

### From Chairperson Del McWhorter:

2019 began with a grave challenge for Virginia Organizing's Statewide Governing Board when many of our elected officials were involved in scandals that we had to address. When Governor Ralph Northam refused to step down after his yearbook scandal broke, we held a media conference to demand that he meet with us and work to dismantle racism. In June we were able to meet with him and share our ideas about how to make Virginia's anti-racism practices a model for the nation. We will continue to press for these changes.



Our grassroots leaders pursued our statewide work by visiting legislators in the General Assembly during the session and later in district. We pressed them for action on education funding, predatory lending, immigrant rights, climate change, and health care.

At the federal level we generated hundreds of public comments to defend the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau and prevent millions of families from being denied SNAP benefits.

Perhaps our biggest win this spring was the announcement from the University of Virginia that all full-time workers would soon be paid \$15/hour or more. Virginia Organizing has been part of the UVA Living Wage Campaign for 15 years!

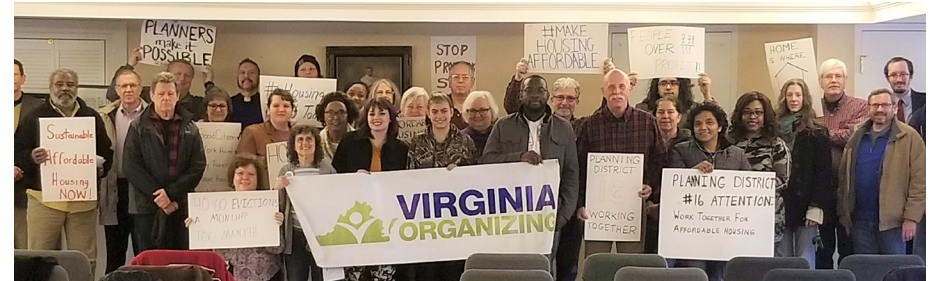
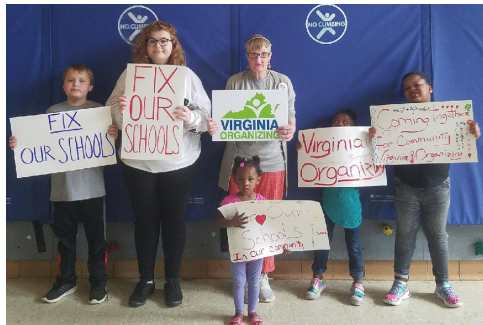
Local organizing in our chapters included...

- In Southwest, Bristol leaders convinced their school board to preserve three small elementary schools and begin to provide necessary accommodations for people with disabilities.
- Eastern Shore worked successfully with the Accomack County Schools to promise to recruit more teachers of color.
- Martinsville and Charlottesville both held public forums on Environmental Justice in order to develop local Environmental Justice campaigns.
- New River Valley and Norfolk both held public Education Justice forums where parents and students could speak in a supportive group about their experiences.
- Emerging chapters in Newport News and Suffolk worked on public transit, civic engagement, and voter registration.

I have been proud to see the success of all of our efforts to build bridges between people and create positive change in our communities. Thank you for being part of Virginia Organizing! Your financial support and perseverance continue to transform the Commonwealth into a place where everyone can thrive.

Del McWhorter

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**VIRGINIA**  
**ORGANIZING**  
**2019 Mid-Year Report**





Brandy Faulkner and other leaders from several chapters met in Richmond to join Mothers Out Front for a media conference on climate change and Dominion Power's mistreatment of consumers and communities of color.



Harrisonburg/Rockingham County Chapter held a rally to protest city cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) because of their mistreatment of immigrants. The city police chief has promised not to cooperate with the agency.



Norfolk Chapter member Doreen Douglas met with Rep. Elaine Luria about predatory lending. State Senator Lynwood Lewis visited the Eastern Shore's May chapter meeting to discuss education reform.



Fredericksburg leaders discussed their affordable housing campaign on a local radio station in April. In the winter they held a rally, and they have met with all members of city council. Support for a housing trust is growing.



In March we held our largest regional workshop yet in Norfolk at the Faith Deliverance Christian Center. 89 people turned out to build relationships and skills for better organizing in Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Hampton, Newport News, and Eastern Shore. Workshop topics included dismantling racism, self care, environmental justice, and more. School board members of several cities held a panel discussion on the school-to-prison pipeline and answered questions about ways to improve education.



Southwest has a new organizer, Susan Stancill! Susan originally comes from North Carolina where she volunteered with Moral Mondays. She has worked on electoral campaigns in Virginia.



**211** leaders met with local decision-makers or state or federal legislators.

**221** new members were recruited.

**51** meetings to engage with other progressive groups.

**85** mentions in the news.

**556** one-to-one meetings.

**448** new skills learned by leaders.

**91** members made their views known in letters to the editor and op-eds.

**1380** participants in forums and rallies on predatory lending, immigrant rights, education, and more!

