

MARYLAND



COMMENTARY

Mizeur's heart-smart politics beat Harris' cynicism



Dan Rodricks

Across the nation, with 435 seats in the House of Representatives up for election on Nov. 8, it's hard to imagine a voter choice more stark than the one between Andy Harris and Heather Mizeur in Maryland's 1st Congressional District.

Harris is the incumbent Republican (and anesthesiologist) running for a seventh term he once promised not to seek. Mizeur is the Democratic former state delegate (now herb farmer) challenging him in the heavily red district.

The state's lone Republican in Congress, Harris is stridently conservative, a Trump adherent way out on the right. He's a fan of the Hungarian authoritarian, Viktor Orban.

Mizeur is liberal with a touch of common-sense moderation that stems from her farming-fam-

ily roots and supports her heart-smart — some would call it “touchy feely” — approach to public policy. She's no fans of dictators.

Harris comes across combative and cynical; he votes against everything proposed by Democrats. Mizeur plays a room pleasant and positive, as she did the other night at a home in Harford County. If elected, she promises to work toward bipartisanship.

Bipartisanship — that old thing.

In Washington, Republicans and Democrats work together on almost nothing. Most people these days hear a candidate talk about “bipartisanship,” and they hear a platitude spoken by a naive fool.

But Mizeur is neither naive nor foolish. She believes the country, through elected leaders and citizens, can end the toxic super partisanship that, she says, constitutes “our greatest national security threat.”

Thursday night, at the home of Casi Boyer, a member of the Havre de Grace City Council, Mizeur told about 30 people of

varied political affiliations that she's all about “building bridges” and “listening to those who disagree with me.”

If she's able to pull off one of the great political upsets in Maryland history — Harris has won every election since 2010 in the heavily-gerrymandered (by Democrats) district — Mizeur promises to work across the divide in Congress. “We have to learn to talk to each other again,” she says.

Harris, by contrast, is rated one of the worst members of Congress when it comes to bipartisanship by the Lugar Center and Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy. The Lugar Center was established by the late Richard Lugar, a Republican who represented Indiana in the Senate for 36 years. The center annually ranks how often each member of Congress works across party lines.

Out of the 435 House members, Harris ranked 426th. He's near the bottom with fellow Republican extremists Marjorie Taylor

Green, Jim Jordan and Lauren Boebert.

Among Maryland congressional Democrats, Steny Hoyer, the majority leader, wasn't much better. Four other Democrats were ranked in the middle to lower-middle of the pack while David Trone, of the 6th District, and Dutch Ruppersberger, of the 2nd, were ranked in the top 100.

Is bipartisanship what voters want these days?

Mizeur says it's the only way to get things done, something at which, she says, Harris has miserably failed. “For 12 years,” she says, “we've paid him \$2 million in taxpayer salaries, and he's passed one law to rename a post office.”

As someone who has maintained her idealism, Mizeur still believes there is more that unites than divides Americans. “We've forgotten we're all humans,” she said, “and that we want, by and large, the same things for our communities and for our families.”

On the Eastern Shore, she's found farmers receptive to her “agri-climate” proposals to make grow-

ing food less harmful to the Chesapeake Bay and the planet. She's been to a Kent County gun shop and found agreement on common-sense ways to protect the public from people who should never be allowed to buy a gun.

Her audience in Havre de Grace, mostly women, listened intently to what Mizeur had to say; there were a lot of nodding heads, and applause when she mentioned the urgent need to close the political divide. It's hard to argue with someone who smiles when she speaks and seems well-informed and deeply sincere.

Asked how to deal with political opponents, Mizeur described a recent conversation with a woman, a supporter of Donald Trump, in the parking lot of a feed store.

“We started in on things, guns,” Mizeur said, “And we got past guns, and she got into some other things, a few things that were a bit more QAnon conspiratorial in nature that I don't subscribe to. However, I stood there and listened to her with respect and an

open heart and zero judgment. And people can feel that.”

The woman started to cry. “I've not felt listened to like this in a really long time, especially not from a Democrat, especially not from someone I can already tell doesn't agree with me about this,” Mizeur recalled the woman saying. “I'm so sorry, I'm not sure why I'm feeling so emotional!”

What the woman wanted, Mizeur said, was a chance to express her beliefs without being harshly judged. “And we want that,” Mizeur told her audience. “We hunger for that.”

The woman asked Mizeur for a hug. They embraced in the parking lot.

“I don't know for sure whether she'll walk away voting for me, ultimately,” Mizeur said. “I have a feeling that, at a minimum, she'll probably decide not to vote for Andy Harris, and that's a win for my campaign. ... As much as I want to win, I'm also doing this to really change how we interact with each other.”



PICTURING MARYLAND

READY FOR ROSH HASHANA

Clockwise, from top: Andrew Koch, left, kneads dough for challah bread as Jodi Miller adds flour and Keanou Jackson watches them. They were participating in a Young Jewish Professionals Baltimore event, Loaves of Love, at Chabad of Downtown. Those attending each took home a loaf to bake and helped prepare additional loaves for Jewish patients at downtown hospitals during Rosh Hashanah. Volunteers will deliver about 100 loaves of challah, accompanied by honey and copies of the new Jewish calendar for Year 5783; Chani Druk, who operates Chabad of Downtown with her husband, Rabbi Levi Druk, shows participants of Young Jewish Professionals Baltimore one way to braid challah dough for Rosh Hashanah; Annie Feiler, from left, Jodi Miller, Aliza Silverman and Marissa Leff, participants in Young Jewish Professionals Baltimore, work together to prepare the traditional braided bread for the Jewish New Year, which begins tonight.

AMY DAVIS/BALTIMORE SUN PHOTOS

SUNDAY NEWS SHOWS INTERVIEW GUESTS

ABC's “This Week”: National security adviser Jake Sullivan; Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo. 9 a.m., WMAR (Channel 2); 10 a.m., WJLA (Channel 7)

NBC's “Meet the Press”: National security adviser Jake Sullivan; Reps. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., and Nancy Mace, R-S.C. 10 a.m., WGAL (Channel 8) and WBAL (Channel 11); 10:30 a.m., WRC (Channel 4)

CBS' “Face the Nation”: National security adviser Jake Sullivan; Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy; Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-Calif.; Raphael Bostic, president and chief executive officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. 10:30 a.m., WUSA (Channel 9), WJZ (Channel 13)

CNN's “State of the Union”: British Prime Minister Liz Truss; Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif. 9 a.m., CNN

“Fox News Sunday”: Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y.; Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va. 9 a.m., WTTG (Channel 5), WPMT (Channel 43) and WBFF (Channel 45); 2 p.m., FOX News Channel

“Matter of Fact with Soledad O'Brien”: Host Soledad O'Brien brings awareness to the country's issue of teacher shortage. 11 a.m., WBAL (Channel 11)

“11 TV Hill with Jason Newton”: Host Jason Newton speaks with legal experts about the vacated conviction of Adnan Syed. 11:30 a.m., WZL (Channel 11)

“Square Off”: Moderator Richard Sher welcomes Mary Koch, Tyrone Keys, Shannon Wright and Chris Kennedy to square off on the prison release of Adnan Syed and whether a retrial is coming. Plus, the Mar-A-Lago investigation of the potentially classified documents former President Donald Trump took from the White House. Also, the crisis at the southern border is out of control and will there ever be a solution? And in a rare interview, President Joe Biden told 60 Minutes reporter Scott Pelley that he has not made a decision to run for reelection in 2024 and that he's doing his job to help retain control of the House of Representatives and the Senate in the mid-term elections. *These topics and more are available on line at squareoff.net.*