



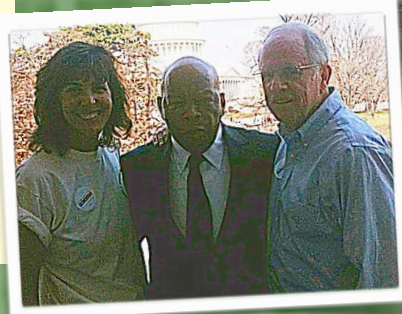
# Virginia Organizing Project

APRIL 2010

ISSUE THREE



VOP held a barber shop conversation on the health care bill with Congressman Tom Perriello in Martinsville



Congressman John Lewis with Teresa Stanley and Tim McCarthy at immigration reform rally.



“Speak for yourself Mr. Cuccinelli!”

## News From the Grassroots

### Historic Passage of Health Care Reform!

*By Janice “Jay” Johnson, VOP Chairperson*

This month, the U.S. House of Representatives passed historic legislation which will ensure that all Virginians have access to affordable health care. Virginia’s families are one critical step closer to not having to worry about whether or not they can afford to see a doctor when we get sick – a huge step for working families and small businesses.

This landmark legislation will stop insurance companies from denying care based on “pre-existing conditions,” expands coverage and care for the one million uninsured Virginians, allows young adults up to age 26 to stay covered on their parents’ insurance and reduces

prescription drug costs for seniors.

Positive change in this country never comes without struggle, whether the fight is Social Security or civil rights. In time, the benefits of change are visible. Those who opposed change are remembered as being on the wrong side of history.

Virginia Organizing Project leaders fought for health care reform over the last two years by making tens of thousands of phone calls, knocking on thousands of doors and visiting the offices of their members of Congress. This is their victory and a victory for all the people of Virginia. We thank the Virginia members of Congress who stood up for all of us and voted for the health care reform we desperately need.

### A Health Care Wish

*By Marcus Grimes, Woodbridge*

How long must we citizens be denied, Our right to the health care that we deserve?  
 How long must our Congressmen chose to side, Against the voices begging to be heard?  
 We elect our legislators for Representation for our wants and needs, But our right to life they seem to ignore,  
 Thus I must ask what be faith without deeds.  
 We the people elect you to those seats; ‘Twas not the insurance companies’ end,  
 The corporate lobbyists on K Street. Hear our voices ring clear across the land,  
 And act as a beacon through this dark night:  
 Health care be not a privilege, ‘tis a right.

Follow us on  
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VOP has a Facebook Fanpage.  
 We would love to be friends!

We got a makeover! Visit our new website at:  
[www.virginia-organizing.org](http://www.virginia-organizing.org)

# Real People, Real Problems, Real Solutions

## Immigration Reform Rally

By Jimmy Culpepper, VOP Leader, Hampton Roads

I wear a blue wristband that simply states "One Human Family." This message was dramatically reinforced when I attended the Reform Immigration Rally in Washington, D.C., on March 21, 2010 with more than 200,000 fellow human beings.

I rode on one of seven buses from the southeastern corner of Virginia co-sponsored by VOP. We joined hundreds of others marching from Union Station to the National Mall. As we approached the mall, we were engulfed in a sea of people of different nationalities and a cacophony of noise as horns blared and drums pounded. Various groups carried signs declaring the immediate need for immigration reform. We listened as speaker after speaker passionately called for change and I remember marveling at the hope and unity evident in the mass of humanity. At the other end of the mall, people engaged

in the health care debate were dramatic evidence of the deep divide in our country over another issue.

The ride home was a time for contemplation as I reflected on the day's message. There is still much work to be done, and VOP is leading in the effort locally.

## Confederate History Month Divides Us All Over Again

By Denise Smith, VOP Board

I am a descendent of six grandfathers who served in the Civil War, for the Confederacy. The Civil War in Virginia was a monumental event. It shaped the Virginia we know today, and the stories of our citizens were bound by their experiences during that war. Those experiences crossed gender, race and politics. I don't agree with the Governor's proclamation as it stands because it divides us all over again. I wish the governor to reverse it and instead have a Virginia Civil War Month so that everyone's history can be told and used to explain how it shaped our great state.

## VOP Leader of the Month:

Ken Ehrenthal



Ken has been integral in the creation of the first South Hampton Roads Chapter of the Virginia Organizing Project. As a retired high school history teacher, Ken's understanding of the law and politics has been invaluable in fighting for the residents in the Providence Mobile Home Park whose homes have been threatened by a bulldozer. Ken has stood shoulder to shoulder with the Providence residents and is also working on influencing local public policy to address the lack of affordable housing in South Hampton Roads. Ken has a keen sense of how many social justice issues overlap but there is no issue more important to him than jobs. "Sometimes I fear we cannot see the forest through the trees. The forest is that people in this country need good paying jobs. With good jobs you alleviate so many of the other problems in society."

## VIRGINIA ORGANIZING PROJECT

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

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,  
UVA, E&H, U of R

- VOP and residents of Harrisonburg picketed outside a local country club where Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli was addressing the Chamber of Commerce.
- Washington County Chapter will have its Organizational Meeting/ Spaghetti Dinner on Thursday, May 13, at 6 p.m. at the Abingdon United Methodist Church.
- The first docket for the Lee/Scott/Wise drug court could take place as early as May.
- Come out for a drink and a good cause. VOP will be hosting a fundraiser at Sips Wine Bar in downtown Charlottesville on Thursday, May 27, 5:30-7:30 pm. Al Weed will be our guest bartender.
- Charlottesville VOP leaders headed to the post office on tax day collecting postcards to Governor Bob McDonnell in protest of the state's regressive tax system.
- The VOP Chapter at William and Mary registered over 300 students in time for the upcoming Williamsburg City Council elections and participated in an anti-discrimination rally to oppose the Attorney General's letter repealing non-discrimination at colleges and universities.