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# Learn. Pray. Act.

# REPEAT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE VIRGINIA INTERFAITH CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY  
Earthbound: 1716 East Franklin Street, Richmond, VA 23223  
Virtual: [www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org](http://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org)



The VICPP Board, along with Chapter representatives and Staff, met for a planning retreat June 26-27. Ali Faruk looks over a report.

## Board, chapters set focus for 2017

### Upcoming advocacy work to target three key issues for General Assembly session

**D**uring its meeting June 26-27 in Richmond, the Board of Directors and Chapter leaders of the Virginia Interfaith Center voted to concentrate the Center's efforts for the next session of the General Assembly on three specific issues: closing the health insurance coverage gap for more than 400,000 Virginians; wage theft; and restoration of driving privileges for low income residents and returning citizens (formerly incarcerated). You can find details on each of these issues inside this edition of the newsletter. The Center will continue to monitor and

support other issues, but will focus the majority of its efforts on these three priorities in order to enhance effectiveness.

On the first day of the meeting, board members and staff were joined by representatives and leaders from all of the organization's Chapters and affiliated groups (see box at right) in a retreat setting. Recognizing the critical leadership of these Chapters, Executive Director Kim Bobo has visited all but one of the groups on their home turf, and is scheduled to visit group members in Winchester in September.

Chapters represented at the June retreat:

- Hampton Roads
- New River Valley
- Northern Piedmont
- Northern Virginia
- Richmond
- Shenandoah/Winchester
- Williamsburg

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*DETAILS ON NEW ISSUES, pg. 2-3.*  
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## Chapter/Board Retreat

### Wage Theft

What is wage theft? Wage theft is the illegal underpayment or nonpayment of workers' wages. Wage theft takes many forms, but the most common ones are:

- Not paying minimum wage.
- Not paying overtime.
- Calling workers independent contractors when they are really employees.
- Stealing tips.
- Not paying workers for all hours worked.
- Not paying prevailing wage on government-funded projects.
- Taking illegal deductions from workers' paychecks.

Wage theft is a huge problem for low-wage workers, but also affects many middle income workers. The most vulnerable workers, undocumented immigrants, ex-offenders and young people of color, are often victims of wage theft. In the largest studies that have been done on the subject (surveying thousands of workers in three cities), the average low-wage worker lost \$2,600 per year in unpaid wages. Some sectors, like construction, farm-labor and restaurants, are particularly egregious. Wage theft is rampant in Virginia, although we could use more studies to demonstrate the scope of the problem in the state.

What can be done to stop or deter wage theft? There are lots of things that can be done with both education and advocacy. Around the country folks have:

- Strengthened state enforcement against wage theft.
- Educated workers about their rights in the workplace.
- Created "living wage certification" programs to honor good employers.
- Built workers centers.
- Targeted egregious sectors and won codes of conduct that establish fair payment arrangements.

How does the issue connect with the faith community? "Thou shalt not steal" is a pretty fundamental concept in our faith traditions. Once people learn about wage theft and the scope of the problem, they are horrified and quickly recognize that it is wrong and violates our religious principles. Lots of faith traditions have passed resolutions condemning wage theft.

VICPP has worked to strengthen wage enforcement in the past when

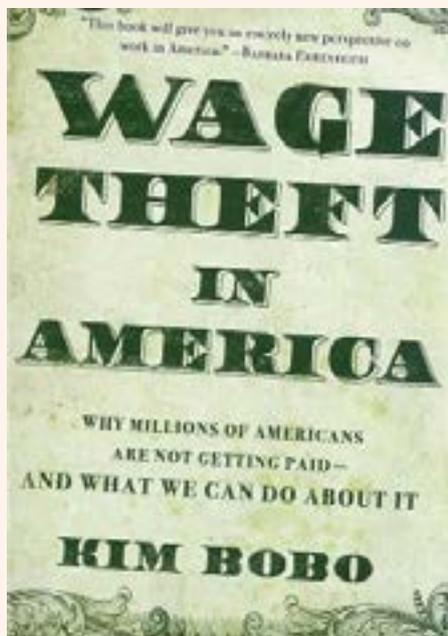
it advocated restoration of funding for the Department of Labor and Industries for wage enforcement when the Assembly cuts its budget.

