

# Kuhl in trouble?

## Incumbent makes most-vulnerable list

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**WASHINGTON** | U.S. Rep. John R. "Randy" Kuhl Jr. could be in trouble in this fall's election, according to *The Hill* and *Roll Call*, a pair of politically oriented newspapers in Washington, D.C.

*The Hill* recently named Kuhl as one of its "10 most vulnerable members of Congress" and called the 29th Congressional District a "toss-up."

Here's what the newspaper wrote:

"Kuhl should not be in this position.

The sprawling Southern Tier district is one of the most Republican in the state, and Kuhl spent two dozen years in the state Legislature before his election to Congress.

Yet Kuhl is not a warm and fuzzy figure, to say the least, and his fundraising has been sluggish. His Democratic challenger, retired Navy officer Eric Massa, was raw and untested in 2006 and still finished just two points behind the incumbent. This time he seems to be running a much more savvy campaign, and he has all the Democratic institutional and activist support lined up behind him.

Through March 31, Massa had \$565,000 in the bank compared with Kuhl's



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\$366,000. The incumbent raised just \$112,000 in the first three months of the year.

Given the district's demographics, Kuhl could still win. But he is in big trouble right now."

*Roll Call*, in a similar list of 10 vulnerable incumbents, published the following blurb about Kuhl earlier this week:

"In one of the most Republican districts in the Empire State, a seasoned pol like Kuhl should be in fine shape. But he has never really recovered from his rocky first House campaign in 2004, when news of a drunken-driving arrest and his nasty divorce came to light; he's never been able to endear himself to his constituents as a result, and his fundraising this cycle has been lackluster, to say the least. Eric Massa, the passionate former Navy officer who came within two points of ousting Kuhl last time, is trying again."

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The D.C. press has realized that voters in the 29th Congressional District want to take the country in a new direction, Massa said.

Massa admitted that most folks in the Southern Tier probably don't pay much attention to what's written in Capitol Hill publications.

"This is not about what is written in Washington newspapers," Massa said. "That's not what this race is about. But the so-called political experts in Washington are now paying attention to what we're saying. That's the story."

Meghan Tisinger, Kuhl's director of communications, released the following statement on the congressman's behalf:

"Congressman Kuhl is pleased to have recently announced his candidacy and looks forward to continue being an independent voice for western New Yorkers. The D.C. reporters are welcome to voice their opinion but unlike the reporters, the congressman has lived in the district his entire life and knows the people that he represents. We're confident and plan to run a strong campaign."

Kuhl, a Hammondsport native, is seeking his third term in the House.