

OPINION

EDITORIAL

Dennis J. Kucinich in the 7th Congressional District of Ohio

Ohio's 7th Congressional District begins at Cuyahoga County's far western edge on Lake Erie, then sweeps down through many of the county's western and southern communities before moving south to include all of Medina and Wayne counties and a small part of northern Holmes County.

To say that the district embodies a broad mix of cultures and political leanings would be an understatement, although most analysts believe it leans Republican.

Three candidates — all from Cuyahoga County — are competing for this seat: incumbent Republican Max Miller of Rocky River, Democrat Matt Diemer of Bay Village and former Cleveland mayor and eight-term congressman Dennis J. Kucinich of Cleveland, who does not live in the district and is running as an independent.

In 2022, Miller, now 35, won the seat held for two prior terms by fellow Republican Anthony Gonzalez, who had voted to impeach former President Donald Trump, then announced in September 2021 he would not seek re-election. Miller won handily, defeating Diemer with 55% of the vote in the 2022 general election.

Diemer, 44, is back for another try after overcoming a primary challenge. He told our editorial board he believes that the diversity of the district will work in his favor, and that the voting on last year's reproductive rights amendment in Medina County, among other places, shows that the district is not as knee-jerk red as some believe.

He also touts his experience, saying living and working in China for 15 years gives him an insight into this country's primary economic competitor that would be valuable as a member of Congress.

Kucinich, 77, has a long history in politics, dating back to 1970, that is familiar to most Northeast Ohioans. He has won and lost many elections (by our count a 13-11 record) and has displayed an uncanny knack for coming back from the political dead after being counted out. His last victory was in 2010 in the 10th Congressional District, which included some of the current 7th before it was gerrymandered. Since then, he has run unsuccessfully for Ohio governor and mayor of Cleveland.

Diemer strikes us as bright, thoughtful and committed, yet he has never held political office and would be over his head in getting his first taste of politics in the key role of congressman. He is the kind of hard charger we need in leadership roles, however, and if he falls short in this election, we would encourage him to run for



Dennis J. Kucinich is competing for Ohio's 7th Congressional District seat.

a lesser office and learn the ropes before seeking higher office.

Miller, who elected not to participate in our endorsement interview, has not been the extreme partisan many feared when he took office, showing a willingness to reach across the aisle for the good of his district and taking sensible positions on complicated issues. However, his unreserved fealty to Trump, going back to Trump's 2016 and 2020 campaigns, and his calling Trump "the greatest POTUS this country has ever had" in a 2021 birthday tweet, make it difficult for us to recommend his return to the House.

So, in a split vote, it is Kucinich whom we believe would be the best choice for voters.

Obviously well-seasoned and well-connected from his 16 years in Congress, with a wide range of experience gathered over his long career, the one-time "boy mayor" is well-suited to bring the perspective and gravitas needed in Congress.

When asked how he would align himself as an independent in Congress, the career Democrat cited his willingness to work with all sides and said he would seek to caucus with both the Democrats and Republicans.

"Is it possible we could have a 217 Republicans-217 Democrats split, with one independent being a deciding vote and that independent being me?" he asked the editorial board.

"That's possible, and I would then use that seat for the benefit of the people of the 7th District, which is the first and foremost interest that I must have as a member of Congress."

Dennis J. Kucinich is the best choice for the district and deserves your vote. Early voting begins Oct. 8.

Note: Dennis Kucinich has a pending defamation lawsuit against cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer and some of its employees, including editor Chris Quinn, a member of the Editorial Board. The lawsuit involves descriptions of Kucinich's relationship with FirstEnergy in stories and a Today in Ohio podcast episode.

Go to [Cleveland.com/opinion](https://cleveland.com/opinion) to listen to full audio of this endorsement interview and for other resources for voters.

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Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris campaigns with President Joe Biden on Sept. 2. Is America finally ready for a "Madam President"? Guest columnist Cliff Anthony reviews the obstacle, and how many other nations have already broken through this gender barrier. Susan Walsh, Associated Press

FROM THE COMMUNITY

Are we prepared to elect a 'Madam President'?

Cliff Anthony

Is America ready for a madam president? The needle of change seems to be slowly swinging toward a "yes."

The push for equal opportunity in the land of opportunities was set in motion in 1872 when Victoria Woodhull ran for president. The Homer native campaigned unsuccessfully under the "Equal Rights Party" banner against Ulysses S. Grant (Republican) and Horace Greely (Liberal Republican).

Her involvement in the feminist movement, advocacy for free love, and a penchant for clairvoyance drew criticism. These personal attacks, according to womenshistory.org, forced her to write a letter to The New York Herald newspaper, stating, "While others argued the equality of woman with man, I proved it by successfully engaging in business while others sought to show that there was no valid reason why woman should be treated socially and politically as a being inferior to man, I boldly entered the arena of politics and business and exercised the rights I already possessed."

Since then, several women have braved similar intense scrutiny to aspire to the top office in this country.

Per the Center for American Women and Politics, they include:

- ▶ Belva Ann Bennett Lockwood, a Royalton, New York, resident, who tried unsuccessfully twice in 1884 and 1888 for the Equal Rights Party's presidential nomination.

- ▶ Margaret Chase Smith, a Republican from Skowhegan, Maine, who failed to make the cut in 1964.

