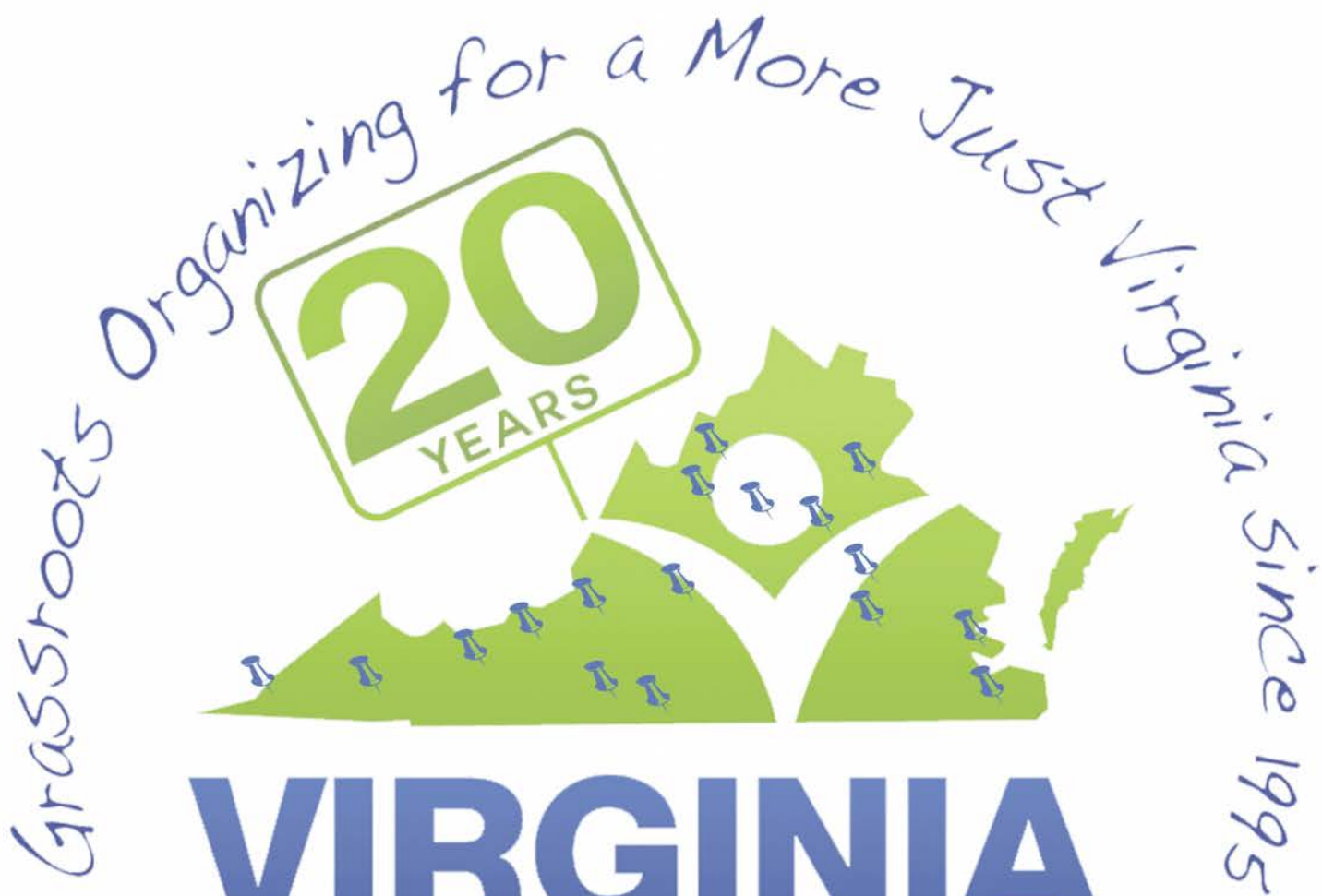




VIRGINIA **ORGANIZING**

2015 Grassroots Gathering
and Statewide 20th
Anniversary Celebration

PROGRAM GUIDE

Virginia Organizing Staff

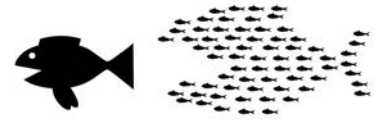
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Nik Belanger Organizer	Amanda Pohl Communications Coordinator
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ORGANIZE!



