



# Caring for Our Caregivers

Sophia's comprehensive plan to care for North Carolina's caregivers.



# Platform of Care

## An Overview



Sophia Chitlik is driven by a vision to make North Carolina the best state in the country for working families and the businesses they power.

**How do we do that?** By caring for children, caregivers, and communities.



**Our Children**



**Our Caregivers**



**Our Community**

In this document we focus on **Our Caregivers.**



# Caring for Caregivers

## We need more caregivers in positions of power.

The pandemic laid bare what we already knew: our system isn't working for working families. Over fifty percent of our General Assembly is over 60. Our State Senate is almost two thirds male, and just a fraction of its members have young children. People are policy. When we elect more caregivers, our policies change.

## Sophia's work is about creating real solutions for caregivers, especially women.

An expert in businesses that support families through pregnancy, birth, and postpartum, Sophia has spent the past five years investing exclusively in women-led companies and nonprofits. For the past year, Sophia has been working to support North Carolina's first Black-owned birth center, [Aya Birth & Community Wellness](#), to get off the ground in Durham.

## Sophia will always fight for caregivers because she is one.

As the parent of a two-year-old, a daughter, daughter-in-law, and friend, Sophia spends a lot of her time caring for the people she loves most. Caregiving is a privilege, but it can also be a burden. Sophia watched her mom care for her aging grandparents and saw firsthand the toll it took. The challenges of balancing work and family are not abstract to Sophia: they are part of her daily life, and the lives of so many in our community.

## Sophia's top four priorities to foster equity and support at every stage are:

### 1. Women's rights.

Safeguarding access to abortion, contraception, and bodily autonomy.

### 2. Maternal health equity.

Tackling our state's maternal mortality crisis.

### 3. Work that works.

Stabilizing and supporting working families.

### 4. Dignity for caregivers.

Supporting the people who make our communities function.

# 1. Women's Rights

As State Senator, Sophia would be a champion for choice. Floor speeches are not enough in this era—we need someone who will fight for women in the Senate. Abortion is healthcare; it's just that simple.

One of Sophia's top priorities if elected will be safeguarding access to abortion, contraception, and bodily autonomy by:

- **Protecting abortion access:** Sophia believes that abortion access should be safe, legal, and accessible. She is strongly against the current 12-week and prospective six-week bans and will be a strong voice in the Senate against any further limitations on women's healthcare.
- **Expanding contraception access:** Sophia is in favor of expanding access to contraception, especially for individuals who are uninsured or underinsured. Sophia is in favor of SB 540, the Right to Use Contraception Act.
- **Reinstating freedom of choice for local governments:** Sophia is in favor of repealing current law which prohibits local governments from offering abortion care to their employees.
- **Striking down the waiting ban:** Sophia believes that the current 72-hour waiting ban on abortion care is sexist and patronizing and believes it should be repealed.
- **Ending child marriage:** Sophia believes in a full ban on child marriage and is strongly
- **Passing the CROWN Act:** Sophia is in favor of passing the CROWN Act, which makes discrimination of natural hair by employers illegal in North Carolina. This kind of discrimination unfairly targets women of color and it must end.



# 2. Maternal Health Equity

**Sophia believes it is imperative to expand safe birthing options so that everyone has a real choice about where and how they deliver their babies. This is particularly urgent for Black North Carolinians, who are three to four times as likely to die in childbirth than white birthing people.**

## As State Senator, Sophia would do this by:

- **Expanding access to midwifery care:** Sophia is strongly in favor of making it legal for Certified Professional Midwives to practice in North Carolina (as they do in 36 other states) and supports creating a Senate companion to House Bill 751. This will create a critical expansion of the birth workforce, alleviate our rural healthcare crisis, and make it more accessible for Black and Brown people to become and practice as midwives. We know that when providers look like their patients, [outcomes improve](#). We need more Black birth workers, and we need them now.
- **Passing the North Carolina MOMnibus Act:** Sophia is proud to support Senator Natalie Murdock's Senate Bill 467/House Bill 552, and would do everything she could if elected to support this critical piece of legislation. This bill would specifically address core drivers of Black maternal mortality, including investing in a more diverse birth workforce.
- **Expanding Medicaid to reimburse equitably for out of hospital birth:** A hospital setting can be [particularly dangerous](#) for Black and Brown birthing people because of institutional racism - but so often, a safe alternative is financially out of reach. This is unacceptable, and it's a major driver of maternal mortality. As State Senator, Sophia would champion legislation to make sure that Medicaid reimburses birth center births equitably and makes homes (when attended to by licensed providers) recognized places of service for births. This will save money, and, most importantly, it will save lives.
- **Making doulas accessible to people who receive Medicaid:** Sophia supports the revival of legislation such as House Bill 421 and Senate Bill 732. Doulas are proven to reduce maternal mortality, especially for women of color. People who receive Medicaid should have the same access to care that people with private insurance have..
- **Holding hospitals accountable for their outcomes:** Sophia believes in greater data transparency around maternal morbidity and mortality statistics, including transparency on racial disparities. As State Senator, Sophia would champion legislation that mandates nonprofit hospitals report this data publicly. Sophia has not and will not take corporate PAC money from hospital systems so that she can be fully accountable to the people of District 22.



