



VIRGINIA ORGANIZING



2012 ANNUAL REPORT



A NOTE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



*Sandra A. Cook,
Chairperson*

WOW! 2012 was a great year for grassroots organizing, wasn't it?

We started off the year facing some frightening legislation at the General Assembly. Our grassroots leaders and Chapters across Virginia responded with action at the Capitol and sent a message to legislators that we were disappointed in their attempts to limit rights and continue unnecessary and wasteful tax breaks.

In March, we celebrated the two-year anniversary of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) and fought back against Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli's rebuff and disregard of the law. Virginia Organizing went to the U.S. Supreme Court to rally during the arguments of the ACA case. After the Supreme Court decision, we celebrated the victory statewide that made the ACA here to stay! Our leaders then went back to work educating communities and elected officials and encouraging full implementation of the ACA in Virginia.

Our local Chapters had many victories in 2012. For example, in Washington County, the Chapter fought against the environmentally costly practice of hydrofracking, and won! In Harrisonburg, the Chapter began a Listening Project to speak to immigrant communities. With that information, and the support of area immigration organizations, the Rockingham Board of Supervisors decided to end a harmful immigration practice that deputized local police as Immigration and Custom Enforcement officials.

We sent leaders to Charlotte, NC to attend the Bank of America shareholder's meeting and ask questions of CEO Brian Moynihan on the bank's lending practices and foreclosure record.

At the federal level, Virginia Organizing fought against the harmful budget proposals that would shift the burden of running our nation and paying down the country's debt to those with the least financial resources. We fought back when the U.S. House of Representatives voted to extend tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires and paid for those breaks by reducing funding for social safety net programs, Social Security, and other necessities. We worked to end the Budget Showdown in Washington with a solution that was good for all people, not just the wealthiest two percent.

As you will read in the following pages, we worked to educate voters on new identification requirements and encouraged them to go vote! As a non-partisan organization, we were able to register thousands of voters and make more than 125,000 calls to voters!

Virginia Organizing accomplished so much this year! We were able to do this because of the work of our Board, our staff, and most importantly, you.

Thank you for being a part of Virginia Organizing in 2012 and I look forward to working with you in 2013!

Sincerely,



Sandra A. Cook
Chairperson



2012 STATE GOVERNING BOARD

Sandra A. Cook, Chairperson
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2012 BY THE NUMBERS

In 2012, Virginia Organizing:

- Led **182** different workshops, trainings and forums for **3,579** people.
- Organized **81** direct actions with **1,913** participants.
- Met with **1,231** people one-to-one to discuss issues in the community and grassroots organizing.
- Helped **1,257** new people get active in their local communities.
- Wrote hundreds of letters to the editor and op-eds and had **89** of those published.
- Supervised and trained **31** interns.
- Sent **78** media releases and had **211** media hits.
- Conducted **86** consultations with other groups.
- Registered **3,465** voters and assisted with completing **36** restoration of rights applications.
- Made more than **125,000** non-partisan get-out-the-vote and issue-education phone bank calls.
- Knocked on about **3,500** doors.
- Increased our Facebook followers by **539** and our Twitter followers by **402**.



STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

- We believe that all people should be treated fairly and with dignity in all aspects of life, regardless of race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, ability or country of origin.
- We believe that every person in the Commonwealth is entitled to a living wage and benefit package that is sufficient to provide the basic necessities of life, including adequate housing, a nutritious diet, proper child care, sound mental and physical health care, and a secure retirement.
- We believe that every person is entitled to an equal educational opportunity.
- We believe that community, economic, social and environmental policy should be developed with the greatest input from the people it is meant to serve, and that the policies should promote, celebrate and sustain the human and natural resources of Virginia.
- We believe in the elimination of the extremes of wealth and poverty, in a progressive tax system based on the ability to pay, and in making the nation's financial systems, including the Federal Reserve Bank, more responsive to the average citizen's needs.
- We believe that we should enhance and celebrate diversity in our community and in our state.
- We believe that those who have positions of authority in our governmental bodies, law enforcement agencies and institutions of learning should reflect the diversity of our communities.
- We believe that our public officials should be held accountable for their actions and decisions.
- We believe in the rights of workers, consumers, shareholders and taxpayers to democratic self-organization.
- We believe in the elimination of the death penalty in all cases because it is fundamentally inhumane, ineffective as a deterrent to crime, and disproportionately and unjustly applied against people of color and those who are economically or educationally disadvantaged.
- We believe that physical and mental health are parts of personal and community well-being; we believe that Virginians have a broad public health and economic interest in ensuring that adequate care is available to low and moderate-income residents.

COMMUNITY LEADERS SPEAK OUT



"I think Virginia Organizing is a very important organization because they are trying to do a lot to help a lot of different people. I like that the organization isn't focused on just one thing."

Catherine Fitzgerald, Danville

"People stay in power when they know what's going on. I'm on a journey myself to understand state and local policy."

Andrea Jackson, Augusta-Staunton-Waynesboro



"I've been caught in the predatory lending cycle of debt and so have my children. Now, that I am out of the cycle of debt, I spend my time helping others realize that there is a better way."

Debra Grant, South Hampton Roads

"I volunteer with Virginia Organizing because it is important to be involved in your community and seek ways to work towards a better world, one place at a time."

Fernando Perez, Harrisonburg



"I'm so proud to be a part of a group that is working to help others and working for social justice. I'm proud we are non-partisan and that all people and their ideas are valued."

Jacqueline Lewis, Fredericksburg

2012 HIGHLIGHTS

Virginia Organizing was appalled at the extremist agenda presented during the 2012 General Assembly, so on Valentine's Day, we "broke up" with legislators on Broken Hearts Day.



Virginia Organizing helped 937 grassroots leaders learn a new skill in 2012!

In May, we took our Divestment campaign to the next level and showed up at a Bank of America shareholder's meeting in Charlotte, NC. Six Virginia Organizing leaders asked the CEO a question to hold the bank, and those in power, accountable for their actions.



Virginia Organizing sent leaders to the White House five times this year! Twice, we were invited for special leadership briefings on issues like the economy, budget, health care, women's issues, and the environment.



We helped get-out-the-vote and educate voters on identification requirements. In Louisa County, Virginia Organizing leaders held an event for the registrar to show how to use the voting machines to help citizens learn to make sure their vote counts.

We had many local victories – big ones! In Harrisonburg, immigrants were being deported under a 287(g) agreement with federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Virginia Organizing helped stop this agreement from being renewed! In Danville, the local Chapter will have input on the city budget next fiscal year to help include weatherization programs! The Southwest Virginia Chapters won an anti-fracking campaign. Read more on our website!



Virginia Organizing worked with national groups to raise awareness about the “fiscal cliff” and budget showdown in Washington. Our Chapters and members have been asking Virginia members of Congress to protect and expand social safety net programs and end the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest two percent! We sang Christmas carols at Congressional offices across the state and held demonstrations to support a fair resolution to any budget negotiations.



Virginia Organizing continued to educate and organize people in their local communities around the issue of health care. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Affordable Care Act (ACA) as constitutional in June! Now, we’re working on implementing the law in Virginia.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING CHAPTERS

Augusta-Staunton-Waynesboro

Charlottesville

Danville

Fredericksburg

Harrisonburg

Lee County

Martinsville-Henry County

South Hampton Roads

Washington County

Tri-Cities/Petersburg

Richmond

On Campus at W&M, UMW, VSU, CNU, UVA, E&H, U of R



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