



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Cut Loopholes, Not Jobs**

***Better Choices for Virginia Delivers Petition to Governor During Packed Gathering at Capitol***

RICHMOND – Stressing the importance of investing in a strong economy, Better Choices for Virginia — a broad group of Virginia businesspeople, nonprofit leaders, local officials, educators and working men and women — gathered at the Capitol to call on the Governor to cut loopholes – not jobs – to solve the state’s financial crisis.

With the Governor preparing to unveil his plan for the upcoming budget next week, the more than 40 organizations that comprise the growing Better Choices coalition want him to protect and create jobs instead of making deep cuts to schools, health care, public safety and other key building blocks for a strong economy.

"Virginia cannot afford two more years of a cuts-only approach that is impeding our economic recovery and costing us much-needed jobs. If doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results is the definition of insanity, then we need to change our insane budget approach," said Jay Johnson, a retired businesswoman. "Now is the time to end inefficient tax credits and close tax loopholes, or we will find ourselves here again two years from now, debating about what's still left to cut."

Better Choices for Virginia members signed an enlarged, symbolic petition to the governor, then marched to his office and delivered it, along with more than 1,300 actual signed petitions from concerned Virginians.

"Our schools are the best and most important tools we have to make sure our children have a bright and prosperous future. Shortchanging our schools means failing our children," said Dominic Melito, teacher at Kellam High School.

Better Choices for Virginia advocates a balanced approach that includes revenues instead of a cuts-only approach that hurts families and threatens economic recovery.

With Virginia facing an estimated \$1 billion gap over the next two years between available resources and what it will take to meet rising public needs, Better Choices for Virginia is concerned that over-relying on cuts to essential services will hurt Virginia’s ability to create jobs and grow the economy.

"For Virginia to continue to be a state we’re proud of, a place where we want to raise our children, we’ve got to get our priorities straight," said Alex Evans, Pastor of 2<sup>nd</sup> Presbyterian Church in Richmond. "We have a moral obligation to care for our citizens and invest in our children and grandchildren’s futures."

Members of Better Choices for Virginia emphasized that they will work throughout the legislative session to reform the state’s tax code, especially costly and inefficient loopholes.

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