

Virginia ✓otes 2009



Inside:

- ✓ Voting information
- ✓ Deadlines
- ✓ Election information
- ✓ Voters' rights and responsibilities
- ✓ Regaining voting rights after a felony conviction
- ✓ Your local voter registration offices
- ✓ Issues that affect you and fellow Virginians — we're all in this together!

Your Guide to the Virginia Elections

***Every Vote
Counts!***

Table of Contents

General Information	3
Virginia Voter Registration Information	4
About Elections in Virginia	5
Absentee Voting	6
Virginia Voter Rights and Responsibilities	8
County and City Voter Registration Offices	10
Health Care	12
Racial Profiling	14
Immigration	15
Car Title Lending	16
Redistricting	17
Restoration of Voter Rights	18
Quality Home Care	19
Voter Protection	20
Missing Voter Project	21
Workplace Discrimination	22
Employee Free Choice Act	23
Offshore Wind Energy	24
Transportation and Climate	25
Clean Energy	26
Conservation and Weatherization	27
Education	28
Uranium Mining	29
Tax Reform	30



The Virginia Organizing Project (VOP) is a statewide grassroots organization dedicated to challenging injustice by empowering people in local communities to address issues that affect the quality of their lives. As a non-partisan organization, VOP especially encourages the participation of those who have traditionally had little or no voice in our society. By building relationships with diverse individuals and groups throughout the state, VOP strives to get them to work together, democratically and non-violently, for change.

703 Concord Avenue • Charlottesville, VA 22903-5208
(434) 984-4655 • (434) 984-2803 fax
<http://www.virginia-organizing.org>

This non-partisan voter guide is published by the Virginia Organizing Project and
printed by Kelly Press, Inc., a union shop.
Circulation for this issue of Virginia Votes is 300,000.

Every Vote Counts!

2009 Voter Guide to the Virginia Election

The Virginia Organizing Project is proud to present this 2009 Voter Guide to the Virginia Election. The Virginia Organizing Project, a non-partisan organization that does not endorse candidates, is distributing this guide in partnership with other members of the Virginia c-3 Table:

ACLU of Virginia
Advancement Project
Boat People SOS
Central Virginia APRI
Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Clean Water Fund
Democracy South
Equality Virginia Education Fund
Environment Virginia Policy and Research Center
Fair Elections Legal Network
Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Project Vote
Tenants and Workers United

Virginia AFL-CIO
Virginia Association of Personal Care Assistants
Virginia Conservation Network
Virginia Education Association
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy
Virginia League of Conservation Voters
Education Fund
Virginia Organizing Project
Virginia Poverty Law Center
Virginia Sierra Club
Voice of Vietnamese Americans
Women's Voice, Women Vote
Working America

These organizations work for the common good of all residents of Virginia. This Voter Guide was developed so everyone can know how to register to vote and learn more about voter rights and responsibilities. In addition, the Voter Guide provides information about important issues in the state so that you can be more informed when you go to the polls.

Virginia Election

November 3, 2009

Polls open at 6 a.m. and close at 7 p.m.

Note: If you are standing in line when the polls close, you will be allowed to vote.

Important Information

- * Deadline to register to vote is Monday, October 5, 2009 by 5 p.m.
- * Deadline for the registrar to receive your mailed or faxed Absentee Ballot application is Tuesday, October 27, 2009 by 5 p.m.
- * Deadline for voting an Absentee Ballot in person is Saturday, October 31, 2009 by 5 p.m.
- * If you will be away from your home on Election

Day or are unable to go to the polls because of illness, disability, or certain other reasons, you may vote by absentee ballot.

- * Absentee voting will begin on or about September 21, 2009, in the local voter registration offices for voters who will not be able to vote on November 3.
- * Citizens needing to verify their voter registration status are encouraged to call their local voter registration office as early as possible prior to the October 5 voter registration deadline.

Virginia Voter Registration Information



Can I register to vote in Virginia?

Yes, if you are a U.S. citizen, your home is in Virginia, and you are 18 or older. If you will be 18 by the next general election (November 3, 2009), you can register when you are 17. If you have been convicted of a felony or if you have been declared mentally incapacitated by a circuit court, you must first have your voting rights restored.

When can I register?

You can register at any time. To vote in a general or primary election, you must register at least 29 days before the election. For this election, the deadline is October 5, 2009. If you are already registered and you haven't moved, you do not need to register again.

Where can I register?

You can register at your local voter registration office, at specially-scheduled registration sites, at the Department of Motor Vehicles, at the Department of Social Services, or at many other local and state social service agencies.

Can I register by mail?

Yes, you can register by mailing in a postal registration application, available at most public libraries and information centers. You can also print out an application on your computer, complete the form and mail it in. (The website is: <http://www.sbe.virginia.gov>)

You can also call your local voter registration office and have an application mailed to you.

What information do I need to register?

You must give under oath your full legal name and current home address, your Social Security number, and the address where you were last registered to vote, if any.

Do I have to state my political party preference?

No, Virginia does not have registration by political party.

Do I have to register for each election?

No, your registration remains valid unless you change your address.

What should I do if I change my name or address after I register?

If you have moved within Virginia or changed your name, you must notify your local voter registration office of your new address or name, in writing. To do this, just fill out the back of your voter card and mail it in. Or, stop by your voter registration office or any registration site and complete a new application form.

Once you complete a new application, or the voter registration office receives notice of your address or name change, you will be sent a new voter card with your new polling place information.

The voter registration office must receive your written notification by October 5. (In some cases, you will still be allowed to vote even if you have moved and forgotten to notify the voter registration office. But the laws about this are very complex and it's better to be safe than sorry!)

If you move outside of Virginia, you are no longer eligible to vote in Virginia, and you must register to vote in your new state.

Can I transfer my registration from another state to Virginia?

No, you must register to vote in Virginia, and your previous registration will be cancelled.

About Elections in Virginia

When are elections held?

November General Elections

Statewide general elections are held each year on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November for the purpose of electing federal or state executive and legislative representatives. Local elected representatives may also appear on the November general election ballot. The election schedule for federal and state offices is in the box below.

Most counties and cities also elect Constitutional officers — offices prescribed by the Constitution of Virginia, unless the county or city’s charter provides otherwise — in November general elections. These offices are Sheriff, Attorney for the Commonwealth, Treasurer, Commissioner of the Revenue, and Clerk of the Circuit Court. These offices are usually elected in odd-numbered years and serve for four-year terms, except for Clerk of the Circuit Court, which serves an eight-year term.

In most counties, the members of the Board of Supervisors and School Board and certain other local offices are also elected in November. These offices are typically elected to four-year terms. The frequency of the elections may vary by community. Some cities elect their city offices at November general elections; terms and frequency may vary.

✓ Check it out!

Office	Term	Next Election
	Federal Offices	
President and Vice President of the United States	Four years	2012
United States Senate	Six years; two seats on staggered terms	2012 and 2014
U.S. House of Representatives	Two years; eleven seats	2010
	Virginia Offices	
Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General	Four years	2009
Virginia Senate	Four years	2011
Virginia House of Delegates	Two years	2009

May General Elections

Some cities and towns elect their Mayors, City Council members, School Board members, and other offices at May general elections, held on the second Tuesday in May. Term limits and frequency of elections vary from community to community.

Primary Elections

The Democratic and Republican parties may choose to select their nominees for offices in November general elections through primary elections or conventions, usually held in June.

Special Elections

Special elections are held when a vacancy occurs in any elected office or when a referendum election is called. Depending upon the timing of the vacancy or the call for the referendum, a special election may take place on the same day as a general election. Special elections are always held on Tuesdays.

Since specific elected offices, terms of office, and frequency of elections vary, please contact your local voter registration office for specific election information in your community.

Absentee Voting

Who can vote by absentee ballot?

