

IN HONOR OF THE REVEREND
EARL WILLIAMS, JR.

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart and solemn remembrance that I rise today to pay tribute to a distinguished athlete, educator, spiritual leader, and dear friend of longstanding, Reverend Earl Williams, Jr. A memorial service will be held in his honor on Thursday, February 7, 2018 at 11:00 a.m. at Disciples of Jesus Ministries located at 228 Augusta Avenue in Thomasville, Georgia.

Earl was born in Thomasville, Georgia in 1931, to the late Billy and Flossie Adams-Williams. A product of Thomas County School System, he graduated from Douglass High School in 1953 and went on to obtain a Bachelor's Degree in Social Science from Fort Valley State University (then College) and a Master's Degree in Administration from Valdosta State University.

In 1953, he played baseball in the Negro National League with Jacksonville Eagles before signing a professional contract with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1955, and playing in both the Mid-Western and Pennsylvania Leagues. After retiring from baseball, he became the assistant baseball coach at Fort Valley State University and a scout for the Baltimore Orioles.

In addition to being an admired athlete, Earl was also an influential educator. In 1971, he served as a teacher and later as the assistant principal at Magnolia-Chappelle Middle School (then Magnolia Junior High School), before being promoted to the role of principal in 1972. After the closing of the campus in 1990, he transitioned to Central Middle School, where he served as the principal, until his retirement in 2000.

A trailblazer offirsts, Earl was the first African-American President of G.A.E. (Georgia Association of Educators) of Thomas County, the first African-American City Commissioner of Thomasville in 1982 (re-elected in 1984), the first African-American Mayor of Thomasville in 1986 (re-elected in 1988) and the first African-American Chairman of the Salvation Army. In addition to those milestones, when he served our nation honorably in the United States Marine Corps (USMC) at Camp Lejeune, he continued to play baseball and became the first African-American to play on a USMC Base traveling team. He was also the Grand Inspector General of the S.P. Jones Masonic Lodge No. 118 and a longtime member of the Albany Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

Furthermore, he received numerous awards including G.A.E. Administrator of the Year; Salvation Army Man of the Year; an Honorary Doctor of Law Degree from Faith College; NAACP; inductions into the Thomasville-Thomas County Sports Hall of Fame, the Fort Valley State University Alumni Hall of Fame; a Distinguished Service Award from Thomasville/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce and Outstanding Service Award which I had the pleasure of presenting to him.

Earl accomplished much throughout his life, but none of this would have been possible

without the love and support of his late wife, Faye, his five children, his nine grandchildren, and the countless others who impacted his life over the years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me, my wife Vivian, and the more than 730,000 residents of the Second Congressional District of Georgia in extending our gratitude for the life and legacy of Reverend Earl Williams, Jr. and our sincere condolences to his family and friends during this difficult time. I pray that we may all be comforted by an abiding faith and the Holy Spirit in the days, weeks and months ahead. He leaves behind a great legacy in service to his beloved family and to all those whose lives he touched through his kindness and generosity.

RECOGNIZING ARLETTE GOMEZ
AND GISELLE TOVAR

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Arlette Gomez and Giselle Tovar, two students at Johnson High School in my home of Gainesville. Recently, these two young women put on an event for local foster children in order to encourage foster children and families.

As members of the Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America Club in their school, they wanted to take on a project that would allow them to help children in the Gainesville area. After researching the county's foster care system, these two students decided to work on a project that would prioritize foster children.

On January 20, Arlette and Giselle hosted "A Luau to Foster Joy" at Johnson High School, an event designed to cultivate friendships among the children in attendance. Additionally, the event helped raise awareness of the county's foster care system.

In Hall County, there are currently 270 children in foster care with only 60 families willing to welcome them into their homes. By hosting this event, Arlette and Giselle hope to inspire more families to open their doors to children in need.

Northeast Georgia is proud to have students like Arlette and Giselle, who aspire to make a difference in our corner of the world. I wish these two young women the best as they continue their studies and work to highlight the local foster care system.

STRENGTHENING PROTECTIONS
FOR SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFICIARIES ACT OF 2018

SPEECH OF

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 5, 2018

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I strongly commend Ranking Member LARSON and Chairman JOHNSON on their bipar-

tisan bill to dramatically improve the Social Security Representative Payee program. We have a responsibility to ensure that this system is strong and fair to protect our vulnerable citizens. In addition to the multiple improvements in oversight and quality, I want to thank Representatives LARSON and JOHNSON for including provisions to improve the Rep Payee program for foster youth for which I advocated.

Currently, when foster youth receive Social Security benefits because they are disabled or their parent is deceased, disabled, or retired, it is common practice for State child welfare agencies to take the children's benefits for state revenue rather than preserving these funds for the youth's current or future needs. We have very poor understanding of who serves as representative payees for foster youth and whether they conserve the funds for these youth. This bill requires long-overdue data coordination between the Social Security Administration and state foster care programs. Requiring this data coordination is critical to ensuring that we know who is serving in the important fiduciary role for foster youth. Right now, we have no clear understanding of the number of foster youth with representative payees, whether those payees are state agencies or family members, and whether the funds are conserved for foster youth or used to plug holes in state budgets.

Just last month, the Social Security Advisory Board recommended improving the Representative Payee Program related to foster youth. The Board pointed out that state foster care agencies routinely are assigned automatically as the payee without any analysis if there is a better choice available. The Board highlighted that there can be an inherent conflict of interest in designating a state entity as payee given that the interests of foster care programs may conflict with the interests of the foster youth. The data required by this bill will help Social Security better focus on payee determination for foster youth to ensure that the payee will act in the best interest of the child. Further, it will provide data to help us understand how often state agencies are serving in this capacity and how they are using these funds. To advance this understanding, the bill requires a GAO study on minor beneficiaries in foster care and their representative payees.

In addition, this bill protects foster youth from overpayment errors made by the state. Under current law, if an overpayment occurs and the state foster care agency is the beneficiary, the foster youth is responsible for repaying the overpayment. This bill includes a protection so that if a state agency is the representative payee and an overpayment is made, the state and not the foster youth is responsible for the overpayment the state received.

These improvements are critical to improving the representative payee program for vulnerable foster youth. I am grateful to Ranking Member LARSON and Chairman JOHNSON for working to strengthen the Representative Payee program to protect vulnerable citizens and for including these significant protections and transparency provisions to support foster youth.