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# Learn. Pray. Act. REPEAL

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)

## Contents

- Annual Meeting photos ..... 2
- 'Witness at the Capitol' program to begin ..... 4
- Goals for 2017 ..... 5
- Faith Advocacy Partners ..... 6
- Volunteer opportunities ..... 7
- ACA replacement checklist from Bill Kallio ..... 8
- Bios of seven new Board members ..... 9
- Emailing the Governor, key legislators ..... 10
- Odds and ends ..... 11

Rev. Lauren Ramseur (right) and Lana Heath de Martinez greet Del. Jimmie Massie during the 2016 Day For All People.



## Day for All People is Wednesday, Jan. 25

### Centenary UMC will be headquarters this year

**O**n Wednesday, Jan. 25, hundreds of Virginians will converge on the State Capitol in Richmond for the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy's Day for All People.

This is the Center's annual advocacy day where participants can meet with their legislators, watch hearings and the House and Senate in action. There will also be a prayer vigil this year.

The day will start with registration from 8 to 8:30 a.m. at Centenary United Methodist Church, located at 411 E. Grace Street in downtown Richmond, four blocks from Capitol Square. There will be a light breakfast available, then at 8:30 will be the opening session, with a welcome, worship, a review of the key

issues of the day and tips for effective lobbying.

The rest of the agenda is:

- 9:45 — Walk to Capitol Square (Rides will be available for those with mobility challenges)
- 10:00 — Visits with Delegates and Senators
- 11:15 — Prayer Vigil (on 9th Street at the General Assembly office building)
- 11:45 — Walk back to Centenary UMC
- Noon — Lunch at church; Campus Network gathering
- 12:30 p.m. — Reports from legislative visits
- 1:00 — "Building the Work in 2017" on: Healthcare Expansion, Just Wages, Worker Rights, Criminal Justice Reform, "Circles of Protection" (standing with and protecting immigrants and Muslims)
- 2:30 — Closing worship and adjournment

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### THE MARCH ON MONUMENT

Sunday, JAN. 14, 1 p.m.

Robert E. Lee statue, Richmond

#### MLK DAY FILM AND DISCUSSION

Monday, JAN. 15, 4:30 p.m.

Byrd Theater, Richmond

#### LECTURE ON ISLAMAPHOBIA

Sunday, JAN. 22, 6:30 P.M.

Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, McLean

#### DAY FOR ALL PEOPLE

Wednesday, JAN. 25, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Centenary United Methodist Church and Capitol Square, Richmond

#### 25TH ANNUAL UNITED METHODIST DAY AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Thursday, FEB. 2, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Bon Air United Methodist Church and Capitol Square, Richmond



# Inside the Annual Meeting

**Two groups, two individuals honored for their work**

VICPP Board Chair Frank McKinney and Executive Director Kim Bobo pose with presenter Rev. Melanie Mullen and Dr. Bill Hazel, state Secretary of Health and Human Services, who was honored as Policy Maker of the Year (top).

Rev. Charles Swadley stands with McKinney, Bobo and his presenter, Dr. Jon Barton, as he is honored as the Citizen of the Year.

Below, some of the crowd of nearly 200 enjoyed a time of fellowship before the awards were bestowed. Sponsors for the evening were Del. Jennifer McClelland, Julie and Bruce Swanson, Kim Bobo, Phyllis Albrighton, Charles and Sue Swadley, AFL-CIO Virginia Chapter, IBEW Local 26, The Islamic Center of Virginia, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, the Baptist General Convention of Virginia, Butler Royals law firm, Stratavan Financial, LLC, Crater Community Hospice of Petersburg, Holy Family Catholic Church, and VICPP's Northern Virginia and Winchester chapters.



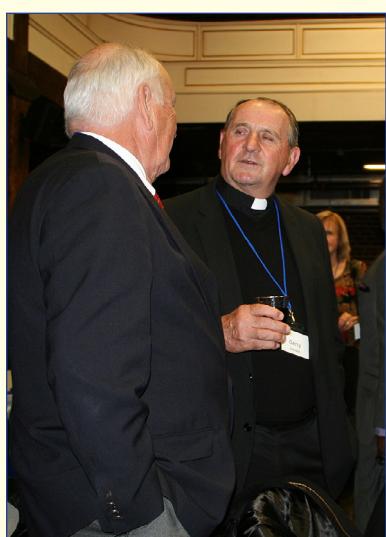


Executive Director Kim Bobo stands with Bishop Jim Mauney and lay leader Eric Carlson of the Virginia Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (above) accepting the Faithful Voice award, and with Board Chair Frank McKinney and Dr. Abu Qutubuddin, who accepted the Beacon of Light award for the Virginia Islamic Center (left).