Virginia Organizing Statement of Beliefs

- We believe that all people should be treated fairly and with dignity in all aspects of life, regardless of race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, ability, or country of origin.
- We believe that every person in the Commonwealth is entitled to a living wage and benefit package that is sufficient to provide the basic necessities of life, including adequate housing, a nutritious diet, proper child care, sound mental and physical health care, and a secure retirement.
- We believe that every person is entitled to an equal educational opportunity.
- We believe that community, economic, social, and environmental policy should be developed with the greatest input from the people it is meant to serve, and that the policies should promote, celebrate, and sustain the human and natural resources of Virginia.
- We believe in the elimination of the extremes of wealth and poverty, in a progressive tax system based on the ability to pay, and in making the nation's financial systems, including the Federal Reserve Bank, more responsive to the average citizen's needs.
- We believe that we should enhance and celebrate diversity in our community and in our state.
- We believe that those who have positions of authority in our governmental bodies, law enforcement agencies, and institutions of learning should reflect the diversity of our communities.
- We believe that our public officials should be held accountable for their actions and decisions.
- We believe in the rights of workers, consumers, shareholders, and taxpayers to democratic self-organization.
- We believe in the elimination of the death penalty in all cases because it is fundamentally inhumane, ineffective as a deterrent to crime, and disproportionately and unjustly applied against people of color and those who are economically or educationally disadvantaged.
- We believe that physical and mental health are parts of personal and community well-being; we believe that Virginians have a broad public health and economic interest in ensuring that adequate care is available to low- and moderate-income residents.

Virginia Organizing 2015 Grassroots Gathering

October 9–11, 2015

Friday, October 9

- 5:00 p.m. Registration
7:00 p.m. Welcome and Dinner
8:00 p.m. Music and Dancing — Special Performance by Mighty Joshua!

Saturday, October 10

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast and Registration
8:30 a.m. Welcome
9:00 a.m. Mass Meeting — Special Guest: Attorney General Mark Herring
10:15 a.m. Workshops Session I

10:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (Two Hour Workshop): In-Depth Strategy

Campaign Strategy Chart — The Midwest Academy Strategy Chart is a great tool used to develop winning issue campaigns. This two-hour workshop will give you an opportunity to learn how to use the strategy chart and to apply it to your own local campaigns. Facilitated by Brian Johns (Room G-44)

10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Skills to Win Campaigns

Virginia Organizing 101 — New to Virginia Organizing? This workshop will give you an idea of Virginia Organizing's 20-year history, what issues we work on across the state, and how you can get more involved in making change in your own community! Facilitated by Harold Folley and Jay Johnson (Room 130)

One-to-One Conversations — Through intentional one-to-one conversations, we learn about important issues, identify potential members, and develop strong public relationships. Learn how and why we use one-to-one conversations to build a strong grassroots organization. Facilitated by Haley Wilson and Debra Grant (Room 134)

Understanding Power — In organizing, our decisions are guided by power analysis. How can we build power to make the changes we want to make? In this workshop, you will define power, learn how to conduct a community power analysis, and discuss ways to build power for the long haul. Facilitated by Joe Szakos and Johnny Mayo (Room 138)

Participatory Research — To build winning local campaigns, we need to be able to understand the complex issues in question. Learn from the Alliance for a Just Society and Virginia Organizing how important research work is not limited to professors and experts but can be done in a way that includes us all! Facilitated by Sam Blair and Denise Smith (Room 142)

Make Your Voice Heard: Writing Letters to the Editor — Decision-makers — politicians, CEOs, and others — look to media to see what people are talking about. Learn the tricks of writing letters to the editor that will be published and amplify your voice! Facilitated by Amanda Pohl (Room 143)

