



South Hampton Roads Chapter leaders held multiple yard sales to help meet their \$10,000 fundraising goal this year.



Local leaders in Louisa County passed out information and assisted residents in registering to vote and provided information on the restoration of rights process and new photo ID laws.



More than 250 people showed up to support Medicaid expansion in Charlottesville at a local town hall meeting.

News From the Grassroots

Health Insurance Marketplace Exceeds Enrollment Expectations

According to the White House, 8 million Americans have signed up for private health insurance through the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) Health Insurance Marketplace, 3 million of which are young adults.

"We celebrate people having insurance because it has a real affect on people's lives and their quality of life," said South Hampton Roads Chapter leader Winston Whitehurst. "Thousands of lives are saved because of health insurance, but there are other tangible benefits like less time off work for being sick and an overall healthier society. Prevention and early treatment are key benefits of having health insurance."

In addition to providing health insurance for so many, the Affordable Care Act has seen other successes. Health care costs are rising at the slowest level on record; the Congressional Budget Office now estimates that the ACA will shrink the federal deficit and lower health insurance premiums even more than previously

anticipated; and Medicare/Medicaid costs are going down while more people are getting the health care coverage they need.

While there are definitely reasons to celebrate, there is also cause for concern as Virginia continues to debate Medicaid expansion that would provide health insurance for an additional 400,000 Virginians.

Currently, the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates are in a standoff over Medicaid expansion that has resulted in a budget stalemate and led to a special session of the General Assembly. The Senate's budget includes a plan to expand Medicaid, while the House of Delegates has refused to entertain any form of expansion, even one that focuses more on a private-public partnership.

Elizabeth La Grua, a Virginia Organizing Augusta/Staunton/Waynesboro Chapter leader, is very concerned about the way politicians are handling Medicaid expansion.

"There is a lot of political noise in Richmond that seems to be drowning out the voices of the people out here who are working hard but can't get insurance

because they fall in the Medicaid coverage gap," said La Grua. "Virginia Organizing wants our legislators to know that they should represent Virginians, not the political machine in Richmond that is blocking Medicaid expansion."

Virginia Organizing Chairperson Sandra A. Cook agreed, "We cannot wait any longer for the uninsured to get coverage. It's irresponsible and unreasonable to ask people to go without health care because the Virginia House of Delegates would rather play political games with their health and lives."

Virginia Organizing leaders across the state have stood up for Medicaid expansion at town hall meetings. In Charlottesville and Waynesboro, local leaders showed up to explain the importance of expansion to delegates opposing the plan. In Portsmouth, 20 Virginia Organizing leaders spoke at a town hall in support of expansion and took their stories to area legislators.

You can still make a difference on Medicaid expansion! Please contact your Virginia delegate and ask him or her to support Medicaid expansion. Visit <http://conview.state.va.us/whosmy.nsf/VGAMain?openform> to find your legislator and contact information.

Real people. Real change.

Virginia Attorney General Opinion Helps DACA Students

Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring issued an opinion that allows universities to charge in-state tuition rates for students granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status who otherwise meet Virginia residency requirements.

"This is a big step in the right direction," said Linda Peña, a DACA student attending Tidewater Community College and a Virginia Organizing South Hampton Roads Chapter leader. "Virginia students who were educated here are now going to have an opportunity to attend some of the best universities in the country."

Peña currently pays the out-of-state tuition rate and receives no federal financial aid, even though she's lived in Virginia Beach for more than 10 years.

To thank Attorney General Herring for his opinion, please call 804-786-2071.

Southwest Virginia Fights to Prevent Fracking

In Washington County, Virginia Organizing leaders have been working for four years to prevent hydrofracking of natural gas in the county because of the potential for harm to the environment, including contamination of drinking and ground water that could pose serious health risks to residents.

This month, land owners attended a Board of Supervisors meeting and shared their concerns during the public comment period.

In addition, landowners met with the editorial board of the local newspaper, the *Bristol Herald Courier*, to share their concerns about fracking. Supervisors are expected to meet later this month to further discuss fracking.

Power Analysis

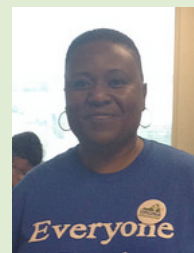
Virginia Organizing leaders, staff and board members met in Harrisonburg, Virginia to discuss power in the state and strategy for moving forward on issue campaigns. Leaders from all parts of Virginia attended the weekend meeting and worked together to explore new ideas. If you would like to learn more about the issues or get involved with a local Virginia Organizing Chapter, please visit our website at www.virginia-organizing.org or call the office at 434-984-4655 ext. 222 for more information.

New Photo ID Laws Take Effect July 1

On July 1, new photo ID laws take effect for voting in Virginia. In order to vote in the 2014 elections, Virginians must present a valid photo ID. Virginia Organizing will provide more information in the coming months on how to obtain a photo ID and what will be accepted on Election Day.

This month, Virginia Organizing joined with more than 15 organizations in Richmond to present testimony at the Virginia Hearing of the National Commission on Voting Rights about voting experiences in Virginia, voter registration procedures, voting precincts, redistricting, the lack of uniform training for election workers, implementation of photo ID requirements, and transparency in the voting process.

Leader of the Month Yolander Davis



Yolander Davis began working with the South Hampton Roads Chapter on health care reform and Medicaid expansion because she wanted to share her own health care story. Yolander is an adult foster caregiver and works

with adults who have mental and intellectual disabilities. She does not make enough money to qualify for subsidies on the Health Insurance Marketplace, but she cannot receive Medicaid under the current state guidelines. She has health conditions that require her to see a doctor, but she is unable to afford the care.

"I just try not to give the pain life," said Yolander. "That's how I cope with it."

When she sat down with South Hampton Road organizers, she knew she wanted to work with Virginia Organizing because of their passion and commitment to social and economic justice. Yolander is also very passionate and has shown that by writing letters to the editor of her local paper, speaking at town hall meetings, and leading a discussion with her state delegate to urge him to support Medicaid expansion.

"I just want to make sure everyone gets the same opportunity and no one gets taken advantage of," said Yolander.

Yolander is committed to raising her voice to make sure opportunity is available.

Thank you, Yolander, for all your hard work and for sharing your story with so many people.

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

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

Local Chapters & Areas Served

Augusta/Staunton/Waynesboro
Charlottesville/Albemarle County
Danville
Harrisonburg/Rockingham County
Fredericksburg
Lee County
Louisa 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, NSU, RU

News in Brief

- The Fredericksburg Chapter held a workshop at the Haynesville Correctional Center to discuss reentry to society, the restoration of civil rights process, and the ban the box campaign.
- The South Hampton Roads Chapter screened a documentary on climate change to raise awareness on rising sea levels that will directly affect large areas of Virginia, particularly the South Hampton Roads area.
- Our goal is to have 20 organizers on staff by 2016 and we need your help! Contact Sally Bastian at bastian@virginia-organizing.org or 434-984-4655 x229 to learn more about how you can help us reach this goal by making a monthly donation.
- Did you know that Virginia Organizing leaders learn new information each month about grassroots organizing through the Leaders' Collaborative? Join our next call or find out more by contacting Nik Belanger at nik.belanger@virginia-organizing.org or 434-709-4953.
- At a Medicaid expansion town hall in Waynesboro, about 70 local leaders showed up to support expansion. This was one of several events around the state on Medicaid expansion in the last month.

www.virginia-organizing.org



www.facebook.com/virginiaorganizing



@VAOrganizing