

By Congressman Vern Buchanan

A new Gallup Poll finds the public approval rating for Congress is the lowest ever, with just 18% approving of the job Congress is doing.

Political analysts have offered several theories on the record-low rating, but one of the complaints I hear most frequently is that partisan politics is preventing Congress from addressing important issues. As a new member of Congress I can tell you that there is too much angry partisanship and too little cooperation in Washington.

I ran for office to serve the people of Florida's 13th District --all the people. Americans don't care whether a proposal is Republican or Democrat – they want common-sense solutions that work. They want their elected leaders to work together to solve the most pressing challenges facing our nation.

Along this line, it was encouraging to see AARP, the Business Roundtable, and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) – three groups that often disagree on federal issues -- launch a national campaign to urge action on the important issues of health care and financial security. The “Divided We Fail” campaign is encouraging elected officials and advocacy groups to work together in a bipartisan effort to find solutions that are fair to all generations.

I commend the organizers of this campaign and support their effort.

Many American families are struggling to afford health care, save for retirement, send their children to college, and support aging parents. At the same time, the high cost of health care is limiting the ability of small businesses to survive and expand.

I applaud the “Divided We Fail” campaign for urging individuals, businesses, non-profits, and government to come together to find solutions and I am committed to working with them. I recently signed the “Divided We Fail” pledge to work with diverse groups and individuals as well as my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to develop and implement common-sense solutions to provide all Americans with access to quality, affordable health care and promote life time financial security.

We need to enact legislation that provides information about the quality, cost, and effectiveness of health care services, prevent illness, and promote good health. We also need to reduce health care costs while maintaining quality of care, develop secure health information technology and electronic health records, and provide choices for long-term care service delivery and affordable financing options.

I am committed to legislation that strengthens Social Security in a manner that treats all generations fairly and provides Americans with greater access to retirement plans and financial incentives to save. We must also encourage policies to ensure that all workers – regardless of age – can continue to work and contribute to society if they so choose.

Many of us will have legitimate differences of opinion on how to best resolve these issues and I look forward to a healthy public debate. But to resolve these issues, I am hopeful that a bipartisan majority will put party politics aside and focus our energies instead on finding solutions we can all support.