



Candace Graham and Beth Kimbriel of the Richmond Chapter protested Rep. Eric Cantor's Vote to repeal the health care law.



Virginia Organizing leaders from all over the state will visit the capitol for grassroots lobby days throughout the 2011 session.



The Fredericksburg Chapter held a forum on the Affordable Health Care Act with Joanne Grossi of HHS and Dr. Chris Lillis.

News From the Grassroots

2011 Legislative Agenda

On January 12, the oldest legislative body in the nation, the Virginia General Assembly, began their 2011 session. Virginia Organizing will be at the capitol every day fighting for the social and economic justice issues you care most about. Our 2011 legislative agenda includes the following priority issues:

- Protecting the citizens of Virginia from predatory lenders.
- Ending the cuts-only approach to addressing the revenue shortfall and enhancing our state revenue.
- Supporting progressive tax reform so that all citizens pay their fair share.
- Preventing all forms of discrimination for residents of Virginia.
- Expanding health care, child care subsidies and housing assistance for low-income families.

- Supporting comprehensive immigration reform that treats immigrants with dignity and fairness.
- Reforming our redistricting process through a nonpartisan or bipartisan commission.
- Automatically restoring the civil rights of felons who have completed their sentences.

United for Immigrant Rights

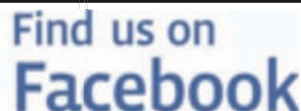
In February, Virginia Organizing will join Virginia United for Immigrant Rights, a coalition of organizations, in holding over 10 rallies across the state as a part of their "Week of Action for Progress, Fairness, and Security." The first of the rallies will take place in Alexandria on February 1, and they will continue in Fredericksburg, Hampton Roads, Harrisonburg, Danville, and other towns across the state, culminating in Newport News on February 9. Thousands of

Virginians will gather across the state to oppose state legislators attempting to pass a slew of anti-immigrant and anti-democratic legislation in the 2011 legislative session.

Holding CSX Accountable

The Fredericksburg Chapter has been working with local residents on taking action against CSX's storing of rail cars containing toxic materials in the middle of a residential neighborhood.

Senator Edd Houck proposed a budget amendment that will hold CSX accountable for safely transporting hazardous cargo in Fredericksburg. If this passes, CSX would have 8 hours to move their cars through residential neighborhoods in Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania or lose \$42 million in state funding for a variety of rail programs.



Real people. Real change.

Strengthen Don't Repeal The Health Care Law

Fredericksburg-Just hours after House Republicans introduced legislation to repeal the health care law, we held a large forum in Fredericksburg on January 8, aimed at getting the real facts out about the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Joanne Grossi, Regional Director of Health and Human Services, was the keynote speaker and explained what the new health care law will mean for local families, Medicare recipients, individuals with pre-existing conditions, small business owners, young people and more. Over 100 residents filled the England Run Library to ask questions and learn about how the new health care law will benefit them.

Virginia Beach-In advance of the January 19 House vote on repealing the health care law, a delegation of leaders from Virginia Organizing visited Senator Jim Webb's Virginia Beach office to deliver a new report detailing what Virginia would lose should the health care law be repealed and to urge Senator Webb's continued support for the new law.

With the new Republican majority in the House, it will be up to the Senate

to preserve consumer rights and benefits under the ACA by stopping the repeal effort.

Richmond-Meanwhile in Richmond, a group of VCU students, members of Virginia Organizing, and health care advocates gathered on January 20 to show their opposition to House Majority Leader Eric Cantor's vote in favor of repealing the health care law.

"The Republicans made an empty promise. They are not going to repeal the health care law. I want them to get to work on fixing the economy and creating jobs. Representative Cantor is just wasting our time and money," said Candace Graham of Chesterfield.

If Representative Eric Cantor is successful in his repeal efforts, 25,800 of Virginia's young adults would lose their insurance coverage through their parents' health plans, sometimes just after they finish school and as they are looking for a job.

"I came out today because I have four college aged kids, two of whom have pre-existing conditions. Without the Affordable Care Act my daughter would have lost her health insurance last May and another would lose it this May," said Beth Kimbriel.

Leader of the Month: Pastor Loretta Murray



Pastor Loretta Murray of the Danville Chapter is no stranger to speaking her mind. Pastor Murray was already a tireless leader in her community when she first

met Nik Belanger, Virginia Organizing's Danville Organizer.

Pastor Murray has been involved with supporting Community Jobs legislation and helping the unemployed. This month Pastor Murray attended a Center for Community Change jobs strategy session in Washington, D.C., where she shared some local successes with activists from around the country. "I see that we have a voice at the City Council that we did not have before and that they are taking notice. Our name is being recognized because we are bringing the community together to speak out on jobs, unemployment benefits and an end to drastic budget cuts," said Murray.

Pastor Murray recently chaired the Chapter's legislative meeting with Delegate Danny Marshall and hosted a planning meeting at her church. "Working with Virginia Organizing has inspired me so much. Today we started a project in our church focused on bringing the community together that was in part, inspired by Virginia Organizing. I'm even more motivated now to go into my neighborhood and share the message and that if we pull together, we get strength from each other. And then we win."

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

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Local Chapters (call or visit the website for more information)

Charlottesville
Danville
Martinsville
Fredericksburg
Northern Virginia
Newport News/Hampton Roads
South Hampton Roads
Williamsburg
Shenandoah Valley
Washington County & Lee County
Petersburg
Richmond
On Campus: W&M, UMW, VSU, CNU, UVA, E&H, U of R

News in Brief

- We welcome Bob Becker to the Virginia Organizing staff. He will be focused on organizing the small business community in Virginia.
- The South Hampton Roads Chapter has been doing dozens of popular education presentations on the benefits of the Affordable Care Act. Upcoming presentations include: February 9 @ 3pm, Sullivan House for Seniors in VA Beach and February 18 @ 1pm at Star of the Sea Parish in VA Beach.
- The Danville Chapter met with Delegate Danny Marshall to discuss tax and budget reform, among other issues.
- The Shenandoah Valley Chapter had two lobby days in Richmond and met with Delegate Tony Wilt and other legislators about immigration, workers' rights, predatory lending, DRE machines, and restoration of voting rights. They also had their first meeting in Harrisonburg and supported two actions by Dream Activist Virginia.
- Charlottesville volunteers are busy working the phones during this General Assembly session on a variety of issues like predatory lending and foreclosure legislation. The Charlottesville Chapter met with Delegate David Toscano on budget issues and is currently planning a forum on the new health care law.
- The Martinsville Chapter met with Senator Roscoe Reynolds and Delegate Ward Armstrong and is still putting pressure on City Council on regulating sweepstakes gambling.