

## Congressmen Payne, Rothman and Sires Celebrate the First Democratic Female Member of Congress

(Washington, DC)

— On July 24, 2008, Congressmen Donald Payne (D-Newark), Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn), and Albio Sires (D-West New York) honored the life and accomplishments of the late Congresswoman Mary Norton (D-Jersey City) as the House Committee on Education and Labor unveiled her portrait, which will hang in the Committee Room.

A champion of labor and women's rights, Congresswoman Norton was the first female Democrat elected to Congress, serving from 1925-1951. While Chair of the House Labor Committee (now expanded to Education and Labor), Representative Norton fought for the passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, controversial legislation at the time that established a minimum wage and overtime pay, and restricted child labor.

### Representative

Norton was born in Jersey City in 1875 where she began her very active life in Democratic politics. Rep. Norton was a pioneer for women's rights, and had many "firsts" in her political career — she was the first woman member of the Democratic State Committee, the first Democratic woman freeholder in New Jersey on the Hudson County Board of Freeholders, and finally the first Democratic woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Throughout her tenure in Congress, Norton chaired the Committee on the District of Columbia, the Committee on Labor, the Committee on Memorials, and the Committee on House Administration.

Congressmen Payne, Rothman and Sires are cosponsors of H.Con.Res.382, legislation that honors Congresswoman Mary Norton and her important social and labor contributions and accomplishments.

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For  
Immediate Release: July 31, 2008

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