Citizens who will be absent from their city or county on Election Day, or who are unable to go to the polls because of illness or disabilities, may vote early (in person or by mail). Valid reasons for voting absentee are citizens who are:

- Students at institutions of higher learning and their spouses
- Absent for business purposes
- Absent for personal business or vacation
- Required by employer to work/commute at least 11 of the 13 hours the polls are open
- Unable to get to the polls because of physical disability, illness, or pregnancy

- Caretakers of confined family members
- Awaiting trial and under confinement
- Serving time for misdemeanor convictions
- Active duty uniformed services or merchant marine personnel and their dependents
- Regularly employed or temporarily living outside the U.S. and dependents
- Unable to go to the polls due to religious obligations
- Serving as an election official

How do I apply for an absentee ballot?

First, you need to get a Virginia Absentee Ballot Application. You can get this from your local voter registration office, or you can print one out on a computer.

The website is: www.sbe.state.virginia.gov.

Be sure the application includes the reason you need to vote absentee; the address you wish the ballot mailed to; your name, address, last four digits of your Social Security number and signature. A separate application must be completed for each election in which you need to vote absentee.

When can I apply for an absentee ballot?

You can apply for an absentee ballot as early as 12 months before an election. If you apply by mail or fax, your registrar must receive your application by the Tuesday before the election date. If you apply in person at the voter registration office, you must complete the application and vote your ballot by 5:00 p.m. on the Saturday before the election.

How do I vote the absentee ballot?

You will receive specific instructions with your ballot. Vote the ballot as soon as you receive it. Seal your voted ballot in the envelope provided, in the presence of a witness. You may deliver your own voted ballot in person, or mail it to your electoral board office using the pre-addressed envelope provided with your ballot. Your ballot must be received by no later than 7:00 p.m. on Election Day in order to be counted.



Can I vote my absentee ballot in person?

Yes, all local election offices allow you to vote an absentee ballot in person beginning approximately 45 days before the election, either at the voter registration office or other approved locations.

If you go in person to the voter registration office, you do not need to bring a completed application. You will complete the application at the office and then vote your ballot at the same time.

What if I want to vote on Election Day, but I have a disability that makes voting difficult?

The election officials are committed to making sure you can vote. If you have difficulty getting into the

Certain individuals with physical disabilities or illnesses may be eligible to submit an annual application for absentee ballots. Instead of applying separately for each election in a calendar year, this single application, filed just once a year, will allow the registrar to send you ballots for any election that may occur in your district during that year. A statement from your physician or accredited religious practitioner must accompany your first annual application filed.

polling place, the election officials can bring a ballot to you in your vehicle outside the polling place.

If you have limited vision, the voting machines are equipped with devices to help you vote in secret. If you have other disabilities, you can ask someone to assist you with voting.

What do I do if I'm currently living abroad?

All U.S. citizens are entitled to vote in Federal Elections (the offices of President and Vice President, U.S. Senate, and U.S. House of Representatives). If you are an active duty member of the uniformed services, or if you are regularly employed abroad but maintain a permanent domiciliary address in Virginia to which you plan to return at some future date, you and any dependents residing with you are eligible to receive a full ballot, including all state and local offices and issues. Please complete the Federal Post Card Application.

These applications are available at any U.S. military base in the world, or you can print out your form on a computer (www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Forms_Publications). Complete your application and return it to the voter registration office in the locality where you last resided in Virginia.

I have been convicted of a felony. How do I regain my right to vote?

If you have been convicted of a felony in Virginia, you lose your voting rights. If your conviction was for a non-violent felony, you may apply for restoration of your voting rights three years after completing your sentence, as well as any suspended sentence, probation, parole or supervised release. There is an easy application form for this process, and once you have completed it, a decision about restoring your rights should be made within six months. Only the Governor can restore your voting rights.

If you have been convicted of a violent offense, drug distribution offenses, or voting fraud, you must wait five years before applying and the application process is more difficult.

To get an application, you can call the Secretary of the Commonwealth at (804) 692-2531. You can also print out an application on a computer (www.commonwealth.virginia.gov/JudicialSystem/Clemency/clemency.cfm).

If you were convicted of a felony in another state, your voting rights may have been restored automatically and you may be eligible to register to vote in Virginia. Check with your local voter registration office.

If you have been convicted of a misdemeanor, you do not lose your voting rights.

If you are a resident of another state who is temporarily incarcerated in Virginia, you may be able to vote in your home state. You need to consult the law of your home state regarding both criminal convictions and absentee ballots to see if this is a possibility.

Virginia Voter Rights and Responsibilities

As a Virginia voter, you have the following rights:

- To be treated with courtesy and respect by the election officials.
- To be notified if your voter registration has been accepted or denied.
- To vote if you have registered at your current address at least 29 days before Election Day.
- To seek help from the election officials if you are unsure about anything relating to the voting process.
- To be given a demonstration of how the voting equipment works.

- To have your paper ballot voided BEFORE IT IS CAST and be given a new one if you feel you have voted incorrectly. This applies only if your polling place uses paper or paper-style (punch-card or optical scan) ballots.
- To enter the full name of a write-in candidate if the candidate of your choice is not on the ballot (except in party primaries).
- To have a ballot brought to your vehicle instead of entering the polling place if you are 65 years of age or older, or if you are disabled.
- To have an officer of election or other person help you vote if you are physically disabled or unable to read or write. Blind voters may have any person assist them. Other voters may have anyone who is not their employer or union representative assist them.
- To vote even if you have no identification with you at the polling place. You must sign the "Affirmation of Identity" statement before voting if you have no ID.

Note: The officer of election or other person so designated who assists you in the preparation of your ballot shall do so in accordance with your instructions, without soliciting your vote or in any manner attempting to influence your vote, and shall not in any manner divulge or indicate, by signs or otherwise, how you voted on any office or question.

Exception: Voters who registered by mail on or after January 1, 2003, did not mail in a copy of their ID at that time, and fail to show one of the federally-required forms of ID when voting for the first time in a federal election must vote by Provisional Ballot. They may not use the "Affirmation of Identity" statement.

- To vote a Provisional Ballot if your status as a qualified voter is in question, and to be present when the Electoral Board meets to determine if your ballot will be counted.
- To bring your minor child (age 15 or younger) into the voting booth with you to observe you vote.

- To vote if you are in line by 7:00 p.m. when the polls close.
- To cast an absentee ballot if you are qualified to vote absentee.
- To register to vote absentee in Virginia if you are a U.S. citizen overseas and your last residence in the U. S. was in Virginia, or you are a Virginia resident away in the military.
- You cannot be denied the right to vote if you are eligible to do so.
- Jurisdictions must not apply standards or practices which deny or abridge the right to vote on account of race, must not deny any individual the right to vote on account of errors or omissions in registration applications which are not material to determining whether such individual is qualified to vote, and must not apply different standards and procedures to voters in determining whether they are qualified to vote.
- To ask the election official to call the General Registrar's office BEFORE you leave the polling place if you have problems regarding your eligibility to vote or the casting of your ballot.

As a Virginia voter, you have the following responsibilities:

- To treat the election officials with courtesy and respect.
- To keep your voter registration information up-to-date with your current address.
- To show your identification (ID) at the polls. If you do not have an ID with you at the polling place, you may still vote if you sign an Affirmation of Identity statement, depending on your registration status.
- To request assistance if you do not know how to use the voting equipment or have other questions about the voting process, or need assistance preparing your ballot because of a physical disability or inability to read or write.
- To check your ballot for correctness BEFORE casting it.
- To understand that once your ballot is cast, you CANNOT be given another ballot even if you think you voted incorrectly.

Check it out!

If you have any questions about your voter registration status or about elections in your locality, please contact your local voter registration office. The phone number is on the next page.

If you feel your voting rights have been violated or that you may have witnessed an election law being broken, contact the State Board of Elections at 1-800-552-9745, or via e-mail at info@sbe.virginia.gov.

