



# VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

Justice  
for ALL

MY MOM AND DAD  
DESERVE  
A BETTER CHANCE  
REFORM NOW

IMMIGRATION  
REFORM

IT'S TIME FOR  
IMMIGRATION  
REFORM

# 2013 MID-YEAR REPORT

# WELCOME

In 2013, Virginia Organizing set out to accomplish some major goals, and because of people like you, we have done a lot! We hope you enjoy learning more about our first half of the year and what we are working on to make the second half even more successful.

From local issues like the Fredericksburg mural project and Southwest Virginia hydrofracking to the national issues of health care, immigration, and corporate tax responsibility, Virginia Organizing has been there raising the voices of those directly affected by the issues that matter most to them.



So far this year, **2,298 people directly affected** by various social and economic justice issues have raised their voices at public events with Virginia Organizing. We are proud that the voices of Virginia Organizing's grassroots leaders are being heard.

We hope you enjoy reading more about this great first half of the year! And thank you for making this all possible.

# VIRGINIA ORGANIZING BY THE NUMBERS

In the first six months of 2013, Virginia Organizing has accomplished a lot with your help! Just take a look at some of the numbers:

- 769 new people became active.
- 487 leaders learned a new skill that they put into action.
- 89 leadership development trainings were held and 803 people participated.
- 49 letters to the editor and op-eds were published across the state.
- 31 direct actions were organized with 1,059 participants.
- 8 workshops on dismantling racism/classism/heterosexism were conducted with 129 participants.
- 13 interns learned important grassroots organizing skills.



- We added 274 new “likes” on Facebook, 33 new videos on YouTube with 625 views, and 219 new followers on Twitter (including important political and community contacts).
- We collaborated with 40 different groups through our Joint Plan of Work program on issues like the environment, transportation, human rights, and community support.
- 21 community forums were held with 862 participants.
- 843 one-to-one meetings occurred in local communities.
- 101 constituent/legislator meetings took place.
- About 30,000 phonebanking calls were made on important state and national issues.

# A YEAR OF BIG CAMPAIGNS

## LOCAL

The Washington County Chapter is working hard to keep hydrofracking out of their community. Leaders attended committee meetings and contacted county officials to make sure their voices were heard.

We hired an organizer in Petersburg and have Chapters starting in both Petersburg and Roanoke! These Chapters will work on local, state, and national issues.

The Danville Chapter has begun working on discriminatory policing this year. Chapter members are



doing police ride alongs and learning more about how the police operate in their community.

In Charlottesville, Virginia Organizing supported the establishment of a Human Rights Commission. This Commission was established in June! The Human Rights Commission is responsible for protecting and enforcing the Human Rights Ordinance in the City of Charlottesville.

In South Hampton Roads, the Chapter focused on helping undocumented immigrants who qualify for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) apply to the program. They held multiple workshops in the local community to support this effort. DACA allows individuals brought to the U.S. as children to stay in the U.S. without fear of deportation.

Students from University of Massachusetts and the College of William and Mary spent their Spring Break learning about organizing in Fredericksburg and Danville. The students spent a week knocking on doors, handing out flyers, and engaging the local community in discussions about important issues.



We began our Leaders' Collaborative calls to invite local leaders from all Chapters to come together and share ideas on organizing and community development.

The Richmond Chapter met with City Council members to promote the Anti-Poverty Commission recommendations for increasing access to transportation and jobs in the community.

# STATEWIDE

Local campaigns are a big deal at Virginia Organizing, but we also focus on issues that affect all people in the state.

Young people in Virginia had an organizing training in January and then put those newly-learned skills to use by holding an action at the General Assembly where they delivered candy watches to legislators with the message that it's time to expand Medicaid in Virginia.

Throughout the General Assembly, Virginia Organizing leaders came to meet with legislators and share stories.



In April, we held our annual Power Analysis weekend. Leaders from all over the state came together to learn new skills, such as social media, fundraising, recruiting more grassroots leaders, and more.

In May, Governor Bob McDonnell announced an administrative change to make the restoration of civil rights process significantly more streamlined! This was a big step forward and we will continue to work for automatic restoration of voting rights for all.

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE

The biggest victory during the General Assembly this year is the potential for Medicaid expansion! Virginia Organizing and other organizations focused on Medicaid expansion as a high priority issue this year and those efforts paid off.

The General Assembly voted to form the Medicaid Innovation and Reform Commission that is charged with determining when certain reforms have been made. Once those reforms are in place, Medicaid expansion can begin in Virginia. There is still work to be done to make sure Medicaid is expanded in Virginia. We will keep you updated as this issue progresses.



Harmful voter ID laws passed the General Assembly that will require photo ID at the polls beginning in 2014. These laws will restrict access to the polls, but Virginia Organizing plans to work to educate people about what they need to vote. In addition, the fight for legal protection for LGBT individuals working in the state will continue as the Senate passed an anti-discrimination bill, but the House rejected that effort. Change takes time and Virginia Organizing will keep working on these issues!

# NATIONAL

Virginia Organizing focused on four national campaigns in the first half of 2013. We worked with many national partner organizations to act on comprehensive immigration reform, Social Security, tax and budget issues and health care.

