



Charlottesville Chapter members held signs and passed out flyers encouraging people to call Congress to protect Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare on November 27.

The Fredericksburg and Richmond Chapters hosted Sister Mary Ellen Lacy, one of the Nuns on the Bus, to discuss Medicaid expansion in Virginia on December 18.

Danville Chapter members protested in front of U.S. Representative Robert Hurt's office and asked that he stop giving tax breaks to millionaires at the expense of everyone else.

News From the Grassroots

To Our Lawmakers: Don't Be A Scrooge!

After Thanksgiving, Virginia Organizing began our "Don't be a Scrooge" campaign, asking members of Congress representing Virginia to protect and expand social safety net programs and do the right thing for all people, not just the wealthiest two percent!

Programs like Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security are vital to the survival of so many Virginians. Virginia Organizing hears story after story of folks who would have nothing if not for these programs.

Barbara Aarons, a South Hampton Roads Chapter leader, worked and paid into the Social Security system for 30 years before her doctor told her she had to stop. Against her doctor's orders, she kept working for three years after that because she had concerns with living off just Social Security. Barbara eventually realized that she had paid into the Social Security system and that money was

there for when she could no longer work. She finally applied for Social Security Disability and now does not know how she would survive without it.

Barbara said, "I don't know what I would do if this benefit that I paid into for years were to be cut. Social Security is not an *entitlement*, but I am entitled to it."

Barbara's story is not unique. So many individuals and families rely on Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare to make ends meet.

Virginia Organizing Chapters across the Commonwealth have held press conferences, rallies, demonstrations and protests to get the message to Congress that vital programs must not be sacrificed so millionaires and billionaires get a bigger tax break.

The choice we face is the starkest contrast: do we help struggling individuals and families stay in their homes, get quality medical care, and put food on the table, or do we pad the bank accounts of the very wealthy?

Virginia Organizing is focusing our campaign on our national and state leaders but for different reasons. Nationally, we need Congress to protect programs at the federal level in budget negotiations. In Virginia, we need our representatives to implement those federal programs so Virginians receive the full benefits of the law.

There are over 400,000 Virginians, many of whom are working hard in low-paying full- and part-time jobs without medical insurance, that would benefit from the Medicaid expansion in Virginia.

Unfortunately, Governor Bob McDonnell announced that he was removing the federal money for Medicaid expansion from the budget. What are the uninsured, working people in poverty to do for health care without the Medicaid expansion?

We ask our elected officials to do what is in the best interest of all people, not just the wealthiest few. Let's keep up the good work of holding them accountable and ensuring the future of vital programs.

Real people. Real change.

Danville Chapter Occupies Rep. Hurt's Office

On Tuesday, December, 4, the Danville Chapter of Virginia Organizing peacefully occupied U.S. Representative Robert Hurt's local office. The Chapter members were there as part of a national day of action to tell Representative Hurt to protect the needy instead of giving out tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires. Forty local people came out to the protest prior to occupying Representative Hurt's office. The Chapter handed out flyers, gave speeches on the sidewalk, and encouraged people to call Congress to protect Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare.

South Hampton Roads Chapter Took the Corner to Senator Warner

On December 17, the South Hampton Roads Chapter delivered over 100 Social Security stories to U.S. Senator Mark Warner's Norfolk office. The Chapter's goal is to deliver 300 or more stories to ensure Senator Warner knows what's at stake with Social Security in the budget negotiations. The Chapter decided since they could not get Senator Warner out to the corners where the people are, they would take the corner to Senator Warner!

Christmas Carolers Send a Message of Justice

If you happen to live in an area where our Christmas carolers have been singing, you may have noticed some different words from the classic "Jingle Bells" and "Oh, Christmas Tree." "Dashing through the Snow" was replaced with "Dashing toward the cliff," and an ode to Christmas trees was replaced with a warning about the "fiscal cliff," "Oh fiscal cliff, oh fiscal cliff, we don't have to fall off you." Carolers have been spotted in Northern Virginia, South Hampton Roads, Charlottesville and Richmond, bringing cheer to passersby and the Congressional offices they target.

Fredericksburg Chapter Provides the Cake

During the French Revolution, the wealthy became so out of touch with reality that Marie Antoinette was credited with saying, "let them eat cake" if they have no bread. Congressional leaders are just as out of touch and the Fredericksburg Chapter demonstrated this by giving out cake in front of a local art studio on Saturday, December 15 as part of the ongoing campaign to ask Congress to end the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest two percent.

Leader of the Month

Kristy Lautenbach



Kristy Lautenbach has been a Danville Chapter member since August 2012 and has already done so much work with Virginia Organizing!

In November, Kristy was one of a small group of Virginia Organizing members to meet with Senator Mark Warner. She also drove to some of the most rural areas of her town to get voters to the polls on Election Day. One of those voters was blind and would not have been able to get to the polls if Kristy had not helped.

Kristy became involved after Nik, the Danville Chapter organizer, knocked on her door to get her perspective on issues as a member of the community. She was hesitant to get involved, but now she places Virginia Organizing as a high priority, even telling her new employer that she had to have time for Chapter meetings and events because this work is so important to her.

"I am so glad to be a part of Virginia Organizing," Kristy said, "Since joining the Danville Chapter, I've felt a boost in confidence, gained public speaking skills, and have learned how to make a difference in my community." Thanks for your hard work, Kristy!

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

703 Concord Avenue
Charlottesville, VA 22903
(434) 984-4655 Fax: (434) 984-2803

Local Chapters

Augusta/Staunton/Waynesboro
Charlottesville
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

News in Brief

- We only have **\$21,000** to go to meet our grassroots fundraising goal of \$325,000! Will you consider helping us by making a tax-deductible donation? Donations can be made online by visiting our website and clicking on "Donate" or by mail to **703 Concord Avenue, Charlottesville, VA 22903**.
- We are still working hard to have local governments pass resolutions to support expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Several local governments have responded by passing the resolutions and others are considering it. Most recently, Virginia Beach passed this resolution.
- Virginia Organizing leaders are meeting with Virginia Senators and Delegates in their local offices to discuss important state and local issues like predatory lending, ACA implementation, uranium mining, and other issues.
- **Thank you for using your Kroger gift cards** this holiday season for purchases! Just buying gas and groceries at Kroger using your gift card helps Virginia Organizing empower people to create change in their communities!

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