

Keynote Speaker at Legislative Luncheon at NAREB's 70<sup>th</sup> National Convention, New Orleans, LA

July 31, 2017

The Honorable Emanuel Cleaver, II, US Representative (MO—5<sup>th</sup> District)

Emanuel Cleaver, II is now serving his 7<sup>th</sup> term representing Missouri's Fifth Congressional District, the home of President Harry Truman. He is a member of the exclusive House Financial Services Committee, the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance, and, also a Senior Whip of the Democratic Caucus.

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.

Congressman Cleaver speaks to the value of Homeownership in his address and the challenges that his Dad faced at daring to become a homeowner, in a racism climate, thereby moving himself and his family into a middle class status as that was not a norm for his generation. Cleaver went on to expound on the importance of homeownership after being raised in public housing and detested the notion of those that were on public housing were somehow lazy and unwilling to work without regard to the systemic racism that exist. It was his upbringing and the struggles of living in poverty that spurred him to become an outspoken advocate for housing and became the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance.

In 2009, Cleaver 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 included 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.

Cleaver's passionate delivery of the message of Hope not despair that NAREB's goal of putting 2 Million new homeowners in homes in the next 5 years is doable and encouraged his audience to do more than 2 Million often mentioning why not 5 Million? Increasing homeownership in the African American communities not only increases their lost wealth, but spurs the economy for everyone.

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