

JENNIFER

CARROLL FOY
FOR GOVERNOR

May 8, 2021

Dear Virginians,

It's no secret that women and families work to provide for their families, build on their skill sets, and give back to their communities. And yet, our economy is *still* set up in such a way that makes it difficult for women, and especially women of color, to earn a living. Fundamentally, women, who make up nearly 60 percent of all workers,¹ should not be penalized for joining the workforce – and that can mean lower wages, less chances for promotion, and disparate access to job benefits and protections.

That is why I have fought hard to pass bills and budgets to address pay inequity, end sex discrimination, and ensure accommodations for pregnant women. I have consistently advocated for paid family and medical leave. The economic fallout brought on by COVID-19 has further exposed the hardships and inequities faced by working women.

We must do better. As Governor, I will make sure that our post-COVID-19 economy works for everyone. I will pass paid family and medical leave, leveling the playing field for women and workers of color, invest in skills training programs with a focus on women participation, expand access to high-quality, affordable childcare, and more. These initiatives will work in tandem with my robust plans to make Virginia more worker friendly.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Carroll Foy

¹ <https://statusofwomensdata.org/earnings-and-the-gender-wage-gap/womens-labor-force-participation/>

WORKING WOMEN, WORKING FAMILIES

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought attention to the inequalities that working families, and especially working mothers, have been dealing with all along in our Commonwealth. More than half of the minimum wage workers in Virginia are women and unpaid leave under FMLA is inaccessible for 55 percent of working people in Virginia.²

And while women were hit especially hard by COVID-19 business closures and furloughs,³ school and daycare closures increased their duties at home, highlighting the childcare burden that falls mostly on women in this country⁴ and the insufficiency of our childcare system for working families. In order to build up working families in our Commonwealth, it is imperative that we provide immediate relief through paid sick leave, enhanced unemployment benefits, and direct aid for our school districts and childcare system.

But the work doesn't end there. We also need to come to terms with the systems that have created inequality and disadvantages for our working families and focus on policies such as an increased minimum wage, flexible and predictable work hours, and increased before and after school care programs⁵ that can make raising a family while earning a good living a reality in our Commonwealth.

As a Delegate, I:

- Sponsored paid family and medical leave legislation⁶ to give workers, and especially workers of color and women, an equal footing in the workplace.⁷
- Passed the Pregnant Worker Fairness Act,⁸ requiring all employers to offer commonsense accommodations to pregnant workers, leading to greater health outcomes and financial stability for mothers and their families.
- Passed the resolution to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment in Virginia to strengthen protections against sex discrimination, pay inequity, and violence against women.⁹
- Co-sponsored the Crown Act,¹⁰ making Virginia the fourth state to ban hair discrimination in school and on the job.
- Passed legislation to give women- and minority-owned businesses more opportunities to bid for public utility contracts.¹¹
- Passed bills to help veteran, active military, and military spouse owned businesses purchase the supplies needed (i.e. desks, furniture, equipment) to advance their

² [Shilpa Phadke, Annie McGrew, Anusha Ravi and Samantha Pedreiro. "Fast Facts: Economic Security for Women and Families in Virginia." Center for American Progress. 06/22/18.](#)

³ ["Working moms are not okay," Amy Joyce and Ellen McCarthy, Washington Post, 10/30/2020](#)

⁴ ["Two kids, no support system and \\$167 in unemployment benefits: One single mom's plight in the age of Covid-19," Greg Iacurci, CNBC, 9/5/2020](#)

⁵ ["Why has COVID-19 been especially harmful for working women?" Nicole Bateman and Martha Ross, Brookings, October 2020](#)

⁶ ["HB 825: Paid family and medical leave program," Virginia's Legislative Information System, Last Modified 02/11/20.](#)

⁷ ["Virginia lawmakers eye paid family leave." CBS 6-WTVR, 1/14/2019](#)

⁸ ["HB 827: Virginia Human Rights Act," Virginia's Legislative Information System, Last Modified 04/11/20.](#)

⁹ ["HJ 1: United States Constitution," Virginia's Legislative Information System, Last Modified 01/27/20.](#)

