



South Hampton Roads leaders celebrate submitting an application for voter restoration of rights at Enoch Baptist Church, June 23.



The Augusta-Staunton-Waynesboro Chapter held a celebratory press conference after the ACA victory on June 29.



Members and supporters gather at the Glass House Winery for a friend-raising event on June 28.

News From the Grassroots

Affordable Care Act and Individual Mandate Provision Ruled Constitutional

On June 28, the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Affordable Care Act and the Individual Mandate. As a result, over 100 million people who have already benefitted from the law will be able to keep their benefits and 32 million more will receive coverage once the law is fully implemented.

State Governing Board Chairperson Sandra Cook celebrated the news:

“Virginia Organizing has worked hard to help raise the voices of those who did not have health care coverage before the ACA and today we are thrilled with the Supreme Court decision — it’s a great day when we can celebrate raising the quality of life for millions and millions of people.”

While the Court upheld the law, it did limit the federal government’s power to revoke existing Medicaid funding as punishment for states that failed to implement the expansion of Medicaid. The Medicaid expansion is estimated to aid about 450,000 people in Virginia alone. Simply put, it makes sense for Virginia to receive the funding and provide insurance for those who need it and cannot afford it. Virginia Organizing supports the expansion and urges state lawmakers to fully implement the ACA.

Chapters across the Commonwealth held events celebrating the decision and calling on Virginia lawmakers and the Governor to put aside partisan political rhetoric and move forward with ACA implementation. Our message is simple: the ball is in Virginia’s court. Chairperson Cook issued this challenge:

“Governor Bob McDonnell appointed the Virginia Health Reform Initiative (VHRI) over two

years ago and they have been working to implement the ACA in our Commonwealth. However, the Governor, Attorney General, and Virginia General Assembly have largely ignored the work of this initiative. The time for delays and playing politics with the health and lives of Virginians is over.”

Our celebrations will continue, but Virginia Organizing is also committed to continuing our fight for fair implementation of the law and health care coverage for all!

Important June U.S. Supreme Court Victories:

- Arizona immigration laws limited
- Affordable Care Act upheld

Real people. Real change.

Immigration Victory

For people in Harrisonburg, 287(g), a provision that allows the deputizing of local law enforcement to act as federal immigration officials, is nothing to take lightly. 287(g) creates an environment of racial profiling and unnecessarily breaks families apart.

Chapter members joined with other organizations this month and claimed a victory in stopping the deportation of Cesar Rios, an undocumented immigrant arrested for picking up wood in a park. The community celebrated and local officials have stated they will focus on individuals who have committed more serious crimes than Rios' minor infraction.

Recently, Virginia was denied the request to deputize state police officers under the 287(g) program.

Voting Rights Struggle Continues

Chapters across the state have been working diligently to help community members register to vote, understand their rights and the new requirements under the voter ID laws, and assist former felons in filing for restoration of their voting rights. In South Hampton Roads, Virginia Organizing co-sponsored a town hall-style meeting with the NAACP and others in Norfolk to educate the community on voting rights.

Virginia Organizing will continue to fight against voter suppression to ensure access to the most fundamental right we have as citizens.

Organizers Go Global!

Richmond organizer Cathy Woodson and State Governing Board Treasurer Jay Johnson traveled to Hungary on July 8 to discuss community organizing and share their experiences. Read their reflections about expectations of the journey in the Community Voices section of the website, or visit the link: <http://www.virginia-organizing.org/content/virginia-organizing-goes-hungary>. Follow up for more reflections when they return!

Intern Insights

Jenika McCrayer is a Virginia Organizing summer intern who is passionate about voter rights. She recently attended the voter education forum in Norfolk and had this to say: "As a democratic society, it is important that every vote is counted but these voter suppression laws cropping up are challenging that democratic ideal. It is up to organizers and activists to make sure every voice is heard, especially those constituencies that have been underrepresented in the past."

Check our website throughout the summer to hear more from the summer interns of Virginia Organizing.

Leader of the Month

Andrea Jackson



Andrea Jackson was introduced to Virginia Organizing as a college student attending a "Dismantling Racism" workshop and has been an active leader in Waynesboro since October 2011. During this time, she has worked on a variety of campaigns, but is most

passionate about civic engagement and getting her local community involved in the policy-making process. She loves learning new skills, working on a diverse range of issues with Virginia Organizing, and helping others learn and grow.

"People stay in power when they know what's going on," said Andrea. "I'm on a journey myself to understand state and local policy." Because of her beliefs in education and empowerment, Andrea has worked with Virginia Organizing to register voters, keep people informed about what policy changes at the state level mean for the local community and provide information for others to become active in their communities.

Most recently, Andrea has met with her elected officials about issues that are important to her and her community and continues to work to strengthen her chapter. She enjoys the confidence she gains every time she tries something new and hopes to empower others to take action in her community.

News in Brief

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

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

Augusta/Staunton/Waynesboro
Charlottesville
Danville
Harrisonburg
Fredericksburg
South Hampton Roads
Washington County & Lee County
Tri-Cities/Petersburg
Richmond
On Campus: W&M, UMW, VSU,
CNU, UVA, E&H, U of R

- Virginia Organizing needs your help to talk to voters on economic issues! All you need is a phone with long distance capabilities and a computer with internet access; you don't even have to leave your home! Contact harold@virginia-organizing.org to help us with this special project!
- 150 Virginia Organizing leaders will travel to the White House on July 13 for a unique policy briefing by officials on health care, financial reform, immigration, budget and tax issues, and small business concerns. Check out the website for reactions and photos after the event!
- Virginia Organizing will hold its annual Grassroots Assembly on August 11, 2012 at the University of Richmond. Contact Nik Belanger for more details and to register at nik.belanger@gmail.com.
- At the end of July, members of the Washington County Chapter are back at work fighting hydrofracking by holding a meeting with county residents whose land will be drilled.

www.virginia-organizing.org