



Emanuel Cleaver

1773. The Colonists objected to the Tea Act for numerous reasons, but most importantly because they believed it violated their rights to be taxed only by their own elected representatives. The attempt to resolve these issues produced a quarrel that would lead to a revolution.

The Stamp Act of 1765, Declaratory Act of 1766, the Townshend Revenue Act of 1767, and the Tea Act of 1773 were a series of legislative rulings made by the British Empire on their colonies, which culminated in the Sons of Liberty rising against their suppressors and repealing those acts. The Boston Tea Party arose from these events and was one of the major events leading to the Revolutionary War being fought on colonial soil, which led to American Independence from the British crown.

Let's be clear. The subjects of tea and stamps aren't on the level of healthcare reform and a country on the verge of an economic meltdown. The first amendment of the Constitution allows us to exercise our freedom of speech, but there comes a point when the envelope gets pushed too far. The virulent actions of the modern Tea Party movement have yet to be publicly condemned by the Republican Party brass and if they continued to go unaddressed the outcome could very well be disastrous. The weekend of March 20-21 will go down in the annals of American history as the days we progressed on policy and regressed socially.

The image of Civil Rights icon John Lewis and other Black congressmen being called niggers as well as Congressman Emmanuel Cleaver being spat upon is emblematic of the 1960s Civil Rights movement. The courting of the Tea Party by Republican leaders is troublesome for our country. They continue to exacerbate and exploit Tea Partier fears and anger for their own political agendas. Republicans need to stop aiding and abetting this type of un-American behavior. This past week, Democratic congressmen have had their lives threatened and their offices vandalized. It seems like our great nation is becoming the Divided States of America because of the inflammatory outbursts by a group of people who supposedly claim to be American.

Our country deserves better than this type of incorrigible behavior. The initial reaction to change by human nature is often met with shock and resistance, but as time moves forward we gradually accept the change and realized it was for the better. A decade from now, these policy changes implemented by President Obama hopefully will be regarded as wise decisions made to improve the future for all Americans, Tea Partiers included.

“The key to change is to let go of fear.”

Rosanne Cash

Rep. Emanuel Cleaver's office released the following statement:

For many of the members of the CBC, like John Lewis and Emanuel Cleaver who worked in the civil rights movement, and for Mr. Frank who has struggled in the cause of equality, this is not the first time they have been spit on during turbulent times. This afternoon, the Congressman was walking into the Capitol to vote, when one protester spat on him. The Congressman would like to thank the US Capitol Police officer who quickly escorted the others Members and him into the Capitol, and defused the tense situation with professionalism and care. After all the Members were safe, a full report was taken and the matter was handled by the US Capitol Police. The man who spat on the Congressman was arrested, but the Congressman has chosen not to press charges. He has left the matter with the Capitol Police. This is not the first time the Congressman has been called the “n” word and certainly not the worst assault he has endured in his years fighting for equal rights for all Americans. That being said, he is disappointed that in the 21st century our national discourse has devolved to the point of name calling and spitting. He looks forward to taking a historic vote on health care reform legislation tomorrow, for the residents of the Fifth District of Missouri and for all Americans. He believes deeply that tomorrow's vote is, in fact, a vote for equality and to secure health care as a right for all. Our nation has a history of struggling each time we expand rights. Today's protests are no different, but the Congressman believes this is worth fighting for.