County and City Voter Registration Offices

Accomack County 757-787-2935	Campbell County 434-332-9579	Fairfax City 703-385-7890	Hanover County 804-365-6080
Albemarle County 434-972-4173	Caroline County 804-633-9083	Fairfax County 703-222-0776	Harrisonburg City 540-432-7707
Alexandria City 703-838-4050	Carroll County 276-730-3035	Falls Church City 703-248-5085	Henrico County 804-501-4347
Alleghany County 540-965-1690	Charles City County 804-652-4606	Fauquier County 540-347-6972	Henry County 276-638-5108
Amelia County 804-561-3460	Charlotte County 434-542-5856	Floyd County 540-745-9350	Highland County 540-468-2013
Amherst County 434-946-9315	Charlottesville City 434-970-3250	Fluvanna County 434-589-3593	Hopewell City 804-541-2232
Appomattox County 434-352-5302	Chesapeake City 757-277-9797	Franklin City 757-562-8545	Isle of Wight County 757-365-6230
Arlington County 703-228-3456	Chesterfield County 804-748-1471	Franklin County 540-483-3025	James City County 757-253-6871
Augusta County 540-245-5656	Clarke County 540-955-5168	Frederick County 540-665-5660	King & Queen County 804-785-5980
Bath County 540-839-7266	Colonial Heights City 804-520-9277	Fredericksburg City 540-372-1030	King George County 540-775-9186
Bedford City 540-587-6007	Covington City 540-965-6381	Galax City 276-236-7509	King William County 804-769-4952
Bedford County 540-586-7649	Craig County 540-864-6190	Giles County 540-921-2802	Lancaster County 804-462-5277
Bland County 276-688-4441	Culpeper County 540-825-0652	Gloucester County 804-693-3080	Lee County 276-346-7780
Botetourt County 540-473-8235	Cumberland County 804-492-4504	Goochland County 804-556-5803	Lexington City 540-462-3706
Bristol City 276-645-7318	Danville City 434-799-6560	Grayson County 276-773-2842 x120	Loudoun County 703-777-0382
Brunswick County 434-848-4414	Dickenson County 276-926-1620	Greene County 434-985-5213	Louisa County 540-967-3427
Buchanan County 276-935-6534	Dinwiddie County 804-469-4512	Greensville County 434-348-4228	Lunenburg County 434-696-3071
Buckingham County 434-969-4304	Emporia City 434-634-9533	Halifax County 434-476-3322	Lynchburg City 434-847-1609
Buena Vista City 540-261-8605	Essex County 804-443-4611	Hampton City 757-727-6218	Madison County 540-948-6533

Manassas City 703-257-8230	Orange County 540-672-5262 x5466	Richmond County 804-333-4772	Surry County 757-294-5213
Manassas Park City 703-335-8806	Page County 540-743-3986	Roanoke City 540-853-1037	Sussex County 434-246-1047
Martinsville City 276-403-5122	Patrick County 276-694-7206	Roanoke County 540-772-7500	Tazewell County 276-988-1305
Mathews County 804-725-3200	Petersburg City 804-733-2429	Rockbridge County 540-463-7203	Virginia Beach City 757-4385-8683
Mecklenburg County 434-738-6191 x4313	Pittsylvania County 434-432-7971	Rockingham County 540-564-3055	Warren County 540-635-4327
Middlesex County 804-758-4420	Poquoson City 757-868-3070	Russell County 276-889-8006	Washington County 276-676-6227
Montgomery County 540-382-5741	Portsmouth City 757-393-8644	Salem City 540-375-3034	Waynesboro City 540-942-6620
Nelson County 434-263-4068	Powhatan County 804-598-5604	Scott County 276-386-3843	Westmoreland County 804-493-8898
New Kent County 804-966-9699	Prince Edward County 434-392-4767	Shenandoah County 540-459-6195	Williamsburg City 757-220-6157
Newport News City 757-926-8683	Prince George County 804-722-8748	Smyth County 276-783-4511 x4	Winchester City 540-545-7910
Norfolk City 757-664-4353	Prince William County 703-792-6470	Southampton County 757-653-9280	Wise County 276-328-8331
Northampton County 757-678-0480	Pulaski County 540-980-2111	Spotsylvania County 540-507-7380	Wythe County 276-223-6038
Northumberland County 804-580-4655	Radford City 540-731-3639	Stafford County 540-658-4002	York County 757-890-3440
Norton City 276-679-1162	Rappahannock County 540-675-5380	Staunton City 540-332-3840	State Board of Elections 1-800-552-9745 TTY 1-800-260-3466
Nottoway County 434-645-8148	Richmond City 804-646-5950	Suffolk City 757-514-7750	

 *Check it out!*

Want to find out who made donations to candidates for office, and how much they contributed? Check out the website of the Virginia Public Access Project:

www.vpap.org

Demand Real Health Care Reform This Year: Universal, Affordable, Comprehensive, Portable, Simple

*The time is now for an American solution that will
secure our families' health and a healthy economy.*

The Virginia Organizing Project is the Lead Partner Organization for the Health Care for America Now coalition in the state. Health Care for America Now (HCAN) is a national grassroots campaign of more than 850 organizations in 46 states representing 30 million people dedicated to winning quality, affordable health care we all can count on in 2009. HCAN principles are supported by President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, and more than 190 Members of Congress.



We are building a national movement to win comprehensive health care reform by helping mobilize people in their communities to encourage their U.S. Senators and Representatives in Congress to stand up to the insurance companies and other special interest groups to achieve quality, affordable health care in 2009.

HCAN Principles:

Coverage You Can Afford

- Health coverage that is affordable for every person, family and business.
- Coverage with premiums and out-of-pocket costs based on your ability to pay.
- Government acts as an advocate, setting and enforcing rules so private insurance companies can't deny coverage or raise rates based on health history, age or gender.

Comprehensive Benefits You Can Count On



- Standard, comprehensive health care benefits that meet your needs from preventive to chronic care.
- Low out-of-pocket costs (like co-pays) so you can afford to get medical care when you need it.
- Choice of doctors and hospitals.

Choice of Private or Public Health Insurance Plan

- Keep your current private insurance plan or join a new public health insurance plan.
- The choice of a new public health insurance plan is a guaranteed backup that will always be there to ensure quality, affordable health care coverage no matter what.

Equal Access to Quality Care

- Equity in health care access, treatment, research and resources to people and communities of color and stronger health services in low-income communities.

Demand Real Health Care Reform THIS YEAR!!

Call 1-888-436-8427

and ask our U.S. Senators and Representatives to support real health care reform in 2009.

We simply cannot wait.



*Contact Brian Johns if you would like more information about VOP's statewide
Health Care Strategy Committee at (276) 619-1920 or bjohns@virginia-organizing.org*



Virginia needs affordable, accessible, quality health care for ALL!!

- 15.1 percent of Virginians were uninsured in 2006
- Nearly one of every three Virginians (31.4 percent) under age 65 went without health insurance for all or part of 2007-2008
 - 81 percent of uninsured Virginians are members of working families
 - More than 10 working Virginians die EACH week due to lack of insurance
- 1.5 million Virginians under age 65 are in a family that spent over 10 percent of its income on health care cost last year
- Over the past 8 years, family health insurance premiums for Virginia's workers rose 4.1 times more quickly than median earnings

Contact your state Delegate and Senator and ask them to support legislation that will:

1. **Expand Medicaid coverage for parents** — Virginia should consider raising Medicaid eligibility for parents to the national average of 64 percent of the federal poverty level. Currently, Virginia only offers coverage to parents with family incomes below 30 percent of the federal poverty level.
2. **Increase FAMIS income eligibility** — The state should explore raising the income eligibility for FAMIS to 300 percent of the federal poverty level and allow children with family incomes above that level to buy-in to the program at full cost, yet, 187,000 children remain uninsured.
3. **Protect provider reimbursement rates** — Capping or reducing the growth of reimbursement rates to hospitals, nursing homes or other providers would likely limit access to care because providers become less likely to treat Medicaid patients.
4. **Access to health care coverage for health care workers** — Providing health care to health care workers is an issue of fairness and common sense. Despite working in the health care industry, thousands of health care workers in the Virginia are uninsured.

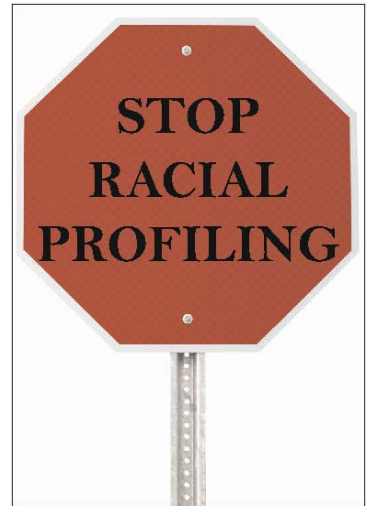
Racial Profiling Undermining Justice and Our Economy

Racial profiling — also known as biased policing — is the practice of stopping, detaining or searching people of color because of their race, skin color or ethnicity, particularly when driving. Law enforcement officers may not realize they engage in this practice because it can be subtle and subconscious. This inherited community problem makes both law enforcement and citizens unsafe by reinforcing distrust.

