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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**VEA Members to Rally in Charlottesville, Roanoke, Virginia Beach on March 3**

This Saturday, March 3, educators and community members will rally in support of public education in three regional events. The events come as the General Assembly considers K-12 education funding as well as bills that would slash retirement benefits and threaten teachers' job security.

**Charlottesville** will host a "Wake for Public Education" at noon, March 3, at the Free Speech Monument in downtown Charlottesville. Participants will mourn the attacks on public education and celebrate educators who made a difference in their lives. VEA's regional office, Blue Ridge UniServ, is coordinating. Contact 434-823-4470 for details.

**Virginia Beach** is holding the "VEA Rally to Restore Public Education Funding" at 10:30 a.m., March 3. The event is being held at Mount Trashmore, 310 Edwin Drive, Virginia Beach 23452. Local elected officials are among those who will attend. During the rally, participants will be calling their representatives in the General Assembly. Contact the Virginia Beach Education Association at 757-486-0202 for other details.

**Roanoke** will host a "Wake Up Call for Public Education." It will start at noon, March 3, at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, 1 block behind the Higher Education Center at Centre and Henry Streets. Contact the VEA field office at 540-343-2213 or 540-362-3825.

VEA President Dr. Kitty Boitnott said the rallies build on the success of VEA's "Black Friday" event two weeks ago, during which thousands of Association members wore black to protest funding cuts and other state actions undermining public educators and their students.

"Virginia needs to wake up to the fact that public schools are so strapped that the quality education provided to students is being jeopardized," she said. "State funding is behind the level provided five years ago. Our class sizes have grown and now rank us 41<sup>st</sup> in the nation. Our teacher salaries are \$7,000 below the national average. We cannot and will not stand by as quality public education is dismantled."

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