



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hearing Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

Remembering Congressman Donald Payne, Jr. (D-NJ)

May 15, 2024

This morning, we remember the life of Congressman Donald M. Payne, Jr., our colleague and friend. He was a union worker, a toll collector. He literally kept the buses in Essex County, New Jersey, running on time. He was an Essex County Freeholder, a Newark City Council Member, a City Council President. He was a congressman, a statesman, a son, father, brother, and husband.

With a kind heart, a closet full of bow ties, and a wit as sharp as his suits, Congressman Payne brought people together. But he also fought for what he believed in. He gave a voice to the voiceless. He never wavered. He never backed down.

While we mourn the loss of our colleague and friend, we know his legacy lives on. Congressman Payne's legacy lives on in the work he did in Congress, including right here in this Committee, to make every child and every school in America safer.

Because of Congressman Payne's advocacy, the Department of Homeland Security today reports to Congress on school security.

Because of a law he authored, aptly named the *Homeland Security for Children Act*, the Department of Homeland Security must plan for children's unique needs during disasters.

His legacy lives on in the heart of his wife, Bea. And it lives on in the bright futures of his children, the triplets: Donald, Jack, and Yvonne. We pray for their peace and comfort at this difficult time.

Congressman Payne served in Washington, DC, but his heart never left Newark's South Ward. Every moment he spent in the halls of Congress was in service to the people of Newark.

Congressman Donald Payne, Jr., leaves a legacy to be proud of. May he rest in power and rest in peace.

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Media contact: Adam Comis at 202-225-9978