

# LEARN. PRAY. ACT.

## 2020 YEAR-END NEWSLETTER

*This has been a challenging and painful year – making Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy's (VICPP) work even more pressing. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our staff, board, and volunteers have continued our work advocating economic, racial, social, and environmental justice. Here's what we have accomplished together.*

## 2020 General Assembly Victories

### Progress for Workers and the Planet

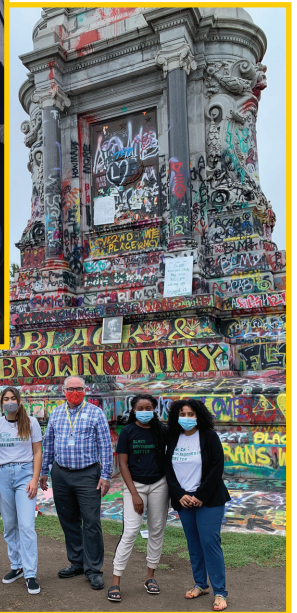
**Wage Theft Reforms:** VICPP successfully championed legislation and supported bills that protect workers' rights and stop or deter wage theft. Collectively, these bills are game changers for Virginia workers.

**Environmental Justice:** Virginia Interfaith Power & Light (VAIPL), VICPP's



**virginia interfaith  
power & light**

environmental partner, led efforts to codify the Environmental Justice Council and establish environmental justice as the policy of the Commonwealth. VAIPL supported the goals of the Virginia Clean Economy Act (to reduce VA carbon emissions) and using the revenues from the Regional Greenhouse Gas initiative for a just energy transition for Virginians. These bills propel VA forward as a leader on environmental policy among southern states.



### Mobilizing Faith Voices within Coalitions

Working with coalition partners, VICPP organized many interfaith prayer vigils and press conferences across the state to call attention to the minimum wage crisis, predatory lending practices, and immigrant rights.

**Minimum Wage Increase:** VICPP was a leading force in the Raise the Wage coalition that won an increase in Virginia's minimum wage. After more than 11 years, Virginians will finally see minimum wage increases: May 1, 2021: \$9.50, Jan 1, 2022: \$11, Jan 1, 2023: \$12, Jan 1, 2025: \$13.50, Jan 1, 2026: \$15.

*continued on p. 2*



Top: Richmond prayer vigil  
Above: VAIPL climate justice event at Marcus-David Peters circle (former Lee Monument)  
Left: Raise the Wage press conference, Feb. 26

# mission

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy advocates economic, racial, social, and environmental justice in Virginia's policies and practices through education, prayer, and action.



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*VICPP gives special thanks to our hardworking and passionate interns. (Not all pictured)*



## General Assembly Victories *continued from p. 1*

**Immigrant Rights:** VICPP supported immigrant rights partners in passing bills to allow people of differing immigration status the ability to obtain a drivers privilege card. We also supported expanding in-state tuition for those who meet Virginia residency requirements.

**Carbon Reduction:** VAIPL & VICPP supported Virginia joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), designating 50 percent of the revenue to invest in energy efficiency, reduce electricity bills for low-income households, and provide equitable transition to renewables.

**Health Equity:** Through supporting the advocacy efforts of the HAV Coalition, VICPP helped obtain partial funding to eliminate Medicaid's 40 Quarter rule, include an adult dental benefit in Medicaid, and extend post-partum coverage for uninsured pregnant women (FAMIS) from 2 months to 12 months.

**Comprehensive Predatory Lending Reform:** VICPP worked closely with the Virginia Poverty Law Center and other partners to finally pass legislation to crack down on predatory lending.

## Responding to the Covid-19 Crisis

Beginning in March, VICPP mobilized support for Virginians surviving the pandemic. When masks were in short supply, we organized congregational sewing groups to make and distribute masks for essential workers and shelters. VICPP also provided information through resource kits, fact sheets (in English and Spanish) and our "Virginia Interfaith LIVE!" weekly public policy broadcast.

## Protecting Workers: Virginia's Emergency OSHA Standard

This summer, when Governor Northam asked the Department of Labor and Industries to draft an Emergency Temporary OSHA Standard for Virginia, VICPP mobilized to support its passage. Virginia's Health Codes and Safety Board passed the strongest OSHA standard in the nation to protect workers against COVID-19. Now, VICPP is advocating that the temporary standard that is in effect until January 2021, be made permanent to protect workers until COVID-19 is gone.



Above L-R: Rep. Jennifer Carroll Foy, Kim Bobo (VICPP Executive Director), Rep. Marcia Price, Benjamin Hoyne (VICPP Policy & Campaigns Director)



Left: Faith leaders hosted prayer vigils at payday lending stores across Virginia.





## Special Session Report

Due to the impacts of COVID-19 along with protests sweeping the nation, Governor Northam summoned the General Assembly back to Richmond in August to address budget needs caused by the crises, protect Virginians against the impacts of COVID-19, and address long overdue reforms to the justice system and policing. The session ran for close to two months with mostly virtual meetings.

