



**For Immediate Release**  
**Thursday, October 17, 2019**

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**LDF Statement on the Passing of  
The Honorable Representative Elijah Cummings**

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is saddened to learn of the death of the Honorable Elijah E. Cummings, Chair of the House Oversight and Reform Committee. The passing of Representative Cummings is a deep loss for the people of Baltimore, a constituency he served with integrity and honor in Congress for over 20 years and as a member of the Maryland House of Delegates for 16 years.

Elijah Cummings was a lawyer and a dedicated public servant. He was passionately devoted to the City of Baltimore and to improving the condition of the community he represented. The son of a sharecropper, he spoke often about his own humble beginnings, his family's struggles, and the extraordinary trajectory of his life – and was determined to create opportunity for mobility in the lives of those living in poverty.

LDF and Representative Cummings collaborated with LDF on many civil rights issues in Baltimore, including housing discrimination. Most recently, LDF co-sponsored a [community town hall](#) on policing reform with Representative Cummings and the University of Maryland's Francis King Carey School of Law in 2016. Those at the event worked to begin to answer a tough question: how to reform the Baltimore Police Department in the wake of the United States Department of Justice (DOJ)'s blistering report.

Cummings' leadership during the unrest following the killing of Freddie Gray in Baltimore City and, more recently, in his role as Chair of the House Oversight Committee overseeing multiple investigations involving the President, brought him to the attention of the nation. When President Trump viciously attacked the City of Baltimore and Rep. Cummings in a series of ugly tweets this summer, Mr. Cummings, as he always did, took the high road, inviting the President to come and visit the city.

LDF President and Director-Counsel, [Sherrilyn Ifill](#) says, “It is impossible to imagine a member of Congress I trusted more than Elijah Cummings. He was fiercely committed to Baltimore City, but committed most of all to fighting for justice and opportunity for those living at the margins. LDF has been privileged to work with Rep. Cummings for nearly a decade on housing discrimination, transportation and policing reform issues in Baltimore City. His focus was always on measures that would lift people up. He saw his own life – from his very humble beginnings to his career as a lawyer and then a Congressman – as an example of what could be possible for those who struggle at the margins of our society. Over the past year, this country has had an opportunity to see the intensity of his work ethic, and his commitment to public service. Even more importantly, the entire nation has seen what mattered most to Elijah Cummings. It was essential to him that he led with humanity and that he acknowledged the humanity of others - even if he was your fiercest opponent. Elijah Cummings is irreplaceable. I shall miss him deeply. We offer our deepest condolences to his wife, Maya Rockeymore Cummings, and other members of his family.”

LDF Director of Policy, [Lisa Cylar Barrett](#), reflects on the passing of Representative Cummings and says, “This is a devastating loss for the people of Maryland and this country. Representative Cummings was someone who was respected on both sides of the aisle for his sincerity and authenticity. He offered a powerful voice of reason that is always important in the political process, but especially in these times.”

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.

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