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3rd district congressional race heats up between Adler and Runyan long before election

is a summertime lull.

Adler, meanwhile, has repeatedly criticized Runyan for not meeting with residents in the district enough to let voters know what his views are.

In his campaign statements, Adler has stressed his meetings with constituents and attempted to put himself above the fray, only to end his statements with damning accusations against Runyan.

“Congressman Adler continues to hold weekly, nonpartisan public events in order to speak directly with middle-class families, seniors, veterans and small-business owners,” Geoff Mackler, Adler’s campaign manager, said via e-mail Thursday. “Jon Runyan is a troubled candidate who placed four donkeys on his massive property to save \$20,000 a year in taxes and then missed paying his taxes 33 times. Now, as a candidate, he has shown the same sort of disrespect by refusing to host public events and take questions from local families, seniors and small businesses.”

Runyan’s campaign has similarly adopted the art of the backhanded slap in their political communications.

Chris Russell, a campaign adviser for Runyan, said in an e-mail Thursday that not only is the former football player out campaigning, but that he was “crisscrossing the district non-stop, talking to voters from Cherry Hill to LBI and everywhere in between every day of the week.”

Russell followed that statement with this comment on Adler:

“I find it stunning that the Adler campaign would admit that the taxpayer-funded, scripted town hall meetings he conducts are part of his official campaign strategy,” Russell added. “I bet the voters throughout Ocean County will be thrilled to hear that their tax dollars are funding the congressman’s re-election campaign.”

The money raised and spent so far in this race suggests that the loud accusations won’t end anytime soon.

Through June 30, Adler had \$1,947,122 cash on hand compared to Runyan’s \$471,761. And Runyan’s total receipts of \$654,434 — to Adler’s \$2,456,042 — includes \$300,000 of his own money.

Adler’s political war chest gives him a clear advantage, but Runyan has shown he can raise enough money to sustain a serious campaign.

contrast to someone like John Adler, who has been in elected office since the late 1980s.

“I’d give John Adler the edge right now, but it’s only early August. Things won’t start getting really interesting until the fall,” Schulman said, adding she expects Runyan will be able to significantly reduce the fundraising gap by then. “And he could have a chance if he can really hit the district’s Republican base hard.”

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