



# VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

SEPTEMBER 2013

ISSUE 41



Virginia Organizing and other groups met with U.S. Representative Eric Cantor's legislative director, Cort Bush, on immigration reform and requested a vote on citizenship by October.



The Sierra Club honored Virginia Organizing's South Hampton Roads Chapter with recognition of the Chapter's work with the Keep the Ban campaign to ensure uranium mining stays out of Virginia.



Leaders from the Maine People's Alliance and the Alliance for a Just Society visited Virginia and helped business leaders in Rep. Eric Cantor's district put up signs to support comprehensive immigration reform.

## News From the Grassroots

### Another Budget Showdown?

The U.S. Congress is facing another budget showdown as our nation approaches what is known as the debt ceiling "X date" and reaching the end of the continuing resolution agreement.

The debt ceiling is the point at which Congress must authorize the spending of funds to pay the debts that Congress incurred on behalf of our nation. We hit the debt ceiling on May 19, but through "extraordinary measures," we have been able to free up enough money to continue to pay our debts. The Federal Reserve has predicted we will run out of money by the middle of October (the X date), requiring Congress to act. Essentially, if Congress fails to act on the debt ceiling, the U.S. will default on its loans.

The continuing resolution is the current law financing the government. Since Congress could not agree on a budget, they have been passing a continuing resolution to avoid a government shutdown. This resolution expires on September 30.

Some economists believe that failure to raise the debt ceiling would be far worse for the economy than a temporary government shutdown, because mandatory programs are not affected by the shutdown. On the other hand, once the money runs out in the

Treasury, the government cannot pay its debts.

Either of these scenarios would hurt the average person in the U.S. Failure to pass a continuing resolution will mean people will be out of work, but there is a plan in place to cope with this. Failure to raise the debt ceiling will be catastrophic to the financial market, raise our nation's borrowing costs, and have more long-term effects. Refusing to raise the debt ceiling will also cost our nation, and therefore, taxpayers, hundreds of billions of dollars. In addition, we would also see higher interest rates on loans like mortgages, car loans, and others.

The reason debates about government shutdowns and the X date are even occurring is so politicians can have some leverage to get what they want. In the U.S. House of Representatives, this means some Representatives want to defund the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in exchange for keeping the government operational.

In these debates, programs like Medicare and Social Security are vulnerable. Virginia Organizing leaders are encouraging Members of Congress to protect and strengthen Social Security and Medicare and instead focus on ending tax loopholes for big corporations and the wealthiest one or two percent of earners.

Currently, big corporations and wealthy individuals can shift profits overseas in

offshore accounts, which means they will not have to pay taxes on these profits. There are many other tax loopholes that wealthy individuals and large corporations take advantage of to reduce their tax liability. Because of these tax loopholes, some large corporations like Bank of America, Verizon and GE are not paying any taxes and may even receive a tax refund from the government.

Congress has to make a choice: will they represent all people, or just the interests of the wealthiest people and corporations in our society? Recently, the House of Representatives voted to cut \$40 billion from the food assistance program known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) instead of reforming the billions in tax breaks that corporations and their CEOs receive. The \$40 billion in food stamp cuts equates to four to six million low-income people being removed from the program.

Programs like Social Security, Medicare, SNAP and the ACA benefit low- and middle-income families. If Congress defunds or reduces funding for any of these programs, it would be disastrous.

Will you take a minute and call U.S. Senators Mark Warner at 877-676-2759 and Tim Kaine at 202-224-4024? Tell them to protect Social Security, Medicare, SNAP and the ACA and end tax loopholes for big corporations and the wealthy.

# Real people. Real change.

## Immigration Update: Get Ready for October 5

Virginia Organizing's immigration reform work is still in full swing! On October 5, there will be events across Virginia to support comprehensive immigration reform with a path to citizenship. These events are being held as part of the National Day of Dignity and Respect.