Clearly racial profiling violates the rights of the profiled individuals. *But racial profiling also has economic impacts.* Once a person enters the criminal justice system, their education or work are likely to be disrupted for a long period of time. Arrests or imprisonment can diminish future job prospects, and create a higher likelihood that they will re-enter the system.

The individuals who are most likely to be profiled — young men of color — are also the most likely to be unemployed already. In other words, racial profiling intensifies our current crisis.

As our nation experiences growing unemployment and economic disruption, surely the time has come to take aggressive action against racial profiling.



The Virginia Organizing Project supports local, state and federal action to end racial profiling. For example, we support the End Racial Profiling Act, which U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee Chair John Conyers is introducing again in 2009.

Enhanced law enforcement training on biased policing and its impact on law enforcement-community relations. We believe that training on these matters should include the affected community to better foster understanding between law enforcement and communities of color.

Systematizing local and state level data about traffic stop and ethnicity. Currently law enforcement officials routinely collect personal information during traffic stops if a citation is issued. We believe that the perceived race and ethnicity of the alleged violator should be recorded at every traffic stop, regardless of the outcome, to later be stored at a state agency. These data will be an empirical tool to help state administrators assess the prevalence of biased-based policing. Community relations will always be difficult if everyone acts on their opinions, not on facts.

Complaint processes which communities of color trust. Most perceived incidents of racial profiling are never reported, since those who experience them have little confidence that action will be taken, and often fear reprisal. There must be processes in place that are independent of local law enforcement, and that are easily accessed and well-publicized.

Please eliminate racial profiling by supporting these proposed reforms!

For more information, contact Larry Yates at (540) 436-3432 or llyates@shentel.net.

REFORM IMMIGRATION FOR America

We are a nation of immigrants. More than 10 percent of Virginians were born outside of the United States. We need to let Congress and the Obama Administration know that Virginia demands immigration reform guided by the following principles:

Immigration reform must promote economic opportunity. We must renew our commitment to helping all low-income Americans improve their job prospects and move up the economic ladder towards the American Dream. Opponents of reform try to pit the needs of native-born workers against immigrants, but our vision of reform is that a rising tide lifts all boats. Immigrants and citizens working shoulder to shoulder, with the same labor protections, access to programs and services, due process, and faith in a system that works for them and their families—this is our vision for a stronger America.

Immigration reform must be comprehensive. Comprehensive immigration reform would recommit our country to being both a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws. Unless we reform the broken immigration system as a whole, we will fail to solve the problems at hand.

The necessary components of reform include:

- (1) improving the economic situation of all workers in the U.S.;
- (2) legalizing the status of undocumented immigrants working and living in the U.S.;
- (3) reforming visa programs to keep families together, protect workers' rights, and ensure that future immigration is regulated and controlled rather than illegal and chaotic;
- (4) implementing smart, effective enforcement measures targeted at the worst violators of immigration and labor laws;
- (5) prioritizing immigrant integration into our communities and country; and,
- (6) respecting the due process rights of all in the U.S.

Long-term reform requires long-term solutions. We acknowledge that the factors shaping immigration are not just domestic, and that the issue transcends our borders. It matters how we as a country approach our relationships with other nations. We must deal with the domestic aspect of this issue, and work in partnership with other countries over time to develop long-term strategies that improve the economic conditions in regions that supply large numbers of economic migrants. Responsible and accountable approaches in this regard, coupled with improving skills and opportunities for our domestic workforce, will improve the economic outlook for all our communities.

For more information on this campaign, please visit the National Immigration Forum at www.immigrationforum.org/action, or contact Tim Freilich, Legal Director of the Legal Aid Justice Center's Immigrant Advocacy Program (Tim@justice4all.org). Legal Aid Justice Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit legal assistance program. Visit them online at: www.justice4all.org.

LEGAL AID JUSTICE CENTER

Car Title Lending: How It Works, How It Hurts, How to Fix It

Poverty & The Working Poor

Between 1996 and 2006, as Virginia's robust economy strengthened, the wage gap between the top 10 percent and bottom 10 percent of wage earners grew more in the Commonwealth than in any other state. Top wage earners made more than \$10 per hour more than they did in 1979. Those with the lowest wages made a dime more than they did in 1979. Currently, 20 percent of workers have household incomes that put them below the federal poverty level (FPL). That's nearly 800,000 people. Too often our policy makers ignore or overlook these hard-working Virginians when confronted with complex policy decisions that impact everyday life.

(Source: The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis)

Car title lenders charge astronomical interest rates, ranging from 25-30 percent per month, which amounts to an APR of 300-360 percent.

Car Title Lending Overview

A car title loan is a secured personal loan for which a borrower's automobile is used as collateral. The companies that provide these loans are commonly referred to as car title lenders. Car title lenders advertise their product as quick and hassle-free. They utilize a simple process, which involves no credit check, requires minimal documentation, and takes less than a half hour. However, car title lenders charge triple digit annual interest rates. These astronomical rates trap borrowers under a debilitating load of debt and often cause people to lose an invaluable asset.

The Process

Car title lenders provide loans for up to 50 percent of a vehicle's wholesale value. To obtain these loans, borrowers must give up the title to a vehicle owned outright, along with a set of keys.

The Problem

Car title lenders charge astronomical interest rates, ranging from 25-30 percent per month, which amounts to an APR of 300-360 percent. In addition, car title lenders require borrowers to pay transactional fees ranging from \$50 - \$100.

Car title lending interest rates trap borrowers in financial quicksand. When people are unable to repay their loan within a 25-30 day repayment period, lenders send monthly billing statements, requesting a minimum payment. Once received, the minimum payment is applied mostly, if not exclusively, to interest. As a result, borrowers remain indebted for an indefinite period of time despite making hefty monthly payments, slipping further and further behind. Some people sink faster than others, but many are left with a tough choice: Continue to make budget crippling payments, sell the car to pay off the debt, or lose the car to the lender, since it is the collateral for the debt owed.

Car title lenders repossess vehicles when borrowers become unable to make loan payments. The repossession of a vehicle owned outright can be devastating to a family. It eliminates a financial asset and leaves people without a source of transportation. In Virginia, transportation is often a family's key link to work, school, health care, and child care.

The Solution

Virginia must regulate car title lending. In the coming months, a special study committee comprised of state legislators will examine the industry's practices and develop policy recommendations for the 2010 General Assembly session. To effectively curb abusive lending practices, any resulting legislation must impose a reasonable cap on car title loan interest rates.

Gerrymandering Subverts Democracy

Ask for Bipartisan Redistricting Reform

Every decade, Virginia legislators convene to redraw the lines of our state's electoral districts. However, our current system promotes "partisan redistricting" which gives the party in control of the legislature power to control how districts get carved out. With the advent of powerful mapping technologies, these delegates and senators can now use computers to draw preferential, or "safe," districts to a degree never before seen.

With these districts being designed to strongly favor one party or another, it comes as no surprise to see the growing polarization and consequent gridlock of government. Allowing representatives to determine who they represent inverts the intended practice, and is questionable at best. Districts drawn according to political affiliations typically cut through geographic features, dividing communities and representational interests. By drawing "party stronghold" districts, real electoral decisions are moved from elections to the primaries, where as few as 1 percent of eligible voters are deciding who wins. Other states have instituted bipartisan redistricting commissions. In Iowa such commissions pass committee-designed maps without much deliberation, a signal that overall, legislators are quite amiable to a process that also bolsters public confidence in the system. To remedy these issues in Virginia, the General Assembly should create non-partisan redistricting. Non-partisan redistricting is a threshold issue for the concerns of The Center and will help uphold the principle that the Virginia legislature, in the words of Thomas Jefferson, will do "equal and impartial justice to all its citizens."