Definitely the youngest in attendance at the Annual Meeting was 11-week-old Ruth, daughter of Owen and Grace Gray (top left).

Board member Warren Hottle chats with Father Gerry Creedon of Holy Family Catholic Church (bottom left).

Below, some of the large crowd who packed into the Virginia Holocaust Museum.



# Witness at the Capitol begins this week

**WHO:** The Witness at the Capitol Team are Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy volunteers who serve as faithful citizen advocates on the VICPP issues during the 2017 legislative session. Volunteers should commit for at least three days during one week of the session.

**WHAT:** The advocates will be the hands-on citizen advocates for VICPP's priority issues. The advocates will:

- Attend and report on committee and subcommittee meetings.
- Meet with legislators and their staff members.
- Communicate the legislators' position to the VICPP members in the districts.
- Draft background pieces and alerts for engaging the membership in the issues.
- Testify on behalf of issues VICPP is supporting.

Volunteers should be active in the faith community and comfortable talking about the faith dimensions of the issues. Retired clergy, deacons, and lay leaders are sought.

**WHERE:** The work is in Richmond, the State Capitol. If you do not live in Richmond, you should be prepared to be in Richmond for at least three days (Tues through Thurs) during one week of the session.

**WHEN:** Volunteers will work Tuesday through Thursday during the session, which runs from Jan. 11 through Feb. 24. A training call will occur on January 10. The average day will begin at either 8:30 a.m. or 9 a.m., depending on committee schedules, and will run till late afternoon.

**HOW:** If you are interested in joining the Witness at the Capitol program, email [Kim@virginiainterfaithcenter.org](mailto:Kim@virginiainterfaithcenter.org). You must commit to at least three days.

Logistics for Witness at the Capitol Monday Call: There will be a brief call on Monday afternoons at 2 p.m. (beginning Jan. 16) to review the schedule for the week and make initial assignments. Please note that schedules shift a lot and so everyone will need to be flexible.



**Meet in the Morning** (Tuesday through Thursday): We will generally meet "outside the coatroom" a few minutes before 8:30 or a few minutes before 9, depending on what time the first committees meet.

**Meet at noon** (Tuesday through Thursday): When the legislators go into full session, the volunteers will meet in the cafeteria and touch base on what we've learned. At that point, we can work on updates to particular districts, if appropriate.

**Dates:** Please confirm which dates you can participate:

Training Call:	Jan. 10 at 2 p.m.
Week One:	Jan. 11-12
Week Two:	Jan. 17-19
Week Three:	Jan. 24-26
Week Four:	Jan. 31 – Feb. 2
Week Five:	Feb. 7-9
Week Six:	Feb. 14-16
Week Seven:	Feb. 21-23

**Patience and Flexibility:** We ask for your patience and flexibility, both because of the General Assembly and a new effort. The General Assembly is known for rescheduling and adding and dropping things at the last minute. We will all need to be flexible. And although VICPP directors like Fletcher, Jim and Doug were regularly at the Capitol, this year will be a learning curve for Kim and for using a group of volunteers. As the song says, "Please be patient with me, God is not through with me yet."

Current confirmed volunteers include:

- Rev. Fletcher Lowe
- Rev. James Payne
- Rev. Pat Shipley
- Rev. Linda Higgins
- Dr. Marie Giblin
- Mr. Warren Hottle
- Ms. Lana Heath de Martinez
- Mr. Irvin Varkonyi
- Rev. Charlie Summers
- Mr. Frank McKinney
- Mr. Ben Ragsdale
- Rev. Nancy Summerlin
- Mr. Mike Stark
- Rev. Louisa Davis
- Ms. Kim Bobo



Kim models the new VICPP stoles which will be worn by participants in the Witness at the Capitol

# Goals, dreams and desires for 2017

## ISSUE GOALS

### 1) Be a strong religious voice for expanding healthcare access for low-income Virginians.

- Support modest improvements in access for mental health and drug addiction services during the 2017 General Assembly.
- Monitor and respond to the proposed changes to healthcare that will occur in Washington.
- Push for Virginia to take advantage of all new federal healthcare dollars.

