



The South Hampton Roads Chapter held a demonstration outside of U.S. Senator Mark Warner's Norfolk office on Halloween to say, "Don't Play Tricks with Medicaid!" during budget negotiations in the lame duck session.



Virginia Organizing met with U.S. Senator Mark Warner on November 15 to discuss issues affecting Virginia communities.



Virginia Organizing leaders attended a working meeting at the White House on tax fairness. Virginia Organizing sent 32 leaders to the White House on November 14.

News From the Grassroots

The Budget Showdown and Fiscal Cliff: What You Need to Know

Now that the election is over, news about the "fiscal cliff" and the "budget showdown" in Washington, D.C. has been prevalent. Virginia Organizing has been involved in discussions around the state and with lawmakers in D.C. about what changes in the budget need to be made to avoid the "fiscal cliff" without harming people.

The term "fiscal cliff" refers to the expiration of several tax cuts, including the Bush-era tax cuts for everyone, and a series of defense and non-defense budget cuts known as sequestration. The "budget showdown" is the battle that is brewing in Washington between conservative lawmakers who advocate for a continuation of tax cuts for the wealthy while making cuts to social safety net programs and progressive lawmakers who want to end tax breaks for the wealthy and protect and strengthen those same safety nets.

Virginia Organizing supports ending tax breaks for the wealthiest two percent and making no cuts to Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security. These social programs ensure that retired people, people with disabilities, foster children, and many others have health care and some income when they can no longer work. They are vital programs to our nation and to Virginia.

If we were to end the Bush-era tax cuts for those families making more than \$250,000 a year, the wealthiest two percent, we would save nearly \$1 trillion over 10 years. The drastic cuts that will take place in the new year if Congress fails to act during the lame duck session equals \$1.2 trillion over 10 years.

If we let the Bush tax cuts expire for all people, it will hurt middle class families and those in poverty the most. Virginia Organizing believes ending the Bush-era tax cuts on the wealthiest two percent is good for tax justice and good for the economy.

In addition to championing the issue of ending Bush-era tax cuts for the wealthiest two percent, Virginia Organizing has other requests to make our tax system more just. We want big corporations to pay taxes that are at least equal in percentage to middle-class Americans. Currently, some corporations pay no taxes or get refunds from the taxpayers.

Tax loopholes that benefit the super-rich should also be closed and Congress should institute the Buffet rule, which ensures that all millionaires and billionaires pay at least 30 percent income tax. Implementing these solutions will help close the gap in the budget without harming society's most vulnerable populations.

Virginia Organizing created a presentation that can be found by visiting the Organizing Toolbox on our website or going directly to <http://www.virginia-organizing.org/sites/default/files/2012%20Lame%20Duck%20Session%20Information.pdf>. We will continue to update our website with new information on the budget showdown as it becomes available.

Real people. Real change.

Virginia Organizing is Participating in the Commonwealth Campaign

This year, Virginia Organizing will participate in the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign. The program allows state employees to make donations using payroll deductions. If you are a state employee and you'd like to donate to help Virginia Organizing continue our social and economic justice work, please use code **3168**. Thanks in advance for your support!

Virginia Organizing Goes to Washington!

Virginia Organizing was invited back to the White House on November 14! Thirty-two Virginia Organizing leaders went to the White House for a working meeting on budget and tax issues. We began the day with a tour of the White House and a visit to the Center for American Progress for a breakfast meeting with Tom Periello and Michael Linden on the issue of the "fiscal cliff." After the breakfast meeting, we went back to the White House Executive Office Building to connect with administration officials on the budget and tax issues that face our

nation during the lame duck session.

On November 15, Virginia Organizing leaders and Board members met with U.S. Senator Mark Warner to share our views on a variety of community issues.

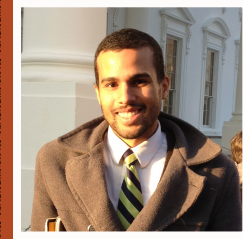
Press Conference in Richmond Draws Attention to Budget Issues

On November 9, Virginia Organizing, Virginia Interfaith Center, SEIU Virginia 512, and ProgressVA held a press conference to ask the question, "Who Pays?"

Richmond Chapter leader Lillie A. Estes said, "Our elected officials have a responsibility to all people, not just the wealthy. If we can reduce some deficit problems in our nation and continue to provide Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security to those who need it by eliminating the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest two percent, why wouldn't we?" Virginia Organizing encourages all our supporters to continue to call U.S. Senators Mark Warner (877-676-2759) and Jim Webb (202-224-4024) to end the tax cuts for the wealthy and protect our social safety net programs.

Leader of the Month

Fernando Perez



Fernando Perez is a Harrisonburg Chapter leader and has been a part of Virginia Organizing since the summer of 2011. Fernando

had an interest in human rights and wanted to serve his local community. He has been working on immigration in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County and helped organize the Listening Project, an opportunity to interview immigrants about their experience with local law enforcement and other aspects of the community.

"I volunteer with Virginia Organizing because it is important to be involved in your community and seek ways to work towards a better world, one place at a time," said Fernando. "One thing that separates Virginia Organizing is its ability to attract people who would otherwise be uninterested in civic or political processes. I'm grateful to have the opportunity to work with Virginia Organizing."

Fernando recently went to the White House with Virginia Organizing for the working meeting on the "fiscal cliff." In addition to immigration reform, Fernando is interested in predatory lending, uranium mining and health care reform and implementation.

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

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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 **\$63,000** 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.
- The **Danville and Martinsville-Henry County Chapters** hosted a budget summit on November 17 at a local Danville church. The summit provided information on current budget issues, including the "fiscal cliff" and budget showdown.
- Holidays are coming up. Using the Virginia Organizing Kroger card really makes a difference for us. Virginia Organizing receives 5% of all Kroger purchases paid for with our Kroger cards and the money generated is used to support Virginia Organizing's work. Thank you so much to everyone using the Kroger cards and please e-mail Sally if you would like a card: bastian@virginia-organizing.org
- The **Southwest Virginia Chapters** are still working hard on Medicaid expansion and drug courts. Members have been meeting with legislators in their local offices.



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