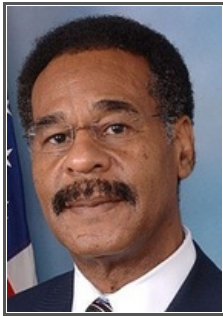


LEGISLATOR

US Representative

EMANUEL CLEAVER (D-MO-05)**IN OFFICE**

Up for re-election in 2016

6th Term

Re-elected in 2014

CONTACT

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BGOV BIOGRAPHY

By Brian Nutting, Bloomberg News

Emanuel Cleaver is a Methodist minister whose involvement in politics grew out of his work as a civic organizer in the late 1960s and whose ideology is to the left end of the political spectrum.

He supports federal government involvement in education, clean energy and manufacturing as well as the nation's infrastructure, consumer protections and a social safety net.

Notwithstanding his faithful endorsements and work on policy issues championed by his fellow House Democrats and his 95 percent-plus loyalty on partisan votes, Cleaver expresses dismay at the level of animosity and backbiting between Democrats and Republicans on Capitol Hill.

"We have come to think about compromise as capitulation ... One thing I've learned -- and I have said this to Republicans and Democrats and everyone in between -- is, bees cannot sting and make honey at the same time," he said on his official website, on a page headlined "Civility."

"Unfortunately," he continued, "Congress spends too much time fighting itself and too little time fighting for our constituents and the issues we believe in. We are a better, more compassionate, and caring nation than our current behavior portrays."

Cleaver teamed with Texas Republican Kay Granger to found a group they called the Working Group for a Working Congress, which the Dallas Morning News described as a "comity caucus."

That's not to say Cleaver always steers clear of rhetorical warfare. In 2011, he didn't like the debt-ceiling compromise reached by party leaders. The deal called for an increase in the debt ceiling, spending cuts and the creation of a "supercommittee" to come up with a long-term deficit-reduction package. In a television interview, Cleaver called it a

``sugar-coated Satan sandwich."

That was a reminder of Cleaver's ministerial background, as is his frequent description of the annual federal budget blueprint as a ``moral document."

Although he gave up full-time pastoring in 2008, he often preaches around the country, including at the 2012 Democratic National Convention.

Cleaver delivered a fiery sermon in support of President Barack Obama's re-election, often departing from his prepared text. ``When everything is gone, you continue to hope. As long as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob sits on the throne of grace, Mr. President -- Hope on! Hope on! Hope on!" he said.

Cleaver is a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, a group of the most liberal Democrats in the House.

He supports abortion rights, gun control, and tough environmental protections. He voted in 2010 to repeal the Pentagon's ``don't ask, don't tell" policy on gays serving in the military.

Cleaver says he wants to reduce the federal budget deficit, ``but not at the cost of critical programs that support our most vulnerable communities."

He says that ``We cannot only rely on hard-working American families to continue making the majority of the sacrifices."

Cleaver got a seat on the Financial Services Committee when he was a freshman. The panel has jurisdiction over federal housing programs, one of Cleaver's priorities throughout his career on Capitol Hill. Housing also was a focus during his previous tenure as a city official in Kansas City.

In the 114th Congress, he became the ranking Democrat on the Financial Services panel's Housing and Insurance Subcommittee.

In 2009, he proposed the Green Impact Zone, an urban development project in Kansas City aimed at reducing crime and lessening the environmental impacts in a 150-block area. The initiative received money from the 2009 economic stimulus package to rehabilitate dilapidated housing, including retrofitting some of them with solar panels and other energy-saving technologies.

Early Years

Cleaver grew up in a two-room shack in Waxahachie, Texas, near Dallas, that once housed slaves. He keeps a picture of it on his office wall.

The family eventually moved to public housing in Wichita Falls. Cleaver first attended Murray State College in Oklahoma, where a knee injury ended his football career.

He first came to Kansas City as a civil rights activist, charged with establishing a chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Cleaver's great-grandfather, grandfather, and an uncle were preachers and Cleaver went to divinity school in the Kansas City area. While at the Saint Paul School of Theology, he was assigned to work at a struggling church, the St. James United Methodist Church.

He got a master's of divinity degree in 1974 and under his leadership the once-struggling church grew considerably.

