

February 2023 Rural Roundup



From Team New Rural Project <info@newruralproject.org>
To Steve Johnston <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
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Date 2023-03-11 10:00

The New Rural Project's *Rural Roundup* Monthly Newsletter

Steve,

During Black History Month, our social media highlighted some of the Black Americans in healthcare who have made a difference in our rural communities. These contributions are critical as we seem to be on the precipice of Medicaid Expansion finally being enacted in North Carolina! We are optimistic that Medicaid Expansion will have a positive impact on thousands of rural North Carolinians. But we also know that not everyone is aware of the potential benefits of expansion so we will continue to spread the word as we talk with our rural neighbors.

PLEASE HELP US SPREAD THE WORD



Since March is Women's History Month, we will continue the theme of healthcare equity by uplifting the stories of women working in healthcare throughout our focus counties. Please visit our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) pages to follow our Women's History Month celebration and also see how we celebrated Black History Month in case you missed it!

As always, thank you for your continued support.

Cynthia and Helen
Co-founders of NRP

LISTENING

In January and February, we have spent time finalizing our strategies for 2023 based on what we learned in 2022 and what we've heard from rural folks who we spoke to on the phone, on front porches, and around the community.

As we always say, our work begins and ends with listening and based on that, this year we are planning to organize our work in four main focus areas: Education, Healthcare, Public Safety, and Voting Rights. Our programming will be designed to promote Advocacy, Engagement, and Empowerment using encouraging messaging derived from our polling in 2022.



UPCOMING



We are excited to launch our first *Fruitful African American Discussion on Empowerment (F.A.D.E.)* of the year in the next month in Hoke County! We will also add *Conversations in Beauty Salons* with young women this year in Anson County! Stay tuned for more information on both programs.

We are bringing our quarterly *Young People's Conversations* series out of our computer screens and into the community! We will be kicking off our first quarter in-person conversation in Richmond County. Be on the lookout for more information coming soon. We look forward to all the ways these conversations will continue to shape our work.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

F.A.D.E. Alumnus Spotlight



On February 26th, the [African American Heritage Committee of Scotland County](#) held its Inaugural Black History Month Parade. Organizers of the parade included Jeremy Baker, one of our Scotland County F.A.D.E. graduates and Laurinburg City Councilwoman Barbara Chaneil Rogers, an NRP volunteer. Though the rain delay meant NRP wasn't able to participate as we had planned, we are proud of what these young Scotland County residents are accomplishing!

Public Safety

With Public Safety as one of our focus areas, on February 16th we attended "Reclaiming our Community and Restoring Peace - What Will it Take?", a community forum on public safety sponsored by the [Hoke County Branch - NAACP](#) and all of the law enforcement agencies in Hoke County.



This was the second in this important series and NRP will be involved in action involving issues of crime as that is one of the top issues that concerns our voters of color.

Urgent Conversations



As NC Governor Cooper stated on March 2nd, "An agreement by legislative leaders to expand Medicaid in North Carolina is a monumental step that will save lives and I commend the hard work that got us here." Knowing how important Medicaid Expansion is for our rural communities, we are hopeful!

If Medicaid Expansion passes the full General Assembly, there are potentially 600,000 NC citizens, over 40,000 in our seven focus counties alone, who will be eligible for health insurance through the Medicaid program. There are lots of questions to answer, so we will be kicking off our new **Urgent Conversations** series with a panel of experts and everyday citizens on **Wednesday, March 22, 2023 beginning at 7:00 PM**. [Register to join us](#) on **Zoom** and **Let's Talk About Medicaid Expansion**.

Leandro Update

Just a few short months ago in November 2022, we celebrated a NC Supreme Court decision upholding the previous court ruling which requires the NC General Assembly to begin funding the **Comprehensive Remedial Plan** (better known as the "Leandro Plan") to ensure all NC children have access to a sound, basic education as guaranteed by our state Constitution. The decision in the Leandro case was first issued in 1994 and almost 30 years later, children are still waiting!

Unfortunately, the State Controller, Nels Roseland, refused to release the funds and brought the case back to the courts. **You can advocate for the release of the Leandro funds by calling the State Controller at 919-707-0500, or click [here to send an email](#).**



ELECTORAL ENGAGEMENT

Phone Banking



We are gearing up to start our first phone bank of the year! This year, we will work on many issues that impact voting rights. [On March 30th, we will start by contacting voters who may not know they have been "purged" from the voter rolls!](#) Every odd-numbered year, the NC State Board of Elections reviews the state-wide voter registration list and removes voters who have moved, died, or are otherwise ineligible to vote.

The process to confirm if someone is still eligible relies on a voter returning a confirmation postcard sent by the County Board of Elections via U.S. Mail. Voters may not receive the confirmation mailing or may forget to mail it back, which can result in the removal (purging) of eligible voters from the voter list. The Board of Elections can also **purge** a voter's registration if they didn't vote in the past two Federal election cycles (four years). Over 7,000 of the voters purged this year are from our seven focus counties!

With our first [Weekly Virtual Phone Bank](#), we will start calling the 7,000 who have been purged to (1) make sure they are aware they have been removed from the voting list, and (2) give them the information they need on how to re-register. Join us on March 30th by clicking [here](#) to register via our Mobilize. We encourage everyone to [check the status of your voter registration](#) to make sure it is still "Active."

OTHER UPDATES

Legislative Update

On March 14th & 15th, the North Carolina Supreme Court will rehear two cases that were previously decided by the NC Supreme Court in 2022.

1. Harper v. Hall - This case that struck down the state's congressional and legislative maps and is the case from which the U.S. Supreme Court case, *Moore v. Harper*, originated. In February 2022, the NC Supreme Court ruled 4-3 to strike down the maps because of partisan gerrymandering. As a result, fairer maps were drawn and North Carolina's congressional districts today more accurately represent North Carolinians with seven districts represented by Democrats and seven represented by Republicans.

2. Holmes v. Moore - This case blocked a restrictive photo voter ID vote law which the court's Democratic majority found to have a "disparate impact" on African-American voters.

The decision to rehear NC Supreme Court cases that have already been decided is almost without precedent and is related directly to the court's shift from a Democratic majority to a Republican majority after the 2022 midterm elections. In Democratic Justice Anita Earls' concluding remarks in her powerful dissent, she wrote **"because this Court's decision today is an affront to the jurisprudence of this State and to the citizens it has sworn an oath to serve 'impartially,' 'without favoritism to anyone or to the State,' I dissent."**



People's Rally at the Capitol

If you live in North Carolina, care about voting rights, and want to object to the rehearing of these cases, you can join other pro-democracy advocates at [The People's Rally at the State Capitol](#) in Raleigh on Tuesday, March 14th from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

Election Information

In 2023, there are four municipal election dates in North Carolina:

Tuesday, March 7th (Town of Dobson (Surry County) voters only)

Tuesday, Sept. 12th Primary (Charlotte, Sanford, if necessary)

Tuesday, Oct. 10th (various municipalities)

Tuesday, Nov. 7th (various municipalities)

For more information about upcoming elections, click [here](#).

Spring Forward! Time-change happens this weekend!



Daylight Saving Time begins on Sunday, March 12th at 2:00 AM so don't forget to set your clocks one hour ahead on Saturday night! Remember: spring forward, fall back!

As always, thank you for being on our team.

Sincerely,

Team New Rural Project

CONTRIBUTE

VOLUNTEER



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