

TRIBUTE TO REV. F.N. WILLIAMS, SR., ON THE OCCASION OF THE 55TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS PASTORSHIP OF ANTIOCH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH IN HOUSTON, TEXAS

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 26, 2013

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Rev. F.N. Williams, Sr., the legendary pastor of the legendary Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, Texas. This Sunday, April 28, 2013, will mark the 55th anniversary of Rev. Williams' pastorship of this great church. For more than a half century, Rev. Williams has ministered to the needs of his congregation, spoken truth to power, and been an advisor to several presidents, including Presidents George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama.

Born into a family of preachers and community leaders, Floyd Nathaniel Williams, was the son of the Rev. M.C. Williams and grandson of Rev. Mike Williams. In 1945, at the age of sixteen began to sense a call to the ministry and responded to the call by earning a Bachelor of Divinity Degree in extended studies from Bishop College.

After serving in the U.S. Army as a Warrant Officer during the Korean War, Rev. Williams began his pastoral career at Greater Union Baptist Church in Matthews, Texas. From 1951 to 1958, he served the Lord at Friendship Baptist Church in Eagle Lake, Texas and at St. John Baptist Church in Beaumont, Texas.

In April 1958, after the passing of his father, Rev. Williams was named to succeed him as Pastor of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, located at 5902 Beall Street, where he continues to serve today.

Rev. Williams did not just preach to the choir. He recognized that to do God's work and to extend his Word, it was important also to reach those in need outside the church. He was the first pastor to implement an athletic program outside of school to provide instruction and support for the youth of the community. And out of that effort came four future ministers whose lives were turned around.

Although the Bible bears witness that, a professed believer should be, "in the world but not of the world," for 55 years Rev. Williams has understood that African American communities have serious problems and thus undertook initiatives outside of the church to ameliorate the suffering and in his community. Among his many initiatives and activities, Rev. Williams served as Editor of the *Globe Advocate* Newspaper; Director of the Advisory Board Standard Savings Association; Director of the Houston Council on Human Relations; Director of the Northwest Water District City of Houston; and Member of the Human Relations Committee of the Houston Independent School District.

Mr. Speaker, Rev. Williams has served the church in numerous ways: as Moderator for the Independent Baptist General Association of Texas; 1st Vice President of the Missionary Baptist General Convention of Texas; President of the Houston Baptist Pastors and Ministers Fellowship; Member of the Board of Di-

rectors of Rural and Urban Ministers Conference, Prairie View A&M University; Member of Board of Directors of Church College Relations Board at Bishop College in Dallas, Texas; 1st Vice President of the Baptist Ministers Association of Houston; Member of the Houston Metropolitan Ministries; Advocate and Supporter of the Texas Youth Commission; and Founder of the Houston Ministers Against Crime. Rev. Williams believed and strongly supported the vision of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and played an indispensable role in bringing Dr. King to Houston. Rev. Williams often reminisces about how he sat only three seats away from Dr. King on April 3, 1968, the night he delivered I Have Been To The Mountaintop, his famous last speech.

A few years after Dr. King's assassination, Rev. Williams and several other local pastors decided that, they "didn't need the government to tell us when to celebrate our history" so they initiated the first ever Martin Luther King Celebration in 1971. To date, he has held 40 Annual Martin Luther King Day Celebrations.

Rev. Williams has been a valued advisor to Presidents. He is a close and personal friend of former President George H.W. Bush whom he brought to the Acres Home and Garden Oaks communities to meet with local residents to discuss the major issues and challenges confronting those communities.

Since that time, Presidents from George H.W. Bush to Barack Obama have sought the advice and counsel of Rev. Williams. On August 19, 2000, Rev. Williams was inducted into the Religious Hall of Fame Elite in Dallas, Texas.

Mr. Speaker, for 55 years Rev. Williams has provided remarkable service to our nation as pastor of the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church and community, state, and national leader.

I am proud to call this remarkable American hero my friend and I offer him my heartfelt congratulations on the 55th Anniversary of his pastorship of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church and my best wishes for continued success for many years to come.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 26, 2013

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker today I rise to honor the Union League Club on their 150th Anniversary. Founded in 1863 the Union League Club of New York has built, over ensuing years, a record of distinguished service to our country. The club dates its founding from February 6, 1863, during the Civil War. Tensions were running high in New York City at the time, as much of the city's governing class, as well as its large Irish immigrant population, bitterly opposed the war and were eager to reach some kind of accommodation with the Confederate States of America. Thus, pro-Union men chose to form their own club, with the twin goals of cultivating "a profound national devotion" and to "strengthen a love and respect for the Union."

