



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on April 5, 2019

## Virginia's Democratic Troika Still In Power Two Months After Scandals

Just about two months ago, Virginia Lieutenant Governor Justin Fairfax lawyered up after two women accused him of rape and forced oral sex.

Those accusations surfaced just after the blackface controversies darkenend the political futures of Governor Ralph Northam and Attorney General Mark Herring, both of whom admitted they once were partial to the [Al Jolson look](#).



Virginia's top three executives seemed to be doomed.

But nothing happened. The three men refused to resign. And all seems to be forgotten — and forgiven.

### Legislative Sessions Ends, Jobs Appear Safe

As [National Public Radio reported](#), the 2019 legislative session in Richmond ends “less than two months removed from a cascade of scandals involving Virginia's top three elected officials, which captured the nation's attention for weeks.”

Yet “all three Democrats remain in office despite continued, though less intense, calls for their resignations.”

But 140 seats in the General Assembly are up for reelection in November, [NPR noted](#). That means “Democrats will try to move beyond the embarrassment that consumed the Capitol and focus on trying to take back one or both legislative chambers,” and the GOP, which holds a slim edge in both houses of the Assembly, “will likely remind voters repeatedly that it was the Democratic leadership in the state that cast the bright spotlight onto Virginia.”

Fairfax's escaping what anyone would have thought a sure #MeToo career-ending scandal is nothing short of a miracle given the accusations.

Vanessa Tyson, a professor at Stanford, surfaced first. [She accused Fairfax](#) of forcing her to perform oral sex in a hotel room in Boston in 2004 during the Democratic National Convention that nominated John Kerry to run for president.

[Tyson hired](#) the same lawyer who peddled Christine Blasey Ford's unproven sex-assault accusation against U.S. Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh. [Fairfax retained](#) Kavanaugh's attorney.

Then came Meredith Watson. [She said](#) Fairfax raped her in 2000, when they were students at Duke University.

The women told their stories to Gayle King of *CBS This Morning* two days before the General Assembly reconvened for its one-day session to consider the governor's vetoes.

[Tyson recounted](#) a harrowing tale of “choking and gagging” as Fairfax forced her to perform oral sex, and said it “was almost as if I was dumbstruck.”



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[Watson detailed](#) what she says was a rape. "If you have to hold someone down," she told King, "it's not consensual."

Fairfax vehemently denied the allegations again on Wednesday, speaking to a roomful of reporters, the [Richmond Times-Dispatch reported](#).

"I have heard Dr. Tyson say that I held her neck and physically forced her to engage in sexual contact," Fairfax told the reporters. "What she alleges never happened."

As for Watson, he said, "I did not rape or sexually assault Meredith Watson. I did not lock the door, I did not turn out the lights, I did not hold her down or use any physical force whatsoever. We were both willing participants."

Fairfax noted that he passed a polygraph test.

Republicans were still calling for an investigation and hearings, the newspaper reported, when the Assembly adjourned on Wednesday after its one-day session to mull the governor's vetoes.

Delegate Rob Bell wanted to reconvene the House Courts of Justice Committee at the end of the day, but the suggestion went nowhere, the [newspaper reported](#): "Democrats did not accept the offer, and the chamber was quiet after Bell spoke."

You can bet it was.

Like Bell, Delegate Todd Gilbert said the women deserve a hearing, and noted that "polygraph tests are inadmissible in court for a reason.... Serial killers routinely pass polygraphs."

[NPR recounted](#) the final question at Fairfax's chat with the media: "At what point do you just resign?"

## **Northam's Blackface**

Never, apparently, is the answer to that question, but at least Fairfax is innocent until proven guilty.

[Northam is guilty](#). He admitted appearing in blackface in a photograph from his medical school yearbook, then recanted, and finally confessed that he blackened his face as a participant in a Michael Jackson dance contest. [Herring also admitted](#) donning blackface, but the initial hysteria that accompanied the the revelations quickly died.

The Left wasn't much interested in watching its control of the three top state offices in Virginia go vacant, nor was Northam's resignation a possibility after the Fairfax accusations surfaced. The Democrats could not permit a man accused of rape and forcible oral sex to become the governor.

And so two months after it appeared the Democrats in Virginia were on the verge of collapse, all three men remain in power.

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