

KNOW THE POSITIONS OF THE Candidates for Lieutenant Governor



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.

Hala Ayala Democrat



ABORTION

Ayala’s plan states that “now more than ever before, we must ensure that the right to safe, legal abortion is enshrined in our Virginia Constitution.” Her plan also refers to crisis pregnancy centers as “fake clinics” that “outnumber abortion clinics in Virginia by 4 to 1.”

In 2020, as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, Ayala voted for 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 Ayala co-patroned and voted for a bill that expanded abortion coverage on Virginia’s health exchange.

CONSCIENCE RIGHTS

In 2021 Ayala co-patroned and voted for a bill to eliminate 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

Ayala posted, “All of Virginia’s workers deserve \$15/hr, paid family and medical leave, and access to affordable health care.” According to her website, Ayala “patroned the [2021] paid family and medical legislation, which would provide every Virginian worker with 12 weeks of paid leave for major events such as an adoption or childbirth.” Her website adds, “The cost of living is rising here in Virginia, and our minimum wage needs to keep up. Furthermore, our Commonwealth needs to invest in affordable housing and combat the economic factors that price families out of neighborhoods they’ve lived in for generations.”

In 2021 Ayala co-patroned and voted for legislation expanding eligibility for childcare subsidies.

Winsome Sears Republican



ABORTION

Sears said in an interview, “When did it become the wrong thing for us to support the babies in the womb?”

In 2002, as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, Sears co-patroned and voted for a bill to require a physician to obtain parental consent prior to performing an abortion on a minor. She also co-patroned and voted for a bill to void any provision in a surrogacy contract that would require or encourage the surrogate mother to have an abortion under any circumstance.

CONSCIENCE RIGHTS

In 2002 Sears co-patroned and voted for a bill to include, within Virginia’s healthcare conscience clause, an exemption stating that no healthcare professional who objects to abortion “on personal, ethical, moral or religious grounds” would be required to dispense any medication “for the purpose of performing an abortion.”

ECONOMY

According to her website, Sears will support policies that “keep taxes low, reduce regulations ... and promote small businesses” and that “reduce the cost of living for Virginians.” Her plan includes enacting a 12-month small business tax holiday; cutting unnecessary regulations by 25 percent; eliminating Virginia’s grocery tax and suspending the recent gas tax hike for 12 months; providing a one-time tax rebate of \$600 for joint filers and \$300 for individuals; requiring voter approval for property tax increases; and doubling the standard deduction.

In 2002 Sears patroned and voted for legislation to ensure access to health insurance for children through child support agreements.

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

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Hala Ayala
Democrat

EDUCATION

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

In 2019 Ayala voted against 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 her website, Ayala "will work to ensure our Commonwealth can transition to clean energy like solar and wind, protect communities who are impacted by flooding, and make sure every Virginian has access to clean air and clean drinking water."

HEALTHCARE

Ayala's website lists ways she "will expand access to affordable healthcare for all," including "strengthen our Medicaid program by creating a statewide Medicaid 'buy-in' option on the exchange" and "provide financial support for families struggling with healthcare premiums."

In a Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association podcast, Ayala cited affordability, transparency, mental healthcare, equity and modernization as ways she would advance the healthcare system in Virginia.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In 2019 Ayala voted for legislation to raise awareness of human trafficking.

In 2021 Ayala voted for legislation to provide judicial remedies to human trafficking victims.

Winsome Sears
Republican

EDUCATION

According to her website, Sears will "empower parents with choices" and supports "promoting choice by creating more opportunities, especially in failing school districts."

ENVIRONMENT

Sears served as a Virginia Co-Chair of "Explore Offshore", a coalition which supports increased access to offshore U.S. oil and natural gas resources. In support of this coalition, she stated that "responsible offshore oil and natural gas development can make our nation more secure, while growing our economy here in the Commonwealth."

HEALTHCARE

As a congressional candidate in 2004, Sears stated, "Every citizen should have access to quality and affordable healthcare. We need to ensure that those without private healthcare have access to Medicaid and Medicare. Public healthcare must be affordable, convenient, and meet the needs. If we minimize waste, fraud, and abuse, then there would be more money for Medicaid and Medicare."

In a Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association podcast, Sears stated, "What we need to do is to increase competition across state lines so that we can have access to the more affordable policies that come when there is competition."

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In an August 2021 interview Sears said: "I was talking to another organization in VA Beach, where there is a high level of sex trafficking and I found two teenagers who they rescued from the system. There were no beds available for them, so they had to go to Montana to find a bed. That's unacceptable!"

As a congressional candidate in 2004, Sears said: "We must protect our children by guarding them from criminals, ensuring their safety while in school, and defending them from predators. ... While a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, I sponsored legislation to ... keep our children's school records confidential and away from the prying eyes of criminals."