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[◀◀ previous](#) **Document 17 of 125.** [next ▶▶](#)

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The Associated Press

August 30, 2004, Monday, BC cycle

**SECTION:** Political News

**LENGTH:** 543 words

**HEADLINE:** U.S. Rep. Ed **Schrock** announces retirement following allegations he is gay

**BYLINE:** By BOB LEWIS, Associated Press Writer

**DATELINE:** RICHMOND, Va.

**BODY:**

U.S. Rep. Edward L. **Schrock** abruptly announced Monday that he will not seek a third term in Congress, citing unspecified allegations that have "called into question" his ability to serve.

Although **Schrock** did not comment on why he decided against seeking re-election, several Virginia Republicans said allegations that **Schrock** is gay have roiled the party since they were posted on a Web log Aug. 19.

**Schrock** is married and a conservative who voted for legislation to ban gay marriages.

Republicans from **Schrock's** conservative district, which includes Norfolk and the resort city of Virginia Beach, said they had planned to discuss the allegations at a party meeting Tuesday. Now they'll meet that day to choose a replacement candidate.

"We're shocked and stunned more than saddened right now," said Virginia Beach Republican Party Chairman Mark McKinney. "What I read on the Internet was a complete and utter surprise to me."

**Schrock**, 63, a retired Navy officer and Vietnam veteran, said in a five-paragraph statement that allegations have surfaced in recent weeks "that have called into question my ability to represent the citizens of Virginia's Second Congressional District."

He continued: "Therefore, as of today, I am stepping aside and will no longer be the Republican nominee for Congress."

The release said **Schrock** would not comment further on his decision, nor did he comment specifically on the allegations.

Allegations that **Schrock** is gay were posted on blogactive.com by Michael Rogers, who said his blog is aimed at exposing "hypocrites" in Congress.

**Schrock's** decision leaves the Republicans scrambling to field another candidate to oppose Democratic lawyer David B. Ashe.

"I am totally, totally shocked and disappointed. Whatever it is, he should have stayed in and fought it. He's a good Republican," said Juanita Bailey of Newport News, a delegate at the Republican National Convention in New York.

U.S. Rep. Tom Davis, a fellow Virginia Republican, said **Schrock** had indicated he was considering retiring when he spoke to him last week.

"He's a very intense guy, and he's got a lot of things going on in his life. I'm really sorry to see him leave."

Ashe was shocked by the move.

"Wow. I had not heard that. That's really something," Ashe said in a telephone interview. He said his thoughts were with **Schrock** and his family and he thanked the congressman for his career of service.

With **Schrock** out of the race, attention turned to state legislators as possible replacements on the Nov. 2 ballot. The 2nd District Republican Committee planned to choose a nominee Tuesday, just three days ahead of a deadline to get names on the ballot, state GOP spokesman Shawn M. Smith said.

Tom Davis and his wife, state Sen. Jeannemarie Devolites Davis, said four legislators had expressed interest in running for **Schrock's** seat.

**Schrock** was elected to the seat in a 2000 Republican sweep of Virginia in an area that is home to the world's largest U.S. naval base.

In January 2001, **Schrock** was elected president of the Republican House freshman class and landed a seat on the House Armed Services Committee.

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Associated Press Writer Sonja Barisic contributed to this report from Norfolk, Va.

**GRAPHIC:** AP Photo

**LOAD-DATE:** August 31, 2004

[◀◀previous](#) Document 17 of 125. [next▶▶](#)

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