



## Letters to the Editor: In Rebuttal to Last Week's Letter to the Editor About Me

September 6, 2021

Editor,

In response to Eric Crusius's Aug. 26 letter about me, it's sad to see our Little City abandon "Falls Church Nice" and embrace smears by innuendo. I for one will not be attacking any of the other school board candidates, but instead am running a positive campaign focused on accountability, responsiveness, and transparency. The enthusiastic reaction I've already gotten suggests that my platform is hardly "outside of the mainstream."

Oddly, Mr. Crusius spends most of his letter asking about articles written by others at the Cato Institute — one of them when I was in high school. They aren't even from my department (constitutional studies) and cover topics that fall outside the school board's purview. Like any think tank staffer, I'm broadly sympathetic to my colleagues' work, but I don't support (nor even read) everything they write.

Indeed, I would've expected a big-firm lawyer to have spent his time researching the letter to which he replies. But there Mr. Crusius's diligent archival work misfires, because the sole example he raises involves a case where I defend teachers' First Amendment rights. If the charge is that I'm overzealous in supporting teachers, I'm guilty — and no, I won't be stepping away from such advocacy if elected.

Moreover, if it's fair to hold me responsible for all Cato work, review our extensive record fighting the abuses of the criminal-justice system and supporting marriage equality. That's work I've actually done — and I'm proud to have contributed to these causes long before they were championed by "mainstream" politicians.

On masking, I wish Governor Northam hadn't imposed a statewide mandate — just like I wish Governor DeSantis hadn't blocked masks statewide, because this is best left to local and parental control.

I'm concerned about developmental risks, especially for young and special-needs children, which is why European countries have left kids unmasked. Regardless, the school board can't overturn the governor's order.

Finally, I'm delighted that opposite Mr. Crusius's letter, the board chair and vice chair adopted my idea of holding regular "office hours." Three cheers for parents demanding more from elected leaders!

Ilya Shapiro

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