Restoration of Rights Action

- Board member Duane Edwards spoke at the Bell Tower in Richmond earlier this month alongside leaders of other organizations and state legislators to denounce Gov. Youngkin’s damage to civil rights progress in Virginia.
- The media conference was covered by many news outlets. Duane and Barbara Harris also published an op-ed in the Virginia Mercury to call for the restoration process previous governors used to be brought back immediately.
- Virginia Organizing is non-partisan, but no matter what side of the aisle you’re on, Virginia needs to stand up and stop this policy that moves us backwards.

Watch the video on our YouTube channel: VOPVideo

Waynesboro Housing Campaign Update

Waynesboro Chapter members visited city council to urge them (again) to adopt a Rental Inspection Program to protect tenant rights and keep rental housing in the city from deteriorating. The leaders were frustrated that after months of waiting for a decision, the city manager now says he is “still evaluating the data on whether or not a rental inspection program is necessary.”

Nora Scott told Council, “Is my lived experience and that of countless other residents not enough data to prove this is an urgent need?”

Power Analysis Preparations

Last week the Wythe County Chapter held their annual meeting at the Open Door Cafe in Wytheville. They’re hard at work developing a campaign for a warming/cooling shelter for the unhoused in their community.

Annual meetings continue this week. At their annual meetings chapters take stock of their year’s work in order to report their accomplishments to the State Governing Board.

On the weekend of April 28, leaders, staff, and the board met in Harrisonburg for our yearly Power Analysis, to help the board determine what next year’s strategy will be.

Take Action

Please contact Kay Coles James, the Secretary of the Commonwealth, and ask her to reverse the change in policy for restoring civil rights to people who have been released from prison. Previous administrations worked to make the process faster and easier for everyone, but the Youngkin administration has eliminated those improvements. They have only restored the rights of a few thousand people.

Please call the secretary at 804-786-2441 and tell her not to go backwards. The governor should not be hand-picking voters. The process should be made as automatic and transparent as possible.
The biggest struggle right now is representation. “We want to be people carry it forward. The work that VCCA does has taken on a momentum of its own as they mentor students into the work, and so the momentum of its own as people carry it forward. VCCA is making a tremendous impact in education and engagement comes from the students he has worked with on climate issues. For Paulson, it is gratifying to see clinicians he knew as students working on climate issues as professionals and teaching their successors. VCCA is making a tremendous impact in educational settings as they mentor students into the work, and so the work that VCCA does has taken on a momentum of its own as people carry it forward. The biggest struggle right now is representation. "We want to be more representative of directly affected communities, but people of color are underrepresented in the medical field. We want to make those connections," he says. To do that, VCCA wants to connect with more groups who are doing environmental justice and community organizing work.

“We want to work with any individuals or groups who have questions about climate and health, who want to learn about that topic to inform their work,” Paulson adds. “If you know of health professionals in your community who are interested in this work, please connect us!”. 2023 Power Analysis

The annual Power Analysis conference was held in person this year for the first time since 2019! We were all happy to be together again at Massanutten Springs.

40 members of the State Governing Board, staff, and leaders from most chapters learned about how power works in Virginia. Then we discussed which issues matter most to our members and what work can help us build power and win in 2024. Civic engagement, restoration of rights, reproductive justice, gun violence, and most of all the housing crisis were some of the issues we studied.

On Sunday, the board held their daylong annual meeting where they considered reports from all of the annual meetings and the Power Analysis and took first steps toward new goals and strategies for the coming year.

Local Chapters and Areas Served:
Charlottesville/Albemarle County, Danville, Eastern Shore, Harrisonburg/Rockingham County, Fredericksburg Area, Lee County, Lynchburg, Martinsville/Henry County, New River Valley, Newport News/Hampton, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Pulaski, Richmond Area, Suffolk, Waynesboro, Wise County, Wythe County

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