Good Government – Ensure a fair process in 2011

- Currently, district lines are drawn by the party in charge of the General Assembly. This means representatives choose their voters, not the other way around.
- Either party may hold the majority and/or the governor's office in 2011. Bipartisan reform protects everyone from partisan gerrymandering by creating a balanced commission to draw the lines.
- Districts will be drawn around geographic communities instead of areas of political benefit.

Ethics – Voters are focused on ethics issues

- Voters have consistently cited ethics as a top concern on Election Day.
- Bi-partisan redistricting will increase voters' trust in the General Assembly while still allowing members to approve final districts.

Voting Rights – Protect the requirements of the Voting Rights Act

- All districting maps, from the very beginning of the drafting process, have to conform with the Voting Rights Act.
- Federal law prohibits diluting minority voting rights. No matter the process used to draw the district maps, the federal law still holds.

Learn More, Take Action, Get Involved

www.fixthelines.com

Learn more about the redistricting reform movement, and how you can become involved. Read the latest polling information on attitudes about the current redistricting process.

Contact your legislator

Thousands of Virginians have already pledged their support and called their representatives. Add your voice to the chorus for strong communities, less gridlock and an end to partisan gerrymandering.

Local teams are forming

Across Virginia, teams are forming to educate their neighbors, spread the word, and organize efforts to contact lawmakers.

Among poll respondents, there is clear dissatisfaction with the partisan way in which redistricting is done and the protection it provides to politicians.

About the Center

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy is a non-partisan, non-profit advocacy organization working with and through the faith informed community to empower individuals and communities, advance progressive public policy, and promote the interests of those on Virginia's economic and social margins according to the shared tenets of the mainstream faith community.
www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org.

RESTORATION OF VOTING RIGHTS IN VIRGINIA: IT IS TIME TO DO THE RIGHT THING

DID YOU KNOW that more than 5.3 million Americans and more than 300,000 Virginians have lost their right to vote because of a felony conviction?

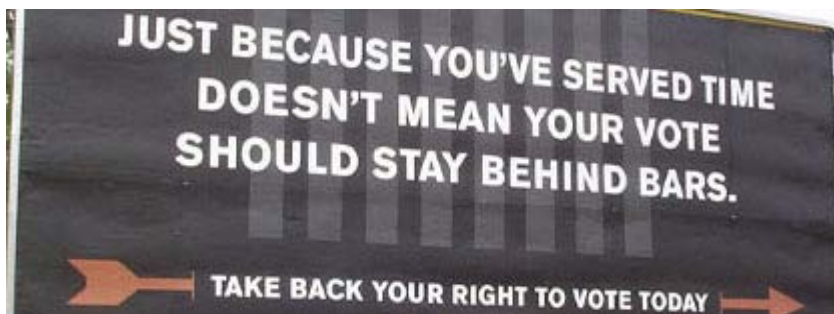
DID YOU KNOW that 48 states restrict the rights of felons to vote, but only Virginia and Kentucky permanently restrict every felon's right to vote?

DID YOU KNOW that 38 states restore voting rights to all former felons upon their completion of their incarceration, probation or parole?

DID YOU KNOW that only the Governor of Virginia can restore a felon's right to vote and that only occurs when the individual applies for restoration of voting rights and the Governor agrees to do so?

DID YOU KNOW that in the last 12 years, 16 states have modernized their laws to help provide opportunities for felons to vote?

DID YOU KNOW that in recent years the Virginia General Assembly has annually rejected legislation that would have modified Virginia's law, even killing measures that would have only helped those convicted of non-violent felonies to vote?



What is the law in Virginia?

The Constitution of Virginia restricts the right of all felons to vote unless that right has been restored by the Governor and that only after the individual has applied to the Governor for restoration of voting rights.

Why change the law?

Voting is a right in a democracy, not a privilege. More than 300,000 Virginians have made a mistake, paid for that mistake with incarceration and, therefore, paid their debt to society; however they cannot vote unless the Governor responds positively to their application, a process that can be complicated and intimidating.

Need assistance?

If you need help in obtaining forms or have any questions related to the restoration of your voting rights, please contact:

Virginia Voter Restoration Project — ACLU of Virginia

530 East Main Street, Suite 310

Richmond, VA 23219

(804) 644-8080 * amuse@acluva.org

www.restoreourvote.org

An important issue is the disproportionate impact of Virginia's law upon people of color. Twenty percent of African-Americans of voting age cannot vote in Virginia. In fact, two-thirds of Virginians who have been disenfranchised are people of color, the second highest number of disenfranchised in the entire country.

Furthermore, research shows that individuals who vote after completing their sentences are half as likely to commit another crime as those who do not vote.

Ensuring Quality Home Care in Virginia



Every day in Virginia, tens of thousands of seniors and Virginians with disabilities rely on direct care professionals—personal care assistants, nursing aides, and home care attendants—for the crucial at-home care they need to live at home and be a part of their community.

Rising Demand for Services

With the aging of the baby boomers, the number of seniors requiring assistance with daily tasks will rise dramatically. In fact, by 2030, the population of Virginians 65 or older will increase by 130 percent.

Virginia needs to ensure a stable, quality workforce of home care workers is in place to meet that demand. And we can—if we tackle the home care workforce crisis.

High Turnover Threatens Quality Care

Low wages, lack of health care benefits, and lack of training mean that seniors and people with disabilities struggle to find and keep workers. Virginia ranks 45th in average wages for home care workers nationally. The

resulting high turnover among home care workers jeopardizes consumers' ability to maintain their independence, maintain jobs and maintain their health. We can do better.

Virginia's seniors and people with disabilities will be at risk of unwanted, unnecessary and costly institutionalization without a stable workforce in place. In addition, home care workers save Virginia's taxpayers money every day. Data shows that, each year, home care workers like Personal Care Assistants save taxpayers \$567 million by caring for our loved ones at home instead of in more costly institutions.



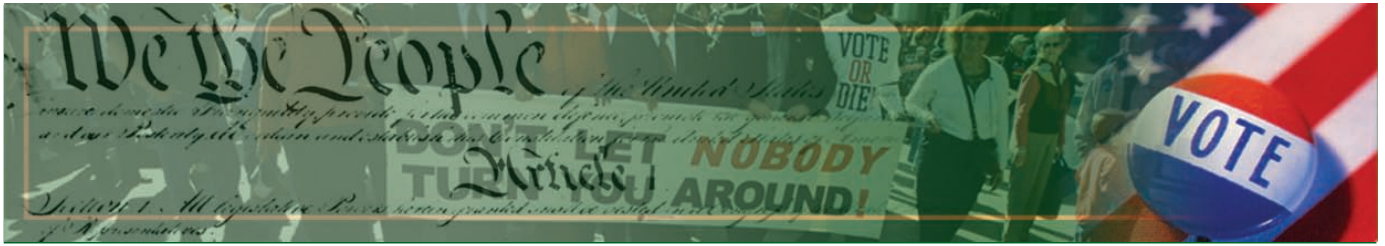
PCAs advocate for Quality Home Care in Richmond

Take Action Today

Let's ensure that Virginia acts today to guarantee there is a quality home care workforce in place for our loved ones and ourselves.

Call your state Delegate and Senator today and urge them to support a stable, quality home care workforce by **voting to increase Medicaid rates for personal care services, and providing health care benefits for all home care workers.** Thank you.

For more information on Quality Home Care, contact the Virginia Association of Personal Care Assistants at 1-800-893-8343 or visit www.virginiapca.org



Our Mission

Advancement Project is a democracy and justice action group. Using law, public policy and strategic communications, we act in partnership with local communities to advance universal opportunity, equity and access for those left behind in America.

Our Work

The core strategy of our Voter Protection Program is to monitor election administration policies, practices, and procedures early in the election cycle, in order to identify, expose, address, and fix problems before they create barriers for voters on Election Day. We are committed to working with our local partners to increase democratic participation, particularly in traditionally underrepresented communities of color and in low-income communities.