# 3. Work that Works

**Right now, too many people are working full time and still aren't making enough to support their families. We need a moral and legislative reorientation towards supporting working families, and the government has a responsibility to create conditions that make it possible to be a productive worker. Workers are human beings: we're parents, children, and friends, and Sophia believes we can do more to support working families.**

## **Sophia would stabilize and support working families by:**

- **Raising the minimum wage:** According to the North Carolina Justice Center, “the current North Carolina minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour, a full-time minimum-wage worker earns...\$1,000 less than the federal poverty level for 2016 for a family of one adult and one child.” We must raise the minimum wage so full-time workers don't live in poverty. Sophia believes in repealing HB-2 and the archaic limitations on municipalities so that cities and regions can set their own higher minimum wages.
- **Stabilizing the childcare industry:** AARPA funds put \$24B into the childcare industry, but the General Assembly failed to continue these subsidies even though we have a budget surplus. Waitlists for full-day care for infants in large city areas are often one year long. What are families supposed to do in the meantime? Beginning January 1st, [155,000 children will lose access to care and over 1,700 centers will close](#). We must use state funds to stabilize the childcare industry so that parents can go to work.
- **Supporting domestic workers and childcare providers:** Sophia is in favor of a Domestic Worker Bill of Rights and supports supplements and incentives for child and home health care workers so that they can make a living wage while doing vital work for our communities. Domestic workers are disproportionately women of color, and Sophia firmly believes that they deserve the respect and benefits workers in other industries enjoy.
- **Providing paid sick and family leave:** Sophia supports paid sick leave, including legislation modeled on the The Healthy Families Act. Sophia is in favor of making at least twelve weeks of paid parental leave standard for all in North Carolina to welcome a new baby, care for an aging parent or support an ill spouse. We must make it possible to be parents and workers.
- **Restoring the Earned Income Tax Credit:** North Carolina is one of the only states in the country to eliminate the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which is a lifeline for working families. Sophia is strongly in favor of bringing back the EITC and would work to champion this legislation if elected.
- **Increasing unemployment benefits:** Currently, our unemployment system does not create an adequate safety net for workers. Sophia believes in increasing this benefit to 26 weeks and increasing the maximum benefit per week to a livable level. Losing a job unexpectedly should not sentence families to hunger or eviction.
- **Tackling healthcare debt:** The threat of medical debt deters people from seeking care and the reality of medical debt burdens families for decades. According to our own Republican State Treasurer, [“some of North Carolina’s nonprofit hospitals billed \\$149.2 million to poor patients who should have qualified for charity care under the hospitals’ own policies.”](#) We need to hold our nonprofit hospital systems to account for the medical debt crisis by providing clarity on community and financial assistance benefit standards.



## 4. Dignity for Caregivers

**We are able to work because of the incredible people who are watching our babies, teaching our kids, and caring for our elders. However, too often these workers have limited rights and even more limited resources.**

**Sophia would support the people who make our communities function by:**

- **Supporting our teachers:** Sophia believes in fair pay and greater incentives for teachers. Learn more in [Caring For Children](#).
- **Supporting domestic workers and childcare providers:** Sophia supports a Domestic Worker Bill of Rights. She also supports providing supplements and incentives for child and home health care workers so that they can make a living wage while doing vital work for our communities. Sophia believes these essential workers deserve the respect and benefits that workers in other industries enjoy.
- **Supporting home health aides and Community Health Workers:** We have a fundamental supply and demand crisis in care, and we need to be incentivizing more North Carolinians to become health aides and Community Health Workers. First, we must raise the minimum wage so that these workers can care for their clients and for their families. Second, we expand programs at the community college level to create new workforce pipelines. These changes can and should be reflected in our state budget.
- **Building up the early childhood education workforce:** We need to continue stabilizing our early childhood workforce and incentivizing more people to go into the field. With just [61 people for every 100 early childhood jobs](#), nothing should be off the table. We need tuition assistance, state emergency funding, and massive public-private partnerships to fill this gap.
- **Supporting ABA providers:** North Carolina's autism rate for eight year-olds is almost [double the national average](#). We have a massive shortage of professionals to meet this need and our existing professionals are often not paid enough to stay in the field. As State Senator, Sophia would work to create legislation that creates incentives for more people to become ABA therapists, including student loan forgiveness.



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