

CONGRESSMAN EMANUEL CLEAVER, II

Nothing Sugar Coated About It

Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, II (D), currently in his fifth term serving Missouri's fifth district, didn't mince words in offering his stark assessment of the current state of Washington politics: "When you add the economic woes including the debt and deficit to the inability of Congress to act, we face a very, very serious problem. We are not functioning at a level that our forefathers and foremothers did, which made this nation great." Congress is "tragically dysfunctional," he said, because of people who "refuse to put logic ahead of ideology." Citing a recent national political poll he noted, "Root canals and Brussels sprouts have a higher approval rating than Congress," and he condemned the leadership decisions that drove us to this point. "For the first time in history, the U.S. fought a war and did not ask the American public to pay for it. In fact, we're the only nation in the history of the planet who went into a war and then gave tax cuts, which was a clear signal that something bad was going to happen with our debt because the war in Iraq was not budgeted. We did not spend American tax dollars. The Chinese financed the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, we borrowed the money from them, which is one of the reasons we'll never go to war with them, because they won't finance it." Representative Cleaver

described the recent enactment of sequestration, which was predicted to be solely a draconian threat, as a "sugar-coated Satan sandwich," because "it was clear from the outset that the acrimony in D.C. would persist and the automatic cuts would inevitably occur." He proposed that, "As a nation we must reduce spending, but in a sensible and intelligent way, not with arbitrary cuts." Americans are ready for their leaders to be bold, he said, "Great leaders don't follow precedents, they set them." When asked how he, a United Methodist Pastor turned Mayor of Kansas City, separates politics from religion in his decision-making, he said: "People will say you shouldn't mix religion and politics, and usually my question is, how do you un-mix it? There is an inextricable connection that exists—it just does, it always has. Moses got in trouble for getting involved in politics. He was a religious leader and got into some trouble with a guy named Pharaoh." He ended his remarks with a call to action: "The future of the United States is not in the hands of President Obama or Congress, it's in yours. We need to get good and decent people who are willing to run for public office and who will stand up against people, even in their own political party, if they disagree with them."

Congressman Cleaver with Missouri delegates Anjali Fernandes and Zachary Bequette

