

2 Democrats battle to challenge Rouzer

Horton and Parker face off in US House primary

By Tim Buckland

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SOUTHEASTERN N.C. — A Kure Beach physician and Goldsboro businessman are hoping voters will make them the Democratic nominee to challenge incumbent Republican U.S. Rep. David Rouzer.

Dr. Kyle Horton has been campaigning since announcing last year, hosting town halls and appearing at numerous events throughout the 7th Congressional District, which stretches from Brunswick County to the suburbs of Raleigh. She was joined in the race by Grayson Parker of Goldsboro, who has run a quieter campaign so far.

Rouzer did not draw a primary challenge and moves on to the November general election for the position, which comes with a salary of \$174,000.

1. What is the top issue facing Southeastern North Carolina?

Horton: In hosting town halls throughout the district, I believe the top issues are the economy, health care and protecting our water, both in our oceans and faucets. On the economy, I will support major investments in infrastructure to create good-paying jobs. I'll work toward an economy that rewards hard work by putting workers first and paying a living wage. To combat skyrocketing healthcare costs, I will support legislation that ensures quality healthcare for all. Finally, I will champion legislation to protect our air and clean our water by demanding that big corporations be held accountable to pay for any necessary cleanup.

Parker: The top priority for Southeastern N.C. is tackling economic injustice. Based in fact and reason, our objectives include raising incomes, creating jobs, early childhood education, comprehensive health care coverage, infrastructure and equal rights for all. We are pro-voting rights and believe in campaign finance reform to level the playing field for all Americans. The middle class is being wiped out by a system rigged towards the highest earners in this country. We must build from the bottom up. Everyone who works hard and plays by the rules should be able to create a better life, not hover at the poverty line.

2. What tangible steps can the region's member of Congress do to either support or oppose offshore oil exploration?

Horton: I am strongly opposed to offshore drilling, which threatens our beautiful Atlantic Coast and economy. Instead of moving backwards to a polluted, over-

industrialized economy, our district would benefit from promoting renewable energy through solar farms, which would bring jobs and opportunity to our rural counties. In Washington, I would fight for a ban on Atlantic Coast offshore drilling and to sponsor legislation to promote clean energy solutions.

Parker: We should work with the other coastal states, form coalitions that oppose this activity and fight for an indefinite moratorium to protect our coast and economy for generations to come.

3. What would be your first legislative goal if elected?

Horton: My first legislative goal would be to support the Jobs and Infrastructure Plan for American Workers. This plan would make a \$1.022 trillion federal investment to create 15 million good-paying jobs. This includes jobs to modernize our crumbling infrastructure, to rebuild America's schools, provide universal high-speed internet, update and improve the rail and port facilities, address construction backlog at VA hospitals and repair our water and sewer systems. These investments will be paid for by repealing the fiscally irresponsible tax giveaways for the super-rich and corporations, so that this plan will not add to the federal deficit.

Parker: A desperately needed comprehensive infrastructure bill would be a great place to start. There is support on both sides of the aisle and it would be a great way to not only build a foundation for American economic growth, new jobs and future prosperity but also a foundation for future legislative compromise among parties that have rarely been at greater odds with each other.

4. What would your approach be to working with the Trump administration?

Horton: Given my alarm with corruption in this administration, you can expect me to speak out against threats to our democratic system including the money in politics, attacks on the press and voter suppression. I'm committed to preserving our democracy with campaign finance reform. I believe that government should serve all the people, and not just the privileged few elites.

Parker: We have seen the power of technology and media to disseminate fear and deceit. We must harness that same power and enthusiasm to advance truth, fact and integrity. We will do that by not only building trust with our constituents but also trust with the other side of the aisle. We may not agree on every solution but we must agree on the facts of the issues at hand.

5. Provide at least one major difference between you and your primary opponent?

Horton: The difference between me and my opponent is my experience and commitment through months of campaigning to hearing the concerns of my future constituents. As a physician, I have firsthand knowledge of what should be done to save our health care in the face of skyrocketing costs. Working in Washington to

defend our veterans has taught me valuable lessons on how to get things done in our polarized political environment.

Parker: My primary opponent and I bring vastly different assets and experiences to the table. My family has operated in the business community in this district for generations and I have had the pleasure and opportunity of successfully working with people from all backgrounds, income levels, genders, races and creeds. With a red-leaning district, this experience will allow our campaign to attract voters from both sides of the aisle and have a higher probability of actually winning in November. Economic injustice, educational injustice and limited access affect people of all parties and we champion those affected.

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