

Virginia is for Parents?

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Virginia's governor's race offers 2021's biggest prize. Might the outcome of the contest between former Governor Terry McAuliffe, the old Clinton pal, and Republican businessman Glenn Youngkin, portend partisan momentum going into 2022?

In just the last dozen years or so, my adopted commonwealth has mutated politically from "Deep Red to Solid Blue." There is, the FiveThirtyEight polling website explains, "a 13-election winning streak for Democrats in Virginia statewide races since 2012." Though the McAuliffe/Youngkin race is "somewhat likelier to result in a Democratic victory," it "could go either way."

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The biggest flashpoint? McAuliffe's statement at the final debate: "I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach."

I quoted that last week in "Burning Down the House." But in a comment, a reader named Doug argued that I was "taking McAuliffe's comment totally out of context."

Now, McAuliffe's words had been widely reported



in precisely the fashion I had placed them, so I felt comfortable. But I had not listened to the entire exchange, specifically to what McAuliffe was responding. So I listened.

"What we have seen over the course of the last 20 months," Youngkin told the debate audience, "is our school systems refusing to engage with parents." Noting how he had spoken with parents upset about "sexually explicit material," Youngkin charged that McAuliffe "vetoed the bill that would have informed parents" about those materials.

"I believe parents should be in charge of their kids' education," concluded Youngkin.

In response, McAuliffe called Youngkin "clueless" and then famously dissed parents.

"School boards are best positioned," McAuliffe wrote in vetoing that 2016 legislation, "to ensure that *our* students are exposed to those appropriate literary and artistic works that will expand students' horizons and enrich their learning experiences."

Whether their parents like it or not.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.