

November Elections and the Big Ugly Shakedown

After the final arguments have been made and nothing more can be said about the candidates and their positions, there's one troubling incident that stands out for me and settles my vote in the November election- the letter the Republican Town Committee sent to the Amity Board of Education this year demanding that its members eliminate anything that smacks of DEI from our classrooms (as decreed by "executive" order) or be reported to the U.S. Department of Education to face the consequences of losing federal funds- taxes that we paid- for our schools.

Shocking as it was that the RTC would leverage our locally derived curriculum with federal, MAGA- centric micromanagement, it was equally upsetting that our children would lose solid educational opportunities reflective of our values if we did not appease the president whose principles cost him the last election in Bethany, Woodbridge and Orange. To make the situation worse, nobody on the RTC or running for office on that ticket repudiated the letter or showed any inclination to publicly declare whether or not they believe that Trump has any business telling us how to educate our own children here in town. The voters have the right to know where they stand. After all, what will the RTC do when Trump intrudes in other matters that have long traditions of being managed locally? March in lockstep again?

Though the author of the letter has departed, reportedly for a position with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the prospect, once unimaginable, of similar future ultimatums remains here with us. I hope that the non-MAGA Republicans can take back their party and reestablish the cordial and respectful working relations with Democrats that Trump and his followers destroyed. Given their dynamic belligerence and take-no-prisoners attitude, this will take courage and possibly sacrifice. But their reward, I think, will be a lot of grateful support from voters who are fed up with MAGA excesses, especially on the local level.

Gene Burshuliak