



FASD United
THE NATIONAL VOICE ON FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS
Formerly NOFAS

A Tribute to FASD Champion and Dean of the House, Don Young

By Mike “Keawe” Anderson and Kate Boyce

FASD United honors the legacy and memory of U.S. Representative Don Young who passed away Friday while returning to his home state of Alaska. Congressman Young had served as Alaska’s sole U.S Representative for 49 years, and in his last term was the lead cosponsor of H.R. 4151, the FASD Respect Act. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation seeks to authorize a comprehensive approach to all prenatal substance and prenatal alcohol exposures.

The Congressman was a champion of legislation and policy in support of FASD throughout his career and was able to garner congressional support for the FASD Respect Act because of his position as the Dean of the House (the longest serving, active member of the House of Representatives) and his bipartisan approach.

“Too many families in Alaska and across our nation have been affected by FASD, and we should be doing all that we can to raise awareness of the many ways to prevent this tragic condition,” Young said last year in remarks to the FASD community. “I am proud to support this legislation which takes important steps to help inform pregnant mothers and prevent the development of FASD and its related effects. I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for helping to support families by coming together on this crucial legislation.”

“Congressman Don Young was one of the early supporters of legislation to improve the federal response to FASD and proudly stood up the first Congressional Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Caucus as Co-Chair along with his colleague Rep. Frank Pallone,” said Tom Donaldson, FASD United President. He added, “Together, Pallone and Young also introduced the Advancing FASD Research, Prevention and Services Act. In addition to his help in spearheading this important authorization legislation, Mr. Young championed annual increases of the federal funding for FASD screening, prevention, education, and awareness. For his tremendous support of the FASD cause, Rep. Young was the recipient of the 2011 NOFAS Congressional Leadership Award.”

“Congressman Young worked tirelessly to improve the health, community and economic interests of his Alaskan constituents, especially Alaska Natives whom he took on as family,” recalled Kate Boyce, FASD United Board Chair. “I first met him in the 1980s through my law partner who had worked with Rep. Young to pass legislation authorizing the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. Rep. Young told me of his own family’s experience with FASD. He was leading the charge again this year with Rep. Betty McCollum to pass their bill, the FASD Respect Act, and we will be forever grateful for his passion and dedication to secure improvements and funding for federal FASD programs.”

FASD United, the national voice on fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD), supports individuals, families, and communities living with FASD and other preventable intellectual/developmental disabilities and works to prevent prenatal exposure to alcohol, drugs, and other substances known to harm fetal development.

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