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Virginia Democrats Propose Banning Criticism of Government Officials

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Virginia's hard-left Democrats are so terrified of the commonwealth's conservatives, moderates, and sane liberals they want to criminalize criticism of anti-gun, pro-infanticide Governor Ralph Northam and other top officials.



The proposal to stamp out free speech is buried in [a package of amendments](#) to the state code that at first glance seems innocent enough, and would severely punish threats of death and physical harm to the governor, and, again, other state officials.

But the Democrats think more is required to protect themselves from the barrage of criticism they will surely get as they administer the state with a majority in the General Assembly and a governor for the [first time in two decades](#).

Thus will they punish critics who they deem to be "harassing" them with "obscene" speech.

Shut Up and Do What You're Told

The proposed "harassment by computer" law would punish those who exercise their constitutional right to protest the government.

[It reads:](#)

If any person, with the intent to coerce, intimidate, or harass any person, shall use a computer or computer network to communicate obscene, vulgar, profane, lewd, lascivious, or indecent language, or make any suggestion or proposal of an obscene nature, or threaten any illegal or immoral act, he is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. A violation of this section may be prosecuted in the jurisdiction in which the communication was made or received or in the City of Richmond if the person subjected to the act is one of the following officials or employees of the Commonwealth: the Governor, Governor-elect, Lieutenant Governor, Lieutenant Governor-elect, Attorney General, or Attorney General-elect, a member or employee of the General Assembly, a justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia, or a judge of the Court of Appeals of Virginia.

The question is who decides what constitutes using a computer to "coerce, intimidate, or harass any person," or what constitutes "vulgar, profane, lewd, lascivious, or indecent language." And, again, one has to wonder what the Democrats would consider beyond the pale given their affinity for such language.

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Anyway, the law will likely get a First Amendment challenge from either the leftist American Civil



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Liberties Union or a conservative legal outfit.

And a court will likely strike it down the first time someone lands in hot water for tweeting remarks about the [rape allegations against Lieutenant Governor Justin Fairfax](#), or cracks wise on Facebook about Northam's youthful shenanigans in blackface, or calls him an accomplice in mass murder because he zealously [supports abortion-on-demand through birth](#), and after that, infanticide.

Why the Law?

The RedState website succinctly explained why the Democrats want to ban free speech.

"Virginia's current leadership wants to be able to pass wildly unpopular, unconstitutional laws without getting any push back," [RedState writer Bonchie explained](#). "They don't want people to organize online campaigns against them or express their displeasure in a way that may animate others to follow suit. This law would be used to harass anyone who steps out of line and it's ironic that it's spun as an anti-harassment law protecting high ranking state officials."

Among those laws are the [gun-control measures](#) that inspired thousands of the state's heavily armed gun owners to [descend upon the capitol](#) in Richmond, and before that, a vast majority of the state's counties [to declare themselves](#) Second Amendment sanctuaries where the new unconstitutional gun laws will not be enforced.

The most dangerous and frightening of those laws is the totalitarian ["red-flag" proposal](#) that would allow the capricious seizure of guns from those deemed to be dangerous.

That law "creates a procedure by which any attorney for the Commonwealth or any law-enforcement officer may apply to a general district court, circuit court, or juvenile and domestic relations district court judge or magistrate for an emergency substantial risk order to prohibit a person who poses a substantial risk of injury to himself or others from purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm."

Within 14 days, a court must convene a hearing to determine whether a substantial risk order should be issued that could disarm the individual for six months. Giving a gun to a disarmed person is a felony, and "the bill creates a computerized substantial risk order registry for the entry of orders issued pursuant to provisions in the bill."

The red-flag confiscation bill and the other anti-gun laws will likely face court challenges.

Photo: AP Images

R. Cort Kirkwood is a long-time contributor to The New American and a former newspaper editor.



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