Wage theft is pervasive in Virginia for several reasons. First, the state wage enforcement law is very weak. Second, the resources devoted to enforcing the (weak) law are inadequate to the tasks, so unethical employers feel they can cheat workers without impunity. Third, most workers do not know their rights and do not know what to do if their wages are stolen. And fourth, the public at-large is not aware of the crisis of the problem and so consumers are not as careful as they could be to seek out and support good employers.

VICPP will be convening a wage theft taskforce composed of experts from around the state to look at what Virginia could do to strengthen enforcement against wage theft. The taskforce will work closely with the Department of Labor and Industries to assure that any proposals made are workable ones.

#### What can you do?

- 1) Learn more about wage theft. Read Kim's book, "Wage Theft in America," or organize a study group at your congregation.
- 2) Talk with friends and neighbors. Even though "talk" is not enough, this is an issue on which it is important to get people talking. Ask friends or family members who work in low-wage sectors such as residential construction, landscaping, food service, retail, recreation or nursing homes whether they



have ever been cheated of their wages. Begin to hear and collect stories.

3) Ask how contractors are paid. If you hire a contractor to clean your house, mow your grass or repair your porch, ask how the workers are paid. Are they paid fair wages and as employees? Or, are they called independent contractors and paid poverty wages? You can ask.

4) Develop a fair-contracting policy for your congregation. Congregations must consider the quality of work and the cost of work, but they also should consider how workers are paid. Sometimes, congregations unknowingly contract with companies that abuse their workers.

5) Be careful on tips. About 10 percent of tipped workers don't get their tips when they are put on credit cards. Ask your waiter if he or she will get the tip if it is put on a credit card. If you don't know, leave the tip in cash.

6) Work with your denomination or judicatory to pass a resolution on wage theft. Email [Kim@virginiainterfaithcenter.org](mailto:Kim@virginiainterfaithcenter.org) for samples.

7) Host a forum on wage theft over Labor Day weekend. Labor Day weekend is a good time to be concerned about worker issues. Host a forum about the problem and what people can do about it.

### Drivers' Licenses

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy has long been an advocate of criminal justice and second chance reforms. As people of faith, we know that we all make mistakes and that we all need opportunities to turn our lives around.

#### What is the Issue?

Approximately 170,000 Virginians are not able to get drivers' licenses because they owe court fines and costs. Most returning citizens (ex-offenders) owe court fines and costs. Even though Virginia allows county courts to establish payment plans so people can begin paying and get a drivers' license, many counties don't have such plans or do not inform people of the options for payment plans. As a result, many returning citizens do not have drivers' licenses and thus can't get to work. Or, they drive without a license and risk going back to jail.

## Faith traditions offer second chances

Thus, Virginians need to make it simple and straight forward for returning citizens to get on a payment plan for court costs and fines (and perhaps for those costs and fees to stop accruing interest), so that they can get their driver's licenses and return to full productivity and engagement in the community. The General Assembly has created a Study Committee, sponsored by Delegate Manoli Loupassi. The Study Committee will likely issue a set of policy recommendations in November.

Creating a way to repay the court fines and costs and get people back to work because they have a drivers' license is an issue that has strong bi-partisan support.

### What can you do?

1) Learn more about the problem of suspended driver's licenses. Download a free copy of the report, "Driven Deeper Into Debt: Unrealistic Repayment Options Hurt Low-Income Court Debtors," released in May by the Virginia Legal Justice Center.