### 2) Stop and deter wage theft.

- Push to have the state Misclassification Taskforce actually function and implement new ways to crack down on misclassification.
- Hold wage theft hearings/forums around the state to lift up the issue. Use the forums to generate media coverage of the issue.
- Draft a revised Payment of Wages bill and find sponsors for introducing in the 2018 General Assembly.
- Support the development of at least two additional worker centers in the state (NOVA and Richmond).
- Develop a Living Wage Certification program that honors and recognizes ethical employers in Richmond and explore possibilities in other cities.
- Pilot a program around training volunteers to help with both identifying and responding to wage theft and finding ethical businesses (perhaps called a Living Wage Navigator).
- Develop a Worker Center in Richmond, a non-profit, community-based mediating organization that organizes and supports low wage workers who are not already a part of a collective bargaining organization like a trade union.

### 3) Become a leader in criminal justice reform efforts.

- Advocate the drivers' license reforms, an issue on hold right now because of a lawsuit. (The U.S. Department of Justice says the Virginia practice is unconstitutional, so that's in our favor.)
- Explore ways congregations can assist courts in developing community service programs as alternatives to jail time.

- Support legislation coming before the General Assembly to raise Virginia's felony theft threshold from \$200.
- Continue to advocate restoration of rights for former felons, which remains a strong moral issue.

### 4) Insist that Virginia be a welcoming place for immigrants, Muslims and others.

- Publicly support efforts to make Virginia a welcoming place.
- Develop a rapid response system that can respond quickly to threats against immigrants, Muslims and others.
- Support congregations that choose to become Sanctuary congregations.

## ORGANIZING GOALS

### 5) Recruit 100 Congregations to be Advocating Congregations.

- Finalize the program description and put on website.
- Promote regularly via publications and weekly newsletter.
- List all congregations on website.
- Ask each chapter to recruit 5 new congregations.
- Ask each Board member to recruit his/her own congregation.

### 6) Support and strengthen chapters.

- Support the Richmond chapter in developing strong programming.
- Work to get an intern to support and work with NOVA chapter.
- Work with each chapter on 2017 goals and directions.
- Continue monthly calls.
- Hold a mid-year chapter retreat.
- Work to build chapters or allied groups in Harrisonburg and Charlottesville.
- Get chapter pages functioning on website.
- Make sure each chapter has at least one person trained on the database.

### 7) Engage more young people in the work.

- Get at least 25 college/seminary students at the Day for All People.
- Meet with faculty and students at three seminaries and at least ten religiously affiliated colleges.
- Develop ways that student groups and faculty can support the advocacy work.
- Host two or three Bonner interns, at

least two seminary interns and a United Methodist intern.

### 8) Increase the number of people involved in and connected with VICPP.

- Increase the number of people in the database by 50 percent through online advocacy.
- Increase the number of people in the database by 5 percent through personal outreach.
- Recruit at least 200 people to participate in the Day for All People.
- Plan two events for networking (e.g. MLK service or Labor Day).
- Recruit and develop meaningful roles for ten in-office (Richmond) volunteers.



**Andres Tobar speaks about his own wage theft experiences during a forum on Sunday, Jan.**

**8. About 50 people attended the gathering at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington.**

**VICPP Executive Director Kim Bobo led the workshop on VICPP's work to achieve social justice for all in the Commonwealth, with a special focus on wage theft, an epidemic afflicting low wage workers throughout Virginia.**

The Virginia Interfaith Center's Northern Virginia Chapter's "Build Bridges and Dismantle Walls" event was co-sponsored by the Centreville Immigration Forum, Shirlington Employment & Education Center and the Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations.

# Faith Advocacy Partners: Join the Center's team!

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy advocates with and through a network of Faith Advocacy Partners. These partners are churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, seminary and undergraduate faith groups and other social justice organizations committed to partnering with each other and with the Virginia Interfaith Center for more effective advocacy.

### The Virginia Interfaith Center provides Faith Advocacy Partners with:

- Resources, training and strategy for effective advocacy;
- Skilled staff members for preaching and teaching;
- Opportunities to communicate and collaborate with other congregations and faith communities across the state;

- Regular legislative updates and alerts via email;
- Representation in the halls of the General Assembly (and occasionally Congress);
- Opportunities to communicate directly with legislators, including our annual Day for All People advocacy day.
- Assistance in coordinating public or community forums.