- ▶ Hillary Clinton, who lost to Republican Donald Trump in 2016 despite women outnumbering men by about 163 million to 159 million that year, according to statista.com.

The roadblocks U.S. women candidates face can be many.

A 2023 Pew Research Center survey found that "gender discrimination," a lack of "support from party leaders," many Americans' reluctance "to elect a woman to higher office," and "family responsibilities" were major obstacles.

It's noteworthy that Third World and

developing nations are ahead of the United States — the world's economic and industrial superpower — in recognizing women's ability to lead their countries.

Deep to the south of our border, Michelle Bachelet broke the gender barrier to become the president of Chile in 2006 and again in 2014. Other South American countries where women have achieved high political position include Argentina, Nicaragua, Brazil and Panama.

On the other side of the Atlantic, in 2004, Luísa Dias Diogo was sworn in as the first woman prime minister of Mozambique, a nation of about 33 million in the southeast of the African continent. Prime ministers are equivalent to the U.S. president, with all major decision-making powers.

Further east, Sri Lanka, an island nation resembling a teardrop about 40 miles south of India, was among the first to elect a female, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, in 1960 as leader of what was then called Ceylon.

Six years later, in 1966, India followed suit by electing Indira Gandhi its first female prime minister, ruling a country three times greater in population and one-third the size of the United States.

Just northwest of New Delhi, Pakistan chose Benazir Bhutto in 1988 as its leader, the first woman to lead an Islamic nation.

And about 2,800 miles west of Pakistan, Israel made headlines in 1969 by naming Golda Meir as its prime minister. It was a significant feat because most of its neighboring countries were, and still are, run by regimes that oppress women.

Europe was not far behind in shattering the glass ceiling. Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain led the way in 1979, followed by Angela Merkel of Germany (2005) and others.

In the recent U.S. Republican primary, Nikki Haley made waves that eventually fizzled out as ripples.

Now we have an opportunity in Democratic Party nominee Kamala Harris to demonstrate that U.S. women are as capable as men to be the commander-in-chief.

And to join the world madam presidents' and prime ministers' club.

Anthony, a Highland Heights resident, is the author of the novel "Tears in God's Own Country."

FROM THE COMMUNITY

Sorry, Frank LaRose. Voters are smarter than you think

Katie Paris and Emily Schriver

When Katie Paris started Red Wine & Blue and Emily Schriver took the reins at The Matriots, we stepped into our roles because we're passionate about encouraging women to tap into their political power.

Katie and her team work directly with more than 42,000 women across every county in Ohio to defeat extremism. Emily and her team have helped support more than 450 women running for elected office.

Between us we have five kids, two husbands, and more than 50 employees. Like most Ohioans, we lead busy lives. And like all Ohioans, we don't have time for political nonsense.

Yet that's exactly what we're witnessing, again and again, when it comes to the simple idea that everyday Ohioans should have a voice in political decision-making.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose and his political friends seem to think frightening and confusing voters is the only way they

can score political wins — and they've been running this playbook for years now.

Since 2022, Ohio has used gerrymandered maps produced by the Republican-dominated Ohio Redistricting Commission — even after they were deemed unconstitutional. We've been drawn into districts where election results are all but locked in before votes are even cast.

Last August, the same politicians tried to undermine our right to join together as everyday citizens to amend the state constitution by ballot issue, a right Ohioans have had for more than 100 years.

Last November, knowing that most Ohioans believe that whether or not to have an abortion should be up to a woman and her doctor, politicians tried to confuse voters about the Reproductive Freedom state constitutional amendment with scary and misleading ballot language.

We don't have time for any of this. While they're drawing maps to serve themselves and changing ballot language to confuse voters, we're trying to protect our commu-

nities and get our kids to eat breakfast.

Good thing voters are smarter than they think we are. Last August, voters came together across partisan lines (including the majority of voters in 16 counties that voted for Donald Trump) to say "no" to ending majority rule. Last November, we came together to say "yes" to reproductive freedom.

This November, we need to do it again.

The vast majority of Ohioans think that voters should be the ones who decide who wins elections, not politicians. But the same politicians who tried to undermine our voices last year are trying to confuse voters again, this time about the state constitutional amendment to end gerrymandering. They've written misleading ballot language because they hope we'll vote against having a choice in our own government.

As moms, this looks familiar. Republicans have changed the ballot language to say that the constitutional amendment — which would ban gerrymandering — would actually "require" gerrymandering.

It reminds us of schoolyard taunts: "I know you are, but what am I?"

Here's something else we know as moms: Schoolyard taunts usually come from bullies who are really just weak and afraid of losing power.

The same is true of Frank LaRose and his political friends. When they go up against the people of Ohio, they keep losing. Their repeated attempts to mislead the public with faulty ballot language shows how afraid they are of us.

But we're not afraid. No matter what language they put on the ballot, they can't change what the constitutional amendment actually says. A "yes" vote for Issue 1 is a vote for having a voice in Ohio.

There's an easy way to avoid all the distortions. Don't rely on what anyone else wants you to think the constitutional amendment says. Read it yourself at tinyurl.com/4zxdj9xv.

Paris is founder and CEO of Red Wine & Blue and Schriver is CEO of The Matriots.

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