



PRESS RELEASE

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***Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Co-Chairmen Honor the Life's Work of Commission
Member Representative Donald Payne***

Washington – The Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission co-chairmen paid tribute to the life and work of friend and colleague Representative Donald Payne. Rep. Payne was an active member of the commission and one of Congress' strongest, most consistent advocates for human rights around the world, with a particular focus on Africa.

Rep. Payne was a leading voice in calling for basic human rights for marginalized people globally. A committed expert on African affairs, he travelled to the region countless times, pushing hard for the United States to prioritize human rights and humanitarian assistance for people across the African continent.

For years, Rep. Payne advocated for self-determination for the people of South Sudan, who had endured severe abuse at the hands of the government in Khartoum. He was also a leading voice in urging American states to divest from companies doing business in Sudan, in light of the government's horrific human rights abuses. He was one of the first public officials to call attention to the horrors unfolding in Darfur and to denounce the mass killings there as "genocide." He joined the commission in calling for free and fair elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo, advocating for the Congolese people to realize their democratic aspirations free of violence, intimidation and coercion.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with Representative Payne's family as they grieve. The Congress will profoundly miss his voice, as will thousands around the globe," said Rep. Wolf.

"Donald Payne believed that if the United States stands for anything, we must stand for human rights," said Rep. McGovern. "We will miss his thoughtful voice in Congress, and we extend our deepest sympathy to his family."

The mission of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission is to promote and advocate human rights in a nonpartisan manner both inside and outside of Congress.