



VOICE-IAF Delivers Justice to 627,000 Virginians Drivers Licenses Restored for people with unpaid court debt



VOICE Clergy leaders celebrate Gov. Northam's commitment to restore Drivers Licenses Suspended Due to Unpaid Court Debt.

In October 2018, [VOICE](#) convened 1,400 of its members to ask Governor Ralph Northam to end Virginia's draconian practice of suspending driver's licenses over unpaid court debt, which almost exclusively impacts the poor and people of color. Specifically, VOICE challenged Gov. Northam to allocate money in his budget to replace revenue lost from reinstatement fees, roughly \$9 million per year, which in the past was a major roadblock to passage of the legislation. In December 2018, Gov. Northam followed through on his commitment to VOICE and allocated the needed funding in his FY 2019-2020 budget.

licenses suspended over court debt with the passage of a budget amendment through the Republican controlled legislature that bans the practice. This victory will enable thousands now to drive to work so they can provide for their families, as well as, contribute millions in new tax revenue. In the preceding months, VOICE sent teams of leaders from local congregations to discuss this issue with dozens of key lawmakers including House Speaker Kirk Cox, whose support proved crucial. VOICE also helped to organize key Virginia allies such as business and denominational leaders, who have helped organize support for the bill in key Virginia districts. VOICE aligned with Legal Aid Justice Center, Americans for Prosperity, and Prison Fellowship to deliver this victory.

On Wednesday April 3rd, as a result of Gov. Northam's action, VOICE helped deliver a major victory to the 627,000 Virginians who have their



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Gov. Northam at VOICE's October 2018 Action Committing to 1,400 VOICE Members to Put Funding in the FY 2019-2020 Budget to Restore Drivers Licenses Suspended Due to Unpaid Court Debt

In 2018, VOICE won an increase in the felony level in Virginia. These victories are the beginning of VOICE's multi-year fight on local and statewide criminal justice reform in Virginia. VOICE is now focusing its non-partisan power on the upcoming 2019 local and statewide elections, where VOICE will hold candidate accountability actions and undertake non-partisan voter engagement organizing, mobilizing more than 500 experienced non-partisan voter engagement volunteers from its member institutions who participated in similar work in 2017 & 2018 elections.



VOICE celebrates the victory with Sen. Bill Stanley (R-D20), the Drivers License Restoration Bill Sponsor.

Press coverage of VOICE's work on this issue may be found [HERE](#) and [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).