

Nicole Merlene

For
State Senate



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NORTHERN VIRGINIA DEMOCRATS HORRIFIED AFTER VIRGINIA STATE SENATOR BARBARA FAVOLA LEVELS WILDLY SEXIST SMEAR. MERLENE DEMANDS RESPECT FOR WOMEN IN RESPONSE TO FAVOLA'S MISOGNISTIC REMARKS.

With momentum continuing to grow for 31st state Senate challenger, Nicole Merlene, incumbent Senator Barbara Favola resorts to divisive rhetoric.

(Arlington, VA) - Last night at the Arlington County Democratic Party debate for 31st state Senate district candidates, incumbent state Senator Barbara Favola used her closing remarks to level a wildly sexist and deeply offensive smear at her opponent. Referring to Nicole Merlene, a 26-year-old first time candidate for public office, Favola remarks: ***"I know there's a new flavor that you can look at, maybe think about, maybe it's tantalizing."***

After sexually objectifying her opponent in front of a packed audience and thousands more online, Favola then claimed to champion the #MeToo movement.

In response to being referred to as a "tantalizing" "new flavor that you can look at", Nicole Merlene has issued the following statement:

"It's a shame a sitting female lawmaker would take to using sexist dog-whistling comments. I, and women across the Commonwealth, are all too used to these types of comments. Moments such as this offer a stark reminder of how far our society must go in the way of treating women, especially young women, with the respect we deserve as powerful and intelligent individuals – not exploitable objects of sexual desire. We as women and as leaders should not have to put up with this any longer. Richmond culture needs a major change and I look forward to being that change. For now, I will continue to focus on the issues that got me into this race to begin with; ethics and campaign finance reform, transportation, infrastructure, affordable housing, and protecting our environment."

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Background:

Nicole Merlene is a life-long resident of Arlington County, Virginia. A graduate of Arlington Public Schools and the University of Delaware, she serves as an economic development policy professional focusing on investments in rural and underemployed areas. Merlene has quickly become one of the most civically engaged millennials in the region. She has served on the boards of the Arlington County Civic Federation, North Rosslyn Civic Association, the Arlington Young Democrats, and the Arlington Democrats Steering Committee. Nicole also sits on the Arlington Economic Development Commission, serves as the Civic Liaison to the Rosslyn Business Improvement District, and has been a volunteer for numerous nonprofits in the region. To date, the Merlene for state Senate campaign has knocked over 10,000 doors, contacted over 40,000 voters at public transportation stations and events, and continues to grow a massive grassroots support network. The Democratic Primary Election will be held on June 11, 2019. If elected in November, Merlene would be the youngest women state senator in the country and in Virginia history at the age of 27.