Fundraising to Build Grassroots Power — Are you nervous about asking people for money but want us to keep doing our great organizing? Find out how to get over those jitters and learn how to be an effective fundraiser. Facilitated by Michele Mattioli and Kathy Stanton (Room 141)

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Hot Topics in Local Chapters

Climate Change Roundtable — Climate change threatens all Virginians. Join leaders from across the state for a roundtable conversation about how we might respond to the challenges. Facilitated by Colleen Garrison and Teresa Stanley (Room 130)

School to Prison Pipeline — School punishment policies that disproportionately affect students of color and students with disabilities can put young people on the path to incarceration. Learn how organized people are taking a stand against this system at the local level. Facilitated by Addie Alexander and the Fredericksburg Chapter (Room 134)

Speak Your Mind: Media Spokesperson Training — This training will help you hone in on your interests and skills to generate media coverage on important issues. After this workshop, you'll be prepared to serve as a spokesperson for your local Chapter on the issues that matter to you most. Facilitated by Amanda Pohl and Sandra A. Cook (Room 138)

Immigrant Rights — With comprehensive immigration reform stalled in Congress, Virginia has still made progress on immigration issues at the state and local level—in-state tuition, ending ICE holds, and more. What's next for immigrant rights? Facilitated by Isabel Castillo and Ray Scher (Room 142)

Civil Rights Past and Present — Join veterans of the Virginia Students' Civil Rights Committee for a conversation about the history of civil rights struggle in Virginia and how we can build on it in our work today. Facilitated by Dottie Edwards and Fancy Terrell (Room 143)

After Marriage Equality: LGBTQ Campaigns — Now that marriage rights have been won, what's next in the fight for LGBTQ equality? Hear stories about Virginia Organizing's local work on the issue and share ideas for paths forward. Facilitated by Joe Szakos and Keith Johnson (Room 141)

12:30 p.m. Lunch

1:30 p.m. Group Photo

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Making Statewide and National Change

Building a New Chapter — Statewide and national change starts locally. If you are part of a new or emerging Virginia Organizing Chapter, this workshop is for you! Established local Chapters will share insights, ideas, and challenges that they have encountered along the way. Facilitated by Teresa Stanley and Andrae Hash (Room 130)

Women's Issues — Explore challenges specific to women in Virginia, including economic opportunity, health care access, and discrimination, with facilitators from the ACLU and Women's Equality Center. Facilitated by Kathy Greenier and Allison Kennedy (Room 134)

Restoration of Rights — Virginia Organizing served as a strong voice in the recent improvements to Virginia's Restoration of Rights process. Come learn about the recent changes and how you can help others get their rights back! Facilitated by Cathy Woodson and John Mahan (Room 138)

Retirement Security — An interactive discussion of the serious threats to Social Security and Medicare in a time of polarization, extremism, and misinformation...and what we need to do about it. Facilitated by the Social Security Strategy Committee (Room 142)

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.: Making Statewide and National Change (continued)

Health Care Reform: Building a Story Bank — In the Affordable Care Act's fifth year, we are hearing more and more success stories from individual and families across the Commonwealth. At the same time, we continue to hear about the need for Medicaid expansion. Join Families USA for a training on collecting and vetting stories for a statewide story bank. Facilitated by Airrion Andrews and Toni Mack (Room 143)

Virginia Organizing 301 (Advanced) — Are you an active member who is interested in the long-term growth and development of Virginia Organizing? Then you should join this workshop for an hour of discussion around growth, Chapter sustainability, working together across Chapters, and a big picture vision for Virginia Organizing! Facilitated by Bob Becker and Addie Alexander (Room 141)

- 3:30 p.m. Open Time and Local Chapter Fair
- 5:00 p.m. Mass Meeting
- 6:30 p.m. 20th Anniversary Celebration Dinner

Sunday, October 11

- 8:00 a.m. Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. Action Small Groups
- 10:30 a.m. Report Back
- 11:00 a.m. Closing and Send-Off



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Office of the Governor

Terence R. McAuliffe
Governor

October 10, 2015

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to extend a warm welcome to everyone attending Virginia Organizing's 2015 Grassroots Gathering and 20th Anniversary Celebration.

