



Secretary of the Commonwealth Levar Stoney visited Danville to talk about the restoration of civil rights process in Virginia.



Mayor Adam O'Neal of Belhaven, NC, visited with Virginia Organizing leaders in Petersburg and Fredericksburg on his way to Washington, D.C., to discuss Medicaid expansion and a hospital closing in his own community.



Virginia Organizing leaders met with Virginia Secretary of Health and Human Resources Bill Hazel to discuss Medicaid expansion and learn more about what Virginians can do to help bring expansion to the Commonwealth.

News From the Grassroots

Virginia Organizing Delivers Backbone to Rep. Goodlatte

On July 30, Virginia Organizing leaders marched to the Harrisonburg office of U.S. Representative Bob Goodlatte to deliver a backbone.

"As a DACA recipient, it is important to me that we stay involved and focused on immigration reform, as this issue affects so many people in our community," said Virginia Organizing Harrisonburg Chapter leader Dulce Elias, who participated in the action.

"Representative Goodlatte told me personally at a town hall meeting that people like me deserve an opportunity to stay here. I'm just asking that he stand by his word and do something. He has the power—I hope he has the courage," said Elias.

Virginia Organizing delivered the backbone to Representative Goodlatte to symbolize the need for him to boldly move forward on immigration reform and to stop cowering to political pressure in discussions about DREAMers and young people who are immigrating to the U.S.

When the Chapter leaders arrived at the office, the staff listened to what they had to say and promised to pass the message along to the Congressman. Chapter leaders requested a meeting with Representative Goodlatte to share their stories and their position on immigration reform as constituents.

The staff at the Harrisonburg office informed the Chapter leaders that Representative Goodlatte would have to approve the request for a meeting. Chapter leaders decided to stay in his office until they got a meeting scheduled.

Representative Goodlatte serves as Chair of the House Judiciary Committee and has the power to hear comprehensive immigration reform bills that are meaningful for more than 11 million undocumented immigrants living and working in the U.S.

Since Representative Goodlatte has consistently said that the nation's immigration system is broken, Virginia Organizing will continue to call on him to listen to his constituents and to use his leadership position to move our country forward on these important public policy decisions.

For about five hours, a group of leaders stayed in the office. The group only left

because the police were called to escort them out. Representative Goodlatte has yet to approve the meeting request.

Stan Maclin was one of the leaders escorted out of Representative Goodlatte's office by police.

"I sat in Representative Goodlatte's office because we need to be heard," said Maclin. "Virginia Organizing leaders are committed to immigration reform. We deserve an opportunity to talk to our elected Representative about immigration reform and we deserve real answers."

"Immigration reform is important to me because this is an issue of justice," said Maclin. "Our elected officials are supposed to be representing us. If Speaker of the House of Representatives John Boehner would just allow a vote, the votes are there to make immigration reform happen. Representative Goodlatte, now more than ever, needs to stand up and do the right thing for our immigrant brothers and sisters."

Virginia Organizing is asking supporters to call Representative Goodlatte's Roanoke office at 540-857-2672 and ask that he meet in Harrisonburg with Virginia Organizing leaders and constituents on immigration reform.

Real people. Real change.

Virginia Organizing to Participate in Amazing Raise

Virginia Organizing plans to participate in the 2014 Amazing Raise, a fundraising campaign sponsored by The Community Foundation that helps non-profits raise money and earn cash prizes to support the good work of the organization.

Virginia Organizing needs your help! Beginning at 6 a.m. on Wednesday, September 17 through 6 p.m. on Thursday, September 18, Virginia Organizing will ask supporters to donate using the <http://www.theamazingraise.org/> website.

Stay tuned to your inbox and watch our Facebook and Twitter feeds to get updates on what prizes we will be competing for during the Amazing Raise. If you are a runner and are interested in entering the Amazing Raise 5k to support Virginia Organizing, contact Michele Mattioli at mattioli@virginia-organizing.org for more details.

