



# VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

## News from the Grassroots

July 2024

Issue 139



We hope you are staying cool, dry, and safe this summer!

### Action Alert: Provide a Public Comment for the EIA's Residential Utility Shutoff Survey

The Energy Information Administration (EIA) has announced that they are asking for public input on their new utility shutoff survey (see Federal Register Notice on form EIA-112). This proposed annual survey would collect 12 months of residential utility shutoff data from electric and gas service providers. This survey is important because it will:

1. Provide more transparency about the nature and scale of utility shutoffs
2. Shed light on the persistent race and class disparities of utility shutoffs
3. Contribute to data that can help to make utilities more affordable for all Virginians
4. Develop the first federal database tracking and publicizing utility shutoffs nationwide

The deadline to submit comments is August 19, 2024.

[Take Action Now!](https://shorturl.at/BjQHK)

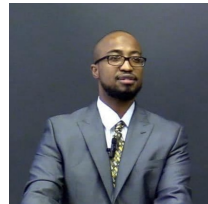


<https://shorturl.at/BjQHK>

included perspectives of organizing in child care, differences in state funding, and challenges that child care providers face all over the country.

Lawrence discussed his passion for early childhood education, specifically because “our youth are the future” and the “goal is to help raise and protect the children.” Additionally, Lawrence spoke on the fact that child care providers are not simply babysitters, but rather, they are early childhood educators.

Providing care at an early age is crucial for helping children through a learning process, as they are “forming language and thoughts,” skills, values, and may even need specialized care. He also noted that effective early childhood care could help to “circumvent people going down a bad path.” This type of skill requires trained professionals, which requires funding.



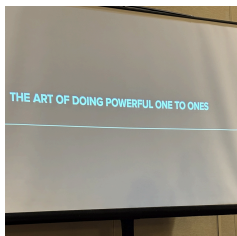
Lawrence Howerton, Jr.

Child care providers are “a necessity to a successful society.” Having attended the conference, Lawrence argued that legislation should invest more into child care, and when the government does not prioritize early childhood education, it should be considered “child neglect” and a “crime.”

He stated that “investing into [the] future will pay off” by providing more well-balanced and productive young people, reducing youth incarceration, and enabling more parents to contribute to the workforce.

### We Care About Child Care

This past week, one of our chapter leaders had the opportunity to attend a national Advanced Child Care conference, focusing on how to build power alongside child care providers and parents. Lawrence Howerton, Jr., of our Halifax/South Boston Chapter, shared his takeaways from the training. He spoke about the impact of igniting a “fire” through awareness, moving forward as communities, and taking action on something that is “actually power,” not just perceived power. This includes taking action to change laws and fighting for better pay for child care providers.

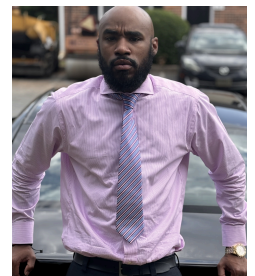


Workshop at the Advanced Child Care Training

The training included information on how to bring issues to legislators, gender disparities and implicit biases, and distinguishing between selfishness, self-interest, and selflessness. Other topics

### Welcome Our New Lynchburg Organizer - Mitxh Richards

A big welcome to our new Lynchburg Organizer, Mitxh Richards! Mitxh brings a passion for and experience with helping young people to fight for criminal justice reform. Mitxh is originally from Fairfax County, VA and moved to North Carolina at a young age. He attributes specific experience during his time in North Carolina as having played a pivotal role in his conviction about fighting for equality in a variety of ways.



Mitxh focuses on providing reentry counsel to those who have recently been incarcerated, as well as bringing awareness to the fact that “everyone deserves the opportunity for fair treatment and equality once they have done their time.” His other areas of expertise include gang intervention, opposition to gun violence, Restoration of Rights, and healthcare. Additionally, Mitxh is involved with multiple community coalitions, a local Toastmasters International club in Lynchburg, and speaks at the University of Lynchburg several times a year. He has also recently enrolled to earn a degree in Business Administration, to continue the work that he is passionate about.

He expressed that he has always “always had a spirit of fighting for what is right” and believes that “life and the quality of life is precious.” Family is also a driving force in his life. He shared that he is “fighting for the future - it’s all about the children.”

### Getting together: Southwest Regional Staff Meeting

Last weekend, our Danville, Wythe County, and Wise County chapters convened for a southwest regional staff meeting in Wytheville. Not only are we focused on issues that concern our local chapters, but we also aim to determine how to best build regional power. True to the heart of Virginia Organizing, we will continue to take action throughout the state to address the needs of our communities on a variety of levels.

