

Vote Mama supports Democratic moms running for office up and down the ballot—because when we elect moms, we pass policies that support women and working families.

Founded by Liuba Grechen Shirley, former Congressional candidate, and first woman in history to successfully petition the FEC to use Campaign Funds for Childcare.

# Problem Scope

The problem is twofold:

1) American policies are failing women and working families.

**While the pandemic brought new attention to the challenges American women face, our policies have been failing women and working families for generations.** The U.S. is ranked 86th globally in women's empowerment, and 27th worldwide in public education and healthcare. The U.S. is the only nation in the world other than Papua New Guinea that does not have paid family leave. Our representatives voted to take maternity coverage away from millions of American women when we have the worst maternal mortality rate in the industrialized world.

2) Moms with young children are under-represented in public office.

Women legislators sponsor more bills, pass more bills, and send their districts more money. Moms in Congress write even more bills over the course of their term than other women do, and their legislation is focused on health care, childcare, education, reproductive rights, and affordable housing for families. **Yet women only make up 29% of state legislators nationwide, 27% of U.S. Congress Members, and only 7% of Congress Members are moms of children 18 and under.**

We're missing out on a critical voice.

Women know at a visceral level the challenges that working families face, but too often do not have a seat at the decision-making table because women, especially moms of young children, face extraordinary challenges running for office.

Due to these hurdles, many moms choose to wait until their children are grown before running for political office. This delay makes it impossible for women to achieve leadership positions at the same rates as men. Speaker Pelosi has said, "I want women to be here in greater numbers at an earlier age so that their seniority [can] start to count much sooner."

We need to address the motherhood penalty in the U.S.—and this starts with electing more moms and changing the face of elected officials nationwide.

Vote Mama is here to do just that.

*Other Countries have social safety nets. The U.S. has women.*

**JESSICA CALARCO**

Associate Professor of Sociology at Indiana University and Author

# Why are we focused on moms with school-aged children?

By the time U.S. women are 45 years old, 85% are mothers. Yet, women with school-aged children, only make up 7% of the entire Congress. If we aren't supporting moms, we are not supporting the majority of women.

More moms in office means more policies that reflect the needs of working families, children, and women all over the country. It means more family-friendly policies such as Universal Childcare and paid family leave, which could add more than 5 million more women to our workforce and an additional \$500 billion to our economy.

However, women, especially moms with young children, face incredible barriers in running for public office. Moms face increased scrutiny from donors, establishment institutions, and the public.

Since women are 15 times more likely than men to be responsible for the majority of childcare, they are confronted with logistical hurdles like how to meet childcare obligations during campaigns that require frequent travel, evening and weekend events. They have to overcome structural barriers, such as the inability to afford childcare while campaigning full time without a salary, and they face cultural pressure with questions such as “Who will watch your children while you're campaigning?”

**If we want an America that prioritizes the needs of women and working families, then we need more moms with school-aged children in office.**

There are many organizations that focus on electing women—but Vote Mama is the only one focused solely on closing the gap for young moms.

*Most Americans my age are working parents...but there are few of us with a seat at the table when it comes to writing legislation to make life easier for working families.*

**REP. KATIE PORTER,  
CA-45**



*We believe the success of our mission can be best measured not just by the number of moms who win their elections, but also by the normalization of moms and young women in positions of leadership and power. Our kids need to see running for office is just what mamas do.*

**LIUBA GRECHEN SHIRLEY, FOUNDER & CEO**

## Our Solution.

Motherhood is a political asset, not a liability. We're empowering moms to run as themselves and bring their lived experience to the campaign trail and into office.

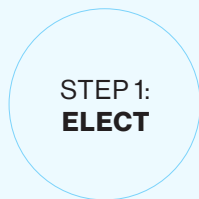
Vote Mama believes that more Democratic moms in office means more policies that help women, children, and working families all over the country.

That's why we are breaking down the barriers for moms to run for office and providing support in all aspects of the process—before, during, and after.

Vote Mama is building a world where childcare, paid family leave, maternal health, and education are not considered “women’s issues,” but infrastructure issues that affect every American.



## Theory of Change:



*Vote Mama PAC endorses, funds, and mentors Democratic moms running for office up and down the ballot all across the country.*



*Vote Mama Lobby empowers everyday mamas as an organized civic & voting body to advocate for mama representation and policies.*



*Vote Mama Foundation conducts research on the political participation of moms and breaks structural barriers moms face when they run & serve.*



# Step 1: Elect

*Vote Mama is hopeful in a way a lot of other organizations don't have the guts to be. They will take candidates like me before everyone else has decided the race is viable. They come in and help early when it matters.*

**CHRIS BUBSER,**  
2020 CANDIDATE



VIRGINIA DELEGATE KATHY TRAN  
Photo: Timothy C. Wright for the Washington Post

Vote Mama PAC directly supports, endorses, and funds Democratic moms running for office up and down the ballot across the U.S. We increase the political power of moms by stepping in to disrupt the systems that hold women back.

In our political system, fundraising is still the primary measure of candidate viability, but many working moms have trouble accessing donor networks. Vote Mama increases the political power of moms through direct financial support to help build successful campaigns.

We invest in campaigns early, when candidates need the support most—and invest in races from School Board to U.S. Senate, because it is important to have progressive moms in all levels of office.

The PAC has supported 400+ moms running for office across 31 states from School Board to U.S. Senate, so far.

