

STRATEGY MEMO



TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: CLUB FOR GROWTH

DATE: NOVEMBER 3, 2021

SUBJECT: YOUNGKIN'S VICTORY IN VIRGINIA & THE FUTURE OF SCHOOL CHOICE

Republican Glenn Youngkin's victory over Democrat Terry McAuliffe in the Virginia governor's race sent shockwaves across the state and the nation. In a state which Joe Biden carried by a full ten points just a year ago, Youngkin managed to turn back the increasingly blue tide, and it's the growing movement towards parental school choice that was a game-changer.

If Republicans run like this in 2022, they'll win back Congress.

Youngkin made school choice a major priority in the campaign. **In an OpEd, Youngkin wrote, "every student deserves the opportunity to get an education that prepares them for college or a career right out of high school. Parent empowerment around choice is simply paramount."**

Youngkin also promised "the most aggressive school choice program in the history of Virginia," a sharp contrast with McAuliffe, who during his previous term as governor, had vetoed seven parental school choice bills.

It was Loudoun County, Virginia, where Biden picked up 61% of the vote, that became the unlikely Ground Zero for a groundswell of parental action that paved the way for McAuliffe's defeat. Parents there, incensed over a number of radical left-wing policies, began showing up at school board meetings in the hundreds.

School board officials reacted by muzzling speakers, shutting down meetings, and had one angry father arrested after he complained that his daughter had been assaulted in a school restroom. Instead of taking his concerns seriously, officials accused him of domestic terrorism.

The national spotlight on Loudoun County allowed Virginia voters to view sharp distinctions between the two candidates on education issues.

McAuliffe's lead in the polls had already started to evaporate prior to a September 28 debate in which McAuliffe declared, "I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach." After that monumental gaffe, Youngkin drew even in polls and then grabbed the lead during the closing weeks.

A week prior to election day, voters told pollsters that [education was the number one](#) issue on their minds, even coming in ahead of jobs, the economy and Covid. Youngkin captured the education narrative, leveraged McAuliffe's gaffe and rode the issue to victory.

It's also important to note that Youngkin contrasted himself with McAuliffe and state Democrats' tax-and-spend agenda by campaigning on a pro-growth platform, advocating a [package of tax cuts](#) that would save a typical Virginia family of four an estimated \$1,500 in the first year.

SUMMARY

The Virginia results demonstrate that Republicans are on the right side of the parental school choice issue. Democrats, on the other hand, keep digging a deeper hole by positioning themselves as the enemies of parental rights and attempting to impose their liberal ideology on those too young to vote. The focus on education underscores the value in expanding Club for Growth's successful parental school choice programs in the year ahead.