

BIOGRAPHY
CONGRESSMAN DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.



A Newark native, Congressman Donald M. Payne, Jr. was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in November 2012, and is now serving in his second term. Congressman Payne, Jr. is a tireless fighter for New Jersey families, working to create jobs and grow the economy, invest in our children, and ensure the health and safety of our communities.

Job creation and security are at the forefront of Congressman Payne Jr.'s agenda. Congressman Payne, Jr. serves as Ranking Member of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications. In representing New Jersey's 10th Congressional District, which is home to Newark Liberty International Airport, the New Jersey Transit Authority, and Port Newark-Elizabeth Marine Terminal, Congressman Payne, Jr. fights to increase transportation security, water security, chemical hazard prevention, and emergency preparedness to make sure that New Jerseyans are protected and that businesses that conduct trade at our ports have the security and efficiency they need to effectively engage in commerce.

Congressman Payne, Jr. has built a record of achievement. In 2015, his legislation to improve interoperable communications at the Department of Homeland Security, the *DHS Interoperable Communications Act of 2015* (H.R. 615), passed the U.S. Congress and was signed into Public Law by President Barack Obama. He successfully fought for a much-needed \$51 billion Hurricane Sandy relief package, and is working closely with federal officials to ensure the funds are delivered to the families and small business owners who need them most. Additionally, Congressman Payne, Jr. introduced and passed through the U.S. House the bipartisan SMART Grid Study Act of 2014, which would examine ways to upgrade and strengthen our nation's electric grid to protect critical infrastructure from natural disasters and cyber attacks. Congressman Payne, Jr. also passed through the U.S. House the *State Wide Interoperable Communications Enhancement Act of 2015*, or *SWIC Enhancement Act*, to improve interoperable emergency communications for state and local first responders.

Congressman Payne, Jr. serves on the Committee on Small Business, fighting to expand access to capital for small business owners and increase job training so that our workers have the skills to compete in an advancing global economy. He works to protect and give voice to disadvantaged small business owners, and seeks to foster economic justice in the African-American business community.

Congressman Payne, Jr. works to improve and preserve the health of New Jerseyans. He strongly supports the *Affordable Care Act*, which provides thousands of New Jerseyans with access to high-quality, affordable health care. Congressman Payne, Jr. is also a vocal advocate for cancer prevention, introducing the National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Resolution to stress the importance of regular cancer screenings.

Congressman Payne, Jr. believes that investing in our children is vital to their success and to the success of our economy. He introduced the *Promise Neighborhoods Act of 2013*, which encourages a holistic community-based approach to educating children in distressed neighborhoods, as well as the *SAFE in Our*

Schools Act of 2013 to better protect children and students in the event of emergencies. Congressman Payne, Jr. also fights for equal opportunities for foster care youth and students with disabilities, and he supports increased funding for Head Start and tuition-free community college for certain students.

As a member of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), Congressman Payne, Jr. works to stabilize our housing market, reduce racial and ethnic health disparities, and create a just and fair immigration system. Moreover, as a member of the Congressional Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, Congressman Payne, Jr. works to protect our communities from gun violence and prevent guns from getting into the hands of criminals. He authored the *Safer Neighborhoods Gun Buy Back Act of 2013*, which incentivizes gun owners to sell back guns most widely used in crime. He also supports legislation to improve background checks and outlaw high-capacity magazines.

Congressman Payne, Jr. fights for civil rights, justice, and equality for all Americans. He cosponsored the *Voter Empowerment Act of 2013*, the *Paycheck Fairness Act of 2013*, and the *Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013*.

Prior to Congress, Congressman Payne, Jr. served as Newark Municipal Council President and Essex County Freeholder-at-Large. As Newark Municipal Council President, he was instrumental in brokering a deal that brought Panasonic's North American Headquarters to Newark, where the company built a \$200 million office tower and is expected to create 1,000 permanent jobs.

Congressman Payne, Jr. also served as director of student transportation for the Essex County Educational Services Commission. Additionally, during his time as a council member, he created an educational leadership program, *Embracing Arms*, and an after-school academic-athletic program, *Above the Rim*.

Congressman Payne, Jr. has made preserving the arts a personal mission. He served as a member of the Board of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and still serves on the Board of Aljira. He also created *Newark Idol*, a program that supports young performing artists. Congressman Payne, Jr. sponsors the March of Dimes' "March for Babies," and his *Preserve Our Legacy* program increases awareness surrounding the benefits of stem cell research.

Congressman Payne, Jr. began his long career in public service when he founded Newark South Ward Junior Democrats, becoming its first president. He also served as an adviser to the YMCA Youth in Government program. He attended Kean College (now Kean University), where he studied graphic arts.

Congressman Payne, Jr. lives in Newark with his wife Beatrice and 17-year-old triplets, Donald III, Jack, and Yvonne.