Virginia Organizing was selected as the lead group in Virginia by the Alliance for Citizenship to work on comprehensive immigration reform. We worked with the Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights and others to organize 30 immigration events with 1,602 participants, make 24 legislative visits, collect 810 petitions, and make thousands of calls.



Virginia Organizing also worked with New Bridges Immigrant Resource Center in the Shenandoah Valley to collect stories of immigrants. The Valley Immigration Stories Project can be found online at [www.vaisp.com](http://www.vaisp.com). Because of the hard work of people like you and many others across the United States, a comprehensive immigration reform bill was passed by the U.S. Senate on June 27, 2013. Virginia Organizing will continue to work for a comprehensive solution in the U.S. House of Representatives.



On budget and tax issues, Virginia Organizing has been delivering the message that big corporations and wealthy individuals must pay their fair share. Right now, some big corporations take advantage of offshore tax havens and tax credits to send jobs overseas. Virginians are raising their voices to say that big corporations and wealthy individuals need to contribute like the rest of us, which will raise needed revenue instead of focusing on cutting programs that benefits those most economically vulnerable in society.

One budget solution proposed by many in Congress is to change the way Social Security cost of living adjustments are calculated by moving from an inflation index to the Consumer Price Index (“chained-CPI”). This



method would reduce payments to those on Social Security and Virginia Organizing has been organizing to make sure this doesn't happen.

We continued to work on Affordable Care Act implementation and hosted Region III Director of Health and Human Services, Joanne Grossi, to discuss the ACA in Virginia. Virginia Organizing will continue to educate people across the state on the new health care laws.

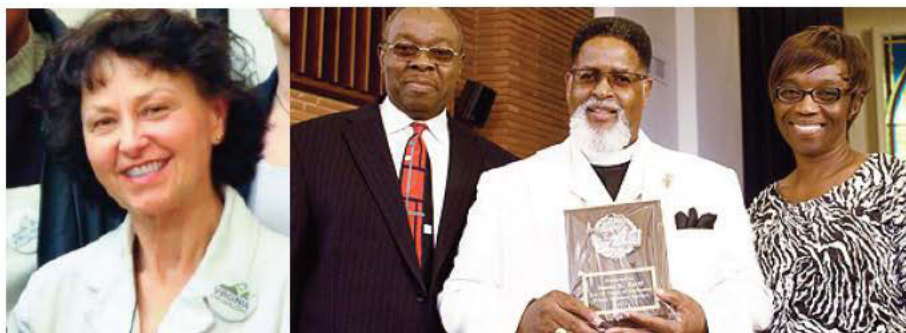
# OUR LEADERS SPEAK OUT

“Getting my voting rights restored was a personal fulfillment to the scripture, an opening of the prison to those who are bound (Isaiah 61:1). I felt myself getting a new start and all that I had done was washed away. I was freed from beyond the prison walls into a new life. This process is a very important step in reaching a true level of letting go and beginning again.”

*-Rev. Hasa Zarif (pictured below) on having his civil rights restored after 20 years of incarceration*

“I’m so proud to be a part of a group that is working to help others and working for social justice.”

*-Jacqueline Lewis (pictured, left) on being a part of Virginia Organizing Fredericksburg Chapter*



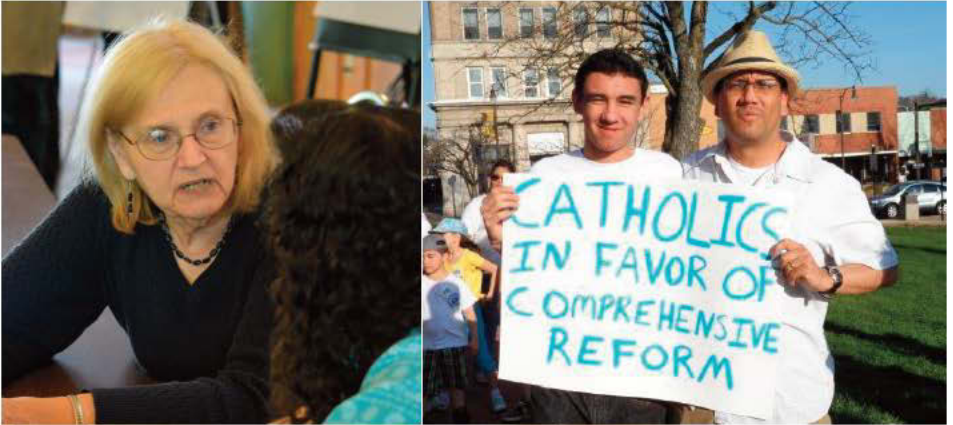
“Without immigration reform, many outstanding students I teach have little hope for a positive future. We have a window of opportunity to pass immigration reform that is fair and just and replaces our broken system with one that does not divide families and communities.”

*-Sandy Mercer, on the importance of immigration reform*

**Virginia Organizing leaders are always speaking out about what is important to them and why. Their words inspire us to keep working for change.**

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**Thank you for your continued support of Virginia Organizing. Because of our generous donors and tireless volunteers and leaders, we are able to fight to make Virginia a more just place for all people!**



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