**Faith Advocacy Partners are encouraged to do at least one activity per year in each of the three categories:**

#### **Education**

- Invite staff or board members from the Virginia Interfaith Center to teach and/or preach in your faith community;
- Convene an advocacy study group related to your tradition's scriptures or important texts;

- Host a community forum (and invite elected officials) on a critical social issue.

#### **Public Witness**

- Collect an offering of letters from members to legislators on one of Virginia Interfaith Center's priority issues;
- Send members to the Day for All People interfaith advocacy day in Richmond (next occurring on Jan. 25, 2017);
- Help organize or attend marches, rallies, or other courageous public actions.

#### **Financial Support**

- Attend VICPP's annual awards dinner and fundraising event;
- Make the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy a line item in your faith community's budget
- Collect a special offering for the Virginia Interfaith Center.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

**What is the pledge that VICPP's statewide network of Faith Advocacy Partners commit to?** "Advocating for social justice in the 'halls of power' is a part of our mission and we partner with the Virginia Interfaith Center to help us do that."

**What is the advantage of joining the network of Faith Advocacy Partners?** Faith Advocacy Partners join their voices with people of faith from across the state. Together, our faith communities represent a powerful, moral voice for social change. Participation in the network also provides faith communities with access to Virginia Interfaith Center's wide range of advocacy resources, from education curriculum and legislative updates to advocacy training and leadership development.

**How do we determine what issues to work on?** The Virginia Interfaith Center relies heavily on our faith communities to help determine our advocacy issues. We encourage faith communities to discern issues by communicating with their local communities and reflecting on their religious traditions. The VICPP Board and Chapter leaders then develop a strategic agenda, usually focusing on one top-tier issue and a few additional issues. The Center has previously worked on issues related to hunger, homelessness, economic justice, the environment, sustainable agriculture, education, healthcare, criminal justice reform and human rights.

**Does becoming a Faith Advocacy Partner require that we support every position the Virginia Interfaith Center takes on individual issues?** No. Becoming a Faith Advocacy Partner simply means that a faith community affirms our shared calling to advocate for a more just and sustainable world. How you and your faith community carry out a ministry of advocacy in your local context is up to you. When the Virginia Interfaith Center takes a position on a particular issue, it is a recommendation that we hope individuals within your faith community will consider and engage with.

**Does participating as a Faith Advocacy Partner require a financial commitment?** Yes. A part of being in VICPP's statewide network of Faith Advocacy Partners is a regular financial contribution, at a level that make sense for your organizational budget. Here are some ways you can help insure our great work together continues:

- Make VICPP a line item in your faith community's annual budget or special mission allocations;
- Collect a special offering for VICPP, or host a fundraiser that benefits VICPP's advocacy;
- Let us know of endowments or other funding sources in your community to which we can apply for funds;
- Add to your organizational impact by attending our annual VICPP awards dinner fundraiser in the fall, and introduce others to VICPP by sponsoring a table for your faith community.

**Is VICPP a lobbying organization?** VICPP is a 501c3 organization that works on economic and racial justice issues. The organization does educate and equip its leadership to speak directly to government officials as one method of doing advocacy, but the work is always done in a nonpartisan manner and the advocacy work is well within the limits established by the Internal Revenue Service. The network of Faith Advocacy Partners empowers and supports faith communities and individuals to seek social change through a variety of means, including education, direct action and religious witness.

**Will becoming a Faith Advocacy Partner affect our tax status?** No. Becoming part of the network will not affect your tax status. 501(c)(3) organizations are prohibited from certain political activity like, for example, endorsing candidates for political office. VICPP does not take positions on candidates, only on issues. Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations are permitted to engage in public education, hosting of candidates' forums when all candidates are invited, encouragement of voter participation, and endorsement of initiatives, among other activities. For more information, contact the VICPP office at (804) 643-2474.

