



# Editorial: Clayton in Democrats' 30th Congressional District race

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Washington's increasingly complex political battleground requires a nimble thinker with energy and new ideas. Incumbent Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson once had what it takes, but now it's time for new leadership to take up the cause.

Of her two Democratic primary challengers, lawyer Taj Clayton is best suited for the job. While Johnson, 76, of Dallas has at times exhibited questionable judgment and ethics, Clayton strikes us as having moral clarity, especially concerning the limits and spirit of the law. The DeSoto resident not only grasps the deep economic challenges facing the 30th District but also ways to work the Capitol Hill system to create jobs and business opportunities for his constituents.

Clayton, a 35-year-old Harvard law school graduate, is young and green, but he's had lots of exposure through party organizing on the national and local levels. What he lacks in experience, he'll make up for in ambition.

"I refuse to be outworked," he told us.

Contrast that with the attitude of privilege that seems to pervade Johnson's office, including the 2010 scandal over Congressional Black Caucus Foundation scholarships she granted to her relatives and children of a top aide. Although she repaid the money, her seeming lack of remorse reflected a lawmaker who has lost touch with her constituents.

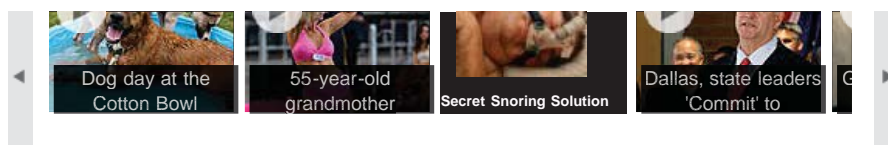
A more recent example of questionable judgment involved her recently lashing out at challenger Barbara Mallory Caraway, 55, a state representative from Dallas. "You have one person whose husband says she's mentally ill," Johnson declared, referring to a January 2011 altercation involving Barbara Caraway and then-Dallas Mayor Dwaine Caraway.

A better line of criticism would be in regard to Caraway's abysmal record in Austin. She stated her priority is developing Dallas' urban core, yet she couldn't identify a single bill she had sponsored or other significant achievement toward that priority during her six years in office.

Johnson accuses Clayton of being a closet Republican because of his law firm's political bent, a characterization Clayton disputes. This newspaper sees that as one more example of why Clayton can work alongside Republicans while Johnson promises nothing more than continued partisan gridlock.

"It's a new day," Clayton said recently, encapsulating our sentiments. "It's time to move on to public servants who are focused on achieving results."

The winner will face Travis Washington Jr., who is running unopposed in the GOP primary.



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