



The Danville Chapter visited U.S. Representative Robert Hurt's office and delivered a "cease and desist" notice to ask the Congressman to vote to end the government shutdown.



In Harrisonburg, Virginia Organizing led the community in a pilgrimage to honor loved ones who have been deported or died trying to cross the southern border for the National Day of Dignity and Respect.



The Virginia Organizing Fredericksburg Chapter canvassed their community to support immigrant reform. The group also went to Washington, D.C. on October 8 to support the national immigration rally on the National Mall.

News From the Grassroots

National Day of Dignity and Respect Comes to Virginia

On October 5, activists across the U.S. came together through 183 different events for the National Day of Dignity and Respect to support our immigrant neighbors. Thousands of people participated in the actions to show support and urge Congress to pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill with a clear path to citizenship and other important protections and rights for immigrants.

Comprehensive immigration reform with a path to citizenship has gained traction over the summer and in the last month. A group of Representatives introduced a more comprehensive immigration reform bill shortly after the government shutdown that has yet to be heard in committee. Now that the government shutdown has ended, Virginia Organizing is even more optimistic about the chances of comprehensive immigration reform being considered.

"Virginia Organizing is hopeful that a comprehensive immigration reform bill with a path to citizenship will be passed this year," said Virginia Organizing Chairperson Sandra A. Cook.

The National Day of Dignity and Respect provided an outlet for immigrants and

allies to speak out even more in support of comprehensive immigration reform and call for an immediate end to deportations.

"This was an opportunity for immigrants in the community to share our stories and put a human face on the need for comprehensive immigration reform," said Ana Ibarra, Virginia Organizing South Hampton Roads Chapter leader.

As part of the National Day of Dignity and Respect, Virginia Organizing hosted five events across the state. In Richmond, leaders attended a community event sponsored by Representative Eric Cantor and handed out flyers that educated individuals on the economic benefits of comprehensive immigration reform.

In Charlottesville, Virginia Organizing joined with Sojourners United Church of Christ Racial Justice Group, University-Community Action for Racial Equity, and Casa Alma Catholic Worker for a day of collective, dramatic storytelling that showcased Charlottesville's history of immigration and the struggle local immigrants face.

Local leaders in Harrisonburg participated in the October 5 celebration through a remembrance pilgrimage from Simms School to Court Square to honor loved ones that have been deported or died crossing the border.

The South Hampton Roads Chapter held an event at Holy Family Church in Virginia Beach to share stories of immigration, view *The Dream is Now* documentary, and take action by writing letters and making calls to Representative Scott Rigell encouraging leadership on comprehensive immigration reform.

In Fredericksburg, leaders canvassed local neighborhoods and registered individuals to vote. Domingo Bautista, Virginia Organizing Fredericksburg Chapter leader, discussed his participation in the National Day of Dignity and Respect.

"I want to invest more in the United States as a business owner and I want to make sure opportunities are available for all immigrants," said Bautista. "It is important for the Fredericksburg community to learn about immigration reform and know that there are real people affected by our nation's policies."

October 5 events led to a national rally on October 8 in Washington, D.C. About 100 Fredericksburg leaders from Virginia Organizing and the Spanish Information Network of Virginia joined thousands of supporters around the nation to raise awareness and call on Congress to support immigration. The national rally became an act of civil disobedience, during which more than 200 people were arrested, including eight Members of Congress.

Real people. Real change.

Virginia Organizing in the Commonwealth Campaign

Virginia Organizing is participating in the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign! If you are a state employee (including those who teach at a Virginia college), please consider making donations to Virginia Organizing using CVC code #3168. You can make a one-time donation or designate a regular payroll deduction to be given to Virginia Organizing, which helps by providing steady income for the whole year. Thank you for joining with others to spur Virginia Organizing on in its commitment to social, economic, and environmental justice.