¹⁰ ["HB 1514: Virginia Human Rights Act," Virginia's Legislative Information System, Last Modified 03/03/20.](#)

¹¹ ["HB 432: Public utilities," Virginia's Legislative Information System, Last Modified 04/06/20.](#)

entrepreneurial endeavors.¹² The 2020 legislation largely impacts women as “92 percent of military spouses are women.”¹³

To ensure that Virginia is the best place for business *and* workers, I:

- Sponsored legislation to raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour.¹⁴
- Passed legislation to end wage theft and the misclassification of workers.¹⁵ These practices disproportionately impact Black, undocumented, and domestic workers.
- Passed legislation to establish a prevailing wage on all state-funded construction projects.¹⁶ Prevailing wage laws help to stabilize the wage floor, reduce wage disparities for women and people of color, and increase overall productivity and worker safety.
- Co-sponsored legislation repealing the “Comstock Rule,” which banned the use of Project Labor Agreements, helping thousands of construction workers get quality health coverage.¹⁷
- Led the call for paid sick leave and expanded broadband access so working families can get the care they need during COVID-19.¹⁸
- Sponsored a state budget amendment to meet unprecedented staff needs at the Virginia Employment Commission to help impacted Virginians navigate the unemployment insurance system.¹⁹

As Governor, I will:

- Finally pass paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave in the Commonwealth.
- Accelerate the raising of the minimum wage to \$15 per hour and ensure the inclusion of overlooked workforces under Virginia Workers’ Compensation Act.
- Work to close the gender pay gap and strengthen pay transparency policies for workers and employees.
- Strengthen labor protections for workers. My administration will support legislation that promotes written contracts and fair scheduling.
- Expand opportunities for domestic worker professional development. My administration will make it a priority to ensure home healthcare workers, nannies, house cleaners, and other domestic workers, among other professions, get opportunities to grow professionally.
- Elevate and protect the voices of working people by ensuring that union members get appointed to boards and commissions.
- Fund and promote education and training programs aimed at strengthening Virginia’s workforce as we pivot to clean energy and rebuild our economy. My administration will administer an awareness campaign for union apprenticeship programs in the skilled trades and amplify targeted efforts to recruit more women and workers of color.

¹² [“HB 437: DGS.” Virginia’s Legislative Information System. Last Modified 03/18/20.](#)

¹³ [“Military Spouses Fact Sheet.” Women’s Bureau. Accessed 05/03/21.](#)

¹⁴ <https://jennifercarrollfoy.com/issues/labor-working-families/>. Last Accessed 03/01/21.

¹⁵ [“HB 123: Nonpayment of wages.” Virginia’s Legislative Information System. Last Modified 04/08/20.](#)

¹⁶ <https://jennifercarrollfoy.com/issues/labor-working-families/>. Last Accessed 03/01/21.

¹⁷ <https://jennifercarrollfoy.com/issues/labor-working-families/>. Last Accessed 03/01/21.

¹⁸ <https://jennifercarrollfoy.com/issues/covid-19-response/>. Last Accessed 03/01/21.

¹⁹ [“Item 131 #1h: Unemployment Commission Staffing.” LIS State Budget. Accessed 05/03/21.](#)

- Continue to support small, women-owned, and minority-owned (SWaM) businesses by increasing the Commonwealth's discretionary spending for buying goods and services from SWaM businesses to a historic 45 percent.
- Create the Rebuilding Virginia Task Force, bringing together leaders from industries impacted by COVID-19 (such as hospitality, retail, and restaurant), members of the small business community, union leaders, and economic experts to build solutions for rebuilding and reimagining Virginia's economy.
- Ensure full collective bargaining rights for workers across the public sector. My administration will institute an automatic collective bargaining bill that gives teachers in the Commonwealth the fighting chance to advocate for better pay and more resources.
- Improve access to high quality, affordable childcare by expanding the Working Families Earned Income Tax Credit, increasing access to child care subsidies, and implementing full day preschool for at-risk three- and four-year olds.