



July 8, 2021

Dr. James E. Ryan
President
University of Virginia
Post Office Box 400224
Charlottesville, VA 22904

Dear Dr. Ryan:

As a retired 30-year Air Force senior officer and eight-year member of the Virginia General Assembly, I understand the commitment that public servants make to serving with integrity, dignity, respect, and honor in their taxpayer-funded roles.

The University of Virginia (UVa) holds these values in high esteem as well and enshrines them in a "Professional Conduct and Ethics" code, which has been approved by the UVa Board of Visitors.

However, not all faculty and staff at UVa seem to share our regard for these values.

It recently came to my attention that Dr. Larry J. Sabato, founder and director of UVa's Center for Politics, has been engaging in behavior that appears to violate UVa's Mission Statement, the Center for Politics Mission Statement, and UVa's Code of Ethics for Faculty and Staff.

Dr. Sabato appears to be the author of a number of tweets that are in direct violation of the following:

- UVa's Mission Statement promoting a "learning environment marked by the free and collegial exchange of ideas," and "unwavering support of a collaborative, diverse community bound together by...values of honor, integrity, trust, and respect;"
- UVa Center for Politics Mission Statement that states, "Everything we do must fulfill our goal of instilling citizens with an appreciation for the core values of American freedom, justice, equality, civility, and service;" and
- UVa's Code of Ethics for Faculty and Staff that states, "[w]e promote an inclusive and welcome community that respects...opinions of all people," "[w]e treat every individual with kindness, dignity, and respect, regardless of position or status," "[w]e collaborate with others in a positive and respectful manner," and "[w]e act and communicate...with integrity, upholding the University's values at all times."

An example of the tweets in question are as follows:

- **July 7, 2021:** I wonder if @GlennYoungkin is still “honored” to have received Trump’s enthusiastic endorsement for VA Governor?
- **November 29, 2020:** “Extreme tax fraud [referring to President Donald J. Trump] deserves a firing squad.”
- **December 2, 2020:** Cuckoo, cuckoo! Does the plush presidential suite at Walter Reed offer psychiatric treatments? Maybe time to helicopter Trump over again.
- **June 3, 2021:** Of course it’s true. Trump, who governed on the edge of insanity for four long years, has gone over the edge. Yet millions of people and 90%+ of GOP members of Congress, still genuflect before this false god.
- **June 26, 2021:** Trump as usual ends with the song “YMCA”, [sic] a completely inappropriate song for him even during Pride Month. Try “Highway to Hell”. [sic] That fits. #OhioRally #revenge tour
- **December 4, 2020:** I’m watching President-elect @JoeBiden’s press conference. It’s so refreshingly NORMAL. After 4 years of the bizarre and the disturbing, we really are going to have a return to normalcy.
- **September 29, 2020:** CANCEL THE REMAINING PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES. It is impossible to have an orderly, productive exchange with Donald Trump. Stop pretending otherwise. #Debate2020
- **September 27, 2020:** It is a disgrace that Trump became the first major-party presidential candidate since the 1970s to avoid releasing his tax returns. This critical information should have been available for voters to consider in 2016. Never again! #TrumpTaxReturns

According to the Center for Politics website, Dr. Sabato founded the Center in 1998 in order “to overcome the notion that politics thwarts the proper function of government.” Dr. Sabato earns a salary of nearly \$450,000 to run the non-profit, non-partisan organization, yet his behavior and department—including a tweet yesterday that repeats Democratic talking points for a gubernatorial race in the Commonwealth where UVa resides—are anything but non-partisan. A reasonable taxpaying citizen can readily conclude that Dr. Sabato is demonstrating the rankest form of bitter partisanship.

In order to have faith in our institutions, it is essential that Virginians hold accountable those public employees and officials who violate institutional values, codes of conduct, and other guidelines of professional behavior.

The University of Virginia has long set a commitment to “the highest standards of ethics, integrity, and lawful conduct by promoting adherence to all applicable laws, regulations, and policies.”

In that spirit, we ask that the University of Virginia initiate an investigation without delay into Dr. Sabato’s actions as enumerated above and elsewhere, and that University authorities make a determination as to whether Dr. Sabato’s public display of bitter partisanship violates applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

Sincerely,



Rich Anderson
Chairman, Republican Party of Virginia