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VOTE MAMA ENDORSES LOCAL CANDIDATES IN CT, SC, TN, VA, and WA

NEW YORK — [Vote Mama](#), the first PAC focused solely on electing Democratic moms, today announced its endorsement of five local candidates in South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington.

- Representative Caroline Simmons -- Mayor of Stamford (CT)
- Tameika Devine -- Mayor of Columbia (SC)
- Elizabeth Wanczak -- Ward 4 Alderman (TN)
- Commonwealth's Attorney Stephanie Morales -- Commonwealth's Attorney (VA)
- Renton City Councilmember Kim-Khanh Van -- King County Council, District 9 (WA)
- Melissa Duque -- Mill Creek City Council (WA)

"We are proud to endorse these five mothers running up and down the ballot, from Mayor to City Council, across five states," **said Liuba Grechen Shirley, Vote Mama's Founder and CEO.** "Few of our elected officials understand the issues most affecting women and families today, especially during this pandemic, but these mamas live them. As mothers, their visceral, firsthand experience and proven track records of fighting for healthcare, economic opportunities, and education will make them the best advocates for working families across the country."

"I'm honored to be endorsed by Vote Mama and grateful for their work to empower and support mothers to run for elected office and advance policies that champion families. My two young boys are a constant source of inspiration for me," **said Rep. Caroline Simmons, who is running for Mayor of Stamford.** "Their future, and the future of the children in my community, is what motivated me as I served as State Representative and it's the reason I'm energized now to run for Mayor. Running for office isn't always easy, but it's worth every second if it means I get to fight for children and families across my community and ensure we leave every child a better world." Rep. Simmons would be the first woman and first mother elected as Mayor of Stamford.

Tameika Devine, the first African-American female elected to Columbia City Council and the first African-American elected at-large, who is running for Mayor of Columbia, said, "Motherhood has prepared me for the role of Mayor for the City of Columbia, South Carolina. As a supporter of work-life integration, I know how to get things done, even among competing demands for time, energy, and attention. As a visionary, I see the promise and potential in every

situation. I am not afraid to roll up my sleeves and do the work to be part of the solution and not the problem.” Tameika would be the first woman and first mother to be elected Mayor of Columbia.

“Moms know how to get the job done under pressure, multitask, and understand exactly how government policy impacts our families and our children,” **said Elizabeth Wanczak, who is running for Ward 4 Alderman.** “I’m honored to be running for Alderman as a mom of two young preschoolers and, if elected, will bring these skills with me to serve the incredible people of Ward 4 in Franklin.”

“Before I am an elected official, I am a woman and a mother. I was a mother when I attended law school and when I decided to commit to a life of public service,” **said Stephanie Morales, the first woman to be elected Commonwealth’s Attorney in Portsmouth, VA, who is running for re-election.** “Nurturing my children taught me how to love and nurture a community and gives me the strength and drive to fight for the freedom to thrive of every child and person I represent. I am beyond honored to be endorsed by Vote Mama, an organization committed to supporting mothers who strive to be servant leaders.”

“Running for office as a mama takes more than ‘one village’ and requires support from my family and community. I am appreciative of VoteMama for their support. I am confronted with issues like childcare, in-home learning, and cultural beliefs and barriers of what my role is as a mother and a dutiful wife,” **said Renton City Councilmember Kim-Khanh Van, who is running for King County Council.** “Yet, however, the challenges I faced, I know that if I want to leave a better future for my children and other children, I need to be a part of the conversations. I have the lived experience as a mama to address pressing issues facing not just other mamas, but parents, grandparents, and others raising children.” Kim-Khanh would be the first woman to serve as the King County Councilmember from District 9, as well as the first woman of color to serve on the Council since its modern formation in 1992.

“I’ve always felt the pull to give back and that is something that I instill in my young boys. We do park clean-ups and donate to the local food banks as a family. And what I am most excited about in this campaign is showing my boys, not just telling, how important it is to be active in our community. This is our home,” **said Melissa Duque, who is running to be the first woman of color elected to the Mill Creek City Council.**

Women, and particularly moms of young children, face unique challenges when running for office. Vote Mama seeks to increase the political power of moms by stepping in to disrupt the systems that hold women back through direct financial support, mentorship, and endorsements. As with all of Vote Mama’s endorsed candidates, these five candidates support family-friendly legislation and are committed to making this country a better place to raise children.

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Vote Mama endorses, funds, and trains Democratic moms running for office up and down the ballot and across the country. Vote Mama is increasing the political power of mothers by providing the tools and training to break down the systemic barriers that hold women and mothers back. Since Vote Mama was launched in 2019, 49 endorsed candidates have gone on to win their races across 13 states.