### New Virginia Organizing State Governing Board Members!

Speaking of adding to the organization, we are happy to announce that we have added two more members to our State Governing Board: Adelaide "Addie" Alexander and Brandy Faulkner!

#### Adelaide "Addie" Alexander



Addie began her involvement with Virginia Organizing as a summer college intern in 2008, and joined the staff as the organizer for the Fredericksburg Chapter in 2012. In addition to her work with Virginia Organizing, Addie also worked as a

tenant organizer in New York for three years, focusing on efforts related to multi-family apartments and coalitions on housing issues. In 2019, Addie returned to Virginia Organizing to reestablish the Richmond Chapter, which officially restarted in 2020.

In May 2024, Addie completed her Masters degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Commonwealth University in May 2024, and she currently works for Virginia Commonwealth University at the Center for Public Policy. She has conducted research on sustainability and environmental justice, and created a plan for Community Land Trust in Richmond that could utilize accessory dwelling units for affordable housing. In her free time, she enjoys reading novels and playing with her one-year-old daughter, who she “loves” to make laugh.

Addie has expressed her passion for the work of Virginia Organizing and working with those who are “directly affected and don’t have a say in public decision making.” She enjoys “finding ways to support their vision and voice,” which is something that will “always stick out” to her about the perspective of the organization. She believes in “power and change that is led from the bottom-up” and is excited about reengaging with Virginia Organizing as a member of the State Governing Board.

### Brandy Faulkner

Brandy Faulkner joined the Virginia Organizing State Governing Board in June 2024. She has been active in the New River Valley chapter since its beginning in 2017, working on the school-to-prison pipeline and low- and no-income housing campaigns. Brandy



As a long-time organizer, she spends most of her time fighting for racial and economic justice and enjoys listening to people talk about their lives. When she’s not engaged in community work, you’ll find her reading, cooking, or studying. She’s a professor of Political Science and Africana Studies at Virginia Tech.

### Upcoming Event Reminders

**Central REGIONAL GRASSROOTS GATHERING**

Join us for a day of learning, fun, and building power!

**SATURDAY JULY 27, 2024**

9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

Trinity Episcopal Church  
118 Preston Ave.  
Charlottesville, VA 22903

**REGISTER NOW**

<https://t.ly/ljvIBo0z>

[www.virginia-organizing.org](http://www.virginia-organizing.org)

**VIRGINIA ORGANIZING**

2024 | **Grassroots Gathering**

**Saturday, September 21, 2024**  
9:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
815 E Grace St.  
Richmond, VA 23219

Gather with chapter members from across Virginia for a day of workshops, guest speakers, and learning about how to build power!

Our gathering will highlight the work that we are doing toward restoration of rights and housing in Virginia.

**REGISTER NOW**

<https://t.ly/vcdasR>

[info@virginia-organizing.org](mailto:info@virginia-organizing.org)

[www.virginia-organizing.org](http://www.virginia-organizing.org)

### 2024 Grassroots Gathering Raffle Tickets & Ad Book

As we prepare for the statewide Grassroots Gathering in September, we want to remind you that tickets for our annual Beach Week Raffle are already available! The winner will receive a one-week stay in a 3-bedroom condo in Hilton Head, SC. The winner will be announced on September 21 during the Grassroots Gathering event. This is a great way to enjoy a relaxing vacation and support Virginia Organizing at the same time!

**VIRGINIA ORGANIZING**

**2024 BEACH RAFFLE**

One week in a 3-bedroom, oceanfront condo on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

**TICKETS:**  
1 FOR \$5  
5 FOR \$20

Winning ticket will be drawn at the Grassroots Gathering, September 21, 2024. Winner will receive one week at a 3-bedroom, oceanfront condo on Hilton Head Island, SC. Week is negotiable with owners and not all weeks will be available. Winner does not need to be present to win.

**REGISTER NOW**

<https://t.ly/vcdasR>

[www.virginia-organizing.org](http://www.virginia-organizing.org)

Also, if you would like to advertise in the program book we give out to all of the participants at the gathering, please fill out this form.

### Local Chapters and Areas Served:

Charlottesville/Albemarle County, Danville, Eastern Shore, Fredericksburg Area, Harrisonburg/Rockingham County, Halifax County, Lee County, Lynchburg, Martinsville/Henry County, New River Valley, Newport News/Hampton, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Richmond Area, Suffolk, Waynesboro, Wise County, Wythe County

Virginia Organizing  
703 Concord Avenue  
Charlottesville, VA 22903  
434-984-4655  
[info@virginia-organizing.org](mailto:info@virginia-organizing.org)  
[www.virginia-organizing.org](http://www.virginia-organizing.org)