2) Identify people who can talk about this problem. VICPP is encouraging people who have been caught up in Virginia's court fines and fee snares to talk with elected leaders about how it has hurt their ability to find jobs and become active community residents. If you or a friend or family member is struggling with this problem and is willing to speak publicly about it, please contact [Neill@virginiainterfaithcenter.org](mailto:Neill@virginiainterfaithcenter.org).

3) Send a letter to your Delegate and Senator. Even though there is not yet specific legislation that VICPP is supporting, you could still send a letter to your Delegate and Senator urging them to support legislation in the next session that would create payment plans for people whose licenses have been suspended due to court fines and fees. To find out who your Delegate and Senator is go to: <http://whosmy.virginia-generalassembly.gov>.

4) Assist someone with court fines and fees. If you have a friend or family member who is burdened with court fines and fees, consider whether you might help them get out of debt so they can move on with their lives.

5) For more information, visit [www.drivetowork.org](http://www.drivetowork.org).

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy believes in giving those who have committed crimes the opportunity to redeem themselves, find work that can support them and their families and restore their access to the benefits of society. Our faith traditions recognize that we all sin and transgress from both God's laws and human laws, and yet we believe in the fundamental power of forgiveness, redemption and restoration.

The Center supports prison reform and restoration of ex-offender rights such as:

- Abolition of the death penalty.
- Reduction of the use of solitary confinement.
- Expungement of records.
- Reducing the severity of drug laws.
- Restoration of voting rights.
- Raising the felony minimum threshold.
- Enabling ex-offenders to obtain drivers licenses.
- Education and job training in prisons.
- "Banning the box" in hiring forms, asking employers to remove the box that asks if applicants have a criminal record.
- Reducing forced plea deals.
- Using DNA tests to see if people are wrongfully committed.
- Clean slate policies that allow minor nonviolent cases to be automatically sealed after time has passed.

**TRAINING OFFERED THIS SUMMER:** It's time for the third annual Virginia Civic Engagement Table Advocacy Training. This free training will help you have a larger voice in the 2017 General Assembly session. The training is in two parts, on two different days: July 23 in Richmond and Aug. 20 in Norfolk. Reach out to Elena Langworthy from VCET for more information at [elena@engageva.org](mailto:elena@engageva.org).

VICPP'S NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY; SEND INFORMATION TO [neill@virginiainterfaithcenter.org](mailto:neill@virginiainterfaithcenter.org).

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**Ms. Debbie Gold Linick**

**Ms. Lana Heath de Martinez**

# Strategy for closing the coverage gap

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, and its health care program, Virginia Consumer Voices, believe that we can convince the General Assembly to close the health insurance coverage gap and expand Medicaid in Virginia during its 2017 session. Doing so would allow 400,000 Virginians to get healthcare coverage and bring in \$4 million a day into Virginia in federal dollars. To do so, we must double-down on our advocacy.

Here's how you and your congregation can help:

**As an individual, you can:**

- Write individual letters to your Delegate and your Senator urging them to support closing the health insurance coverage gap.
- Visit <http://whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov> to find the names of your Delegate and Senator. Visit [www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org](http://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org) for a sample letter.
- Make sure you are registered to vote. Visit <https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation> to register.
- Attend any town hall meetings your legislators organize and ask questions about what the Delegate or Senator is doing to make sure that Virginians have health insurance. Be sure to look at the VICPP/VCV fact sheets before you go.
- Ask friends and family members who "fall in the gap" to share their stories. There are 400,000 Virginians who could be covered by Virginia's Medicaid program if the General Assembly would agree to take available Medicaid funds to expand coverage, saving Virginia money.

Currently, Virginia has one of the most restrictive Medicaid programs in the nation. Approximately 230,000 of these Virginians earn too little to qualify for subsidies under the Affordable Care Act. We need these Virginians to tell their stories to the public and to your Delegate and Senator.

