

**Washington, D.C.** – Representative David Price (NC-04) made the following remarks in the House of Representatives this evening as colleagues remembered New Jersey Democratic Representative Donald Payne, who passed away early this morning.

"It was with great sadness that I learned of the passing of my good friend and colleague, Donald Payne.

"Few members who have served in this institution have left a greater impression on their constituents, their colleagues, and their country's domestic and foreign policies than Don Payne.

"From the moment Don set foot in Congress, he was a powerful advocate for the needs and interests of his central New Jersey community – and of working Americans across the country. Bringing to bear his impressive and diverse record as a public school teacher, president of the National Council of YMCAs, and an elected official in Newark, Don quickly became one of the most forceful and effective advocates for public education in the Congress, playing a key role as a member of the Education and Labor Committee on virtually every major education reform enacted over the last two decades.

"As the first African American elected to Congress from New Jersey, Don was an equally forceful advocate for the continued struggle for civil rights, eventually becoming chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

"His accomplishments in education and civil rights would qualify as a successful career for any member, but Don wasn't content to stop there. Driven by his early fascination with Africa and his adventuresome travels there, Don recognized that the struggle for civil rights and human dignity knew no borders. He rose to become one of the most effective chairmen of the Foreign Affairs Africa and Global Health Subcommittee that we have ever had in this institution. Our nation's expanded focus on AIDS, malaria, and other pandemic diseases over the past decade would simply not have occurred without Don's visionary leadership and moral courage. It was fitting that USAID announced the launch of a Donald Payne Fellowship program last week designed to help young people enter careers in international service.

"I was fortunate to benefit from Don's knowledge and advocacy personally, as he became a founding member of the bipartisan House Democracy Partnership, which I co-chair with my California colleague, Rep. David Dreier. Don's counsel, guidance and encouragement were invaluable as HDP initiated partnerships with legislatures in Africa and conducted outreach in countries affected by the 'Arab Spring.' Our travels together in the region forged a deep and lasting friendship. He probably knew more about the ins and outs of African politics than all the other members of this institution combined. He also had strong and well-informed views about what this country's policies should be, and he was ready to articulate those views persuasively, no matter who was president or what party was in charge. He also insisted on investigating situations on the ground, which led to quite a few one-man CODELs and some anxious moments for those who wanted to pre-package congressional visits or maintain airtight security. It was fascinating to talk to him about his diplomatic forays—which offered a combination of high adventure and a remarkable, inspiring dedication to the freedom and dignity of the people of Africa.

"Congress has lost a true statesman, a dedicated humanitarian, and a loyal public servant. We mourn his passing, and we will miss Don Payne's counsel and friendship."



*Payne (left) and Price (right) are pictured during a press conference in the House of Representatives on March 6, 2012. Rep. David Price is also present.*