The Rhetorical Challenge Facing Democrats

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The “Me Too” and “Black Lives Matter” movements have become a central theme of Democrat rhetoric and status quo resistance efforts in the past few years. Don’t get me wrong. This indeed is a good thing, drawing long overdue attention to the important issues of racism and sexual misconduct.
As we now are witnessing, however, these concerns have not been without political costs. With the increasing number of politicians being exposed for their racist and sexually inappropriate words and behavior (three cases in Virginia in just a few days: Gov. Ralph Northam, Attorney General Mark Herring and Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax), Democrats are placed in a precarious rhetorical position. The challenge is how to recruit candidates and win political races, which is necessary to promote these worthy causes, while simultaneously avoiding moral hypocrisy.

It is debatable about how far back we should go in examining the personal lives of candidates—and this needs thoughtful discussion. Nevertheless, one thing is clear to me: for both Democrat and Republican politicians, morality and ethical principles must be placed above concerns for winning and losing.

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