To that end, Virginia Consumer Voices is videotaping people's stories. Contact Karen Cameron at [Karen@vaconsumer-voices.org](mailto:Karen@vaconsumer-voices.org) or 804-658-3956 about participating. Also, be sure to encourage those who fall in the gap to share their stories with the elected leaders in town hall forums and individual meetings



Board member Debbie Linick leads a discussion on advocacy in specific districts in the Senate and House.

with the legislators.

**As a congregation, you can:**

- Organize a letter-writing time to send personal letters to your Delegates and Senators. (Some congregations have members in multiple districts.) Visit [www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org](http://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org) to get ideas on how to organize a letter-writing time.
- Invite your Delegate and Senator to talk with the congregation or your adult group about what he or she is going to do to help close the coverage gap.

- Make sure everyone in your congregation is registered to vote and goes to the polls. (By August, VICPP will have a "toolkit" of resources on voter registration and engagement.)
- Invite a speaker from Virginia Interfaith Center to visit your congregation.
- Work with members of your local government (city or county) to pass a resolution calling on the General Assembly to close the coverage gap. Sample resolutions are available at [www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org](http://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org).



Board president Frank McKinney (right) along with other Board members and Chapter representatives listen to the strategy presentation.



Board member Warren Hoddle (left) listens to Executive Director Kim Bobo.

# Here's the process for getting a local resolution adopted

**G**etting supportive resolutions adopted can help push an issue forward at the state level by showing a senator or delegate that the people they represent are aware of and favorable towards a particular position. As they say, all politics is local and each community has its own approach to getting things accomplished and who the official and unofficial "powerbrokers" are.

Therefore, the following are to be general guidelines but it is important to understand the idiosyncrasies of your locality. Late summer and the fall are good times to try to get a resolution adopted, since the local budget season is over and local governing bodies will have more time for education on an issue and to consider a resolution.

1. Build a group or coalition of local people who are interested in the issue. Include members of the Virginia Interfaith Center's chapters, faith communities, Healthcare for All Virginians coalition organizations and their members, and others committed to similar values. Agree upon resolution language to be used and ensure locally specific numbers/facts are included, if possible. (A draft is available at [www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org](http://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org).)

2. Meet, as appropriate, with the executive board of the NAACP, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, state and local chapters, community organizations, unions, colleges, area hospitals and healthcare providers to get their support.

3. Identify the City Council or Board of Supervisor members who are most likely to be supportive. Meet with that person(s) to develop the best strategy for resolution adoption. What other members should be approached for support and when? Depending on his/her support, influence and tenure, sometimes you may want to approach

**Part of the strategy in "Closing the Coverage Gap" is to get city, county, hospital, judiciary, faith and/or other organizations to pass resolutions calling on the General Assembly to close the coverage gap to ensure that all Virginians have access to comprehensive health care. This is a tutorial of how you might approach that goal.**

will abstain from the mayor or county administrator to ask him/her for support.

4. Meet with all members of the Council or Board, if possible, to educate them on the issue. Ask your local or Council/Board champion(s) to be at the meetings. Ask for their support and address any objections they might have. If they cannot support the resolution, ask if they will abstain from the vote.

5. Have coalition members write letters to the editor of the local paper and continue to build support among organizations in the community in the several weeks leading up to the resolution's consideration. Meet with the press to educate them on issue.

6. Ask your Council/Board/Administrator champion to put the issue on the agenda. Confirm the date it will come up on the agenda.

7. Recruit plenty of supporters in the room when the resolution is considered. Ask someone or several local people, who are directly affected, as well as the area hospital and health care providers, to speak at the meeting. Invite the press to be there.

8. Send thank you notes to the Council/Board/Administrator members. Follow up on any opposition if unsuccessful in order to prepare for another opportunity in the coming year. Celebrate if successful.

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

**Lana Heath de Martinez** has just completed a Master of Divinity at Union Presbyterian Seminary. Her background is primarily in immigrant rights advocacy. She has been the Virginia chapter president of American Families United, a grassroots organizer with Virginia Organizing and Organizing For Action, and a Public Policy intern for VICPP.