# Volunteering for the Virginia Interfaith Center

#	Job	Description	Timeframe
<b>In Office Ongoing Needs</b>			
1	Database	Regularly update and work on database	4 hours/week
1	Website	Work with our Communications Director on upgrading website	Flexible
1	Communications Assistant	Work with our Communications Director in developing short articles on VICPP issues for denominational publications	1 day per week
1	Development Assistant	Assist the Executive Director in scheduling meetings for her and board members with prospective donors	1-2 days per week
2	Clerical tasks	File, stuff, collate, etc. Assist the entire office	2-4 hours per week
1	Grant Researcher	Research foundations	1-2 days per week
<b>Richmond Organizing Needs</b>			
5	Worker Center Planning Team	Help organize a worker center in Richmond by serving on the planning team	A few hours a month
5	Living Wage Certification Planning Team	Work on the team developing a living wage certification program	A few hours a month
5	Criminal Justice Team	Help build a new team to figure out how congregations could address criminal justice issues in Richmond	A few hours a month
<b>Statewide Organizing</b>			
2	Congregational Organizer	Reach out to congregations and organize letter-writing opportunities	1 or more days per week
1	Wage Theft Resolution Organizer	Get the major Virginia faith traditions to pass resolutions on wage theft	A few hours a week
<b>Day for All People - Wednesday, Jan. 25</b>			
2	Scheduler	Schedule visits for participants, assigning people to districts	Week of Jan. 16
2	Office Volunteer	Help copy, collate and prepare materials	Week of Jan. 16
4	Registrars	Help register people as they check in.	7-10:30 a.m.
2	Guides	Help get folks organized into the right places	11 a.m. to noon
1	Sound tech	Manage the sound system	8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
2	Drivers	Drive vans or cars to help folks get to and from the Capitol who have trouble walking	8 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
4	Breakfast Servers	Set up, serve and clean up breakfast	7 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
4	Lunch Servers	Set up, serve and clean up lunch	11:30 am - 1:30 p.m.
4	District Assigners	Make sure everyone knows what district they are in. Assign people to tables based on districts. Make sure tables are marked appropriately.	7:30 a.m.
2	Prayer vigil set-up	Make sure the materials, sound system, banners are ready at the vigil, to be held on the sidewalk on 9th Street	10:30 a.m. to noon
2	Guides	Stand along walking route to get to the church to the State Capitol and back to the church	10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

If you are interested in volunteering, in one of these or a less specific role, please email [Neill@virginiainterfaithcenter.org](mailto:Neill@virginiainterfaithcenter.org).

# Affordable Care Act Replacement Checklist

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has made significant improvements in the way Americans receive their healthcare insurance coverage. Whether you receive healthcare coverage from your employer, a government program or the individual insurance market you could be affected by changes to the ACA. As legislative proposals emerge to repeal and replace the ACA, the following checklist can serve as a guide in evaluating the impact of proposals on consumers.

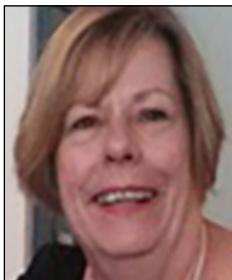
Replacement of the ACA should :

- **Allow children to remain on a family policy until the age of 26.** (*66,000 young adult Virginians have been able to stay on family health insurance policies.*)
- **Prohibit insurance companies from denying coverage to individuals with preexisting conditions.** (*3.5 million Virginians with pre-existing conditions have access to affordable coverage.*)
- **Use community rating in setting premiums for all policy holders regardless of health status.**
- **End lifetime and annual limits on the amount of money an insurance policy will pay for high cost individuals.** (*About 3.5 million Virginians no longer have to worry about lifetime or annual limits.*)
- **Provide premium assistance to individuals and families up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level.** (*Currently, 319,000 in Virginia get help with their premiums, averaging \$275 per month.*)
- **Prohibit insurance companies from canceling policies due to high healthcare costs and inadvertent errors.**
- **Prohibit discrimination in setting premiums based on gender.** (*Prior to the ACA, women in Virginia were charged as much as 35% more than men for the same coverage.*)
- **Set limits on the amount of premium an insurance company can charge based on age.**
- **Place caps on the amount of profit an insurance company can make in determining premiums.** (*236,000 Virginians have received \$52.1 million in refunds from plans that overcharged for premiums.*)
- **Continue moving the healthcare system in the direction of quality improvements and outcome based payments.**
- **Continue the emphasis on health prevention by assuring all health plans provide a set of preventive tests with no co-payments or deductibles.** (*Almost 2 million Virginians on private health plans have gained access to new preventive healthcare services.*)
- **Continue to close the “donut hole” in Medicare Part D plans to assure that seniors have access to prescription drugs year round.** (*In 2015, about 114,000 of Virginia’s seniors and people with disabilities saved an average of \$1,015 on drug costs.*)

