



April 13, 2022

Ms. Heather Mizeur
Heather Mizeur For Congress
P.O. Box 786
Chestertown, MD 21620

Subject: Proposal for Debates in the First District

Dear Ms. Mizeur:

Please accept this letter as a request to participate in a series of at least four debates across Maryland's First Congressional District between now and the start of early voting in July.

Even in the steadiest of times, voters benefit from the chance to hear candidates for higher office speak in a direct and unfiltered manner about the most important issues of the day. This need for debates is particularly true in a congressional district as large and geographically diffuse as ours, where opportunities for citizens to engage substantively with their potential representative are relatively limited.

As you are well aware, these are not the steadiest of times. Vladimir Putin's invasion and sustained campaign of genocide in Ukraine has served as a catalyst for a political realignment among traditional U.S. allies abroad and significant economic disruption here at home. We both agree that Representative Harris' dereliction of leadership in this crisis – including his inexcusable refusal to acknowledge the indispensability of NATO in times of international conflict – has only reinforced why he must be defeated in November and replaced with a member of Congress who will actually act to defend America's national security interests.

At the same time, our next representatives must provide meaningful solutions to challenges facing the children, families and small businesses of the First District. The soaring rate of inflation has made it difficult, if not impossible, for working people to fill their car with gas and put food on the table, while still setting money aside for college and retirement. This economy is particularly tough for low-to-moderate income residents, as well as those – such as watermen, farmers, restaurant owners and contractors - whose livelihoods are directly impacted by the rising costs of motor fuel, beef, poultry and other agricultural products.

The financial insecurity felt by residents of our district is matched by a growing sense of concern for their personal safety. Even in a rural district such as ours, voters are increasingly concerned about the recent murders in the district and the rising rate of both violent and property-related crimes. Our next member of Congress must stand ready to work with our state and local

governments to provide the personnel, technology, and equipment our police officers need to make our neighborhoods safe.

Finally, our next member of Congress will be called upon to act and lead on issues that will determine the quality of life for our children and grandchildren. We must curb the rate of carbon emissions, achieve independence from imported oil, and support the development of alternative sources of energy. We must provide all Americans with a health care system that balances affordability, accessibility, and quality, while addressing the unacceptable absence of viable mental health care treatment for people in desperate need of help. We must also support local school systems throughout the First District with the resources to attract and retain the best teachers, build schools that create a suitable learning environment for our children, and keep teachers, students, and staff members safe from violence.

Given the breadth and magnitude of these issues, and the grotesque inadequacies of our incumbent congressman, I believe it is imperative that we provide the voters with our respective credentials and priorities as well as areas of agreement and differences. Now that the judicial process for determining the boundaries of our district has concluded, now is the time to organize these debates.

I propose that our respective campaign managers and staff begin to work through such details, including formats, subjects, and possible moderators. Given that we have a candidate forum in Salisbury on April 20th and are now less than three months away from the start of early voting, time is of the essence.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

R. David Harden

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