In Richmond, participants will gather outside of U.S. Representative and House Majority Leader Eric Cantor's event at Innsbrook to call attention to the need for immigration reform. In Charlottesville, dramatic storytelling will showcase the shared history of immigrants in the area. The Harrisonburg Chapter will march for immigration reform and share stories of lives lost at the border and changed forever through deportation. The Fredericksburg Chapter will be working on voter registration and working on gaining support for a large-scale march in Washington, D.C. that will take place October 8. In Norfolk, participants will share their immigration stories.

To participate in any of these actions, please contact your local organizer or call our office at 434-984-4655 ext. 222 for more information.

## Virginia Organizing Chapter Wins Award

The South Hampton Roads Chapter of Virginia Organizing recently received an award from the Virginia Sierra Club on the Chapter's support of the Keep the Ban campaign to stop any attempts to remove the ban on uranium mining

in Virginia. The South Hampton Roads Chapter has been working on this issue with various groups in the area. A uranium mining company has been working to lift the more than 30-year ban on uranium mining to extract uranium found in Pittsylvania County. The site, known as Coles Hill, could produce dangerous runoff into water sources for the Virginia Beach and South Hampton Roads area. In addition, Virginia's wet climate and volatile weather makes uranium mining unpredictable and dangerous. Congratulations, South Hampton Roads Chapter, for your work to keep your community's water and environment safe!

## Deadline to Register to Vote Approaching

This year, Virginians will elect a Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General and House of Delegates on November 5. October 15 is the last day to register to vote in Virginia to be eligible to vote in this year's election. If your voting rights have been restored, please remember that you must still register by the October 15 deadline to vote!

To find out if you are registered to vote, or to get more information about voting, please visit the State Board of Elections at [www.sbe.virginia.gov](http://www.sbe.virginia.gov). If you would like to help register people to vote with Virginia Organizing, please contact your local organizer or call our office at 434-984-4655 ext. 222. To find a local organizer, visit [www.virginia-organizing.org/chapters](http://www.virginia-organizing.org/chapters) and choose the Chapter location nearest you.

## Leader of the Month Dell Erwin



Dell Erwin has been working with the Virginia Organizing Charlottesville Chapter for many years, focusing on health care and civic engagement.

Dell said the best part of working with Virginia Organizing is having an opportunity

to work on a variety of issues that focus on disenfranchised people. "There is a level of quality and commitment and passion from those who work with Virginia Organizing to really do something about pressing problems. We are a group that puts feet on our words!" said Dell.

Dell is committed to helping former felons get back their voting rights. She believes voting is a fundamental part of our society and all people should be entitled to their right to vote. While she was discouraged by the vote-suppressing ID laws that were passed in Virginia over the last two years, she is encouraged that our state is making some progress on restoring voting rights to those who lost them due to felony convictions.

Most recently, Dell has been working to make sure the people of Virginia know the facts about the Affordable Care Act, focusing on the new Health Insurance Marketplace. Her family benefits greatly from the Affordable Care Act and she wants to make sure everyone else knows the benefits they can now access thanks to health care reform.

Thanks for all your hard work, Dell!

### 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, ODU

### News in Brief

- Virginia Organizing is working with Every Child Matters and other groups in Virginia to make sure that children's issues are an important part of the gubernatorial campaign this year. For handouts on this campaign, please talk to your local organizer.
- Have you ever considered having a house party to fundraise for Virginia Organizing? Get more information by contacting Sally Bastian at [bastian@virginia-organizing.org](mailto:bastian@virginia-organizing.org).
- In Harrisonburg, Chapter leaders organized a "cash mob" to support a local immigrant-owned business. The business owner was thrilled with the support.
- In Petersburg, a group of local leaders had their first meeting to talk about forming a Chapter in the area! The group is currently working on voter registration.
- Chapters across the state are working to make sure that small business owners and uninsured individuals know about the new Health Insurance Marketplace (HIM). The HIM opens enrollment on October 1. All plans must have minimum coverages and insurance companies may no longer discriminate based on pre-existing conditions.



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