

THE STORY

Target: Schmitt

Type “anti-Bush” in any search engine and you’re sure to get a million hits. Okay, maybe not quite that many, but the Internet serves as a fantastic platform for anyone and everyone to air their gripes with political figures. Usually you don’t find websites dedicated solely to bashing legislators, however.

Until Now.

Throughout Minority Leader Peter Schmitt’s reign as legislator in Nassau County for Massapequa, he hasn’t been known to make friends. Some adversaries roll their eyes at his quotes, some snicker behind his back after his remarks. But one Massapequa constituent was so frustrated that he actually put up a website, citing all of the politician’s flubs and challenging the facts in the editorials he writes, at www.geocities.com/schmittwatch. The site’s 33 year-old webmaster, who prefers to remain anonymous, works on the Island as a media manager. “I disagree with Pete Schmitt on his approach and his record,” he says. “I picked Pete Schmitt because he is my legislator and lucky for me, and maybe unlucky for him, he is the minority leader which means he is the one out front for his caucus.” The “Pete Schmitt Watch,” said to be created by the “Schmitt for Private Citizen Campaign,” provides text from and links to various media outlets where Schmitt has written or been quoted making statements that are, as this webmaster sees it, factually incorrect. According to the site’s page-views counter, slightly more than 200 visitors have visited since it was launched a few weeks ago.

don’t expect a similar anti-Suozzi site anytime soon from this webmaster—he’s a registered Democrat and sees a good future for Nassau under the Suozzi administration. “I am happy to see a county executive and majority legislature more concerned with fiscal matters than photo-ops,” he says.

The political watchdog’s efforts were not on Schmitt’s radar until a Press reporter called his office. “We are not going to respond to an anonymous website which seems to be authored by some craven lacky whose time is spent misinterpreting Legislator Schmitt’s comments,” said Scott McMahon spokesperson for Peter Schmitt. The webmaster says this is not the case. “I’m not going to take a snippet out of context and use it, because that is dishonest,” he says. “I know that the translation from voice to print sometimes causes misquotes, but I’ve generally stayed on what Schmitt has written himself.” The webmaster wouldn’t say no if asked to run in the next election. “Instead of talking about issues,” he says, “I should do something.” He’d have to drop the anonymity thing though, and could become a target of irate voters with Internet skills. – Lauren E. Hill