The Rev. Dr. **David L. Chapman** has served as Interim Executive Minister of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia since January, 2014. Prior to that he was senior pastor at High Street Baptist Church in Roanoke. He has degrees from Bluefield State College and the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University.



**T**he Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy is planning a Silent Auction!

At its Annual Meeting and holiday party on Dec. 15, VICPP will host a Silent Auction as a new type of fundraiser. Your donations to the auction will support the Center. We could use such things as:

- \* Tickets to concerts, sports and other events
- \* Restaurant vouchers
- \* Artwork or handmade crafts
- \* Use of a vacation home
- \* An hour of business (legal, resume, etc.) or personal services (nail, hair, etc.)
- \* A round of golf
- \* Books (especially those signed by the author)
- \* Gift baskets that represent a special topic or area
- \* A donated meal at your home or delivered to the purchaser

Donations are only limited by your creativity.

If this is an area that interests you, or you have experience with a Silent Auction for another organization, please send an email to [Neill@virginiainterfaithcenter.org](mailto:Neill@virginiainterfaithcenter.org).

## Chapter/Board Meeting

# Reports from Chapters and Affiliate Groups

### New River Valley

The group held presentation on the moral imperative for health insurance reform with Karen Cameron of Virginia Consumer Voices and an interfaith anti-violence service tied to the anniversary of the 2006 Virginia Tech massacre.

### Northern Virginia

Sponsored a Social Justice University at St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church and held its annual Advocacy Training Session at Unity of Fairfax in Oakton. Also did a joint project with the League of Women Voters of Arlington on "The Economic Impact of Medicaid Expansion." [Watch the event here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQU8tHtcijU>]

### Hampton Roads

The Chapter has done a number of collaborations, on Medicaid expansion, on predatory lending, on redistricting and on climate change/coastal protection (a big issue for the Tidewater region). Members are big on visiting legislators before the session starts, when they take more time to sit and talk about the issues.

### Northern Piedmont

Held a hunger event at Germanna Community College in Culpeper. Also organized a counter-protest at an anti-Muslim event in the area, which got a great response. "We'd like to get our clergy leaders get their congregations involved in social justice issues and letting us be the advocacy vehicle," said Scott Christian. "There is often a separation between attending an event and becoming an advocate. We've thought about creating a kind of 'buddy system' where new advocates are paired with someone who



Lana Martinez (left) leads a Richmond Chapter meeting last December at the VICPP office.

has gone to the General Assembly before." They are working on a juvenile justice-related event for the fall.

### Shenandoah Valley/Winchester

Has been an affiliated group since 2000. Worked with the local NAACP to get the city of Winchester to take the Confederate Battle Flag off the official city seal. They replaced it with the CSA national flag, but that is a slight improvement. Worked on issues of the local African American community including improving relations with law enforcement. Also held a program on loneliness. In response to Orlando shooting, held an event in solidarity with the LGBTQ and Muslim communities at the Hideaway Café, a new "safe space" in Winchester. Kim will meet with the group in September

and will also lecture at Shenandoah University.

### Williamsburg

A fledgling affiliate group is being organized by Charles Swadley and John Whitley. The group met at Williamsburg Baptist Church, where Daniel Wilson, is the pastor. The first big event was an interfaith service in the wake of the Orlando shooting (photo below), with good participation. "That may help this new affiliate in Williamsburg grow some roots," said Dr. Whitley.

### Richmond

"We have tried to be in step with the Center," said Rabbi Gary Creditor. Lana Heath de Martinez convened a meeting in December to preview the General Assembly session.



Clergy and student participants at a service for the Orlando shooting victims held recently in Williamsburg.