Government Shutdown Over for Now

The U.S. government was shut down for 16 days and cost our nation approximately \$24 billion according to financial services company, Standard and Poor's (also known as S&P). While federal employees who were furloughed during the shutdown will receive pay for the time they lost from work, contractors and small businesses that rely on business from federal workers will lose wages and income from those 16 days. In addition, the short-term deal negotiated by Congress at the eleventh hour to avoid the first-ever U.S. credit default only includes funding for the government through January 15. This means if Congress fails to work out a budget, we could face yet another shutdown, costing our nation (the taxpayers) even more.

Virginia Organizing called on Congress to stop playing games with the livelihoods of millions. In Danville, Chapter leaders gathered at U.S. Representative Robert

Hurt's office to ask the Congressman to "cease and desist" his participation in the continued shutdown. The Chapter will continue to call on Representative Hurt to stop playing politics and, instead, focus on the best interests of Virginians and the U.S.

For the cost of the shutdown, our government could have nearly paid for the total annual costs of Head Start, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program combined (total \$25.2 billion).

Fall Fundraiser at The Haven

This year, Virginia Organizing is partnering with The Haven, a Charlottesville organization dedicated to ending homelessness, to host a special fall fundraiser. On Friday, November 22 from 7 to 9 p.m., we will "Sing the Unsung Heroes," those in our community who do the often unrecognized work that enriches our lives. The HYPE Step Team and the Downbeat Project will perform. Virginia Organizing will take donations at the door and for bowls left over from last year's Social Justice Bowl. There will also be cider, snacks, beer, and wine for sale. Contact Michele Mattioli at mattioli@virginia-organizing.org or 434-984-4655 ext. 223 for more information.

Help Get Out The Vote!

This year, Virginians will elect a Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General and House of Delegates on November 5. Will you help us get out the vote? Contact Harold Folley at 434-984-4655 ext. 231 or harold@virginia-organizing.org.

Leader of the Month Renee Stone



Renee Stone is an active Virginia Organizing leader in the Danville Chapter. Renee has been involved with Virginia Organizing for about two years.

"I got involved with Virginia Organizing because I receive Social Security and I wanted to raise my

voice to protect the program for myself, my family, and other people," said Renee.

While Social Security was the main issue that brought Renee to Virginia Organizing, she has also been involved in civic engagement, especially with seniors in her community. Renee has canvassed with Spring Break students, recruited new Virginia Organizing members from her neighborhood, written letters to the editor, registered voters and so much more.

Most recently, Renee participated in a community action calling on U.S. Representative Robert Hurt to stop the government shutdown and stop hurting Virginia families. She believes Congress should do their job and protect the programs that so many people rely on.

"People just want to take care of their families," said Renee. "The shutdown got in the way of that."

Thank you, Renee, for all that you do for Virginia Organizing and your community!

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

703 Concord Avenue
Charlottesville, VA 22903
(434) 984-4655 Fax: (434) 984-2803

Local Chapters

Augusta/Staunton/Waynesboro
Charlottesville/Albemarle County
Danville
Harrisonburg
Fredericksburg
Lee County
Martinsville/Henry County
South Hampton Roads
Washington County
Tri-Cities/Petersburg
Richmond

On Campus: UMW, VSU, CNU, UVA, E&H,
U of R, ODU

News in Brief

- Leaders across the state registered 255 voters in Virginia during the month of September!
- Have you ever considered having a house party to fundraise for Virginia Organizing? Get more information by contacting Sally Bastian at bastian@virginia-organizing.org.
- The Fredericksburg Chapter held a largely-attended forum on health care and the Affordable Care Act marketplace to educate people on the ways they can register for health insurance.
- 22 people attended a Land Use Committee meeting in Washington County, which required the Committee meeting to be moved. Five people spoke before the Committee for the first time. The Committee delayed any decisions about hydrofracking in the county and will continue to research the issue. Good work, Washington County leaders!
- Our Richmond Organizer, Cathy Woodson, visited Hungary and Slovakia to conduct community organizing trainings in Roma communities.



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