

Lawyers and Legislators Give Second Chances Through Drive-To-Work

by Deirdre Norman



Clockwise from left:

1. Governor Terry McAuliffe.
2. O. Randolph Rollins and panelists including Virginia Supreme Court Justice William C. Mims (2nd from right).
3. VSB President Doris Henderson Causey (2nd from right) at the Dominion Energy table.
4. Two Drive-to-Work success stories with O. Randolph Rollins.

If you're looking for a bipartisan effort in today's hyper partisan environment, look no further. This fall, at the Jefferson Hotel in Richmond, a group that included sheriffs and prosecutors, criminal defense attorneys and people convicted of crimes, and high-profile Democrats and Republicans met for lunch to celebrate the ten-year anniversary and the many accomplishments of Virginia's unique Drive-To-Work program.

Founded by retired McGuireWoods LLP partner O. Randolph Rollins in 2007, Drive-To-Work assists low-income or previously incarcerated individuals with restoring driving privileges so that they may get back to work. As keynote speaker Governor Terry McAuliffe told the crowd at the luncheon, "We want everyone back in society, paying taxes, and going to work."

Panelists at the luncheon included Virginia Supreme Court Justice William C. Mims, attorney and Virginia House of Delegates member G. Manoli Loupassi, Virginia Senator Ryan T. McDougle, Virginia Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian J. Moran, and Virginia House of Delegates member William J. Howell.

Virginia is the first state in America to offer drivers' licensing and commercial drivers' licensing in its prison system, an innovative program that helps to alleviate the difficulties of finding work and re-entering society without the ability to drive. For example, although there are currently almost 100,000 available commercial driving jobs nationwide, Virginia had over 800,000 drivers' licenses suspended as of 2015.

Much of the driving difficulty comes from laws that suspend licenses for unpaid court costs, civil judgments, or failure to pay child support. As a result, offenders are often left unable to break the "no license-no job-no money" cycle. The special guests of the luncheon included two former clients of Drive-To-Work — a former substance abuser whose court costs had climbed to \$19,000 that the program helped to find work and pay off his debts, and a woman whose impaired driving had landed her in prison. She found sobriety while serving time, and through the Drive-To-Work program was able to get her license restored after seven years. She is now building her own home in Virginia.

Sponsors of the luncheon included Capitol One, Dominion Energy, McGuireWoods, Hunton & Williams, Barnes & Diehl, Douglas D. Callaway, ThompsonMcMullan, and WilliamsMullen. If you are interested in volunteering for Drive-To-Work, please call (804) 358-6727, or e-mail info@drivetowork.org.