Cleaver's focus has been on political office from the beginning. He told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, ``Time was when, if you were black and aspired to political office, you almost had to be a preacher and use your church as a base of support."

He made an unsuccessful run for the Kansas City Council in 1975. Four years later he was successful. He served on the city council for 12 years.

In 1991, he ran for mayor of Kansas City and won the nonpartisan race, becoming the city's first black mayor.

He served two four-year terms as mayor, focusing on economic development, enticing corporations including Transamerica Corp. and Harley-Davidson Inc. to set up operations in the city. He is proud of the rejuvination of the city's 18th and Vine

district.

After leaving office in 1999, he continued as pastor of the St. James church. He also briefly served as an urban adviser to Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Andrew Cuomo, and as a radio talk-show host.

In 2004, when Democratic Representative Karen McCarthy decided not to seek another term in the House, Cleaver ran for the seat and won by 13 percentage points, becoming one of the few black representatives of a district that wasn't a majority minority district.

His re-election campaigns, always against Republican Jacob Turk, were by double-digit margins in 2006, 2008 and 2012 and by narrower margins in the strong Republican years of 2010 and 2014. His 2014 victory was by 7 percentage points in a district that, according to the 2010 census, was 21 percent black and 9 percent Hispanic.

In the run-up to the 2008 Democratic presidential primary, Cleaver said he had received criticism from members of the black community for his support of candidate Hillary Clinton over Barack Obama. He responded that the district population was less than a quarter black and that "It is important for me to always make decisions based on what I think is the best decision and certainly not based on race."

In 2008, he began turning his ministerial duties at the St. James church over to his son, Emanuel Cleaver III, who officially became the church's senior pastor in 2009.

Updated March 5, 2015

BIO FROM REPRESENTATIVE'S WEBSITE

From the Representative's Website

Emanuel Cleaver, II is now serving his sixth term representing Missouri's Fifth Congressional District, the home district of President Harry Truman.

Having served for twelve years on the city council of Missouri's largest municipality, Kansas City, Cleaver was elected as the city's first African American Mayor in 1991.

During his eight year stint in the Office of the Mayor, Cleaver distinguished himself as an economic development activist and an unapologetic redevelopment craftsman. He and the City Council brought a number of major corporations to the city, including TransAmerica, Harley Davidson, and Citi Corp. Cleaver also led the effort, after a forty year delay, to build the South Midtown Roadway. Upon completion of this major thoroughfare, he proposed a new name- The Bruce R. Watkins Roadway. Additionally, his municipal stewardship includes the 18th and Vine Redevelopment, a new American Royal, the establishment of a Family Division of the Municipal Court, and the reconstruction and beautification of Brush Creek.

Cleaver has received five honorary Doctoral Degrees augmented by a bachelor's degree from Prairie View A&M, and a Master's from St. Paul's School of Theology of Kansas City.

In 2009, Cleaver, with a multitude of accomplishments both locally and Congressionally, introduced the most ambitious project of his political career^the creation of a Green Impact Zone. This zone, consisting of 150 blocks of declining urban core, has received approximately \$125 million dollars in American Recovery and Reinvestment funds. The Green Impact Zone is aimed at making this high crime area the environmentally greenest piece of urban geography in the world. This project includes rebuilding Troost Avenue, rehabbing bridges, curbs and sidewalks, home weatherization, smart grid technology in hundreds of homes, and most importantly, hundreds of badly needed jobs for Green Zone residents. During the 112th Congress, Cleaver was unanimously elected the 20th chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Cleaver, a native of Texas, is married to the former Dianne Donaldson. They have made Kansas City home for themselves and their four children.

PERSONAL PROFILE

COMMITTEES[House Committee on Financial Services](#)**CAUCUSES**[Congressional Black Caucus](#)
[Poverty and the Economy Task Force](#)[Congressional Serbian Caucus](#)[Congressional Progressive Caucus](#)

Birthdate 10/26/1944

Birthplace Waxahachie, TX

Political Party Democratic Party

Marital Status Married

Spouse Dianne Donaldson

Residence Kansas City, MO

Family 4 children

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**Education**St Pauls School
Master's Degree 1974Texas A&M Univ
Bachelor's Degree 19721979 - 1991 Council Member, City of Kansas
1991 - 1999 Mayor , City of Kansas
01-03-2005 - Present
Representative:Missouri, (US)House of Representatives