Danville and Martinsville Chapters Deliver Medicaid Petition to Legislators

The Martinsville/Henry County and Danville Chapters of Virginia Organizing delivered more than 500 petition signatures to Virginia Delegate Les Adams and Virginia Senator Bill Stanley in July.

"I see an urgency to Medicaid expansion but our legislators are dragging their feet," said Virginia Organizing Martinsville-Henry County Chapter leader Betty Chew. "We can't wait any longer—we need health care for 400,000 Virginians now! I hope Delegate Adams will pay attention to the needs of his constituents."

"Seniors, families, and workers need health insurance," said Virginia Organizing Danville Chapter leader Renee Stone. "Between rent, groceries, and utilities, most budgets don't leave a lot of room for health costs. I'm so disappointed that Senator Stanley was a roadblock to Medicaid expansion in the state, and I hope he'll do the right thing in the future."

Virginia Organizing is proud of the local Chapter work across the state around Medicaid expansion as we continue to raise awareness about this important issue!

Fracking in Washington County

Washington County Chapter leaders have been fighting hydrofracking and gas drilling in the area for several years. Recently, the Planning Commission voted to send regulations to the Board of Supervisors for approval to begin drilling. Residents are concerned about drinking water contamination, land devaluation, noise pollution and other environmental and economic consequences. Virginia Organizing leaders organized a rally outside the most recent Board of Supervisors meeting and more than 80 people came to be heard by their elected officials. The primary goal was to be seen and get the Board's attention and the Chapter accomplished this goal!

Voter Photo ID Education

Virginia Organizing has begun educating voters about the new voter photo ID laws that are now in effect for the upcoming elections. For printable flyers that can be used in the community, please visit <http://bit.ly/VOflyers> and choose the flyer for your area.

Leader of the Month Eunice Haigler



Eunice Haigler became interested in Virginia Organizing because of criminal justice work and Medicaid expansion. Eunice is one of the 400,000 people who would benefit from Medicaid expansion. She now works on many projects with Virginia Organizing.

"These are personal issues for me, not just political ones," said Eunice.

While Eunice was working on criminal justice and health care issues, she noticed that Chapter members who did not have a personal connection to those issues worked alongside her. She chose to help out with immigration reform because others helped her on her issues and then someone shared why immigration reform was so important.

"After I heard the story, I knew I wanted to help. I decided I would get arrested with Virginia Organizing and immigrant youth to show solidarity."

Eunice did get arrested outside of Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives John Boehner's office in Washington, D.C.

"I was prepared for the handcuffs, prepared for the processing, but I was not prepared of how I would feel once the door to the cell shut," said Eunice. "I knew the outcome of my arrest, but it hit me that there were thousands of immigrants out there being detained for deportation who do not know their fate. They are taken from their homes to a cell filled with uncertainty. That was hard."

Thank you, Eunice, for your incredible work and commitment to a just Virginia.

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

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Local Chapters and Areas Served

Augusta/Staunton/Waynesboro
Charlottesville/Albemarle County
Danville
Harrisonburg/Rockingham County
Fredericksburg
Lee County
Louisa 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, NSU, RU



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News in Brief

- Petersburg leaders registered 42 new voters at the Halifax Jazz and Blues Festival.
- The 4th Circuit Federal Appeals Court ruled Virginia's ban on same sex marriage unconstitutional! The case will likely go to the U.S. Supreme Court, but Virginia Organizing is hopeful that justice will prevail.
- The Grassroots Gathering will be September 5-7 at the Blackstone Retreat and Conference Center in Blackstone, Virginia. Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam and Secretary of the Commonwealth Levar Stoney will be guest speakers.
- Virginia Organizing Chapters are working hard to raise money for the great organizing work we are doing across the state. This month, the Fredericksburg Chapter held a yard sale to raise funds.
- The South Hampton Roads Chapter held the 16th monthly Light the Way to Comprehensive Immigration Reform gathering on August 1.
- The Virginia General Assembly will meet beginning on September 18 to discuss Medicaid expansion in special session. Visit our website or like us on Facebook for updates and details as they are available.

www.virginia-organizing.org