

policy, rather than rely on a handful of extreme voices that are not representative of the majority of the American people or the majority of Members of Congress.

POLIO

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today is World Polio Day, and I want to comment briefly about the funding to support global polio eradication efforts in the Senate version of the fiscal year 2020 Department of State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill, which was reported unanimously by the Appropriations Committee on September 26.

Polio is a highly infectious, crippling, and potentially fatal disease. While there is no cure, there are safe and effective vaccines. The global strategy to eradicate polio, therefore, focuses on preventing infection by immunizing every child until transmission stops and the world is polio-free.

Through the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, the United States provides financial support and technical leadership around the world to support the eradication strategy. USAID focuses specifically on recognizing and raising the importance of identifying and reaching mobile populations, cross-border coordination, communications, and the need for more women vaccinators and community-based disease surveillance.

Since global polio eradication efforts began 30 years ago, when cases numbered 350,000 annually, polio has been eliminated in more than 120 countries and remains endemic in only three—Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan.

While significant progress has been made, much work remains. Cases of polio persist in insecure areas and in countries with porous borders and large migratory populations, posing considerable obstacles to eradication. However, while there have been real setbacks, and the goal posts continue to change, complacency is not an option.

To that end, the Appropriations Committee has recommended \$61 million in fiscal year 2020—an increase of \$2 million over last year—for USAID's polio eradication activities. Increased resources are necessary to get over the finish line in Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan, and to demonstrate the continued U.S. commitment to polio eradication. It is our hope that this increase will cause other donors to follow our example.

I am not alone in my support for these activities. The State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee heard from more than 20 members, Republicans and Democrats, requesting funding for global polio eradication efforts in fiscal year 2020.

So while many Senators have advocated for this critical funding, I want to be sure that all 100 Senators are aware of these efforts which are essential to achieving a polio-free world.

REMEMBERING ELIJAH CUMMINGS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, my heart is heavy today as we mourn the loss of Congressman Elijah Cummings. He was a powerful voice for the people of Baltimore, a champion of justice for our country, and a dear friend to me and so many others.

I first met Elijah when he was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates, where I was the speaker, but our lives had intersected in formative ways even before that. We both grew up in Baltimore and shared a deep and abiding love for the city. We went to the same high school—Baltimore City College High School—and we both earned law degrees from the University of Maryland before balancing private law practices with public service in the Maryland General Assembly.

So when I met Elijah, I couldn't help but feel a kinship with him, but I think that was perhaps just Elijah's power—the ability to build kinship with anyone and the commitment to do so with everyone. He was constantly searching for common ground, always looking to make human connections. As a result, he developed meaningful friendships with people all over the political, social, religious, and geographic map.

Elijah's talent for building consensus, as well as his work ethic and dedication to his constituents, propelled him early on to positions of leadership in the Maryland House of Delegates. There, he became the youngest ever chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus and the first African American to be named speaker pro tempore. He served in that chamber for 14 years, during which he worked tirelessly to advance the rights and opportunities of Maryland residents.

Then, in 1996, Elijah was elected to represent Maryland's Seventh District, including our home of Baltimore, in the U.S. House of Representatives. He filled a seat previously occupied by civil rights legacies Parren Mitchell and Kweisi Mfume, and, let me tell you, there was no person more prepared to carry on their fight for equality and freedom.

Elijah was the son of sharecroppers who worked the same land in South Carolina where his ancestors had been enslaved. His parents moved to Baltimore to build a better life for their family, but the city was rife with racial intolerance. From a young age, Elijah faced prejudice and discrimination. He attended a segregated elementary school, and he was pelted with bottles, rocks, and jeers when he and other children integrated the local public swimming pool.

In the face of all that hatred, he found the hope and determination to overcome every obstacle set before him so that he could rise up and lift others up too. He worked diligently, excelling as an undergraduate at Howard University, going to law school even though people told him he could never become a lawyer, successfully practicing law, and then launching a career of public

service that led him to the U.S. Congress. Elijah continued to climb until he was elected Chairman of the House Oversight Committee.

All the while, he remained firmly based in his community. He lived in the same house in West Baltimore for more than 30 years—in the inner inner city, as he put it—and he returned home every night after a long day of work in DC. He was known to sit on the stoop of that house and feed the neighborhood pigeons. And every Sunday, he went to church, where he was often met by a line of people waiting to share their concerns, and he would listen to them and try to help them all.

Elijah never for a moment forgot that his purpose was to represent the folks back home in his district, to be a voice for the many who were silenced. He once said that while it was his "constitutional duty to conduct oversight of the executive branch," it was his "moral duty" to fight for his constituents. And fight, he did. In the 23 years that he spent in Congress, he was a fierce advocate for his district, especially for Baltimore. Where others saw problems and danger, he saw opportunities and solutions. He advanced measures to improve education, to expand affordable housing, to curb addiction, to enhance public infrastructure, to promote gun safety, and to reform police practices. He worked to erase the racial and class divides that he had grown up with, so that future generations of Baltimoreans would not face the same obstacles he did.

Although he never shied away from contentious issues, he also understood when harmony and healing were needed. After the tragic death of Freddie Gray, Elijah went to the streets to ask the citizens of Baltimore to come together and find a peaceful path forward. Then, true to form, he launched into action, pushing hard for policies and programs to help the city recover.

Because of his heroic service to his constituents, Elijah was beloved by his community, perhaps more than any other elected official I have known. His loss is a devastating blow to Baltimore and to Elijah's entire congressional district.

But it is not just Maryland that will feel this loss—Elijah's passing leaves an unfillable void for the Nation as a whole. He loved this country deeply. Elijah believed in the potential of American ideals, so he held us to the highest moral standards. In moments of moral crisis, he would famously remind whoever was listening, "We are better than this!"

He was passionate about rooting out corruption, protecting our democracy, and achieving equality and freedom for all. As chairman of the Oversight Committee and in life, he fought for what was right simply because it was right. And Heaven forbid anyone should stand between Elijah Cummings and justice, because, while Elijah was always calm and respectful, he was never afraid to hold someone's feet to the fire.