

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE  
COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

WILLIAM R. SPENCER, M.D.  
LEGISLATOR 18<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

15 PARK CIRCLE – SUITE 209  
CENTERPORT, N.Y.  
11721

CHAIR  
HEALTH COMMITTEE

VICE-CHAIR  
WAYS AND MEANS

MEMBER  
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE



PHONE: (631) 854-4500  
FAX: (631) 854-4503

December 29, 2016

Dear Editor,

Fake news dates back centuries, however in the advent of social media it has become a phenomenon. The insidious impact of fake news can strike organizations, lives and communities at any time. With so much information out there, the opportunity to create social media environments that dilute the truth and/or spread misinformation deepens our polarization and erodes personal accountability. As information consumers this is a topic worthy of our attention as we have the ability to temper its influence and correct deceptions.

Having been the target of a fictitious story in the past several weeks, I've become keenly aware of how detrimental it can be. A recent social media campaign was launched, falsely stating that I, along with another Legislator, sponsored a bill to purchase a rock in Rocky Point with county funds. The truth is, I had absolutely nothing to do with the rock and no public or private interest in pursuing its preservation with public or private dollars. The idea was raised by the legislator who represents the district where the rock sits, and a proposal was never drafted or presented to the legislature for consideration.

I've worked hard to represent Suffolk County residents well and my record shows that I wouldn't entertain such unwarranted spending. If you ever come across a story that appears out of line with my established record, please don't hesitate to call my office directly. I would be happy to answer your questions.

It's good to see social media platforms stepping up to the plate by developing tools to monitor this disturbing trend, but ultimately it is up to us to spread the truth. In 2017 and beyond, I am hopeful that we will all do our part in guarding against falsehoods. Let's challenge ourselves to seek the whole truth, even if it debunks our suspicions and preconceived notions. Opening our beliefs to scrutiny will strengthen our accountability, our connections, and lead us to a better future.

Best Regards,

William R. Spencer, M.D.  
Suffolk County Legislator  
18<sup>th</sup> Legislative District