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National Rally at the Lincoln Memorial on Saturday to Honor 100 Years of Father's Day

Washington—With one in three children in the United States living apart from their biological fathers, Representative Danny K. Davis (D-IL) and Senator Evan Bayh (D-IN) are renewing their efforts to promote healthy families and support American fathers who are trying to earn a livable wage and take a more active role in the lives of their children.

Rep. Davis along with Reps.

André Carson (D-IN) and Artur Davis (D-AL) today introduced companion legislation in the House called the Julia Carson Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2009 Act, in honor of Representative Julia Carson, the late Indianapolis congresswoman who championed fatherhood reform throughout her long career.

Bayh today introduced his Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2009 with Senators Blanche Lincoln (D-AK) and Roland Burris (D-IL), a bill cosponsored by then-Senator Barack Obama in the last Congress. Bayh's bill is co-sponsored with Senators Blanche Lincoln (D-AK) and Roland Burris (D-IL).

"It is a sad and sobering fact that one out of every three kids in America will wake up this Father's Day without their father present," Bayh said. "Conceiving a child doesn't make you a man, but raising one responsibly does. Unfortunately, absentee fathers have become a national epidemic. The result is that 24 million American children are more likely to struggle in school and have emotional and behavioral problems."

"The absence of fathers or a father figure often contributes to negative behavior in children and disrupts the normal pattern of social and emotional development," Davis said. "In many instances it also limits the child's ability to have necessary economic resources with which to feel secure. With this legislation we

are saying to fathers, whatever has separated you from your children, it is time to put that aside and come home. Children need the love and support of their fathers.”

"No one argues that there is any one model of family structure but the elimination of government barriers to healthy relationships and healthy marriages, the promotion of cooperative parenting skills and the fostering of economic stability and the provision of incentives to non-custodial parents to fulfill financial and emotional support responsibilities are clearly in the interests of millions of children," said Davis (IL) sponsor of 110th and 111th House Companion.

Davis continued, "We must do more to ensure all children have opportunities to become productive citizens--through revised income support, health care, and education policies. This will require new thinking about federal investments and more focus on prevention and longer term investments."

"Our current system too often has benefits set up in a way that encourages single parent households rather than two-parent families. The unintended consequence, of course, is that parents have a disincentive to remain together," Congressman Carson said. "My grandmother's vision-and this bill- focuses on changing the system so that it's more pro-family and creates incentives for both parents to work together to raise their children."

"Responsible Fatherhood is an essential social and economic component of a strong, thriving family" said Congressman Artur Davis. "I am very proud to be an original co-sponsor of this bill, which will strengthen the support structure for many distressed families. The late Congresswoman Julia Carson would have been very proud of the moral mission that this bill seeks to accomplish."

The inability of parents to sustain a healthy relationship with their child's other parent and remain involved in their child's life can have severe negative consequences for the parents, the child, their community, and taxpayers. Single-parent families are 5 times as likely to be poor as married-couple families.

Research reveals children raised in single-parent families are more likely than children raised in 2-parent families to do poorly in school, have emotional and behavioral problems, become teenage parents, commit crimes, smoke cigarettes, abuse drugs and alcohol, and have poverty-level incomes as adults.

Poverty imposes costs on the nation in terms of both programmatic outlays and productivity losses that can affect the economy as a whole. Economic research suggests that individuals living in poverty face an increased risk of adverse outcomes, such as poor health and criminal activity, both of which may lead to reduced participation in the labor market. Research also shows that poverty can negatively affect economic growth by affecting the accumulation of human capital and rates of crime and social unrest.

In the last 40 years, the number of children without fathers in America has more than quadrupled, from five million in 1960 to more than 25 million today. Nearly 30 percent of children in fatherless households have seen their fathers in the past

year, and only 40 percent have had contact with their father once or more in the last month.

Studies show that children without fathers in their lives are five times more likely to live in poverty and commit crime, nine times more likely to drop out of school, and 20 times more likely to end up in prison. They also are more likely to have behavioral problems, to run away from home, and to become teenage parents themselves. The bills offered by Davis and Bayh seek to support fathers trying to do the right thing and take steps to collect child support from non-custodial parents shirking their parental responsibilities.

Bayh added, "Our government spends \$100 billion a year to deal with the fallout of absent fathers. The government can't pass a law to make men good dads, but we can support local programs that specialize in job training, career counseling and financial literacy to help those men who embrace their parental responsibility and are trying to earn a livable wage to do right by their kids. I am glad President Obama is starting a national conversation to draw public attention to the critical role that fathers play in raising responsible, healthy adults."

The legislation offered by Bayh and Davis will:

- Fund job training programs and community partnerships to help parents find employment;
- Fund financial literacy programs and budgeting education, employment services, and mediation and conflict resolution for low-income parents.
- Ensure that child support payments to families do not count as income and result in loss of food stamps;
- Restore cuts in federal child support enforcement funding to help state and local governments collect \$13 billion in additional payments for single parents;
- Require states to send 100 percent of all child support payments to the single parent within five years, rather than letting states take a portion of money for administrative costs;
- Prohibit unfair and unequal treatment of two-parent families receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

(TANF), ensuring the state work participation standard is the same for all families.

- Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit to increase the incentive for full-time work and fulfillment of child support obligations;
- Fund programs designed to protect the families who have been affected by domestic violence.

Congressman Davis and Senator Bayh will attend a White House event today with President Obama to honor America's fathers and urge men to play more active and constructive roles in their children's lives.

On Saturday, June 20, 2009 from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. there will be a rally at the Lincoln Memorial in honor of the centennial anniversary of Father's Day. The National Partnership for Community Leadership is helping to host the National Rally for Responsible Fatherhood on behalf of America's children along with almost 100 other fatherhood/family organizations from around the nation. Representative Danny K. Davis is the Honorary Co-Chair and Platform Speaker at the National Partnership for Community Leadership "National Rally on the Mall for Responsible Fatherhood."

Congressman Davis stated, "With this legislation, with the rally on Saturday, with the special event at the White House, we are sending a message this Father's Day weekend, loud and clear, responsible fatherhood is one of life's great privileges, but it is also one of life's great responsibilities. Let us celebrate the privileges and practice the responsibilities, not just on Father's Day, but every day."