



Dem Va. Legislators: Parental Rights, Protecting Kids From Porn Are “Stupid,” “Crap”

Two Democratic members of the Virginia state Legislature were recently caught on a hot mic expressing their disdain not only for Republican Governor Glenn Youngkin, but also for parents who insist on their rights to guide and direct the upbringing of their children. In the recordings, the Democratic lawmakers can be heard describing parental rights as “garbage,” “crap,” and “stupid.”

In two separate tweets, the Republican State Leadership Committee (RSLC) posted the audio recordings of state Senator Monty Mason and state Delegate Shelly Simonds during a political social function at Christopher Newport University. In the first of the two recordings, Mason and Simonds can be heard talking about [S.B. 1515](#). The bill — [passed in March](#) — requires pornography websites to verify the age of visitors and allows civil liability if sites do not prevent minors from accessing pornographic content. While even few Democrats publicly objected to the bill’s passage, it appears that the two hard-left state legislators caught on the hot mic did not mind expressing their true feelings in what they imagined was a private conversation. And what they said does not cast them in a favorable light. Others can be heard in the recordings, laughing and agreeing, but they did not make remarks and have not been identified.

In that first recording, Mason is heard referring to the bill, saying Youngkin “slapped that online parental garbage on the pornography bill.”

Governor Youngkin had attempted to expand the bill to include protecting children from other sites — particularly e-commerce sites — that collect users’ personal data. After all, the personal data of minors should be protected from data harvesting. Mason disagrees, saying on the recording, “Youngkin had a bill that said that if you’re under 18, you need to have parental consent to engage in websites or shop online.” He then builds a straw-man argument about how impossible it is to verify age online, asking,



AP Images
Va. Sen. Monty Mason



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on May 22, 2023

“Y’all bought online – bunch of stuff online, right? You ever seen a mechanism that asks how old you are?” As if he can’t imagine that there would be a way to verify age online. He claims that “merchants hate” any process to verify identity or age. This writer would point out that (a) that’s not true, since online merchants want to be protected from fraud just as other businesses do, and (b) *even if it were true*, it’s irrelevant, since protecting the personal data of minors is — and should be — a priority over merchants who routinely gather data and sell it to advertisers, marketers, and political organizations (or worse).

Mason went on to ask how “parental consent” could be achieved, sarcastically asking, “What? Do you send in a letter?” He added, “I mean, it is just stupid.”

And lest it seem that Mason’s remarks are being exaggerated beyond their context, the second recording provides some of that context. In short, both he and Simonds — who can be heard in the second recording — consider parental rights to be “crap” and “stupid.”

In that recording, Mason is pontificating about Youngkin pushing for a parental rights bill that the Democrat-controlled state Senate had already “killed twice,” saying of that bill, “We killed this bill twice, there’s no practical application on it, and before we got off the floor, there was a digital advertisement about the bill already running, but we’re the ones playing politics.” He then says the bill “is all a part of this parental crap that they’re selling.”

Simonds chimes in to ask, “And you guys killed it, right?” To which Mason replies, “Oh, yeah! We killed it again!” At this point, Simonds (who serves in the Republican-controlled state house) says to Mason (a state senator), “This is why we have to keep the senate, because the house is in the hands of the Republicans and they can push through all kinds of stupid things.”

So, bills protecting “parental crap” are “stupid things” and protecting minors from pornography and online data harvesting is “garbage.” This writer has given multiple presentations to church groups and parents to teach them about how to protect their children online. In my research for those presentations, I have dug into the statistics of online pornography. The average age for a person to see hardcore pornography is 12, with between 15 and 20 percent seeing it as young as 10. Almost zero reach the ripe old age of 18 having never seen it.

Perhaps it comes as no surprise that the party that pushes the sexual grooming of children in schools would push back against attempts to protect children from online porn and data harvesting. But to hear two of them discussing their disdain of parental rights and the importance of protecting children in an unscripted, unguarded conversation is still shocking — not because it actually discloses anything we did not already know, but because it is refreshing to hear them in their own words and to see them without their masks.



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