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>total</u>
<i>federal</i>	0	14	1	23	<b>38</b>
<i>statewide</i>	0	0	0	16	<b>16</b>
<i>state leg</i>	11	29	13	101	<b>154</b>
<i>city council</i>	11	5	35	16	<b>67</b>
<i>local office</i>	22	4	58	20	<b>104</b>
<i>school board</i>	5	5	9	9	<b>28</b>
<b>total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>407</b>

## Step 2: Mobilize

*My Congressional campaign came so close to unseating a 25-year incumbent because of the power of our grassroots army of volunteers. When we replicate and build on that model, we give Democratic moms across America the people power they need to run and to win.*

**LIUBA GRECHAN SHIRLEY,**  
FOUNDER & CEO, VOTE MAMA



Vote Mama Lobby 501C4 is a civic selfcare membership program designed to politically empower everyday mamas. We are organizing a civic body of American moms to advocate for mama representation and *truly* family-friendly policies.

By recruiting, connecting, and activating mamas all over the country, the Lobby is creating a grassroots movement that can be called on to: (A) mobilize voters to elect Democratic moms; and (B) push legislators via targeted actions to pass family-friendly policies.

We know that movement-building drives real change. Together, we will harness the collective power of moms to uplift women and working families, and in turn improve the lives of all Americans.

**WE'RE LEVELING THE CIVIC LANDSCAPE THAT EXCLUDED MAMAS.**

We're filling a gap in the market—moms may be able to find other organizations that push existing politicians for mama-centered policies from the outside, but we're the only organization 100% focused on systemically electing more moms who will push for mama-centered policies from the inside.

**OUR MAMAS ARE NOT OUR CURRENCY—THEY ARE OUR CUSTOMERS.**

As a nonprofit that funds projects to civically organize mamas, we maintain a maternal lens to ensure we meet the needs of the customer. We have a unique perspective that we leverage to deliver the user experience that mamas require from their brands.

**MAMA VOTER BLOCS ARE PROVEN POLITICAL TIPPING POINTS.**

We're reaching voters who care about policy issues but don't access traditional channels of activism, and therefore empowering an untouched lobby to elect Democratic mamas, pass & fund family-friendly policies, and normalize foundational civic engagement behaviors.

## Step 3: Legislate



*I have an obligation in Congress to break down barriers that prevent Moms from serving and create a country that empowers women to have the professional and personal success they want, not what society thinks they should have.*

**REP. NIKEMA WILLIAMS,**  
GA-5

Vote Mama Foundation 501C3 is the leading source of research on the political participation of moms. We're breaking the structural and cultural barriers moms face when they run and when they serve.

Once mamas get into office, Vote Mama Foundation equips and enables them to pass policies that are women-centered and truly family-friendly.

Vote Mama Foundation focuses on three research and policy areas—the use of campaign funds to pay for childcare, the political representation of mamas, and structural barriers that keep moms out.

### State of Motherhood

Our signature research series fills the gap in the current conversation on women's political representation, providing first-of-its-kind data from all 50 states, to build an understanding of how moms are uniquely positioned to pass legislation that supports women and working families.

### Campaign Funds for Childcare (CFCC)

We conduct nonpartisan research, work with candidates to petition their state & local election commissions, and partner with lawmakers to introduce legislation to approve the use of CFCC for state and local candidates, which has now been **approved in 26 states**.

### Structural Barriers

We started with Campaign Funds for Childcare, but the structural barriers keeping moms out of office don't stop there. Next steps:

1. bipartisan mama caucuses in state legislatures
2. paid family and medical leave for legislators
3. virtual legislative voting and hearings
4. online signature petitioning to get mama candidates onto ballots
5. changing tables and pumping rooms in all state capitol and legislative buildings
6. lay the political groundwork to make state legislatures full-time, provide livable wages for electeds, and funds for full-time staff support

## How We Will Get There

Vote Mama has already launched a robust PAC operation, and as of 2022, has helped over 400 mamas run for office at all levels of government.

We are the only organization working with candidates to petition state and local election commissions and legislators to introduce legislation allowing the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare. 26 states have now approved the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare. Our goal is to pass Campaign Funds for Childcare (CFCC) in all 50 states.

In 2022, Vote Mama Foundation will release the first publication in our signature research series, *The State of Motherhood in American Politics*, which will give a comprehensive look at the current political representation of moms and their impact on passing family-friendly policies.

In the Fall of 2022, Vote Mama Lobby will launch its grassroots volunteer membership program.

*My  
daughter  
couldn't  
be the  
reason  
I didn't  
run.  
She had  
to be the  
reason  
I ran.*

**ASSEMBLY-  
WOMAN  
BUFFY WICKS**





## Liuba Grechen Shirley

Founder & CEO, Vote Mama SHE/HER

Throughout her career, Liuba has forged strategic partnerships between public, private, and nonprofit sector organizations to tackle issues including economic development, access to health care, and paid family leave. She has also fought for increased accountability and less corruption in the use of international aid funds.

In 2018, Liuba ran a historic congressional campaign to represent New York's 2nd District in the U.S. House of Representatives. She received the highest vote share of any Democrat to run against Peter King in 25 years. Liuba raised over \$2 million with no corporate PAC money and built a grassroots movement of volunteers that knocked

over 250,000 doors. She petitioned the Federal Election Commission and became the first woman in history to receive federal approval to spend campaign funds on childcare.

In 2019 and 2020, Liuba was selected as one of Long Island's 100 Most Powerful People by City & State and was named to the Long Island Business News 40 Under 40 list. Together with UN Women, she launched the #IAmParent campaign for Parental Leave and was selected as a Global Champion for Women's Economic Empowerment. She has appeared on CNN, The Today Show, and MSNBC and featured in The Washington Post, TIME Magazine, Huffington Post. Liuba holds an MBA with specializations in Management and Economics from the NYU Stern School of Business, and a BA in Politics and Russian from NYU. She lives on Long Island with her husband Christopher and children, Mila, Nicholas, and Andrew.