



Dear Leaders.

We at DPVA share your dismay and outrage by the discriminatory, bigoted and offensive question that the WJLA Anchor, Mr. Lucas, asked Delegate Rasoul. We are here to work with you and for you. But in order to do that, we need to make sure you are aware of the facts.

I immediately condemned the question under DPVA Chair twitter account. When I speak as DPVA Chair, I am speaking for DPVA.

When the offensive question was asked, we immediately rushed to confront the WJLA Team face to face.

I want to be clear that no one at DPVA had any input on the questions or saw them beforehand. Nor do you want us to have input or screen the questions because that creates an extreme liability (recall the DNC fiasco in 2016). However, we spent time with the WJLA Team and representatives from the campaigns working through and agreeing to the debate rules. We trusted them to follow the guidelines for a substantive and informative debate.

The rules stated the following:

“Questions will be focused on issues, topics, and policies that could come before the Office of the LT. Governor and/or of keen interest in the Commonwealth of Virginia.”

Every campaign and the WJLA Team agreed to this. And then WJLA broke the rules, and our trust. We immediately demanded that they apologize.

If we had known this was their intention, we would have cancelled the debate.

I spoke with Delegate Rasoul after the occurrence and the DPVA Team met with Delegate Rasoul’s campaign manager. We were sickened by what happened and it is completely unfair and inaccurate to say that we don’t have a whiff of concern.

After the debate, numerous calls were exchanged between DPVA staff and the

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news team. Additionally, I had a very strong conversation with the News Director, relaying that they had broken our trust and I did not see how we could work with again.

Your outrage is shared by us and should be directed at those who were the problem, WJLA and the anchor, not those who are your allies in this. Our relationship with the Muslim community has been very strong over the years. I received calls from Chairman Babur Lateef and Mirza Baig who are longtime supporters of the Democratic Party. I immediately apprised them of the situation and reassured them of our commitment to the Muslim community. They continue to stand by the Virginia Democratic Party and the strong work we have done as well as reaffirming their commitment to work together for a better Virginia.

We understand how being given wrong information about our involvement you decided to send this letter. But now, knowing the facts and how supportive we are, we look forward to working together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan R. Swecker". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sincerely  
Susan Swecker  
Chairwoman, Democratic Party of Virginia