

Kucinich Would Push Peace, Health Care

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DENNIS KUCINICH knows he's an underdog in the presidential primary. But he plays to win.

As a 4-foot-9, 97-pound high school freshman football player, he learned to be tough. The oldest of seven children in Cleveland, he lived in 21 places by the time he was 17, including a couple of cars. Kucinich scrubbed floors at school to pay off the book fees so he and his siblings could attend Catholic school.



KUCINICH

Small and intense, the 61-year-old Democratic congressman from Ohio prides himself on taking a strong stand on issues.

"I'm not a DeRepublican," he says.

Dennis Kucinich first ran for President in 2004. This time, his campaign includes his third wife, Elizabeth. She's British and has a master's degree in international conflict analysis.

Tall, with red hair and an easy smile, Elizabeth Kucinich speaks about monetary policy and five minutes later dashes into a nearby room to switch a load of laundry. She seems equally at ease with both tasks.

The couple married two years ago. On the New Hampshire campaign trail, Kucinich consistently touts his wife's expertise. When they think no one's watching, they hold hands.

He and Elizabeth travel without an entourage, just a campaign intern who drives them and a staffer who manages the schedule.

At campaign stops in Acworth, Westmoreland and Keene, the couple spoke to packed crowds and conceded privately they were pleasantly surprised to find such strong support.

In Keene, Kucinich worked for 15 hours straight, beginning with a morning meet-and-greet at a local bagel shop and ending with a college newspaper interview about 11 p.m. There was no time for lunch, just some quick bites of Chinese take-out in the car between town hall meetings -- dinner consisted of lunch leftovers. As a vegan (no meat or dairy), Dennis Kucinich is eating a lot of Chinese take-out on the campaign trail.

New direction'



Dennis Kucinich signs a copy of "The Courage to Survive" during a swing through NH last month. (GRETA CUYLER)

Dennis Kucinich tells voters he's offering "a totally new direction for America."

His top domestic priority is to transform Medicare into a nationwide, not-for-profit, single-payer universal health-care system. He's leading the charge to impeach Vice President Dick Cheney, a man he contends lied to get the United States to invade Iraq. He wants to repeal the Patriot Act.

Dennis Kucinich entered politics at age 21 when he ran for Cleveland City Council. At 31, he was elected mayor of Cleveland, the youngest person ever to have been elected mayor of a major U.S. city.

When Kucinich speaks to voters, he's serious. Watch closely, though, and you'll catch a sly smile light up his face. And when one young girl asked about global warming during a town-hall meeting in Keene, Kucinich pulled up a chair next to her and talked about efforts her class could make to save the planet.

His favorite music includes songs by his friend Willie Nelson, along with the Beatles and Melissa Etheridge. Push him and he'll tell you he also loves a good polka.

"Oh yes, he's serious," says Elizabeth, grinning and rolling her eyes when she hears him mention polkas.

Kucinich doesn't accept corporate campaign contributions. As of Sept. 30, his campaign has raised just over \$3 million, compared with \$80 million for Barack Obama and nearly \$91 million for Hillary Clinton.

His campaign slogan, "Strength Through Peace," emphasizes diplomacy over aggressive warfare.

If America is attacked by terrorists again, "we'd go after them, no question about it," Kucinich says. "Anyone who thinks because I'm working for peace I wouldn't defend America is mistaken. But we'll also create a climate where no one will want to attack us."

He wants to eliminate tax breaks for the richest 1 percent in exchange for tax breaks to the bottom 80 percent. He advocates tuition-free public colleges and universities in exchange for two years of public service after graduation.

Of all the candidates, Kucinich has the most aggressive deadline for troop withdrawal in Iraq, promising to bring the all troops home within three months.

"He's real," said Lin Fields of Carlisle, Mass., who drove up to Kucinich's book-signing in Keene. "He believes in peace and politics. He wants to get out of the war; he respects the Constitution; he speaks to my heart."

In early November, Kucinich ranked sixth -- with 2 percent of the vote -- in a poll conducted by the UNH Survey Center for the Boston Globe, which asked 400 likely New Hampshire Democrats for whom they would vote.

YOUR COMMENTS

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It 's either Dennis J. Kucinich, My Friends, or we're looking at the same old elite priorities, programs, and destruction of the Constitution and the planet. PLEASE, spread this good man's and let's vote our country back to "We The People"!

- Robert Alan Brown, Mancos, Colorado

What a refreshing breath of fresh air. The only reason this man is not leading in all the polls is most people haven't heard him and don't know what he stands for. This is mostly because the corporate owned media ignore him or ridicule him.

When he is in the debates he gets the least amount of time, but wins never-the-less. I believe America's future depends on this man. I hope Americans get a chance to hear him.

- **Joe Albani, Bedford**

Right on!!! Thanks for the article

- **William J. McCarthy, Manchester NH**

I like him... Certainly the MOST IMPRESSIVE of all of them.

- **Mark Larochelle, Manchester**

With the Kucinich story coverage I can only say, "Now, you're talking." What a decent man and human being. Anyone with the courage to call it like it is should have our support and ultimately our one vote. Yes, impeach Cheney and get out of Iraq. Bring our brave troops home. Negotiate world peace, stay tough with terrorists who would do the United States harm - taking care of our homeland and not invading other countries. Roll back the tax break for the richest one percent of Americans in order to bring relief to the bottom 80 percent and I love the idea about college tuition affordability for all and just imagine health care that is affordable. What more could we want? Our good name and dignity back would be the benefit.

- **Judy Burke, Austin, Texas**



