1 Provide Affordable Healthcare for 400,000 Virginians and Create 30,000 Jobs by Expanding Medicaid

More than a million hard-working Virginians lack access to healthcare. The Commonwealth could provide coverage to 425,000 Virginians through the federally-funded Medicaid expansion. Studies show taking advantage of the Medicaid expansion will save lives and money, create jobs and ensure a healthy, productive workforce in Virginia.

We urge the General Assembly to provide affordable healthcare and create jobs through the Medicaid expansion.

2 Funding for Vital Local Government Services

Virginia families and small businesses rely on public services from local governments, including education, road maintenance, libraries and more. Recently, local governments have experienced budget cuts at both state and local levels. Cuts in state services increase the demand for county and municipal services, forcing many localities to raise taxes or deny services.

We urge the General Assembly to provide adequate funding for local government services so as not to place an undue burden on local taxpayers. Please oppose any measures, such as items in the Governor’s transportation plan, which divert general fund dollars from local education and healthcare services.

3 Ensure Retirement Security for Dedicated Public Employees

Local and state employees work hard every day to deliver quality public services to Virginia families and businesses. Many public employees have forgone careers in the private sector, where they could earn significantly higher salaries, in exchange for the promise of pensions and retirement security. Yet, these promised pensions have come under attack from some officials, who haven't paid what was owed into pension funds.

We urge the General Assembly to protect and fund the defined benefit pensions, which were promised to our dedicated public employees. Please oppose HB1331, which would allow localities to terminate defined benefit pensions for their hard-working employees.

4 Quality Home Care for All Virginians

All Virginians deserve to live at home. By providing quality, cost-effective home care services to older adults and people with disabilities in their homes, instead of in nursing homes and institutions, we ensure that Virginia respects the dignity of all people. The program also saves the Commonwealth’s tax-payers more than a billion dollars every year. However, high workforce turnover rates and proposed budget cuts threaten the viability of our Home Care system.

In order to provide quality care and save tax-payer dollars, we urge the General Assembly to (1) fund paid sick days for Home Care providers; (2) raise the reimbursement rate for Medicaid personal care to a living wage; (3) restore home care access for the 3,000 seniors and people with disabilities who will be cut off in 2014; and (4) add additional life-saving, cost-saving Waiver slots to reduce the waiting lists.

Please support the following budget amendments:
- Paid Sick Days for Home Care Workers: 307 #25h, 26s
- 10% Rate Increase for Consumer-Directed Personal Care: 307 #11h, 28s
- Restore Home Care for 3,000 Families: 307 #12h, 17h, 20h, 15s, 22s, 27s
- Add Cost-effective, Live-saving Waiver Slots: 307 # 2h, 3h, 13s, 14s, 17s

5 Protect our Rights at Work

Local and state public employees have committed to serving the Commonwealth and its residents. Workers’ Compensation and grievance procedures ensure that dedicated employees are protected from injuries and unfair treatment on the job. These policies also ensure that Virginians will continue to enjoy the quality public services they have come to rely on.

We urge the General Assembly to oppose any efforts to weaken workers’ compensation, such as HB1612, which will reduce the number of quality providers handling workers’ compensation cases and thus limit injured workers’ access to quality medical care.

“Stand in unity with us to strengthen the working class. Progress is the foundation of the American Dream. Struggling for basic healthcare, services, sick leave and workers’ compensation benefits should not be factors.”

— Crissy Helinski
Employment counselor, Loudoun County

“Our Home Care system is in crisis. Virginia deserves better. We deserve a great Home Care program and through our common sense solutions, we can build one.”

— Thomasine Wilson
Home care provider
SEIU Virginia 512 members are Home Care providers, Fairfax County employees and Loudoun County employees. We advocate for better services for Virginia families and communities, better pay and benefits for Virginia workers and a real voice on the job for frontline professionals.

Why I Believe in Quality Services, Quality Jobs

My name is Julia Newton. I’m a home care provider. I’m also the mother of a young man with disabilities. I’m the Executive Vice-President of SEIU Virginia 512, and I’m proud and humbled to serve as our Member Lobbyist for the 2013 General Assembly session. I used to advocate for my son by myself, but now SEIU Virginia 512 gives us a bigger voice to advocate for what our communities need.

I’m here at the General Assembly because having a face-to-face conversation is so critical. Making a phone call and writing an email are good, but sitting down one-on-one is best. After all, it was lobbying the General Assembly that won funding for my son Antoan’s Medicaid Home Care Waiver, after 10 long years on the waiting list. That waiver is life-saving for my family and will save taxpayer dollars by keeping Antoan at home and out of a nursing home.

Now I want to help ensure that all Virginians have access to the Quality Services and Quality Jobs that we all need.

We all need dedicated public employees, such as local social workers, housing specialists, librarians and more. Local government employees keep our cities clean and our communities safe.

We all need quality jobs. Jobs that pay enough to raise a family. Jobs that provide healthcare coverage and a secure retirement.

Unfortunately, Quality Services and Quality Jobs have come under attack by some who wish to slash vital services and slash our pay and benefits. Meanwhile, Home Care providers like me and my daughter earn only $8.86 per hour, with no healthcare, no retirement and no sick days. Dedicated local government employees who have assisted our community for years are seeing healthcare costs skyrocket and long-promised pensions chipped away.

It’s important we tell our stories and help educate our elected leaders. If we don’t do that, they won’t know what we need.

We all have a role to play in our democracy. Working families. Legislators. Advocates. Community leaders. Small business owners. And, by working together, we can win a better future for our children. Being the change you want to see in the world is not easy. But it’s so very worth it.

Help Build a Better Virginia

The women and men of SEIU Virginia 512 believe in “Quality Services, Quality Jobs.”

We believe quality, cost-effective public services — including home care, mental health, parks, libraries and public safety — play a vital role in our communities and in our economy.

We believe that all Virginians deserve quality jobs with access to affordable healthcare and retirement security.

We believe that by partnering with our elected officials we can make Virginia a better place to live, work and raise a family.

To ensure Quality Services and Quality Jobs for all Virginians, our Legislative Platform includes five key areas:

1. Provide Healthcare for 400,000 Virginians and Create 30,000 Jobs by Expanding Medicaid
2. Funding for Vital Local Government Services
3. Ensure Retirement Security for Dedicated Public Employees
4. Quality Home Care for All Virginians
5. Protect our Rights at Work