



Hala's Plan to Tackle the Gun Violence Epidemic in the Commonwealth

Today marks the 14th anniversary of the Virginia Tech shooting, the largest mass shooting in Virginia's history. Since then, Virginia suffered yet another senseless mass shooting in Virginia Beach in May 2019, and we have seen a rise in gun violence. Every single year more than 1000 Virginians, including 87 teens and children, die from preventable gun violence, and even more are injured every year. Families, friends, and communities members are traumatized every day as we lose nearly 3 Virginians per day to these senseless acts of gun violence.

Hala knows this pain personally. When she was 2 years old, her father was shot and murdered. She saw her mother suffer from severe PTSD as a result. That is why she has been a gun sense champion in the General Assembly since being elected in 2017. Hala will continue to honor her father and the victims of gun violence through action as Lieutenant Governor.

Hala's Record:

As Chief Deputy Whip in the Democratic Majority, Hala led the fight to strengthen Virginia's notoriously weak background checks, extend the wait period to up to 5 days for gun sales, and pass red flag laws. These laws will save lives throughout the Commonwealth.

The Plan:

- **Banning "ghost guns" and other undetectable firearms.** "Ghost guns" are firearms that are sold in parts to circumvent current federal and state public safety laws. Unlike regulated firearms, these guns are not produced with serial numbers or any other tracking mechanism, which makes it impossible for law enforcement to trace critical information in the case of an emergency or a crime. With the sale of "ghost guns," individuals who should not have access to a firearm are able to access these weapons. These dangerous weapons have no place in our Commonwealth, and as Lieutenant Governor, Hala would support legislation to ban them.
- **Banning military-style assault weapons.** Military-style assault firearms are weapons of war and have no place on our streets. After the tragedies of Virginia Tech and Virginia Beach, Virginia has seen firsthand the catastrophic effect that these firearms have on our communities. In the House of Delegates, Hala supported legislation that would have banned all future sales of these weapons and magazines that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition. As Lieutenant Governor, Hala will take action to ensure that this life-saving legislation is finally passed.
- **Closing the hate crime loophole.** Bigotry and hatred are all too common in our society. During 2019, Virginia experienced almost 200 incidents of hate crimes throughout the Commonwealth,

and nearly 20% of these hate crimes affect our LGBTQ+ community, who are already at an increased risk for gun violence. From Charleston to Atlanta, we have seen too many incidents across this country, where a bigot attacked communities of color using gun violence. Hala feels the fear that many marginalized communities feel personally because she lives it every day. As the mother to 2 Black children, Hala worries if they will be targeted themselves. That is why as Lieutenant Governor she will fight to close the hate crime loophole, prohibiting anyone convicted of a hate crime from purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm.

- **Partnering with federal legislators to repeal the Tiahrt Amendments to aid the enforcement of gun laws.** The Tiahrt Amendments are annual riders to the Department of Justice's budget that have been backed by the NRA since 2003. Since then, they have restricted law enforcement's ability to fully investigate and prosecute crimes related to guns and gun violence. As a national security specialist, Hala knows that it is critical for our federal and state law enforcement authorities to have the necessary tools to keep dangerous weapons off of our street. The repeal of these amendments would allow the Department of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms to keep inventories of firearms dealers that could reduce the number of firearms reported lost or stolen by dealers every year and give authorities a better understanding of gun violence in crimes. As Lieutenant Governor, Hala will work with our congressional delegation to repeal the Tiahrt Amendments.
- **Preventing domestic abusers from accessing firearms.** Nearly 50% of female homicides in the United States are committed by a current or intimate partner, and women are 5 times more likely to die if a firearm is present in the home during a domestic violence incident. During the 2021 session, Hala co-patroned HB 1992, which prohibits the purchase, possession, and transportation of firearms by someone convicted of domestic abuse within 3 years of conviction. While this is a monumental step in the right direction, we need to build on this progress. As Lieutenant Governor, Hala will support legislation that increases the prohibition to 10 years and will prohibit the possession of firearms within the household by any member at all.
- **Recognizing gun violence as a public health crisis.** Gun violence is a public health crisis. As nearly 3 Virginians die every single day and more than 1000 Virginians annually, we need to recognize gun violence as the public health crisis it is. That is why Hala will support a legislative resolution declaring the gun violence epidemic as a public health crisis.

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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