

Statement on the Death of Representative Donald M. Payne, Jr.

April 25, 2024

Don Payne was an accomplished public servant whose kind strength and generosity of spirit won him love across his district and the U.S. Congress. I've trusted his partnership throughout my Presidency and always been grateful for his insight and support.

A proud son of New Jersey's biggest city, Newark, Don was active in the community since before he could even vote. He worked his way up from a job as a highway toll collector, becoming a city councilman and county freeholder. After losing his trailblazing father, New Jersey's first Black Congressman, Donald Payne, Sr., to cancer in 2012, Don ran reluctantly in a special election to serve out his father's final term. He came to embrace that proud heritage, winning reelection five times.

Don and I worked together throughout his time in Congress, as he fought to expand access to health care, clean drinking water, and cancer screenings; to prevent gun violence, protect voting rights, and promote equal pay for women. He cosponsored the 2013 law reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act that I first wrote years ago, transforming the way that domestic abuse is treated in America. And he was more recently key to passing our landmark bipartisan infrastructure law, making sure to secure record funding for rail upgrades across the Northeast, including the train tunnel under the Hudson River between New Jersey and New York. They will be a piece of his legacy forever.

Don represented the best of Newark, a community of faith, grit, and hard work; and he believed deeply in its promise. He lived his whole life on the same street, committed to the city that so many in his family served. Throughout his courageous battle with diabetes, he never tired of bringing people together to get things done for others.

Jill and I send our thoughts to Don's family—especially his beloved wife Beatrice and their triplets Donald III, Jack, and Yvonne—and with the people of Newark, who have been blessed to have the wisdom and heart of a Payne representing them in Congress for so long.

Categories: Statements by the President : Rep. Donald M. Payne, Jr., death.

Names: Biden, Jill T.; Payne, Beatrice; Payne, Donald M., III; Payne, Donald M., Jr.; Payne, Jack; Payne, Yvonne.

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