



Wayne Hamlett of Chesterfield spoke at the Healthcare for All Virginians media conference in support of Medicaid expansion in Virginia. Hamlett works multiple jobs, including playing Santa Claus during the holidays, but is without health insurance.



Charlottesville Organizer Harold Folley was presented with the Pioneer Award, recognizing him as one who has paved the way for future leaders, by the City of Promise. Harold is pictured above with City of Promise Director Sarad Davenport.



Virginia Organizing Vice-Chairperson Ladelle McWhorter spoke passionately in support of the anti-discrimination bill (SB701) that would prohibit state agencies from discriminating against LGBT citizens, pregnant women, veterans, people with disabilities and more.

News From the Grassroots

Medicaid Expansion Top Priority for Virginia Organizing

The 2013 General Assembly session began on January 9. This year, Virginia Organizing chose five primary issues to focus on during the session. These issues are Medicaid expansion, immigration, uranium mining, predatory lending, and budget and tax fairness. In addition to these five priorities, Virginia Organizing remains supportive of the efforts of other organizations to bring about a more just Virginia.

Throughout the session, Virginia Organizing will address a number of bills and our leaders and members will contact their legislators to support or oppose legislation. Chapter leaders have already spoken to their legislators in support of anti-discrimination bills, keeping the ban on uranium mining, expanding Medicaid in Virginia, and other issues of concern.

In addition to contacting legislators directly, Virginia Organizing leaders

have submitted letters to the editor and op-eds on important issues. Virginia Organizing will continue this effort year-round, not just during the legislative session!

This year, the top priority for Virginia Organizing is the expansion of Medicaid in Virginia. A recent study found that Medicaid expansion will add about 30,000 health care jobs, insure over 400,000 people who currently do not have insurance, inject billions of dollars into Virginia's economy, and cost the state less over the next six years than not expanding Medicaid.

These are just some of the more direct effects of expanding Medicaid, but there are other positive economic effects. For example, the 30,000 people employed in health care jobs will pay taxes in Virginia. They will also eat out, shop, and live here meaning that restaurants and retailers may have to hire more people to keep up with the demand.

Medicaid will also reduce the burden on our local, private hospitals, which

will reduce the amount people with insurance pay for their premiums. Hospitals provide uncompensated care for people without insurance who cannot afford it, but they have to recoup some of those losses through charging more for patients who have insurance. This is known as a "hidden tax" and is estimated to be between \$1,000 and \$2,000 each year per family.

There are many economic reasons to expand Medicaid. But the arguments are not all about money. People without insurance wait before seeking care for health concerns which can lead to dangerous consequences. People with insurance seek care earlier for health concerns. Early treatment and prevention have the best health (and cost) outcomes.

If you are willing to fight with us for Medicaid expansion, will you call your legislators and ask them to expand? Will you write a letter to the editor of your local paper? Will you get your friends involved? You can make a difference in this important debate!

Real people. Real change.

South Hampton Roads Chapter Making a Difference

The South Hampton Roads Chapter was able to secure a unanimous decision from the Virginia Beach City Council in support of a resolution urging the Virginia General Assembly to expand Medicaid. The Chapter is also planning to participate the "Day for All People" on January 22. The day is designed to educate people from across the Commonwealth on important issues and move those people to action by visiting their legislators and discussing the issues. The Chapter will focus on Medicaid expansion, predatory lending, uranium mining, and balanced approaches to budget needs.

Fiscal Cliff Negotiations Not Over

The nail-biting conclusion to the so-called "fiscal cliff" negotiations left our nation with more questions than answers. Fortunately, the tax cuts were extended for low- and middle-wage earners, but they were also extended for some high-wage earners. Congress chose to defer the decisions on the automatic, across-the-board spending cuts known as sequestration. They also did not address two other important items: the debt ceiling and the continuing resolution.

Raising the debt ceiling means that Congress is agreeing to pay back the money already borrowed and not default on the country's debt. Past considerations not to raise the debt ceiling caused our nation's credit rating to be downgraded and caused fear of further economic downturn. The debt ceiling debate was pushed back, but recently, House leadership has signaled that they will raise the debt ceiling in the short-term to prevent default.

The continuing resolution keeps the government in business while regular budget negotiations take place. If not passed, the government will shut down. Virginia Organizing remains dedicated to the best interests of all people, not just the wealthy few. We are telling Congress not to make cuts to Medicaid, Social Security or Medicare in these negotiations.

Virginia Organizing Charlottesville Organizer Recognized by City of Promise

Charlottesville Chapter organizer, Harold Folley, received the City of Promise's Pioneer Award this month. The Pioneer Award recognizes "those who have paved the way for future leaders." Harold was presented the award by the City of Promise Director Sarad Davenport. We are so proud of Harold for his dedication to the community and future leaders!

Leader of the Month Jacqueline Lewis



Two years ago, Jacqueline Lewis went to a health care forum in Fredericksburg hosted by Virginia Organizing because she wanted "just the

facts" of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). She was so impressed that she decided to become involved. Since that time, she joined the Fredericksburg Chapter and got to work on Social Security, the ACA, and local issues in her community. She serves on the statewide Social Security Committee and in her Chapter she is in charge of setting up meetings with elected officials.

In addition to meeting with elected officials, Jacqueline stays involved by writing letters to the editor and attending events, both locally and statewide.

"I'm so proud to be a part of a group that is working to help others and working for social justice," Jacqueline said when asked why she chooses to work with Virginia Organizing. Reflecting further, Jacqueline said, "I'm proud we are non-partisan and that all people and their ideas are valued. You just feel it."

Thank you, Jacqueline, for all your hard work with Virginia Organizing!

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

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Local Chapters

Augusta/Staunton/Waynesboro
Charlottesville
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

News in Brief

- Thanks to your support, we met our grassroots fundraising goal last year! You are why Virginia Organizing is here and we thank you for your ongoing support.
- Please remember Virginia Organizing in your estate plans. Planned gifts, such as will bequests, insurance policies, retirement plans, property and charitable trusts help ensure the long-term operation of Virginia Organizing in our work for justice. There are also some attractive tax benefits for making such a gift. For more information, please call Michele Mattioli at 434-984-4655 x223.
- Virginia Organizing is co-sponsoring Equality Virginia's Day of Action on January 29. For more information, visit https://equalityfederation.salsalabs.com/o/35035/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event_KEY=2080 to register for the event.
- Our new organizer in Roanoke began on January 1! Please welcome Alex Dobranic to Virginia Organizing! If you or someone you know lives in the Roanoke area, please email Alex at alex@virginia-organizing.org. Welcome, Alex!

www.virginia-organizing.org



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