

Duking It Out in Virginia

Virginia has a long history as a battleground.

In 1781 British General Cornwallis surrendered to a combined force of French and American troops at Yorktown, Virginia, effectively bringing an end to the Revolutionary War.

During the Civil War, Union and Confederate forces fought each other all over the state. You can hardly drive anywhere from Arlington to Richmond to the Shenandoah Valley without bumping into some historic site from that war.

Today a different sort of war is being waged in the Commonwealth, this time over the state's governorship, between Democrat Terry McAuliffe and Republican Glenn Youngkin. The Nov. 2 election will not only determine the political direction Virginia will take in the future, but may also serve as a litmus test for what Americans think of President Joe Biden's administration.

Like several other states, Virginia is politically divided across its geography. Northern Virginia, which boasts some of the wealthiest counties in the United States because of their proximity to Washington, D.C., has many non-native residents and votes heavily Democratic blue. Once you leave that area and head either west or south into the Old Dominion's farmlands and small towns, you are in Republican red territory. In my town of Front Royal, for example, Youngkin signs outnumber those of McAuliffe about 10 to 1.

Like so many of the voters in northern Virginia, McAuliffe is not a native Virginian, but was born and raised in New York. He served as governor of the Commonwealth from 2014-2018—Virginia law forbids consecutive terms for that position—where he pursued a progressive agenda, granting felons the right to vote, for example, and vetoing a bill that

would have prevented sanctuary cities in the state.

In his present campaign, McAuliffe has supported late-term abortions, more gun control measures, and a green environmental program. Among independents and Democrats these positions may not raise many eyebrows, but his take on education, delivered during a televised debate with Youngkin, may well cost him the governorship. "I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach," [he said, and the uproar began.](#)

McAuliffe's words might have gone unnoticed, but for months now schools and school boards in Virginia have garnered enormous attention for what is being taught in the classroom and for some of their policies, such as allowing transgenders to use female restrooms. In Loudon County, which is the epicenter of this firestorm, school administrators tried to [cover up](#) a sexual assault by a transgender female on a 15-year-old girl in the bathroom. Even before that incident, parents had spent months protesting mandatory masking and Critical Race Theory (CRT) being taught in the classroom. McAuliffe's comments dissing parental rights inflamed many of these moms and dads, including a good number of Democrats.

Most recently, Loudon County parents brought their ongoing protests to the National School Boards Association (NSBA) in Alexandria, Virginia. The NSBA had earlier [called parent protests "domestic terrorism"](#) and sought a federal investigation of some parents, a position they later retracted after an explosion of disbelief and protest around the country.

With his campaign faltering—Youngkin recently surged ahead in voter support, going from [46 percent to 53 percent](#) in two weeks—McAuliffe called on Vice President Kamala Harris and President Biden to come to Virginia and speak in support of his campaign. When that tactic failed—these two are disliked among the people I know, even some Democrats—McAuliffe also

tried to accuse Youngkin as a [racist for his opposition to CRT](#). Given that Youngkin's running mate is Winsome Sears, a black, Jamaican-born female and former Marine, that charge seems unlikely to gain any traction.

Keep your eyes on Virginia in the next few days. What transpires here could prove to be interesting indeed.

Virginia stands today at a crossroads. McAuliffe and crew's platform calls for greater government control over the Commonwealth's citizens while their opponents favor fewer restrictions and are opposed to such measures as late-term abortion and vaccine mandates. Moreover, this election is important because it may well serve as a bellwether for the 2022 elections.

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