The New York League was founded by four prominent professionals and intellectuals:

Henry Adams Bellows, Frederick Law Olmsted, George Templeton Strong, and Oliver Wolcott Gibbs. The men, all members of the United States Sanitary Commission, desired to strengthen the Nation and the national identity. They first aimed to recruit a coalition of moneyed professionals like themselves. Strong believed that the club would only thrive with a respectable catalogue of moneyed men. Olmsted especially wanted to recruit the new generation of young wealthy men, so that the club might teach them the obligations and duties of the elite upper class. Members of the Union League Club were instrumental in establishing The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1870 as well as the Sanitary Commission, a predecessor organization to the American Red Cross. It helped erect the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor and the Lincoln Monument in Union Square. Its members were instrumental in bringing down the "Boss" Tweed ring and in raising funds to outfit American soldiers in several conflicts. Many prominent civic, state and national leaders have enjoyed the fellowship of the ULC. Theodore Roosevelt managed his early political career from the Club's chambers. J. Pierpont Morgan.

The Union League Club played an instrumental role in civil rights, as the club decided to recruit, train and equip a Colored infantry regiment for Union service. The 20th U.S. Colored Infantry was formed on Riker's Island in February 1864. The next month, it marched from the Union League Club, down Canal Street and over to the Hudson River piers to embark for duty in Louisiana. In spite of numerous threats, the members of the Union League Club marched with the men of the 20th, and saw them off. During World War I, the club sponsored the 369th Infantry, the famed Harlem Hellfighters, which was commanded by William Hayward, a club member. During Reconstruction, Union Leagues were formed all across the South. They mobilized freedmen to register to vote. They discussed political issues, promoted civic projects, and mobilized workers opposed to segregationist white employers. Most branches were segregated but there were a few that were racially integrated. The leaders of the all-black units were mostly urban Blacks from the North, who had never been slaves. Black League members were special targets of the Ku Klux Klan's violence and intimidation, so the Leagues organized informal armed defense units.

Today The Union League is a social club providing its members and guests with a quiet sanctuary and relief from the hustle of the city. The Club bestows two annual awards for two of its most prominent members: The Abraham Lincoln Literary Award to outstanding American authors, and the Theodore Roosevelt American Experience Award to individuals who have "enriched the American experience." The Union League Club has stood for the betterment of American society for 150 years and speaks volumes on the character and dedication one must possess to truly change history. Founded in justice and equality the Union League Club been a champion of civil rights, and has made its goal to not only enhance politics but to improve the quality of life, a trait that is well represented through the Union League's illustrious history.

Mr. Speaker I ask that you and my distinguished colleagues join me in celebrating this momentous occasion and honor the Union

League Club for 150 remarkable years of its service and dedication to our great Nation.

APRIL IS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH—MOVING FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

HON. BILL POSEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 26, 2013

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw the attention of the Congress and the American people to the Autism epidemic that is tragically ravaging too many of America's children.

April is Autism Awareness Month, and I am pleased to join with parents, siblings, grandparents, special education school teachers, medical care providers, and interventionists to draw attention to the rapidly expanding autism community.

When I was young, autism was virtually unheard of. In the 1980s rarely did you meet someone who knew someone with autism. Yet, in the 1990s there was an explosion of autism. Indeed, in the course of just my lifetime, Autism Spectrum Disorder has grown from a very rare condition to—according to the Centers for Disease Control—a developmental disorder affecting 1-in-50 school aged children. And, tragically, the rate for school aged boys is a disturbing 1-in-31.

On December 19, 2006, the effort to address this epidemic took a major step forward as President Bush signed into law the bipartisan Combating Autism Act. I look forward to working with my colleagues and the Autism community to reauthorize this program next year. Though the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee each year produces a strategic plan to address Autism, the billion-dollar allocation of resources to autism has not been evenly invested among genetic, epigenetic, and environmental factors. I must concur with the experts who have been willing to speak out, that the epidemic increase in the rates of autism are not a 'genetic' epidemic. Indeed, you don't have genetic epidemics. While there is likely a genetic component to many who have been diagnosed with Autism, we must seriously consider that there are likely several key factors in autism.

Also, so some who have suggested that the increase in Autism is due to better diagnosis, you don't go from 1 in 1,000 to 1 in 80 in three decades due to better diagnosis alone. And, if that were the case, where are the tens of thousands of autistic adults in their 40s, 50s and 60s. While better diagnosis may be a factor, common sense says there is a real increase and something is causing it.

While some may be borne with Autism, there are many parents who testify to the fact and present cases where their children were progressing normally but something triggered a regression where they lost speech, abilities, and regressed from developmental milestones that they had earlier met. Was that regression due to external factors such as medical injury, exposure to environmental toxins such as lead or mercury, or was it adverse reactions to medications that lead to high fevers, brain in-

flammation or seizures? We must get answers to these questions.