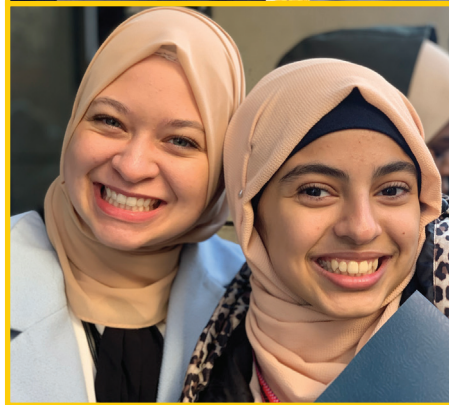
VICPP supported several bills that passed including establishing a Civilian Review Board, banning no-knock warrants, creating a mental health crisis alert system, and requiring that immigrant detention facilities comply with Virginia health and safety standards.

## Civic Engagement

VICPP engaged congregations through providing resources, including a civic engagement toolkit, a Voter Guide, 2020 Census outreach resources, and frequent registration and voting updates. VICPP recruited volunteers for Virginia's election protection program, managed by the Virginia Civic Engagement Table and mobilized texting outreach through the Outvote campaign in partnership with Faith in Action. Our Civic Summer and Civic Fall programs engaged more than 100 volunteers and 40 congregations.

## Communication during Covid

In mid-March, VICPP launched its virtual office moving most of our work and outreach online. On April 3, VICPP launched a weekly live 30-minute broadcast called *Virginia Interfaith LIVE!* to help educate the public and bring faith and community leaders, public policy experts, and legislators together to address pressing justice issues. VICPP has aired 50 programs in English and some in Spanish with 88 guests. The show usually airs on Thursdays at 11 a.m. – watch it live on Facebook or on VICPP's YouTube channel and on most podcast platforms.



Top: Faith leaders speak out at the Capitol during Minimum Wage vigil, Feb. 19  
Left: Day for All People, Jan. 22  
Right: Drive Virginia Forward rally, Jan. 8

## Environmental Activism

Virginia Interfaith Power & Light (VAIPL) amplified civic engagement in its Faith Climate Justice Voter Campaign and launched a grant challenge to help faith communities create greening projects. VAIPL's annual Climate in the Pulpits, Bimahs, and Minbars initiative reached 55 diverse faith communities who uplifted climate and voting as a sacred responsibility.

## Join our Social Media Team @vainterfaith @VAIPL

You can make a difference! Use your voice and your connections to advocate social justice and share news during the General Assembly. Join our team and share VICPP's and VAIPL's posts and tweets. To sign up, contact [roberta@virginiainterfaithcenter.org](mailto:roberta@virginiainterfaithcenter.org). Follow VICPP on social media @vainterfaith and @VAIPL





# Get Involved

## 2021 General Assembly Legislative Priorities

### Economic Justice

- **Worker Justice - Paid Sick Days:** VICPP will continue to help lead the Virginians for Paid Sick Days Coalition effort to win a Paid Sick Day Standard in Virginia

### Immigrant Justice

- **Farmworkers:** VICPP is partnering with the Legal Aid Justice Center to remove the farmworker exemption on minimum wage, require parental permission for children to work in tobacco fields, and address heat stress issues faced by farmworkers and other outdoor workers

### Health Equity & Human Needs

- **Maternal Health:** VICPP will continue to support efforts to decrease maternal mortality rates for BIPOC women
- **Food & Financial Assistance:** VICPP will support efforts to expand programs that support low-income families such as food stamps (SNAP)
- **Evictions:** VICPP will support budget allocations and programs to reduce and prevent evictions

### Criminal Justice Reform

- **Abolition of the Death Penalty:** VICPP is partnering with Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, the ACLU of Virginia, and others to stop this horrific practice
- **Pre-trial detention:** VICPP will support efforts like reforming cash bail to reduce pre-trial detention

### Environmental Justice

- **Water as a Human Right:** VAIPL will help lead an effort to make water a right and to ensure clean water is affordable and accessible to all
- **Energy Burden:** VAIPL will support coalition efforts to reduce the energy burden for Virginians by strengthening language in the Clean Energy Act to ensure low-income communities benefit from RGGI
- **Transportation:** VAIPL will support legislation to make public transportation more equitable and environmentally sustainable



Top L-R: Rabbi Gary Creditor, VICPP Board Member; Rev. Jeanne Pupke, First UU Church, Richmond  
Bottom: Julie Swanson, VICPP Board Chair; Kendyl Crawford, VAIPL Director; Geran Lorraine, VAIPL Faith Outreach Organizer

## Virtual “Days for All People”

**Monday Jan. 18 –  
Thursday Jan. 21, 2021**

You can continue to be involved in legislative advocacy work, even during the pandemic. VICPP will host a virtual “Days for all People” series of events. Mark your calendars for the week of January 18 and stay tuned for daily events including guest speakers, workshops, and hands-on advocacy work to get ready for the 2021 General Assembly.



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## Donate

Please support VICPP's work advocating economic, racial, social, and environmental justice. You can send a check to our office or donate online here: [tinyurl.com/givevicpp](https://tinyurl.com/givevicpp).