

**Virginia Organizing had groups of members from across the state nearly every day of the legislative session.**

**In opposition to SB 1367, we distributed air fresheners to legislators stating, "Predatory Lending Stinks!"**

**Virginia Organizing stands with the workers of Wisconsin, Indiana and Ohio.**

## News From the Grassroots: General Assembly Edition

### Fighting Bad Immigration Bills

We celebrated a big victory this month when state legislators rejected almost all of the anti-immigrant laws proposed this session.

Over the last two months we have spoken out against a slew of anti-immigrant laws moving through the General Assembly and held six events in Harrisonburg, Danville and South Hampton Roads, Christopher Newport University, College of William and Mary and University of Mary Washington. We stood up against Arizona-style legislation requiring local law enforcement to ascertain the immigration status of those arrested and taken into custody. And we opposed a bill barring undocumented residents from attending a university in Virginia, among many other harmful and useless bills. And we won!

### Predatory Lending Stinks!

On Valentine's Day, we visited all the offices of the Virginia House of Delegates to hand out a one of a kind valentine. We gave each member their very own car air freshener that says, "Predatory Lending Stinks. Vote No On SB1367." The scent was "fresh linen" but it still cannot cover up the stench of SB 1367 expanding predatory lending. Unfortunately the legislation passed the House and Senate. Our friends at the Virginia Poverty Law Center made a couple changes to Virginia's tourism slogan to reflect the new legislation:

*Virginia Welcomes You. Get A Car Title Loan. Walk Home.*

It's simple. It's catchy. And it's accurate. Now that SB 1367 will be law, those who have cars registered

in other states will have the "privilege" of crossing the border into Virginia to get a car title loan at rates as high as 264%. That sure beats a "Virginia Is For Lovers" t-shirt!

### Revenue: The Real Budget Solution

Candace Graham, a member of our Budget and Revenue Committee gave a passionate testimony in a subcommittee meeting against SB 1394, a bill that would allow money from the General Fund to be used for transportation, instead of health care, public safety or education.

While the Senate and House fight over the state budget, we are also reminding folks that we need progressive tax reform and new revenue. WVTF public radio ran a great story on our efforts this month.



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# Real people. Real change.

## Supporting Wisconsin Workers

On February 23 we delivered a letter to Governor Bob McDonnell, criticizing his support of Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker. Instead of focusing on jobs or transportation, our Governor spent his time recently praising Governor Walker for his attacks on Wisconsin workers. The letter was signed by two dozen Virginia organizations and labor unions that spoke out about the need to stand up for the workers who are protesting nationwide. (Please visit our website to see the letter.)

Now we are gathering petition signatures in support of the historic actions of hundreds of thousands of workers in Wisconsin over the last two weeks. Virginians need to carry a message that is louder and clearer than the one our Governor has been sending. Across the nation, politicians like Governor McDonnell have waged a war on workers and their rights. These proposals are sold as “good for business” or “tough choices” or about “shared sacrifice.”

We know none of this is true and let us not mince words. These are simply mean-spirited, politically motivated, cynical attacks on working people and they fuel a race to the bottom that’s destroying our middle class.

Please take one minute to stand in solidarity with the working people of Wisconsin. Please sign the petition at: [www.virginia-organizing.org](http://www.virginia-organizing.org)

## Our State Legislators Leave Homeowners Vulnerable to Mortgage Fraud

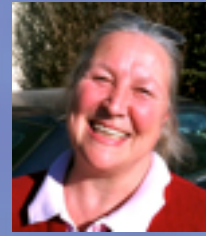
Members of Virginia Organizing, Virginia Poverty Law Center and other groups delivered 100 paper towel rolls to House members designed to make the point that delegates should support SB 837 to “wipe out” foreclosure fraud.

The paper towel rolls donned the label “Virginia’s Foreclosure Process is a Mess. Clean it Up. Vote Yes on SB 837.” Unfortunately, the legislation died in subcommittee along with all other bills introduced to protect Virginia’s homeowners.



## Leader of the Month:

**Kathy Stanley**



Kathy Stanley has shown an unwavering commitment to the local housing campaign in Chesapeake and has put herself in a vulnerable position in order to

speak out for others. As a resident of the Providence Mobile Home Park she has worked to keep the pressure on the Chesapeake City Council to pass a citywide protective policy for mobile home park residents. Since no good deed goes unpunished, Kathy experienced a \$75 increase in rent after she began speaking up on the issue. Despite being targeted, she presses on.

“I realized that I needed to speak out and that I was in a unique position to do so. God puts us in certain situations for a reason and I did what I felt I needed to do,” said Kathy.

Kathy delivered a strong and courageous testimony on February 15 to ensure that the Chesapeake City Council approved 60 permanent affordable housing single room occupancy residences.

“This effort was collaborative. There were so many other people who came out to support us. There really is strength in numbers,” said Kathy.

In spite of this recent victory, Kathy realizes the long-term fight has just begun. “I hope that everyone will keep us in their prayers and hopefully we will continue to have a roof over our heads.”

## VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

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**Local Chapters** (call or visit the website for more information)

Charlottesville

Danville

Martinsville

Fredericksburg

Northern Virginia

Newport News/Hampton Roads

South Hampton Roads

Williamsburg

Shenandoah Valley

Washington County & Lee County

Petersburg

Richmond

**On Campus:** W&M, UMW, VSU,

CNU, UVA, E&H, U of R

## News in Brief

- We are holding health care forums in honor of the one-year anniversary of the Affordable Care Act: in Charlottesville (April 5), Richmond (March 22), and Petersburg (March 23). Please see the website for more details.
- The Southwest Virginia Chapter traveled the furthest to visit the General Assembly. They met with Del. Bud Phillips, Del. Joe Johnson, Del. Terry Kilgore, Del. Will Moorefield and Sen. Phillip Puckett on a variety of issues including drug courts legislation, foreclosure bills, car title lending, redistricting and the need to implement the health care law.
- Student chapter leaders from William and Mary, Christopher Newport University, University of Mary Washington, and the University of Richmond gathered for a student lobby visit on February 11.
- The South Hampton Roads delegation testified before the special subcommittee of Courts of Justice in Richmond on February 16 to help defeat 10 of the 12 bills targeting immigrant families.
- The Danville Chapter did a community power analysis that was a huge success and they also met with U.S. Congressman Robert Hurt.