Our Resources

Our recent publications include:

- **Voter Protection Action Kit** – The Action Kit is a collection of tips, examples, and resources to address election problems pre-Election Day and to help community partners develop processes to successfully meet and exceed voter protection related goals. It can be accessed at: <http://www.advancementproject.org/pdfs/vp/VPPActionKitFinal.pdf>
- **Voter Protection Laws in a Nutshell** – The Virginia Nutshell is intended to distill complex election law for lawyers, advocates, voter registration campaigns and "Get Out the Vote" campaigns. It can be accessed at: <http://www.advancementproject.org/publications/power-and-democracy.php>.

Contact Us

To learn more about our work in Virginia, please contact Bradley Heard, Senior Attorney, at (202) 728-9557 or bheard@advancementproject.org.





The Missing Voter Project™

Everyone Wins When Everyone Votes!

SUPPORT INCLUSIVE, VOTER-FRIENDLY ELECTIONS

Restoration of Voting Rights for Non-Violent Felons Who Have Completed Their Sentences

Under a Jim Crow law enacted over a century ago to exclude Blacks from voting, convicted felons in Virginia are permanently stripped of their voting rights. Today there are about 300,000 ex-felons in Virginia who have completed their sentences but still cannot vote. Surveys show that most Virginians believe restoration of voting rights for non-violent felons is fair and racially just. We agree.

Voters Win With Early Voting and Election Day Registration

With in-person Early Voting (EV), voters can cast a ballot at multiple designated satellite polling places well before Election Day. Early Voting is rapidly gaining popularity because voters, especially hourly wage workers and commuters, find it far more convenient than traditional Election Day voting. Election Day Registration (EDR) allows eligible voters to register and cast a ballot on Election Day. Seven states currently have EDR. States with EDR have consistently boasted turnout rates 10 to 12 percentage points higher than states without it. Twenty-one states are considering EDR because it reduces unnecessary barriers to participation and empowers their residents. Virginia should adopt these reforms for voter-friendly elections.

GROW THE VOTE!

Join The Hampton Roads Missing Voter Project

The United States now has on average the lowest voter turnout in the world among mature democracies. Not voting has reached epidemic levels in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. We estimate that 270,000 registered voters in Hampton Roads region did not vote in the 2004 presidential election. The turnout for non-presidential, local elections is drastically worse. It doesn't have to be this way. We can have elections where everyone has a say. As a non-profit, non-partisan public service, the Hampton Roads Missing Voter Project works in neighborhoods across the region to help historically underrepresented citizens to register and vote.



You can make a difference. By becoming a member of the Missing Voter Project, you can help build an inclusive voting electorate that looks like and serves all of us and not just some of us.

- For membership information please call: **800.509.9409**
- For more information, please go to: **www.missingvoter.org**

Democracy South • www.democracysouth.org

Free Virginia from Workplace Discrimination

In Virginia, a person can legally be fired or refused employment by any private employer on the basis of that person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Governor Tim Kaine took steps to correct this injustice by including sexual orientation in Executive Orders that establish the Commonwealth's policy against workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation in state employment.

Executive Orders are not permanent, lasting only as long as a governor chooses to make nondiscrimination the state's policy.



Until the legislature acts to codify the protection against workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation, no Virginia employee has the assurance of equal opportunity in the workplace.

Join us in our efforts to achieve equality in the workplace. Visit our website at www.equalityvirginia.org

**The right to employment free
from discrimination is a basic
human and civil right.**

EVEF, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, is tasked with providing the research and educational foundation for EV's advocacy and to provide legal analysis and education on issues affecting GLBT Virginians.



403 N. Robinson Street, Richmond VA 23220 | 804.643.4816 | www.equalityvirginia.org

Employee Free Choice Act

Our economy only works when it works for everyone. In good times but especially in bad, America is a community that has been able to get ahead by bringing everyone along.

The need for American families and working people to hold corporations accountable and make sure they're working for everyone's interest is more important than ever. Through unions, workers come together to balance their voices with the power of corporations, and to build an economy that works for everyone.

Why do we need the Employee Free Choice Act?

Even before the recession, families were finding it increasingly hard to make ends meet, pay for health care, send their kids to college, and save for retirement. As employers develop strategies for dealing with weak economic conditions, unions play a critical role in ensuring we get our economy back on track with good business practices, not more of the same.

Corporations routinely intimidate, harass, coerce and even fire people who try to organize unions — and today's labor law is powerless to stop them. Every day they deny working people the freedom to make their own choice about whether to have a union:

- Employees are fired in one-quarter of private-sector union organizing campaigns;
- And even after workers successfully form a union, one-third of the time they are not able to get a contract.

What does the Employee Free Choice Act do?

1. Strengthens penalties for companies that illegally coerce or intimidate employees in an effort to prevent them from forming a union;
2. Brings in a neutral third party to settle a contract when a company and a newly certified union cannot agree on a contract after three months;
3. Allows workers — not their employers — the choice over how they want to form a union: through an election or majority sign-up. Both methods have been around for years and majority sign-up ("card check") means that if a majority of the employees sign union authorization cards, a company must recognize the union. *Large national companies with good profit margins and good labor relations, such as AT&T and Kaiser Permanente, have used majority sign-up successfully for years.*

Congress Should Pass the Employee Free Choice Act Now!

The Employee Free Choice Act isn't just about individual workers,
it is about strengthening whole communities.

We are asking Congress to support and pass the Employee Free Choice Act.

*For more information, contact Steve Savner at ssavner@communitychange.org or (202) 339-9312;
or about the Campaign for Community Values visit www.communitychange.org*



SIERRA
CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Virginia Chapter



Help Bring Offshore Wind Energy to Virginia's Coast

Our General Assembly and Congressional members should embrace a secure energy future for Virginia by sponsoring and supporting policy decisions that will advance the development of coastal wind energy.

Wind is a clean, renewable resource. Unlike coal, oil, gas and uranium, offshore wind is a clean, renewable energy source, which can help Virginia meet its renewable energy targets. Offshore wind turbines emit no air pollution and don't foul our rivers; they pose no risk of mercury poisoning; they do not cause asthma or other lung ailments. They require no mountaintop removal coal mining, produce no radioactive waste, do not spill toxic sludge onto our beaches, and do not consume scarce fresh water resources for washing coal or cooling generating plants.

Offshore wind is a proven, commercially available technology. Offshore wind offers an energy solution that can be adopted *now*. The technology is well-established worldwide, with offshore wind farms in ten countries, totaling more than 1,130 megawatts (MW). U.S. offshore projects are moving ahead in six other Atlantic states. Delaware has recently approved a 450 MW wind farm 11.5 miles off its coast, and a 420 MW wind farm in Nantucket Sound off the southern coast of Massachusetts has nearly completed federal review. Rhode Island and New Jersey have recently awarded projects of 400 MW and 350 MW, respectively. New York and Georgia also are studying offshore project sites for near-term development.

Wind energy offers price stability. Conventional fuels, including oil, coal, natural gas and uranium, are increasingly subject to price volatility. Once a wind farm is built, however, its fuel is free, making it possible for businesses and consumers to reliably forecast their energy costs well into the future. Using fossil fuels to generate electricity is like taking out an adjustable rate mortgage; consumers are committed to paying for fuel price increases, as well as any costs of additional emissions controls that might be required by future environmental regulations, for the entire life of the plant. This represents a huge risk, especially over a typical power plant service life of 25 years. Using wind is like taking out a fixed-rate mortgage and locking in stable prices decades into the future.

Offshore wind farms create jobs. A recent University of Massachusetts, Amherst report concluded that investment in clean energy, such as offshore wind, would create nearly four times more jobs than spending the same amount of money on oil energy resources. The economic advantages of offshore wind are even greater when job benefits are considered. Construction, installation, operation and maintenance require a skilled labor force that can be hired and trained locally. Many of the components of wind turbines can also be fabricated locally, taking advantage of Virginia's strong maritime industrial base.

