



Reasoning with Ethics

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A Project of The School for Ethical Education | www.ethicsed.org

“Ethics in action creates character.”

Use this blog to:

1. Lead class discussions in social studies, civics, ethics or advisory classes.
2. Teach students skills to analyze cases with core values.
3. Recognize skills in support of the four components of ethical functioning.

[Visit the online Ethics Blog.](#)

Legal versus Ethical

The corruption scandal and legal arguments associated with estimated \$175,000 in gifts given to past Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell and his wife Maureen were brought back to public attention with a recent CBS 60 Minutes story.

McDonnell had been convicted in earlier trials but

pushed his legal appeals all the way to the US Supreme Court, where in June 2016, his guilty verdict was overturned in a unanimous verdict.



The Court expressed its dismay at what was labeled “tawdry tales”, but rebuked the lower courts and prosecutors for overreaching on Virginia State law that set no limit on the gifts a politician could receive. The Federal prosecutor’s claim and jury conviction of McDonnell in 2014 of corruption of “honest services” was thus vacated. The Supreme Court pointed out the need for the State of Virginia to write new laws, if it was believed that the gifts to the McDonnells were inappropriate.

Student responses are sought with the suggestion they imagine themselves as Virginia legislators. Does the current law allowing unlimited gifting to politicians supported by reasonable ethical core values? If so, what values support the law? If not, what core ethical values are violated and what new law might address the problem?

Regarding the questions in this case, SEE welcomes students to post their response on our website at http://bit.ly/Ethics_Case where more information is available for *Reasoning with Ethics*. A video link for this archived case is available at-- <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/why-bob-mcdonnell-talked>

Contact information

The School for Ethical Education is a not for profit teaching agency in Milford, CT with the mission to advance strategies of placing ethics in action to create character. As a non-sectarian 501(C)3, SEE is supported by fees for service, grants and donations. For more information visit our website at www.ethicsed.org
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