



Virginia Organizing met with U.S. Senator Tim Kaine about immigration in May. From left: Virginia Organizing Vice Chairperson Ladelle McWhorter, Harrisonburg Chapter leader Isabel Castillo, U.S. Senator Tim Kaine, Harrisonburg Chapter leader Jossimar Diaz-Castro



Virginia Organizing's 2013 Power Analysis was held on April 27 at Massenetta Springs. Participants learned about community organizing in other parts of the country and participated in two afternoon group learning activities of their choice.



On April 23, Joanne Grossi, Region III Director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, visited Virginia Beach to share information about the new Health Insurance Marketplace that will open for enrollment in October 2013.

News From the Grassroots

May Day and More

Last month, we told you all about immigration reform and the efforts Virginia Organizing and other groups have been making to make sure reform is comprehensive, fair, and includes a path to citizenship.

Unfortunately, at the end of April, U.S. Representative Bob Goodlatte of the sixth Congressional District introduced a bill that would undermine comprehensive immigration reform by focusing on just one part of immigration, guest worker visas.

Rep. Goodlatte's bill proposes a limited number of new work visas for individuals. The bill does not provide any solutions for the millions of undocumented people already living and working in the U.S., including those that came here as children.

The bill introduced by Rep. Goodlatte is harmful on many levels. First, the bill is a piecemeal approach and gives people in power the opportunity to pass just the parts of the bill they like instead of coming to a compromise on all the important issues like a path to citizenship, family reunification, and

worker's rights. Second, Rep. Goodlatte's bill hurts families. There are no provisions for family members to join their loved one on a guest worker visa unless that family member separately obtains the same visa. Finally, the bill weakens immigrant worker rights allowing them to be paid less without the recourse that American workers have when employers are unscrupulous.

Virginia Organizing is still responding! On May 1, our Chapters organized actions across the state to host a variety of actions. In Charlottesville and Virginia Beach, Virginia Organizing sponsored community forums to provide education on what immigration reform means to families. These events showed community solidarity in support of comprehensive immigration reform.

In Harrisonburg and Fredericksburg, phone banks were held to get the message out about comprehensive immigration reform and encourage Virginians to call Congress and share their opinions on the issue.

Virginia Organizing also supported several immigration reform rallies across the state, including one in Richmond and one in Fairfax hosted by allied

organizations. People marched in the streets to show support for comprehensive reform and to urge Congress to act according to what the people they represent want.

The immigration reform debates will continue into the summer and Virginia Organizing will continue to work on this issue and keep you informed. If you want the latest information, you will receive that through our emails. Sign up at www.virginia-organizing.org/signup today to make sure you get all the latest information!

How You Can Help

- Be sure to call your Representative and Senators and ask for their support of **comprehensive immigration reform**. Senator Mark Warner's number is 877-676-2759 and Senator Tim Kaine's number is 202-224-4024.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.
- Volunteer for events. Contact your local organizer for more information.
- Please make a donation to help us continue the work we are doing! You can donate online at www.virginia-organizing.org/donate. Your support is greatly appreciated! Thank you!

Real people. Real change.

Health and Human Services Director Discusses Exchanges, Medicaid

The South Hampton Roads Chapter brought Region III Director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Joanne Grossi, to Virginia Beach to discuss the new Health Insurance Marketplace, formerly called health benefits exchange, and Medicaid expansion.

Director Grossi spoke to a large crowd of individuals and business owners interested in how the Affordable Care Act affects their insurance coverage. The federal government will run Virginia's Health Insurance Marketplace, which will open for 2014 enrollment in October 2013.

In addition to the health insurance marketplace, Director Grossi discussed Medicaid expansion in Virginia saying that there are hundreds of thousands of Virginians who will be left out of health insurance coverage without the implementation of Medicaid expansion.

For more information on the Affordable Care Act, how to sign up for insurance in the marketplace, and more, please visit www.healthcare.gov.

Power Analysis Weekend

Virginia Organizing hosted our annual Power Analysis on Saturday, April 27. Ninety people from across Virginia made the trip to Massenetta Springs to discuss how Virginia Organizing can

be more deliberate and intentional about building our strategic capacity to bring about social change.

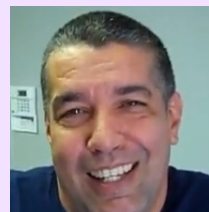
LeeAnn Hall, the Executive Director for Alliance for a Just Society, Bev DeLeonardis, Chairperson for Alliance for a Just Society, and Chris Conroy, Economy Program Manager for Take Action Minnesota, shared their experiences in building power in other parts of the United States and helped Virginia Organizing leaders understand different strategies employed for social change.

Virginia Organizing leaders worked in small groups to learn more about building power and to develop new skills. All participants shared in mapping the history of Virginia Organizing and planning for the future.

Leaders' Collaborative

Virginia Organizing hosted the first Leaders' Collaborative call on Monday, May 13. Chapter leaders from across Virginia participated in learning more about planning protests and other actions and how to make those events fun. Ramona Sanders of Harrisonburg shared details about a local immigration rally and march, in which over 400 people participated. Matt Bailey of Danville discussed the action at U.S. Representative Robert Hurt's Danville office to support tax fairness. The next Leaders' Collaborative call will be June 10 at 7:30 p.m. and the topic will be social media. Please contact Nik Belanger at nik.belanger@virginia-organizing.org.

Leader of the Month Lee Whitehead



Lee Whitehead is the owner of Lee's Custom Appearance and a member of Virginia Organizing in the South Hampton Roads area. Lee

has been active with Virginia Organizing for over three years now.

During that time, Lee has been active on the issues of health care, immigration, gun control, and worker's rights. Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, Lee has also worked to fully implement the law in Virginia, including the expansion of Medicaid.

"I believe that it is a fundamental right for all Americans to have health care," said Lee. "No one should have to worry about going bankrupt from seeing a doctor and everyone should have access to that care. The Affordable Care Act isn't perfect, but it's a really great start to reforming our broken system."

Lee primarily works with the Virginia Main Street Alliance, the small business program of Virginia Organizing.

"Virginia Organizing is a great organization, always driven by people and working for what we want," said Lee.

Thanks for your hard work, Lee!

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

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Local Chapters

Augusta/Staunton/Waynesboro
Charlottesville-Albemarle County
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

- Chapters across the state are holding annual meetings and affirming their commitment to Virginia Organizing! For more information about our Chapters and who to contact, please visit www.virginia-organizing.org/chapters.
- Do you want to have fun with your friends and help raise money for Virginia Organizing? Consider hosting a House Party! Contact Sally Bastian at bastian@virginia-organizing.org for more information.
- The Petersburg Chapter will begin meeting this summer! Please contact Fancy Greenwood at fgreenwood@virginia-organizing.org for more information.
- The Danville Chapter is working on more local issues and hopes to address discriminatory policing and downtown redevelopment in the coming months.
- Many thanks to those who have submitted matching gift forms to your employer, doubling your gift to Virginia Organizing. Please contact Sally Bastian at bastian@virginia-organizing.org if you need help with matching gifts.

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