

SUPPORTING DESIGNATION OF YEAR OF THE FATHER

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June 24, 2010

SPEECH OF
HON. DANNY K. DAVIS OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2010

- Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to support the designating of 2010 as the Year of the Father. One-hundred years ago, Father's Day was founded by a mother who recognized the vitally important role of fatherhood. As a father myself, I am honored and humbled by this annual day of recognition and celebration, and happily recall all the positive memories and influences my own father had with me.

- I'm sure that most people in this room already know of the importance of fathers. Fathers bring love, care, and emotional support that work in tandem with the support of mothers to bring about positive development for their children. For some, however, fatherhood is a foreign concept. Twenty-three percent of families with children in 2008 were maintained by single mothers. Approximately sixty percent of children born during the 1990s lived or would live significant portions of their lives without fathers. For minorities, the numbers are even more daunting, with only thirty-five percent of African American children living with two married parents, and only fifty percent of children having regular contact with their fathers.

- For these same minority families, being a father is simply not the same. Barriers like education and access to jobs continue to restrict the involvement of men who would otherwise be involved fathers. While it is important to promote and celebrate the significance of fathers, it is equally important to recognize that fatherhood comes with varying obstacles and responsibilities for every background. To fully promote a healthy nation and support the ideals behind designating 2010 as the Year of the Father, it is crucial that we pursue more opportunities for non-custodial and would-be fathers to live up to their potential, and the potential of our present and future generations.

It is my hope that by declaring 2010 as the Year of the Father, we would not only be honoring and recognizing the importance of fathers to the family, but also encouraging reform to make fatherhood a reality for countless Americans.