*-Prepared by Bill Kallio, VICPP’s Healthcare Advisor*

# Introducing new VICPP Board members

*At its December 15 meeting, the VICPP Board of Directors approved the addition of seven new members. Here are short bios of each:*



**Caroline Black** serves as the Canon for Formation in the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia. Caroline has worked in Christian Formation for more than

30 years in four dioceses around the country, including, Dallas, Pittsburgh, and Maryland. She has served on the numerous committees throughout the church including the Children's Charter for the Church and The Charter for Lifelong Formation, which was passed by General Convention in 2009. Caroline represented Province III (middle Atlantic dioceses) on The Episcopal Council for Christian Education and served as Convener for the Provincial Christian Formation Network. Since joining the Bishop's staff in Southern Virginia, Caroline's job has expanded to include stewardship, advocacy ministries and Safe Church training and administration. During the last three years, the diocesan anti-racism committee (Repairers of the Breach) under Caroline's leadership has created a video and study guide for conversations in the diocese on racial justice, repentance and reconciliation.

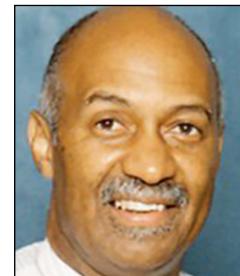
## Paul Falabella

is an attorney with the Butler Royals law firm in Richmond. He concentrates his practice primarily in the areas of employment discrimination, employment and business torts, civil rights and employment contracts. He attended college and law school at The University of Richmond.



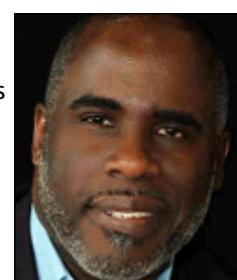
**Rev. Rodney Hunter** has served as pastor of Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church in Richmond since 1986. Hunter has been very involved in com-

munity service, both nationally and internationally. In the United Methodist Conference, he has served as chairperson of the District



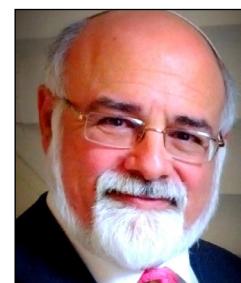
Council, Board of Discipleship, Churches in transitional communities, the Society of St. Andrews Gleaning Network and Home Reparation Project. Rev. Hunter has worked with the Parenting Is Basic Program through Richmond Public Schools, the Board of Richmond Habitat for Humanity, CARITAS, Richmond East Team Board, Chairperson of the Richmond Juvenile court volunteer programs, coordinator of the SHARE Food Program for Richmond and vicinity, co-founder of the Jubilee Assistance Program – an alternative, low interest, loan program for persons who otherwise would use predatory lenders. He assists the chaplain at the Richmond City Jail, and works diligently with ACTS (Area Congregations Together in Service) to provide mortgage assistance to those in need. He also currently serves as president of the Richmond Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

**Rev. Dr. Keith Jones** is the pastor of Norfolk's historic Shiloh Baptist Church. For the last seven years, he has this progressive church family in



a comprehensive program of caring for the community through regular Community Services days, food and clothing distribution, blood drives, workshops and life skills development programs, programs for men, youth and seniors, and crisis support for the needy. Jones coordinated the training of a network of disaster and shelter management Red Cross volunteers for the Hampton Roads area that is evolving into a state-wide network of crises responders, and

is a founding member of the Norfolk's Pastor's Coalition, a group seeking to address issues of social justice and fair treatment in this city and metropolitan area. He is the director of Home Missions for the Virginia Baptist State Convention, the President of the Ministers' Council of the American Baptist Churches of the South and the First Vice President of the Tidewater Metro Baptist Ministers' Conference.