Interested in more information? Contact the Sierra Club-Virginia Chapter at 804.225.9113
or visit: www.virginia.sierraclub.org

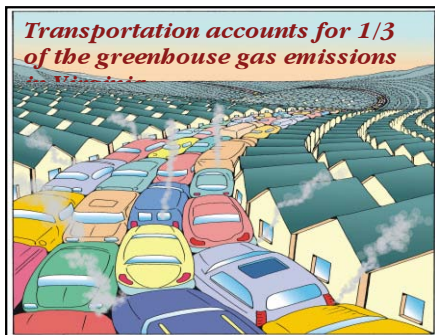


Virginia families are struggling with the economic downturn, rising energy costs and crippling traffic congestion. Renewable energy and energy efficiency will help create jobs and lower our reliance on oil, but smarter growth in our own communities can also ease pain in our pocketbooks, combat climate change, and improve our quality of life.

Old Habits... or a Smarter Approach?

Traffic Congestion

Each minute you spend in your car is a minute less doing the things that make your life meaningful. You also produce more emissions that lead to climate change (20 pounds per gallon of gas). We have built more and more roads, but traffic has only gotten worse.



Unmanaged

In the past few decades, out of control growth throughout Virginia has led to crushing traffic jams and frustrated citizens. This "sprawl" also wastes government resources on more and more miles of asphalt, forcing citizens to drive for every need. Virginia has lost more than 1 million acres of farmland to development in the last 20 years.

Demand Bold Leadership!

We can move in a new direction by promoting transit, intercity rail and walkable communities as a fiscally responsible way of solving climate change and improving our quality of life.

Tell your legislators to support the smarter approach!

WANT TO STAY CONNECTED? --- Visit www.valcvf.org to sign up for periodic updates and learn how to support smarter growth and clean energy solutions.

Transit Solutions



Investing in transit systems that help move people easily is an essential part of reducing traffic congestion. Both freight and passenger rail greatly reduce the number of cars and trucks on the road.

Comfortable, Connected Communities

Reestablishing the link between land use and transportation policies means targeting growth in our communities so we can get around by walking and biking - while driving less. **Connected communities are easier to navigate and create less pollution.**



Smart growth reinvests in existing communities to create connected neighborhoods.



Dover Kohl/Urban Advantage



530 E. Main St. Suite 410
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 225-1902; info@valcvf.org

Working with You to Re-Power Virginia



Right when Virginia needs clean energy the most, Dominion Virginia Power and Old Dominion Electric Cooperative are asking us to spend more than \$8 billion for old-style, coal-fired power plants. The facilities, if approved, will pollute our air and water, increase the devastating practice of mountaintop removal coal mining, lead to higher electric bills, and release millions of tons of global warming pollution every year – for the next 50 to 60 years.

The Chesapeake Climate Action Network is fighting in communities, on the streets and in court to put an end to coal's dirty legacy in Virginia and usher in a new era of clean, efficient energy.

But we can't do it without you. Join the fight for a clean energy future to:



Use energy more efficiently

Simply by investing in energy efficiency measures – everything from compact fluorescent light bulbs to fuel efficient cars – we can boost Virginia's economy, lower the cost of energy, and avoid the need to build costly and polluting power plants for years to come.



Derive energy from renewables, not coal

Virginia has incredible untapped potential for renewable energy. We have the highest offshore wind potential in the east coast and yet we don't have a single wind turbine. In fact, only two percent of Virginia's energy comes from renewable sources like wind or solar. With your help, we can change that.



Create jobs, not pollution

Simply by investing in energy efficiency, Virginia could create up to 10,000 new high quality jobs. A proposed \$6 billion plant near Williamsburg, by contrast, would create at most 200 permanent jobs. As fossil fuels become more scarce and hard to find, clean energy can also help stabilize skyrocketing energy prices.

Be part of the solution.

Join CCAN today at www.chesapeakeclimate.org or call 804-767-8983.

Trying to save money? Try saving energy.



Lower your family's energy bills by taking advantage of tax credits, assistance programs, and simple tips. Learn more at vcnva.org

Simple Tips

Programmable thermostats allow you to automatically cut back the heat or AC while you are away.

Set your hot water heater no higher than 120° F.

Air dry your dishes instead of using the dishwasher's drying cycle.

Electronics in standby mode still use power. Plug them into a power strip for a quicker unplug when not in use.

Consider shading your air conditioning unit.

Use compact fluorescent light bulbs and install dimmers and timers to automatically turn lights off when not in use.

Keep the kitchen faucet lever on cold so you don't heat water you're not using.

Check for yellow flames in natural gas appliances. This means that the gas is burning inefficiently and needs an adjustment.

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

Struggling to pay bills? Contact the National Energy Assistance Referral Service at 1-866-674-6327 to find out how you can qualify for help with your heating and cooling bills.

*Learn more about
energy efficiency at
www.vcnva.org*

Weatherization Assistance Program

Weatherization reduces heating bills by 32 percent and overall energy bills by an average \$350 per year. Eligible homes can receive free repairs such as insulation, caulking, weather stripping, even furnace and AC replacement. Contact the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development at (804) 371-7112 for more information.

Save on Bills and Taxes with Energy Star®

Save energy and protect our environment by replacing your electronics, appliances and light bulbs with products rated by the government's Energy Star® program. With regular maintenance, you can reduce your future energy bills by up to 30 percent!

In 2009 and 2010, federal tax credits are available at 30 percent of the cost (up to \$1,500) for energy efficient windows, doors, insulation, roofs, HVAC systems, water heaters and biomass stoves.

From 2009 through 2016, federal tax credits are available at 30 percent of the cost (with no upper limit!) for geothermal heat pumps, solar panels, solar water heaters, small energy wind systems and fuel cells. Your installation costs may also qualify!

Virginia's sales tax holiday for Energy Star® appliances is the first weekend in October—buy appliances then to save even more!



Saving energy is as simple as changing a light bulb—anyone can do it!

Virginia Conservation Network (804) 644-0283 www.vcnva.org



Children are our special interest

Public school children and the people who serve them are our “special interests,” and we are proud of it. For nearly 150 years, the Virginia Education Association has been consistent to a fault. We want the best public schools for our children, we want the people who serve those children to be the best they can be and we want them treated fairly. That’s it. Pretty simple and straight forward.



When it comes to politics, of course, there are those who don’t like the fact that public school teachers and education support professionals are engaged in the political world. What our Association predecessors soon learned as they worked to create the first public schools — and what we continue to learn today — is that just about every decision that is made for or regarding our public schools is made by elected officials. So, how could we possibly be the guardians of public schools and our profession without being involved in the political process?

The VEA supports principle over partisanship. We support people who have demonstrated that they understand the value of a free public education for all children and who will be proponents of public schools on which most of our children depend.

We know that there are many, many Virginians who hold public education to the same level of importance as we do. And that is why we encourage every Virginian who believes that the children deserve the best our Commonwealth can provide to learn more about education issues and to cast an educated ballot on election day.

Want to know more about education issues? Contact the Virginia Education Association at (804) 648-5801 or visit www.veaweteach.org.

As Thomas Jefferson argued two centuries ago, a democracy requires at least two basics — free interchange of ideas and educated voters. We continue to believe that today.



What you can do

1. Learn more about uranium mining, and how you can become involved at www.vipl.org. Sign up to receive updates on the status of the study and other relevant news.
2. Increase awareness of the issue of uranium mining by writing letters to the editor of your local paper. An educated and engaged electorate is the most powerful tool to ensure that any study of the issue adequately covers all health and economic concerns.
3. Join up. Local teams are forming across Virginia to educate their neighbors, spread the word, and organize efforts to contact lawmakers.

[www.vipl.org]

About VIPL

Virginia Interfaith Power and Light helps congregations become energy efficient and works for policies that reduce the impact of global climate change. It is a program of the Virginia Interfaith Center, and is part of a national movement, with additional Interfaith Power and Light programs currently in 16 states.

Uranium Mining in Virginia

A hazard to health and national security

In the early 1980s, large tracts of land were leased within the Commonwealth for uranium mining. The largest of these was the Coles Hill deposit, in Pittsylvania County. Worried about the possible impacts these mines would have on the local rivers and streams, the General Assembly passed a moratorium on mining and milling until they received the results of a feasibility study. Ultimately, in 1985 the legislature declined to lift the moratorium, citing the risk to local waterways as well as the fact that Virginia would be the wettest climate such mining would have ever occurred in the U.S. With the Chernobyl disaster shortly after, the price of uranium plummeted, and the issue became dormant.

