

# CANDIDATE COMPARISON: RACE FOR GOVERNOR



Compiled by the Virginia Catholic  
Conference for the 2025 Virginia Elections

In keeping with its mission, the Virginia Catholic Conference aims to educate and inform Catholics about a wide range of issues. The information compiled here has been gathered from policies, public statements, official and campaign websites, and other resources, as of August 14th, to help voters form their consciences before voting in November. The issues that appear here do not represent a complete list of issues that may be of importance to Catholics. The VCC 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, 2023



WINSOME EARLE-SEARS



ABIGAIL SPANBERGER

## ABORTION

In March 2025, as Lieutenant Governor, Sears made the following written notation to a proposed constitutional amendment that would enshrine a "right" to abortion in Virginia's constitution: "I am morally opposed to this bill: no protection for the child."

In her keynote address at the April 2025 Virginia March for Life, Sears stated, "We stand for life and how can it ever be wrong to stand for life?"

In 2002, as a Virginia House of Delegates member, Sears co-sponsored and voted for a bill to require a physician to obtain parental consent prior to performing an abortion on a minor.

In January 2025, Spanberger issued a statement in support of the House of Delegates' passage of a proposed constitutional amendment that would enshrine a "right" to abortion in Virginia's constitution.

As a member of Congress, Spanberger co-sponsored the Women's Health Protection Act, which sought to prohibit "governmental restrictions on the provision of, and access to, abortion services." Spanberger also co-sponsored the Ensuring Access to Abortion Act, which would have prohibited "anyone acting under state law from interfering with a person's ability to access out-of-state abortion services." Spanberger is endorsed by Planned Parenthood Advocates of Virginia.

## ASSISTED SUICIDE

In a May 2024 radio interview, Sears stated her opposition to assisted suicide legislation. She said, "No, we don't want to be in the business of death. Is that what we're about?"

In response to a question about assisted suicide at a 2023 event, Spanberger said she supported "legislation that legalizes the right to die," including "allowing for medical providers to provide...life-ending prescriptions."

## CONSCIENCE RIGHTS

In 2002, as a Virginia House of Delegates member, Sears co-sponsored and voted for a bill to ensure 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."

In a May 2025 interview, Sears said, "I don't want a person who has religious faith to feel they are forced against their will. It's freedom of religion." She made the comment to explain her opposition to removing the one-man/one-woman marriage definition from Virginia's constitution.

In response to a question about Catholic and other religious healthcare institutions at a 2023 event, Spanberger said, "I oppose the ability of religious institutions to put their religious-based ideas on individuals and their healthcare choices and options.... I do not believe that people should have the option to allow their own personal beliefs to dictate the type of medical care that they are providing their patients."

As a member of Congress, Spanberger co-sponsored and voted for the Equality Act, which would have added the new terms "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to the definition of "sex" in federal civil rights laws, and would have exempted itself from the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993.

## ECONOMY

Sears' campaign website states she "wants to make sure Virginia is a place where all families can afford to live, raise their families, work, and build a future. She will fight for common-sense tax cuts that help all Virginians." In a December 2024 op-ed Sears wrote, "We must strengthen public-private partnerships that drive innovation. We must continue...to attract and retain new world-class companies. And we must invest in workforce development to prepare our Virginians for the jobs of the future."

In a November 2021 interview, Spanberger noted her work in Congress to lower the cost of prescription drugs and extend the child tax credit. In April 2025, Spanberger announced her support for raising Virginia's minimum wage to \$15 an hour. At a rally in April 2025, Spanberger said she will ensure "more Virginians can negotiate for the benefits and fair treatment that they've earned."



WINSOME EARLE-SEARS

ABIGAIL SPANBERGER



EDUCATIONAL CHOICE

In a 2025 interview, Sears stated, "My vision for Virginia is whatever you, the parent, want: public, private, parochial, home school, whatever it is, a hybrid — you make the choice."

Spanberger's "Strengthening Virginia Schools Plan" includes "rejecting efforts to divert funding from public education to pay for voucher programs."

ENVIRONMENT

In a May 2025 speech, Sears expressed support for a variety of energy sources: "That's why we are going to have all of it: clean coal. Oil. Yes, renewables. Nuclear. Natural gas; all of that." On X (formerly Twitter) in July 2024, she posted, "Virginia will continue to lead the nation as we innovate and expand our All-the-Above energy approach. We will drive and maintain economic growth as we expand our capability to support the energy needs of a growing Commonwealth."

Spanberger called climate change "one of the greatest and most imminent threats to our economy, our national security, and our way of life." In 2019, Spanberger co-sponsored the Climate Action Now Act, which would require "the President to develop and update annually a plan for the United States to meet its nationally determined contribution under the Paris Agreement on climate change." In a 2019 Congressional hearing, she stated, "As Congress looks to strengthen our engagement on issues of international diplomacy, security, and development, climate change must be viewed as a pressing national security concern."

HEALTHCARE

In a 2022 interview, Sears expressed support for increased funding for mental health initiatives, including behavioral health facilities and school support staff. "We've got to find the money; we've got to prioritize," Sears said. "There are things if we don't address them, they are only going to get worse and mental health is absolutely one of them."

According to Spanberger's website, "Abigail believes that all Virginians deserve access to quality, affordable healthcare — and believes in protecting Virginia's Medicaid expansion and defending against efforts to dismantle the *Affordable Care Act*, which protects more than 1.3 million Virginians with pre-existing conditions."

PARENTS' RIGHTS

In a 2022 interview, Sears stated, "Parents want to know that their child is learning. If that is not happening, something needs to be done." She highlighted a bill that Gov. Youngkin signed that requires parental notification before sexually explicit content is presented, permits parental review of the materials, and requires the provision of non-explicit alternatives to any student upon parental request. In reaction to a June 2025 U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding Tennessee's ban on puberty blockers and other so-called gender transition procedures on minors, Sears stated: "The Court got it right: parents have the final say."

In 2023, as a member of Congress, Spanberger voted against the Parents Bill of Rights Act. This bill sought to require schools to notify parents of their right to know what their children are being taught, to address the school board, to see the school budget and spending, and to receive information about violent activity. The bill also specified the right of parents to "know if their child's school operates, sponsors, or facilitates athletic programs or activities that permit an individual whose biological sex is male to participate in an athletic program or activity that is designed for individuals whose biological sex is female" and to "know if their child's school allows an individual whose biological sex is male to use restrooms or changing rooms designated for individuals whose biological sex is female."

Disclaimer: As a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, the Virginia Catholic Conference is not associated with any political party and does not endorse any candidate, political party, or political action committee.