



Virginia Organizing met with Senator Mark Warner's staff in Washington, D.C. on July 12 to discuss cuts to the safety net.



Virginia Organizing joined MoveOn members at the offices of Reps. Bob Goodlatte and Robert Hurt to oppose Medicare and Medicaid Cuts.



Virginia Organizing and Doctors for America delivered a petition to Rep. Eric Cantor's office in Glen Allen.

News From the Grassroots

Virginia Organizing Leaders Sound Off on the Debt Ceiling.

With the debate on the debt ceiling reaching a fever pitch, Virginia is front and center as Republican Majority Leader Eric Cantor of Richmond has made it clear that he is willing to put our nation's economy at risk, rather than raise taxes on the wealthy. But what you might not know is that Virginia is one of five states that could lose its AAA bond rating thanks to Rep. Cantor's theatrics. Due to Virginia's high level of government workers and contracts, the state would be one of the hardest hit by national default.

Virginia Organizing leaders are taking action by flooding Congress's phone lines with calls; sounding off on this dangerous game of chicken:

"Imagine you need open-heart surgery, but the surgeon will not do it

unless you donate a kidney to his nephew. No, you say, that will not happen. And you are right. Surgeons answer to ethical boards and can be sued for malpractice.

"The freshman conservatives who are holding us hostage are outside of the ethical practice of government. But they cannot be sued for malpractice, fired for incompetence or held to an ethical standard of service. These hypocritical ideologues will receive their hefty paychecks for crashing the U.S. economy, and, even if we vote them out at the next opportunity for the wrong they have done, they will get government retirement at taxpayer expense," said **Sarah Williams of Bristol.**

"On June 23, my representative in Congress, Eric Cantor, abandoned debt-ceiling talks because of a dispute with Democrats over

whether new revenue should be a part of the debt-solution equation.

"This short-sighted bickering endangers our country's economic health. As the U.S. moves closer to Aug. 2, financial and bond markets will become increasingly jittery, resulting in lost economic output. If that date should come and the U.S. defaults on its obligations, we will fall back into recession," said **Jeffrey Hunt of Richmond.**

Caring Across Generations By: Stephanie Mitchell

On July 12, I joined close to 20 Virginians from all over the state in Washington, D.C. for a lobby visit with the offices of Virginia Senators Mark Warner and Jim Webb. Our group, which included Virginia Organizing's summer Social Security...



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Real people. Real change.

(Caring Across Generation cont'd)

interns, expressed our own personal concerns as well as the concerns of the hundreds of seniors we have been speaking with throughout the state.

We conveyed the message that Virginians want Senator Warner to focus on strengthening rather than cutting Social Security. We stressed the misconceptions about Social Security's impact on the federal deficit and the detrimental effects of possible benefit cuts and an increased retirement age. We advocated for scrapping the cap on Social Security as a possible solution. After visiting the offices of Senators Warner and Webb, we attended a rally organized by Caring Across Generations that focused on protecting Medicaid. The rally attracted hundreds of people who sought to make their voices heard. With visits from Senators Sheldon Whitehouse, Al Franken and Claire McCaskill and personal stories from a wide array of people, the rally encouraged real people to go out and make real change.

Rep. Cantor: Stop Grandstanding With Grandma's Health Care

As the heat rises outside and heated debt ceiling talks continue in Washington, a group of doctors and community leaders from Doctors for America and Virginia Organizing

delivered a signed petition to Rep. Eric Cantor's Glen Allen office reminding him that a decision to cut Medicare or Medicaid can mean the difference between life and death for many Virginians.

The constituents and physicians expressed their disappointment with the Congressman's unwillingness to negotiate on the debt ceiling unless dramatic cuts are made to the safety net and more tax cuts are given to the wealthy.

Candace Graham, a constituent of Rep. Cantor's and member of the Virginia Organizing Budget and Revenue Committee, braved the intense heat to attend the event because health care cuts would have a dire effect on her family.

"My elderly parents live with me and I see first hand just how much they rely on Medicare. I think that my Congressman is out of touch with what his constituents want. The vast majority of Rep. Cantor's constituents do not want to see cuts to Medicare and Medicaid," said Graham. "People want an end to the Bush tax cuts. We want shared sacrifice for the wealthy and corporations. And we do not support Rep. Cantor's attempts to balance the budget on the backs of the poor, the disabled and the elderly," added Graham.

Leader of the Month:

Ray Scher



Ray Scher of Caroline worked for decades as a managed care nurse, licensed practical nurse and nursing home inspector. It is his experience and insight into the health care industry that led him to be an active advocate for health care reform.

Scher worked for Blue Cross as a managed care nurse during the time that they transitioned to a for-profit model. "After becoming a for-profit, we were no longer looking at clinical outcomes, we were looking at the bottom line. I became very uncomfortable with where the organization was headed because I got into nursing to serve patients, not shareholders," said Scher.

He began speaking out internally but found that few of his colleagues were in a position to join him. "So many health care workers are non-union and are afraid to speak up because they fear losing their jobs."

Eventually Scher retired early and has since dedicated himself to health care reform. He has been active on the Virginia Organizing Health Care Committee and recently testified at the VHRI (Virginia Health Reform Initiative) meeting to determine the governance of Virginia's exchange. He supports the Affordable Care Act and spoke out at the May 10, U.S. Appeals Court health care trial in Richmond.

With support and encouragement from his wife, Scher presses on, "Anymore, health insurance companies and corporations are working against what is best for patients. That's why we need to continue to organize. And getting grassroots people together is the only way we are going to win."

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
Tri-Cities/Petersburg
Richmond
On Campus: W&M, UMW, VSU, CNU, UVA, E&H, U of R

News in Brief

- The Staunton Chapter is continuing to grow and the Harrisonburg Chapter is strategizing on next steps in an anti-287(g) campaign.
- The Valley Chapter met with staff from Rep. Goodlatte's Staunton office to express their concerns over dramatic cuts to Medicaid and Medicare.
- The South Hampton Roads Chapter had a huge victory on July 27 when the Chesapeake City Council approved a Mobile Home Park Protective Policy, which will provide some protection for families in the event of rezoning and displacement.
- The South Hampton Roads Chapter has shared their concerns over cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security at many of Senator Warner's recent "Warner on Your Corner" events and have visited Rep. Rigell's local office as well.
- Virginia Organizing was represented by Karen Kallay of our Health Care Committee at the July 15 Virginia Health Reform Initiative meeting and called for an accessible, fair, and transparent Health Benefits Exchange.