However, with the rising prices of uranium, private interests are once again pushing for a lift of the mining moratorium. Virginia Uranium, Inc. is a company founded by the Coles family, owners of the Coles Hill property. In 2007, a bill was introduced to the General Assembly that would create a study to determine whether uranium mining could be safely performed. Although it did not pass, the Virginia Coal and Energy Commission decided to pursue a study regardless, and created a subcommittee to study uranium mining. Currently, the subcommittee has begun talks with the National Research Council to create a scope-of-study report.

Although this issue may only seem to concern Southside Virginia, lifting the moratorium would allow mining throughout the entire Commonwealth, and land all the way up to Orange County had been previously leased for mining exploration. The waterways of cities from Virginia Beach to Fredericksburg would be potentially affected, and it is imperative that citizens get educated and involved on the issue.

Health Concerns

- For every half to full pound of usable uranium mined, a full ton of radioactive rock (known as tailings) will be excavated. These tailings will be required to be held on site for hundreds of years afterward, and any breach of these holding facilities would release radioactive waste into nearby waterways.
- The proposed mine in Chatham would be the first east of the Mississippi, a climate that is significantly more wet and densely populated than any other mining location in the U.S.
- The amount of time that the waste will remain radioactive, coupled with Virginia's frequency of hurricanes, means that any storage facility will need to be able to weather multiple "once every hundred years" storms.

Economic Concerns

- Local businesses have already stated that due to the very perception of danger associated with an active uranium mine, they would be forced to relocate their operations, in the process costing an economically depressed community even more jobs.
- It is currently unclear whether proximity to the mine would impact the sale of local food produced and sold throughout the rest of the commonwealth.
- The presence of the mine may also serve as a disincentive for new businesses that may otherwise be attracted to the region.

Security Concerns

- Waters near the mine are carried all the way to the naval base in Norfolk. Should these waterways become contaminated, whether by accident or on purpose, the world's largest naval station would be directly affected.

Virginia Needs a Progressive Tax Structure

Virginia's current tax structure has several serious problems:

- Revenues raised by the current state tax structure, especially during a recession, are inadequate to address the basic responsibilities of government. For example, the General Assembly of Virginia has been unable to develop adequate funding for the maintenance and construction of a modern and efficient transportation system.
- Virginia's combined tax code (income, property, sales and excise taxes) is regressive, generating tax liabilities for the poorest Virginians (9.1 percent of income) that are higher than that of the state's wealthiest citizens (7.0 percent of income). (Source: Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy).
- Even the most progressive element in the overall tax structure — the state's income tax — can hardly be described as such, for its brackets have remained essentially unchanged since the 1920s. With a top marginal rate imposed on taxable income over \$17,000, many of Virginia's poorest citizens pay a marginal income tax rate identical to the state's richest citizens and an effective rate that is only slightly lower.
- Virginia's revenue growth lags behind population and general economic growth, thus forcing higher tax rates (or new hidden taxes) just to maintain existing services.

The current regressive tax structure impairs economic growth and employment. A progressive tax system helps to provide for a prosperous and sustainable economy. It is time for Virginia's leaders to recognize this and to initiate reforms that would transform the state's tax system. We need a tax system that is an agent of shared and expanding prosperity for the 21st century.

The Virginia Organizing Project supports the recommendation of well-known economist Joseph Stiglitz, who stated the following in a letter to New York's Governor David Paterson in March 2008: "When faced with such an unpleasant choice, economic theory and evidence gives a clear and unambiguous answer: it is economically preferable to raise taxes on those with high incomes than to cut state expenditures."

Virginia needs progressive tax reform now!



*For more information, please contact
Ben Greenberg at (434) 971-5700 or bengreenberg@infionline.net.*



Effective Virginia Tax Rates as a Percentage of Income (before/after federal deduction)*:

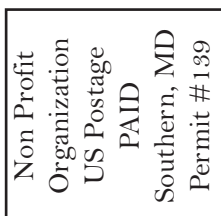
Top 1%:	7.0/4.8
Next 4%:	7.7/5.8
Next 15%:	8.2/6.6
Fourth 20%:	8.5/7.8
Middle 20%:	8.4/8.1
2nd 20%:	8.4/8.3
Lowest 20%:	9.1/9.0

**Source: Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy, 2003; includes sales, excise, property and income taxes.*

“The subjects of every state ought to contribute towards the support of government, as nearly as possible, in proportion to their respective abilities; that is, in proportion to the revenue which they respectively enjoy under the protection of the state.” — Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations (1776)

Virginia Organizing Project Statement of Beliefs

- We believe that all people should be treated fairly and with dignity in all aspects of life, regardless of race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, ability or country of origin.
- We believe that every person in the Commonwealth is entitled to a living wage and benefit package that is sufficient to provide the basic necessities of life, including adequate housing, a nutritious diet, proper child care, sound mental and physical health care, and a secure retirement.
- We believe that every person is entitled to an equal educational opportunity.
- We believe that community, economic, social and environmental policy should be developed with the greatest input from the people it is meant to serve, and that the policies should promote, celebrate and sustain the human and natural resources of Virginia.
- We believe in the elimination of the extremes of wealth and poverty, in a progressive tax system based on the ability to pay, and in making the nation's financial systems, including the Federal Reserve Bank, more responsive to the average citizen's needs.
- We believe that we should enhance and celebrate diversity in our community and in our state.
- We believe that those who have positions of authority in our governmental bodies, law enforcement agencies and institutions of learning should reflect the diversity of our communities.
- We believe that our public officials should be held accountable for their actions and decisions.
- We believe in the rights of workers, consumers, shareholders and taxpayers to democratic self-organization.
- We believe in the elimination of the death penalty in all cases because it is fundamentally inhumane, ineffective as a deterrent to crime, and disproportionately and unjustly applied against people of color and those who are economically or educationally disadvantaged.
- We believe that physical and mental health are parts of personal and community well-being; we believe that Virginians have a broad public health and economic interest in ensuring that adequate care is available to low- and moderate-income residents.



Virginia Organizing Project
703 Concord Avenue
Charlottesville, VA 22903-5208

Working together for the common good in the Commonwealth:

ACLU of Virginia

(804) 644-8080 * www.acluva.org

Advancement Project

(202) 728-9557
www.advancementproject.org

Boat People SOS

(202) 728-9557 * bpsos.wordpress.com

Central Virginia APRI

(202) 508-3710 * www.apri.org

Chesapeake Climate Action Network

(804) 767-8983
www.chesapeakeclimate.org

Clean Water Fund

(202) 895-0420
www.cleanwaterfund.org

Democracy South

(757) 428-0645
www.democracysouth.org

Environment Virginia

(706) 594-5487
www.environmentvirginia.org

Equality Virginia

(804) 643-4816
www.equalityvirginia.org

Fair Elections Legal Network

(202) 331-0114
www.fairelectionsnetwork.com

Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

(202) 662-8600
www.lawyerscommittee.org

Project Vote

(800) 546-8683
www.lawyerscommittee.org

Tenants and Workers United

(703) 684-5697
www.tenantsworkers.org

Virginia AFL-CIO

(804) 755-8001 * www.va-aflcio.org

VA Association of Personal Care Assistants

(800) 893-8343 * www.virginiapca.org

Virginia Conservation Network

(804) 644-0283 * www.vcnva.org

Virginia Organizing Project

703 Concord Avenue * Charlottesville, VA 22903
(434) 984-4655 * www.virginia-organizing.org

Virginia Education Association

(804) 648-5801 * www.veaweteach.org

VA Interfaith Center for Public Policy

(804) 643-2474
www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org

Virginia League of Conservation Voters Education Fund

(804) 225-1902 * www.valcvef.org

Virginia Poverty Law Center

(804) 782-9430 * www.vplc.org

Virginia Sierra Club

(804) 225-9113
www.virginia.sierraclub.org

Voice of Vietnamese Americans

(703) 593-7182
voiceofvietneseamericans.blogspot.com

Women's Voice, Women Vote

(202) 659-9570 * www.wvww.org

Working America

(202) 637-5137
www.workingamerica.org