## Join the Fun ... Host a House Party!

### What's a house party?

A house party is a fun social gathering of friends, family (both yours and VICPP's) and neighbors who are committed to racial and economic justice or are interested in learning more about the issues facing low-income families in Virginia, and what they can do to help. And it is an event designed to raise financial support for the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy.

Basically, anyone who wants to have a good time while learning something new is welcome!

This is a great time to host a party to introduce people to our "new" Executive Director, Kim Bobo.

The event includes time for people to visit informally with Kim and one another. When possible, we'd also like to have a special guest, such as an elected leader or prominent religious leader. There is about a 45-minute presentation that includes the special guest talking about how important public policy advocacy is for Virginians, Kim talking about the vision and direction of the Center and a request for financial support done by the host or a party guest and Q/A time. If it is possible to get someone there who falls in the healthcare coverage gap to talk about his or her experience, it will increase interest in our work on Medicaid expansion.

As a supporter of VICPP, it is also a great opportunity as host to share your own story and encourage others to join you in your commitment to racial and economic justice. All that, while helping raise awareness about and financial support for VICPP's programs and

campaigns.

### Who can host a party?

Let's put it this way: You say "I've got a venue", the staff says "WHEN???" If you're reading this, YOU can host a house party.

### How much does it usually cost to host a party?

It really all depends on the number of people and the type of food you decide to serve. You can make it as inexpensive (and VICPP can help you think of ways on how to do that!) or as extravagant as you wish. Although, we'd really rather you not spend too much – agreeing to host a party is generous enough!

*\*All house party expenses will be counted as an in-kind donation\**

### What is expected of the host?

There are a few things VICPP asks of our gracious hosts:

- Provide names of friends and neighbors to invite.
- Call or email friends to strengthen the invitation.
- Recruit a volunteer to help with sign-ins.
- Set up early so you can welcome guests.
- Provide refreshments, food and drink, and all paper supplies. We recommend you keep it simple.
- Provide a basket for contributions.
- Welcome guests to your home and introduce the special guest and Kim.
- Make the "ask" or allow someone else to do so.
- Help guests with any special needs.
- Have fun!

### How much money am I expected to raise?

There's no minimum and, most definitely, no maximum fundraising requirement. Although raising money is important, the biggest value that a house party brings to VICPP is the opportunity to make new friends and allies in the struggle for justice in Virginia.

### Where does the money go?

Proceeds from house parties go into VICPP's General Fund, which supports our educational and organizing work.

### What's a typical timeline?

Planning for a party usually begins two or three months before the event.

#### **Three months before the party...**

- Pick a few dates and see what will work best for Kim and your proposed Special Guest. Confirm the date as soon as you can.
- Decide the type of event you wish to have (e.g. lunch, dinner, coffee and dessert, hors d'oeuvres).
- Figure out how many people your home can accommodate and make a goal for how many people you'd like to participate. (VICPP will prepare a list of the people in its database who live in the vicinity. Hosts should review this and add friends, family and colleagues.)
- Decide if there will be a special guest.

#### **Two months before the party...**

- Finalize the guest list and develop the invitation. Decide on a reply mechanism, such as calls to the host or a mail-in reply card. Include a way for invitees to contribute to VICPP prior to the event or if they can't attend the party. The VICPP office will prepare the invitations.

#### **One month before the party...**

- Mail the invitations at least four weeks in advance (can be done by VICPP staff).
- Send special email invitations to friends (even those who received hard-copy invitations).
- Call or talk personally with people about coming.
- Figure out refreshments.
- Confirm the program and all speakers.
- Create a Facebook party page (VICPP can help).

#### **The Day of the Event...**

- Set out (cook) refreshments.
- Set up a check-in and literature table to help greet guests. (VICPP will provide nametags, check-in sheet, donation cards and envelopes and organizational literature.)
- Arrange for someone to take photos. The party typically lasts about 2 to 2 1/2 hours.

#### **After the party...**

- Send photos to Neill@virginiainterfaithcenter.org.
- Process contributions and send thank you letters (VICPP will do this).
- Send contribution cards to people who did not attend.

