at Morningside, Irving Middle School, Lake Brad-dock Secondary School, Lake Ridge Middle School, Langley High School, Lauren Hill Ele-

mentary School, Mark Twain Middle School, Mount Vernon High School, North Stafford High School, Oakcrest School, Oxon Hill High School, Patriot High School, Paul VI High School, Phillipsburg Middle School, Pinnacle Academy, Potomac Middle School, Rippon Middle School, Rodney Thompson Middle School, Samuel Ogle Middle School, Sidwell Friends School, South County High School, South County Middle School, St. Stephen & St. Agnes School, Suitland High School, Temple Baptist School, West Springfield High School, Westlake High School, and Williamsburg Middle School.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending the schools and students who are participating in the 2018 West Point LEADS Program. I thank the West Point Society of DC, the MITRE Corporation, and the Rotary Club of Springfield, for their support of this vital program. I also would like to recognize Ms. Pat Walker Locke, who in 1980 became the first African American woman to graduate from West Point, for her critical role in creating and promoting the LEADS program, as well as for her decades of commitment to the growth and development of our future leaders. She has received numerous national awards and accolades in recognition of her efforts. Her support of all students, but primarily those in underrepresented communities, has improved the lives of countless children and is truly worthy of our highest praise.

HONORING MASTER SERGEANT RUSSELL BERKHEIMER, U.S. ARMY, ON HIS RETIREMENT AFTER MORE THAN 20 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 10, 2018

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Russell Berkheimer, a native of Thomasville, PA, on his upcoming retirement after more than 20 years of service to the United States of America.

Master Sergeant Berkheimer currently serves as the Technical Director of the Joint Communications Integration Element, where he provides daily guidance on technical issues facing the entire command, while leading research and development projects to meet capability gaps. He entered the United States Army in 1998, and served in numerous assignments, to include Central America in support of counter-narcotics and humanitarian missions, as well as Afghanistan and Iraq during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, respectively.

His numerous commendations and awards, including the Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal (1 OLC), the Meritorious Service Medal and others, are a testament to his steadfast courage, personal integrity, tireless work ethic and impeccable character. His enduring legacy of service to our Nation truly is exceptional and sets a standard for all to follow.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District, I commend and congratulate my fellow brother-in-arms, Master Sergeant Russell Berkheimer, upon his retirement