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[Undercover Boss! Congressman Quigley Does the Dirty Work](#)

Congressmen Mike Quigley stinks. Seriously, the man smells like a garbage can.

But he didn't pick up the odor in D.C., as clever as that might be. Quigley (D-Illinois) acquired the stench while working as garbage man on a Streets and Sanitation truck.

At a time when many Americans are critical of an out of touch Congress, the 5th District Representative recently went undercover at a few area businesses to find out just what it's like to work in the trenches.

"The problem in D.C. is that everything is on paper, and it's theoretical," Quigley said during a break from hoisting trash into the back of a garbage truck. Here the wheels hit the street. When they talk about my job being important I say 'the important jobs are the ones that you'd notice if you left for a week.

"So if the sanitation folks didn't come by for a week, you'd notice."

Quigley proved that adage. Not only did he ride the garbage truck, he also slinged drinks as a bartender at Connie's Pizza in Elmwood Park; hunted for Asian carp with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources; squeezed mustard at Super Dawg's and spent time at a Ravenswood School tasting hot lunches with the students.

Along the way, Quigley said he learned a few things, like the spirit of American entrepreneurship.

“At Super Dawgs and other places you learn about the genius of American ingenuity,’ he said. “Folks after World War II with a dream put together a place that works more efficiently than McDonald’s and has done so for 62 years.”

Or what Chicago Public School students go through on a daily basis.

“I learned that Chicago lunches are terrible,” he said. “If I was a Chicago student I would ask my mom to pack a lunch. Then the next day – this is the unique quality of this job – I got to talk to the USDA Chief and say look, our school lunches are really bad. What are we going to do about it?”

It’s something that he could hear about in a hearing at the Capitol, but seeing and tasting the food is much more visceral way to experience an everyday issue.

Quigley took over the 5th district post from Rahm Emanuel when Emanuel went to serve as President Obama’s chief of staff.

He says despite growing concerns about Democratic losses in the midterm elections, he's not concerned about his job.

"I think I'm in pretty good shape," he said.

As long as he stays in touch with his district at a grass roots level he shouldn't have any concerns. Even if he stinks.