If you have additional questions, contact Kim at 773-391-8844 or Kim@virginiainterfaithcenter.org.

# FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

## Engaging your congregation and community in registering and voting

Is everyone in your congregation registered to vote? Does everyone faithfully vote on Election Day or use early “absentee” voting opportunities?

Does your community have lots of people who are unregistered or who don’t regularly vote?

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy is working with Virginia congregations to use the latest in voter file technology to register those in your congregation or community who are not registered to vote and to increase voter turnout from existing and new voters. The voter registration and get-out-the-vote program is non-partisan and focused on under-represented communities – those with low voter-registration and low-turnout. Hundreds of thousands of people in Virginia are eligible to register to vote and haven’t. More than 200,000 returning citizens (ex-offenders) are now eligible to register. Unregistered people and those who don’t often vote could be in your congregation or in your nearby community. Find out and do something about it!

There are five parts to the Faithful Citizenship program:

- Data Analysis
- Pledging
- Preaching
- Reminders
- Celebration

**Data Analysis:** Effective voter registration and getting folks to vote is based on good data. Luckily, there is a lot of public information about who is registered to vote and who actually votes in elections.

Through the Civic Engagement Table, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy has access to the voter registration data and a sophisticated data manager. **Congregations can:**

- Compare your membership lists with the voter files to see who is and is not registered.
- Find out who in your community is registered to vote (so you can register those who aren’t).
- Analyze who in your congregation and community does not vote regularly even though they are registered. Make plans to focus your efforts on getting them to turnout.
- Partner with public housing resident councils to identify who in their communities are not registered, again using the data files, and support them in registering people.

**Registering:** Make your congregation and its members a center for registering people. You can drive people to various registration sites around your community, or even better, you can:

- Set up computers and help people register online (works for anyone with a Virginia ID or driver’s license).
- Print out copies of the hard-paper registration forms and mail or hand carry them in to the voter registration place (required for those without a Virginia ID or driver’s license).
- Canvass the neighborhood and help people register.

**Pledging:** Tests have shown that a simple way to encourage

people to actually vote is to get them to sign a Faithful Citizenship pledge card promising to vote, address the card to themselves, and then send the cards back to the people a week or two before the elections. Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy can provide you pledge cards or give you samples you can print and adapt.

**Preaching:** Pastors can build excitement for voting by preaching on the importance of using the power God has given us to make a difference in the world. Sample sermon resources will be available on the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy’s website by September. ([www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org](http://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org)).

**Reminders:** People need to be reminded to vote. You can do this by regular announcements in your congregation. You



should mail people’s pledge cards back to them a week or two before the election. You can canvass your community a week before the election and then knock on doors or call people the day of the election. You can have team of people willing to drive others to the polls if people need rides. Since voting is public information, the pastor or social action team can review voting data after the election and know who actually voted and who didn’t. Letting people know that you will know if (not how) they voted might encourage more participation.

**Celebrations:** Congregations can celebrate the privilege of democracy and build excitement about elections. You can organize a “celebrate voting” party for people who bring their voting receipts. You can hold an election night party to watch the returns. You can ask everyone who voted to stand in the service right after the elections and give the voters an applause.

**Don’t forget your valid ID:** Remember, in order to vote in Virginia, you must present a valid photo ID. Please check this website for proper forms of identification: <http://va-gotid.pnstate.org/>

### 2016 Virginia Dates to Remember

**Oct. 17** Last day to register for the Nov. 8 Election

**Oct. 29** First day to do “absentee in person” voting at the registrar’s office

**Nov. 5** Last day to do “absentee in person” voting at the registrar’s office

**Nov. 8** Election Day – polls are open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

If you would like your congregation to participate and to use VICPP’s data analytics, please email [Kim@virginiainterfaithcenter.org](mailto:Kim@virginiainterfaithcenter.org).