

The Honorable Glen Youngkin, Governor of Virginia  
State Capitol  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor Youngkin,

My name is David Cariens. I am resigning from the *Governor's Commission to Investigate the May 31 2019 Virginia Beach Mass Shooting* effective June 29, 2023.

I was nominated by Delegate Convirs-Fowler and appointed by your predecessor. I served as a commissioner at the pleasure of your office. It is therefore appropriate for me to address my concerns and resignation to you.

The people of Virginia, particularly all those impacted by gun violence, expected a thorough investigation of the Virginia Beach massacre. They did not get it.

The citizens of Virginia Beach, and the Commonwealth of Virginia, believed in the honesty, integrity, and character of everyone appointed to the Commission. They trusted us. Unfortunately, in some cases, that trust was misplaced.

I, and all Commission members, had the duty and responsibility to carry out an investigation and let the evidence and facts dictate the Commission's investigative conclusions. That is what we were sworn to do.

The state legislature made their desire for an investigation clear when they established the Commission. Politicians on both sides of the aisle came together behind the legal English imperative, "shall investigate."

As late as early 2023, more than two years since the Commission's inception, some commissioners were arguing to produce a "report" not an "investigative findings." Apparently, they did not read the legislation.

There were numerous obstacles to our work—I detail those in my attached *Minority Investigative Findings*. We owe everyone who mourns the loss of a spouse, sister, brother, coworker, or friend to conduct the investigation. To do less is a disgrace. I cannot be part of a Commission that engages in

duplicity, half-truths, and excuses for the city and its elected officials and employees.

I am deeply disappointed that some Commission members appear to have put their careers ahead of finding the truth. I am upset that regularly only a quarter of the Commission members did what the chairman asked.

The behavior of some on the Commission was juvenile. When they had no answers for questions raised, or apparently wanted to protect the City of Virginia Beach, they engaged in inuendoes discrediting the objectivity of other Commission members. The chairman did nothing to stop this.

I agree fully with a former Commission member who wrote in her resignation letter: "I have concerns that the Commission's work is being obstructed from within, either deliberately or due to negligence." I would add my concern that our work was obstructed by what appears to the city's attempts to control and possibly neutralize the Commission.

I have attached an *Investigative Findings* I have written as a result of my, and others, work on the Commission. Those *Findings* spell out my concerns in detail.

It has been a privilege to serve on this Commission and the Commonwealth of Virginia. If you, or anyone, have any questions please contact me.

Sincerely,

David Cariens

Cc: The Honorable Jason Miyares, Attorney General of Virginia  
Delegate Kelly Convirs-Fowler, Virginia State Legislature  
Ryant Washington, Chairman, *The Commission to Investigate the May 31, 2019 Virginia Beach Mass Shooting*