

Not Awkward: President Trump and Rep. Elijah Cummings Meet at the White House

President Donald Trump had a tough-to-get sit-down meeting with U.S. Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., but in the end, both men—who have launched some rather pointed attacks at each other in recent weeks—came out of it smiling.

The White House released the following readout of the meeting, which focused on the high cost of prescription drugs and efforts by Cummings, a civil rights icon, to address the issue:

Today, President Donald J. Trump met with Congressman Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) in the Oval Office to discuss rising prescription drug prices. This meeting was a result of a January telephone conversation, during which Congressman Cummings said that he and the President, “had more in common than differences.” President Trump expressed his desire to work with Congressman Cummings in a bipartisan fashion to ensure prescription drug prices are more affordable for all Americans, especially those who need lifesaving prescription medications. Reforming the Food and Drug Administration and reducing the regulatory burdens on drug manufacturers so as to enhance competition will help accomplish those goals. President Trump also offered his condolences to Congressman Cummings and his longtime staffer, Katie Malone, who lost six of her children in January in a tragic house fire.

Cummings offered his own comments in a brief statement outside the White House, as well as in interviews with the liberal mainstream media that followed.

“I said to him, ‘Mr. President, most respectfully, when you’re talking about the African-American community, I want you to

realize that all African-American communities are not places of depression, where people are being harmed,'" he said during his comments outside the White House. "I think it would be good for him to acknowledge that most African-American people are doing very, very well.

"I think he got it. Where he goes from there, I don't know."

The media has focused on the racial aspects of their conversation, but the purpose of the meeting was to discuss drug prices for all Americans. And on that front, it would seem there was a breakthrough, with the congressman noting they had more in common than differences.

"What we have is a lot of companies, pharmaceutical companies, that are raising the prices of drugs unreasonably," he later told CNN's Wolf Blitzer. "You go to a drug store in January, it's \$100. You go back a month later, it's \$600. We see it over and over again.

"A lot of these drug companies are doing it because they can do it. Right now, we've got Medicare paying sometimes 70 percent more than the VA or Medicaid. That's ridiculous. The president made a commitment today—as a matter of fact, he's enthusiastic about it—on a piece of legislation that we will file in two weeks." {eo}