Delegate Greg Habeeb on Politics and Media

By: Kathleen Miles

RADFORD, VA –

Delegate Greg Habeeb spoke last week at Radford University answering questions of the students and explaining his thoughts on the impact the media today has on politics today.

Habeeb represents the 8th district in Salem, Virginia. He is a lawyer in Roanoke and has grown up in the area living in Christiansburg throughout his childhood.

His main focus is on the well being of the younger people. “I understand the long term vision,” said Habeeb. Being a younger Delegate, he focuses on issues that will affect young people in the future.

One of the main topics Delegate Habeeb spoke about was the importance of social media in his job. He feels as though people get to know him as a person through social networking, rather than only professionally.

A lot of politicians today have social media pages whether it be for their campaign or for their personal use. Habeeb had a lot to say about this.

He believes that most politicians misunderstand social media. He says others try to manipulate people with their twitter pages and Facebook pages by linking press releases back to their campaign website.

Habeeb uses social media to “expand the conversation.” He believes that by people getting to know him as a person, they will trust him more and be more comfortable to confront him about issues; in fact he boasted about his cell phone being easily found on his Facebook page.

“Winning elections isn’t worth being a different person for…I am who I am, believe what I believe, and have no secrets,” said Habeeb.

An informative topic the delegate spoke about was controversial bills. The General assembly dealt with over 2000 bills this session, however only four of them were talked about in the media.

Habeeb spoke about all of the good bills that were passed in the assembly. There were a lot of good public safety bills that were passed; but because they were passed unanimously and not debated over, they were not covered in the new age.

“If you run a story about controversy in Richmond, talk about positive ones [bills] passed unanimously,” said Habeeb.

Popular bills talked about in the media this year were the ultrasound bill and the voter identification bill. The ultrasound bill had been passed for the past four years. There was one minor change to the bill that involved informed consent and for the mother to see the ultrasound picture and wait 24 hours.

The bill was talked about minorly in the general assembly and stayed the same, yet was covered in the Roanoke Times for fourteen days in a row.

Because of all of the controversy, mostly in the media, the bill was never passed.

Habeeb’s main message about media was clear; he believes in honest reporting about the good, not just the bad. He also believes in projecting yourself in an honest light when it comes to social media, so that the public can decide if they like you or do not.