Virginia Organizing is a non-partisan statewide grassroots organization dedicated to challenging injustice by empowering people in local communities to address issues that affect the quality of their lives. This annual gathering provides an important opportunity to share best practices and learn about strategies to address the unique concerns facing neighborhoods across the Commonwealth.

Neighborhoods across Virginia exhibit broad diversity in composition and demographics, but they all face similar challenges. All communities strive to ensure public safety for their families, excellent schools for their children, and quality housing and jobs. These problems are best addressed when government officials, non-profit leaders, and grassroots activists join together to build stronger neighborhoods in which families can prosper. I commend Virginia Organizing for all that they do to strengthen the Commonwealth.

Best wishes for a successful event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Terence R. McAuliffe".

Terence R. McAuliffe



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

October 10, 2015

Ralph S. Northam
Lieutenant Governor

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Fax: (804) 786-7514
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EMAIL: ltgov@ltgov.virginia.gov

Virginia Organizing
c/o Joe Szakos, Executive Director
703 Concord Avenue
Charlottesville, VA 22903-5208

Dear Virginia Organizing,

Congratulations on 20 years of excellent work! This is a tremendous achievement for your staff and volunteers. I wish I could be there today to celebrate this momentous occasion with you all.

Over the past 20 years, Virginia Organizing has accomplished so many amazing things both locally and statewide. From working to ban criminal history questions on job applications, to protesting Welfare cuts in the Commonwealth, I have watched Virginia Organizing unwaveringly fight injustice wherever it is found. By empowering local communities to actively address the issues that affect their lives, you are helping to mold Virginia's political landscape for the better and bring legislators closer to their constituents every day.

Congratulations again to everyone at Virginia Organizing for 20 years of leadership in grassroots activism. I am grateful for all that you have accomplished for our Commonwealth, and I know you will continue your great work for many years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ralph S. Northam".