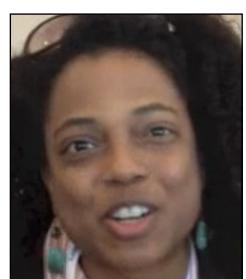


**Rabbi Gary Creditor** is the Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Beth-el, where he served for 21 years. Currently he is working as a Hospice Chaplain for Heartland

Hospice. Before serving Temple Beth-el, he served congregations in New Jersey, Maryland, Connecticut and New York. Creditor is the Chair of the VICPP Richmond chapter, Past President of Long Island Board of Rabbis, Past Chair of the Richmond Rabbinic Association and he has served in many other leadership roles with nonprofit organizations. He also serves as an instructor at the Osher Institute at University of Richmond.

## Rev. Melanie Mullen

**Mullen** is the Downtown Missioner for St. Paul's Episcopal Church, where she has served since 2012 as the point person for engaging the congregation in serving in the city. She has a Masters in Divinity at Virginia Theological Seminary, and most recently, she served as Interim Diocesan Youth Missioner for the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, D.C. She has previously worked in fundraising and development for nonprofits. She loves movies and yoga.



For 45 years **Marilyn Blagg** and her family have run a beef cattle and sheep

**BOARD is continued on page 11**

**Let them hear from you!**

# MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

*In the past few weeks the Center has asked supporters to communicate with the Governor and some key members of the General Assembly on some of our key issues. If you haven't done so there is still time to be an effective voice:*

## Tell Governor to Fight Wage Theft

Please sign this petition urging Governor McAuliffe and Secretary of Commerce Todd Haymore to crack down on wage theft by making the state's Misclassification Taskforce function as it was designed.

In 2014, the Governor created a Misclassification Taskforce by Executive Order to get the various government agencies sharing data about employers that misclassify workers and working together to crack down on this serious form of wage theft. The taskforce met a few times in 2015 but did nothing but talk. It didn't even meet in 2016. The Secretary of Commerce is in charge of the taskforce, but it clearly is not a priority for him.

Many states have used Misclassification Taskforces to seriously address wage theft. Not Virginia. This is a huge missed opportunity to crack down on wage theft and recover money for the state. Misclassifying workers is when employers call workers independent contractors when they are really employees. This means employers don't pay the employer side of payroll taxes (forcing workers to pay double taxes), unemployment, workers comp, and overtime. Workers are exempted from a whole set of important labor protections. Although there may be some employers who are confused about the law, many employers, especially in construction, have found that they can break the law with few consequences and thus have made misclassifying employees part of their business model.

According to the 2012 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) report entitled Review of Employee Misclassification in Virginia, "A Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) audit of one percent of Virginia employers found 5,639 workers were misclassified in 2010. Based on findings in other states, Virginia could have on the order of 40,000 misclassifying employers and 214,000 misclassified workers." According to the report, the state could be losing \$28 million in revenue because of not cracking down on misclassification.

Governor McAuliffe and Secretary Haymore must stop wage theft by getting this Misclassification Taskforce functioning. The Taskforce should immediately:

- Figure out how to share data between government agencies.
- Conduct a pilot program to crack down on egregious violators of the law.
- Develop a detailed plan for strengthening enforcement against misclassification.

Please go to this link to send emails to both Governor McAuliffe and Secretary Haymore:

<https://virginiainterfaithcenter.ourpowerbase.net/civicrm/petition/add?action=update&id=1&reset=1>

## Support the Governor's Criminal Justice Reform Package

On Jan. 4 the Governor announced that he is introducing legislation to restore driver's licenses to those who owe court fines and fees (one of VICPP's top priorities), raise the felony threshold (an issue VICPP has long worked on) and allowing more people to appeal their cases when new DNA evidence is found. These are common sense criminal justice reforms that the Center can support.

Go to <https://governor.virginia.gov/constituent-services/Communicating-with-the-governors-office> to thank Gov. McAuliffe for his leadership. You can use the text below. (You can also thank him on Twitter at @GovernorVA.)

Dear Governor McAuliffe,

Thank you for your leadership in proposing common sense criminal justice reforms. I am eager to support these proposals as good reforms for the Commonwealth.

Thank you.

Delegate Manoli Loupassi, has been a leader in the House of Delegates on the issue of restoring driver's licenses for people owing court fines or fees. Yesterday, the Governor announced a package of common sense criminal justice reforms, including restoring drivers licenses to those who owe court fines and fees.

