



Hala's Plan to Protect Black Mothers and to End Racial Disparities in Healthcare Outcomes

We are facing a grave crisis of Black maternal mortality in our country and in our Commonwealth. The ongoing COVID-19 crisis has only compressed the deep racial disparities in our healthcare system that existed before the pandemic. Too often Black women are not heard when they speak with their doctor about concerns or pre-existing conditions, and for that reason, it is no surprise that Black women are twice as likely to suffer from life-threatening pregnancy complications, are 4 times as likely to die during birth, and are 9 times more likely to lose a pregnancy. High rates of Black maternal mortality span every income and education level, and the CDC has said that up to 60% of these deaths are preventable. The status quo is unacceptable.

The fight to end racial disparities for our Black mothers and infants is personal to Hala. While giving birth to her son, Hala suffered from complications and almost died. As Lieutenant Governor, Hala will build on Governor Northam's work to lower Virginia's maternal mortality rates and will bring Virginia into the top 10 states with the lowest maternal mortality rate.

Hala's Record:

As Delegate, Hala fought to tackle the Black maternal mortality crisis in our Commonwealth. She patroned legislation to create Virginia's first ever Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Team, creating evidence-based policy solutions to this crisis and bringing Virginia into the majority of states with this program. Hala also supported Governor Northam's historic funding for doulas, which have been shown to lower maternal and infant mortality rates during birth. She also was a co-patron on Majority Leader Herring's legislation to establish the Task Force on Maternal Health Data and Quality Measures.

The Plan:

- **Implementing required implicit bias training for our healthcare providers in Virginia.** Doctors and nurses are too often not listening to their patients, especially their Black patients, which can lead to preventable and fatal complications. Nearly 70% of birthing complications are preventable, and other states who have implemented this training, like Massachusetts and California, have among the lowest maternal mortality rates in the country. As Lieutenant Governor, Hala would work with the General Assembly to pass legislation to create and require this life-saving training.
- **Establishing pregnancy medical homes to connect high-risk women with health and social services.** Pregnancy medical homes are great programs, which help connect high-risk women with a case worker who will help them to receive essential health and social services. A similar

program was started and successful in North Carolina and improved pregnancy and birthing outcomes across Medicaid recipients in the state. As Virginia continues to lag behind our neighbors in North Carolina and West Virginia, pregnancy medical homes will be an essential tool for improving healthcare outcomes. As Lieutenant Governor, Hala will work with the Department of Social Services, Department of Medical Assistance Services, and the Governor's Office to support the creation of pregnancy medical homes in Virginia.

- **Increasing access to doula care.** During the 2021 session, Delegate Ayala supported Governor Northam's historic \$2.4 million funding to support doula care in the Commonwealth. Doulas are medical professionals and advocates, and when Black women have access to doula care, birthing outcomes are improved. There are many great doula organizations throughout the Commonwealth who would benefit from continuing to increase funding for doula care. As Lieutenant Governor, Hala would fight to double funding to support increased access to doula care throughout the Commonwealth.
- **Creating a universal paid family and medical leave program in Virginia.** 55% of Virginians do not have access to paid family and medical leave in Virginia, and having access to paid leave can improve maternal outcomes. With a universal program, at-risk mothers will not have to choose between their income and their health. Hala knows that this program would be life-changing for thousands of Virginians. When her son was born, he had some severe health problems. She was working at a gas station and having access to paid leave would have helped them immensely. That is why she led the fight for a universal paid leave program as Delegate, and she will continue that fight as Lieutenant Governor.

###

Delegate Hala Ayala is running for Lieutenant Governor of Virginia with a vision for a strong, just, and prosperous future for the Commonwealth. Ayala, who would be the first woman and first Afro-Latina to hold the position, embodies the bridge between Virginia's past and its future, as well as the bridge between struggle and success that many Virginia families face. Learn more at HalaForVirginia.com.

Paid for by Hala for Virginia