I was pleased to participate in a November 2012 House Oversight and Government Reform hearing on the Federal Response to Autism. That was one of the most attended hearings I have participated in since coming to Washington in 2009. Indeed at this hearing it was standing room only, and overflow rooms had to be used to accommodate the public. This was a much anticipated hearing from many parents of children suffering from Autism who want clear and unbiased answers to questions surrounding the epidemic.

I, like many in Congress, were frustrated with the lackluster response from the federal witnesses, particularly the CDC witness that was evasive and took more than five months to respond to the Committee's questions. The responses that finally arrived this month were incomplete, often evasive, and showed a complete lack of urgency on the part of the CDC. I was also disappointed that the federal government witnesses did not have the courtesy to remain at the hearing to listen to the testimony of the public panel representing non-profit organizations and academic institutions focused on Autism and Asperger's Syndrome.

Parents, grandparents, educators, health professionals, and highly functional adults on the autism spectrum are frustrated at the federal response to this epidemic. There is much more that we could and should be doing.

Some believe that toxins like thimerosal, which is 50% ethylmercury, have played a role in the rise in autism and neurodevelopmental disabilities. In 2000 there was near universal agreement that mercury should be removed as a preservative for vaccines. Yet, today, nearly half of all annual flu vaccines, which are recommended for children and pregnant women, still contain mercury as a preservative—not simply trace amounts of mercury. It's 2013! Why are we still injecting ethylmercury into babies and pregnant women?

I have been deeply disappointed in the failure of the CDC and the Department of Justice to see that Dr. Poul Thorsen is extradited to the United States to stand trial for orchestrating an elaborate scheme stealing more than \$1 million from the CDC-Denmark grant. That money was supposed to be used to investigate the causes of autism and developmental disabilities. Instead it was diverted to personal use by Dr. Thorsen. Thorsen was a key author on 22 of the CDC's key studies related to autism and developmental disabilities.

Before coming to Congress in 2009, I heard from some in the autism community who have advocated for a retrospective study to examine whether there are different health outcomes when comparing vaccinated children and unvaccinated children, including autism and chronic conditions. I have continued to hear these requests over the past four years. At the hearing I asked CDC if they had conducted such a study and they said they've done dozens of studies related to autism but never have looked at a comparison of vaccinated versus unvaccinated. In fact, a recent study they published compared fully vaccinated children to those who were not fully vaccinated, but for some reason it did not include data on completely unvaccinated children. Seems like common sense to do a study comparing vaccinated children vs

unvaccinated and this week I was pleased to be joined by my colleague Rep. CAROLYN MALONEY (D-NY) in introducing H.R. 1757, The Vaccine Safety Study Act. This would direct the National Institutes of Health to conduct a retrospective study of health outcomes, including autism, of vaccinated versus unvaccinated children. That should bring an answer to this decades long question.

Whether the number is 1-in-88 twelve-year-olds, or 1-in-50 school-aged children, or 1-in-33 young boys, we can all agree that the number is devastatingly high. We must overturn every stone to get to the bottom of this epidemic. We cannot afford to see this epidemic grow. We must examine every possible risk factor to protect the world's greatest resource: our children. And, we must invest to develop the best interventions to help those who are autistic.

MINORITY HEALTH MONTH

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 26, 2013

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to promote Minority Health Month and spotlight the health disparities that plague our communities.

In a 1985 report, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) called health disparities in this country "an affront both to our ideals and to the ongoing genius of American medicine." Now 28 years after HHS released that landmark report, health disparities still exist between black and white and rich and poor.

A significant driver of these disparities is the lack of health insurance. For instance, African Americans make up 13 percent of the entire population, but account for more than half of all people who are uninsured. Blacks also have disproportionately lower access to primary care, often receive poorer quality of care, and face more barriers in seeking treatment for chronic diseases.

That is why I am pleased that the month of April is designated as National Minority Health Month. It provides an opportunity for all Americans to learn that healthcare disparities still exist. It also provides an opportunity for government, industry, non-profits, and advocacy organizations to combine efforts to help curb healthcare disparities.

My fellow colleagues, every American deserves the opportunity to live a healthy life regardless of economic means or ethnicity. It is this belief that led the Obama Administration to pass the Affordable Care Act.

Following in the President's footsteps, I will continue to promote Minority Health Month during my district work period by visiting the Metropolitan Community Health Services, the Halifax Regional Medical Center, the Roanoke Rapids Clinic, and several other healthcare facilities in the First Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in advancing health equity in every community. As leaders, we have an obligation to reverse health inequality through awareness and championing the importance of preventative healthcare.