Loupassi could be instrumental in helping pass such legislation. Please send an email to Delegate Loupassi urging him to provide the leadership in the House necessary to pass such legislation. You can copy the message below and send it to him at [DelMLoupassi@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelMLoupassi@house.virginia.gov):

Speaker Bill Howell has also shown openness to common sense criminal justice reform issues. Copy the text below and send Speaker Howell an email urging him to work with the Governor to pass common sense criminal justice reforms at [DelWHowell@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelWHowell@house.virginia.gov).

Dear Delegate Loupassi,

Thank you for your leadership in the House of Delegates on the issue of restoring drivers licenses for those who owe court fines and fees. I encourage you to work with your legislative colleagues to develop an approach to this issue that can pass in the House of Delegates.

Thank you again for your leadership.

Dear Speaker Howell,

I know you are concerned about common sense criminal justice reforms. I was happy to hear about the Governor's proposals to restore drivers licenses to those who owe court fines and fees and to raise the felony threshold. These are issues I care about and that make sense for the Commonwealth. I urge you to seek common ground between Republicans and Democrats in the House of Delegates to pass common sense criminal justice reforms.

# Dumfries passes Medicaid resolution

In its regular meeting on Dec. 6, 2016, the **Dumfries Town Council** unanimously approved a resolution calling on the Commonwealth's General Assembly and Governor to fully accept federal Medicaid funding to provide healthcare coverage for its residents.

The resolution calls on the legislature to expand Medicaid or create its own state plan to take advantage of the federal dollars available. The resolution was introduced by Council member Derrick R. Wood and signed by Gerald M. Foreman, the mayor of Dumfries.

Dumfries is located in Prince William County in northern Virginia, next to Interstate 95.

Medicaid is the federal and state program that offers healthcare coverage for the poor and disabled. The low-income persons who would be covered cannot afford to purchase through the Affordable Care Act's Exchange Marketplace but don't qualify for Virginia's current Medicaid program because of its restrictive eligibility limits.

The resolution also touted the economic benefit of Medicaid expansion, including bringing \$6.2 million a day from the federal government into Vir-

ginia, bolstering the state's hospital and healthcare industry and the general economy as well. The Department of Medical Assistance Services estimates that Virginia would see a net savings of \$265 million through fiscal years 2022, with the state's small match being more than offset by savings in healthcare for inmates, mental health, indigent care and other state-funded health services.

Recent health insurance statistics by the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that the rate of uninsured fell last year in 47 states and the District of Columbia, including Virginia. Nationwide, the rate of uninsured dropped from 10.4 percent in 2014 to 9.1 percent. Virginia's uninsured rate in 2015 matched the national average at 9.1 percent, but decreased at a lower rate than nationally.

According to Executive Director Kim Bobo, the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy hopes these resolutions being adopted by communities across the Commonwealth can help members of the General Assembly realize the local constituent support that exists to close Virginia's coverage gap.

The Virginia Interfaith Center's "end

of year" appeal in December has been very successful, but the Center will continue to fight for the marginalized according to the beliefs of our Virginia faith groups, all of which call for justice for our neighbors. We need your help continue this fight. You can go to <http://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org/give/> for multiple donation options, or put a check in the mail today to the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, 1716 E. Franklin St., Richmond, VA 23223. Thank you in advance for your generous spirit.

Our friends at the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities and Hands on Greater Richmond have partnered with the University of Richmond Bonner Center for Civic Engagement for a screening of the movie "Race," about Jesse Owen's path to Olympic gold medals at the Games in Berlin in 1936. The event will be offered on Sunday, Jan. 15, at 4 p.m.

Registration for the **Day for All People** is available at: <https://virginiainterfaithcenter.ourpowerbase.net/civicrm/event/info?id=3&reset=1>

## BOARD, continued from page 9

operation in Highland County. Blagg serves her church as pianist and Sunday School teacher, and is active in United Methodist.



Women included District President, Treasurer and Secretary, on the Conference level she's a member of the Nomination Committee, is beginning a 2-year term as Social Action coordinator and continuing work on the Mission Encounter committee. Marilyn's special areas of concern are the Mayan women in the Highlands of Guatemala and the plight of adolescent girls dropping out of school at puberty. She leads United Methodist Volunteer In Mission teams to Guatemala through the Highland Support Project.



Hundreds of people attended the latest "Stand Together" event on Dec. 4 at Third Baptist Church. VICPP was among the sponsors.

**ALL  
FAITHS  
BELIEVE IN  
JUSTICE**