Ralph S. Northam

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 for 20 years of organizing for justice.
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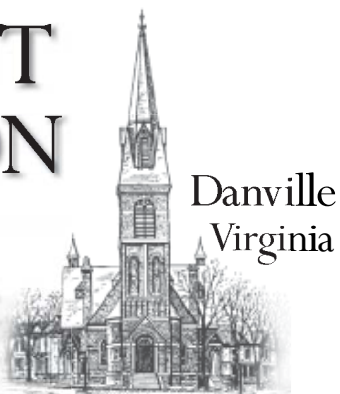
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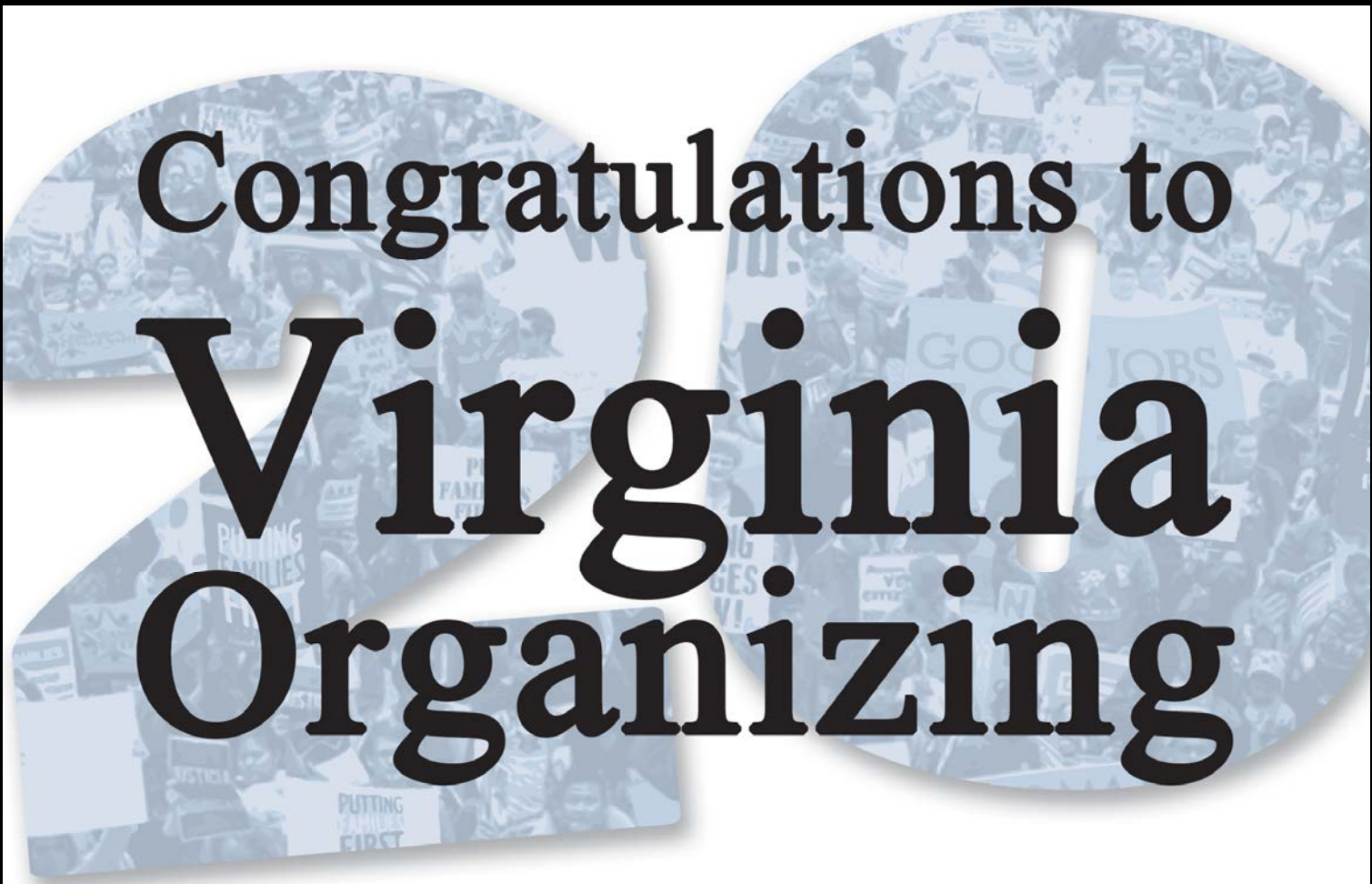
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*Congratulations on
20 years of great work.*

Keep it up!



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WHO WE ARE

We are mothers, grandmothers, and other caregivers who can no longer be silent and still about the very real danger that our dependence on dirty energy poses to our children and grandchildren—from dirty air and contaminated water, to rising seas and more extreme weather.

WHAT WE DO

We come together to discover our sources of power as mothers:

- We are the primary purchasers in our households
- We create strong social and professional networks
- We VOTE.

When we act together, we are an effective voice to protect our children and grandchildren today, and to ensure that they have a bright future.

To learn more about Mothers Out Front and our work in Virginia, please email Rev. Tiffany Curtis at tiffany.curtis@mothersoutfront.org

FOLLOW US ON:  

LEARN MORE: **www.MothersOutFront.org**



The **Alliance for a Just Society** congratulates **Virginia Organizing** for your dedication to genuine grassroots organizing, leadership development and building power from the ground up. Your commitment to organizing has translated to real, tangible wins and better lives for Virginians.

We are honored to be partners with **Virginia Organizing** in taking action and making change.



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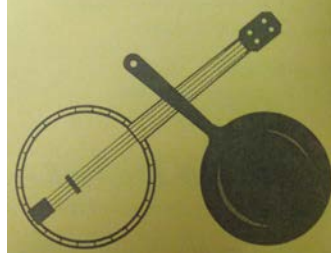
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*John R. Erwin
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To our friends at Virginia Organizing

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Best wishes for the
decades to come.

