

KNOW THE POSITIONS OF THE Candidates for Attorney General



In keeping with its mission, the Virginia Catholic Conference (vacatholic.org) aims to educate and inform Catholics about a wide range of issues. The information listed here was compiled as of September 16, 2021, from policies, public statements, official and campaign websites and other resources to help voters inform their consciences before heading to the voting booth. The issues do not represent a complete list of issues that may be of importance to Catholics. The Conference neither supports nor opposes any candidate for public office.

*“Human dignity is respected and the common good is fostered only if **human rights are protected and basic responsibilities** are met. Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible, and a right to access those things required for human decency – food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing, freedom of religion and family life.”*
– Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, No. 49, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2019.

Mark Herring
Democrat



ABORTION

Herring tweeted, “You can always count on me to stand up and fight to protect a woman’s right to an abortion - because I believe her body, her choice.”

In June 2021, Herring submitted testimony in support of the Women’s Health Protection Act, which would invalidate state laws banning abortion at any stage of pregnancy. He stated that this legislation “would protect the constitutional right to access an abortion.”

Herring filed briefs in the U.S. Supreme Court in support of the abortion providers in *Whole Women’s Health v. Hellerstedt* and *June Medical Services v. Gee*. He filed a Circuit Court brief in support of the abortion providers in *Planned Parenthood South Atlantic v. Wilson*.

CONSCIENCE RIGHTS

In 2012, as a member of the Virginia Senate, Herring voted against legislation that established Virginia’s conscience law for private child-placing agencies. The conscience law provides that an agency shall not be required to participate in a foster care or adoption placement “when the proposed placement would violate the agency’s written religious or moral convictions or policies.”

ECONOMY

According to Herring’s website, “In an increasingly global economy, Attorney General Herring is working to create a Commonwealth where businesses, entrepreneurs, and talented workers from around the world feel welcome to start, grow, or work at a Virginia business.”

In 2010 Herring introduced and voted for legislation to curtail predatory lending, and introduced and voted for legislation to create a capital gains tax exemption (enacted).

Jason Miyares
Republican



ABORTION

In 2020, as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, Miyares voted against a bill that allowed non-doctors to perform first trimester abortions, removed most sections of the informed consent law for women considering abortions, and removed regulations for abortion facilities.

In 2021 Miyares voted against a bill that expanded abortion coverage on Virginia’s health exchange.

In 2016 and 2017 Miyares voted for legislation that would have prohibited the Virginia Department of Health from contracting with or making grants to any entity that performs non-federally qualified abortions.

CONSCIENCE RIGHTS

In 2021 Miyares voted to preserve Virginia’s conscience law for private child-placing agencies. The conscience law provides that an agency shall not be required to participate in a foster care or adoption placement “when the proposed placement would violate the agency’s written religious or moral convictions or policies.”

In 2016 and 2017 Miyares voted for legislation to provide that no clergy or religious organization would be subject to any penalty, civil liability or other action by the state “solely on account of ... belief, speech, or action in accordance with a sincerely held religious belief or moral conviction that marriage is or should be recognized as the union of one man and one woman.”

ECONOMY

Miyares’ website states, “Small businesses and entrepreneurs are struggling under high taxation, litigation and regulation coming out of Richmond. Jason ... is a passionate believer in a ‘bottom-up’ economy that doesn’t favor big corporations but instead supports the policies that allow small business owners to grow, thrive and most importantly, hire.”

In 2017 and 2018 Miyares introduced and voted for legislation to create a property tax exemption for the spouses of disabled veterans. In 2018 he introduced tax relief legislation for disabled veterans and their spouses. In 2020 he voted against legislation to increase the minimum wage.

The issues listed here represent a snapshot of the candidates’ positions as of September 16, 2021.

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Mark Herring
Democrat

EDUCATION

In 2012 Herring voted against legislation that established the Education Improvement Scholarships Tax Credits program, which provides a tax credit for donations that fund scholarships for income-eligible students to attend nonpublic K-12 schools.

ENVIRONMENT

In a 2018 interview Herring stated, “What I’ve done is used the visibility of the office to speak out about the dangers of climate change, because it is real, it is happening, and we need to do everything we can in Virginia to move to a more clean energy future. ... [W]e should be investing more in clean energy.”

According to Herring’s website, he “has fought for clean air and water, open spaces, clean energy, and to hold polluters accountable.” Herring’s website also cites “Virginia’s unique vulnerability to climate change and sea-level rise.”

HEALTHCARE

In a Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association podcast, Herring stated that “access to quality affordable healthcare is essential for Virginians,” that he “went to the Supreme Court twice” to protect the Affordable Care Act, and that he would “continue to do everything I can to expand access, to protect people’s access to healthcare.”

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In 2017 “Herring signed a memorandum of understanding creating the Hampton Roads Human Trafficking Task Force, a partnership involving his office, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Attorney’s Office, Virginia State Police and Hampton Roads law enforcement agencies, and Samaritan House.” In 2020 Herring “secured \$525,000 in federal grant funding to continue the work of the [HRHTTF] for at least three more years and allow the Task Force to expand into new localities.”

In August 2021 Herring posted, “Human trafficking robs its victims of their humanity and oftentimes preys on vulnerable individuals. My office is working to get more funding to expand our human trafficking initiatives across our Commonwealth because we have to do more.”

Jason Miyares
Republican

EDUCATION

In 2019 Miyares voted for a bill that expanded the Education Improvement Scholarships Tax Credits program to include income-eligible pre-K students.

In 2019 Miyares voted for a bill that would have required prior written consent of a student’s parent in order for the student to participate in a public school’s “family life education program.”

ENVIRONMENT

According to notes from a March 29, 2019 meeting of the 2040 Vision to Action Community Coalition, “Delegate Miyares’ message to other state representatives who do not believe flooding is or should be a state issue, is that flooding is a **state issue**. [His] hope is ... [to] make the state of Virginia an official non-federal sponsor of flooding mitigation just like Louisiana became one after Hurricane Katrina.” Miyares believes that “we need to be proactive and not wait for something to happen especially since we are statistically due for another category 3 catastrophic flooding or hurricane event.”

HEALTHCARE

In a Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association podcast, Miyares stated, “I’m a big believer in patient empowerment,” which “gives you more options controlled by you.” Miyares called Medicaid fraud a “huge, huge problem” because it results in less money going to “protect Virginia’s most vulnerable citizens.” Miyares said he would “bring a prosecutor’s mindset” to the Medicaid fraud unit and would make that “one of my top priorities.”

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Miyares has introduced or supported bills to stiffen penalties, expand training and enforcement efforts, provide judicial relief and safe haven for victims, and create greater public awareness to prosecute and convict traffickers.

In a recent interview Miyares stated, “I am determined to make sure Virginia is leading the fight against Human Trafficking. I was recognized by the Safe House Project for my work combatting this crime in the House of Delegates, and as Attorney General I will work with survivors, experts and activists to raise awareness and teach Virginians how we can prevent and eventually eradicate this horrible crime.”