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The South Hampton Roads Chapter of
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20 YEARS
of grassroots organizing in Virginia.



Congratulations to Virginia Organizing for 20 years of grassroots organizing victories! The Women's Equality Center is proud to partner with Virginia Organizing to advance reproductive rights and economic justice through the Stand With Women or Stand In The Way Campaign!



www.womensequalitycenter.org

Women's Equality Center is a 501C3 project of New Venture Fund (NVF).

**Congratulations to
VIRGINIA ORGANIZING**
for 20 years of empowering
Virginians on issues that matter.



AppalachianVoices
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BUILDING POWER, CHANGING LIVES

— THE STORY OF —
Virginia Organizing

How one grassroots organization is persistently working for long-term, sustainable change in Virginia.

by RUTH BERTA and AMANDA LEONARD POHL

What does it take to build a successful, diverse, powerful grassroots organization in a state that was once home to the Capital of the Confederacy? Virginia Organizing has been working for 20 years to build power and create changes all across Virginia — starting in the region farthest from Richmond to empower directly affected people whose voices are often drowned out by systemic oppression and left out of traditional political power structures.

The book is available for purchase now at <http://bit.ly/vaorgbook>. All proceeds from purchases made through Virginia Organizing will benefit the organization.

*The following individuals and businesses thank Virginia Organizing
for their continued work for justice!*



*Mark Braley
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*Rosemary Rivera
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Virginia Organizing thanks all of our donors for their support, and especially these people, who have been truly steadfast over the years.

You help make the organizing possible and we thank you!



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WE STAND WITH WOMEN



Will you stand with women today and call Virginia Speaker of the House of Delegates William Howell at **(540) 371-1612** and tell him to expand Medicaid? Will you recruit 10 friends to do the same? If you can't reach him by phone, you can also email him at **DelWHowell@house.virginia.gov**.

Tell Speaker Howell it's time to stop standing in the way of women's health.

It's going to take all of us to push to update the rules so that all women can be equal partners in the new economy and their families can thrive. *We stand with women:*

☑ FOR FAIRNESS: Raise Wages and Provide Equal Pay for Equal Work.

Women face unfair pay at almost every level of the new economy, whether in low-wage industries and "tipped" jobs or in higher-paying white collar jobs where they are paid less for the same work. Women are underrepresented in promotions and leadership positions everywhere. **We STAND WITH WOMEN for equal pay for equal work, raising wages in industries that pay women workers poverty wages, guaranteeing women the right to form a union, and ensuring fair promotions and representation in leadership.**

☑ FOR OPPORTUNITY: Invest in Women and Families for a Better Future.

It's time to invest in more opportunities for women to enter, stay, and flourish in the workforce. There are more women graduating from college today than men; the fastest growing industries employ mainly women; and women are increasingly leading households as single parents. **We STAND WITH WOMEN for investments in affordable childcare, education, job training, and retirement security that enable women to participate fully in the economy.**

☑ FOR FREEDOM: Support Fair and Equal Reproductive Rights for Women.

Over 84 percent of women have a child by the time they are in their 40's. Having children has huge personal, health, and economic impacts on women and families, so women need guaranteed access to health care whether they have children or not. Equality for women starts with affordable health care, including no cost birth control, pregnancy and maternity care, and abortion, without interference from politicians or employers. **We STAND WITH WOMEN to support pro-active policies to expand access to women's health care, including birth control and abortion, and against efforts to limit services or to criminalize pregnant and parenting women.**

☑ FOR FAMILY VALUES: Abolish Maternity and Family Penalties at Work.

Most women in today's workforce are working to support children and families. Corporations are padding profits at the expense of workers by refusing to provide paid leave, forcing women to choose between work and family. It's time to update work standards and stop discrimination that punishes women for pregnancy, parenting, and fulfilling family responsibilities. **We STAND WITH WOMEN to demand that businesses adopt responsible leave policies that protect women against discrimination, harassment, and maternity penalties on the job.**

We'll Stand with Women Every Step of the Way.