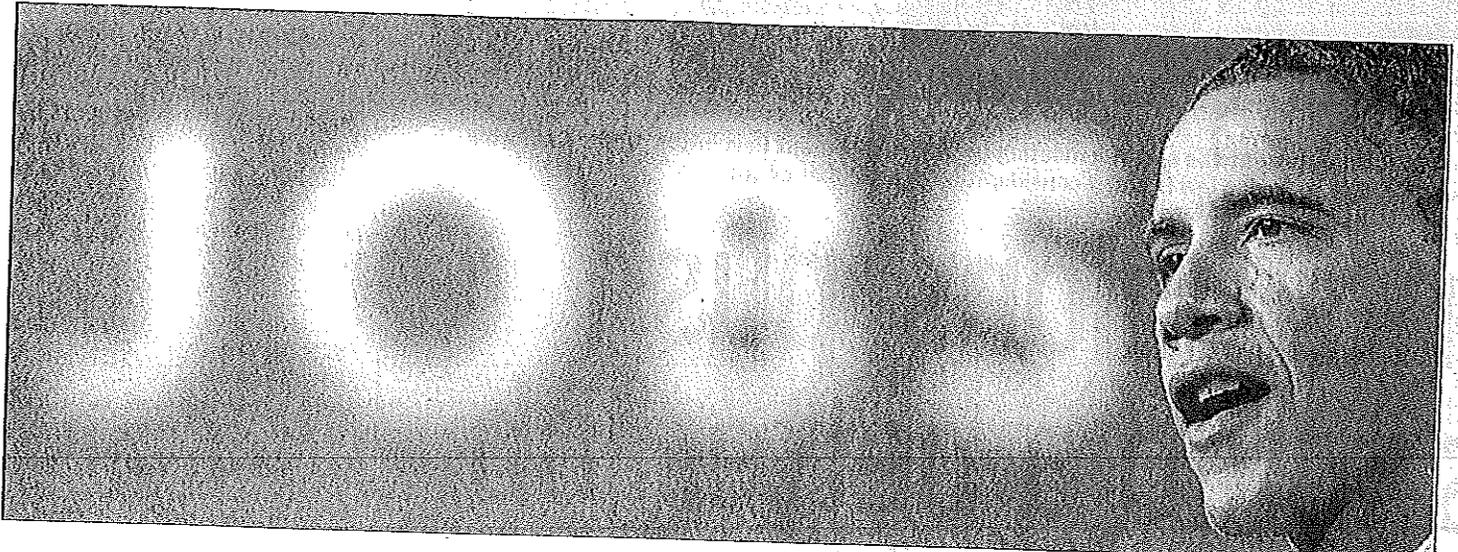


RTD Oct 19

American Jobs Act

Obama pleads case in Va.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"It doesn't seem like your voices are heard enough in Washington," President Barack Obama said Tuesday in Emporia.

President criticizes Republicans for blocking legislation

BY OLYMPIA MEOLA
Richmond Times-Dispatch

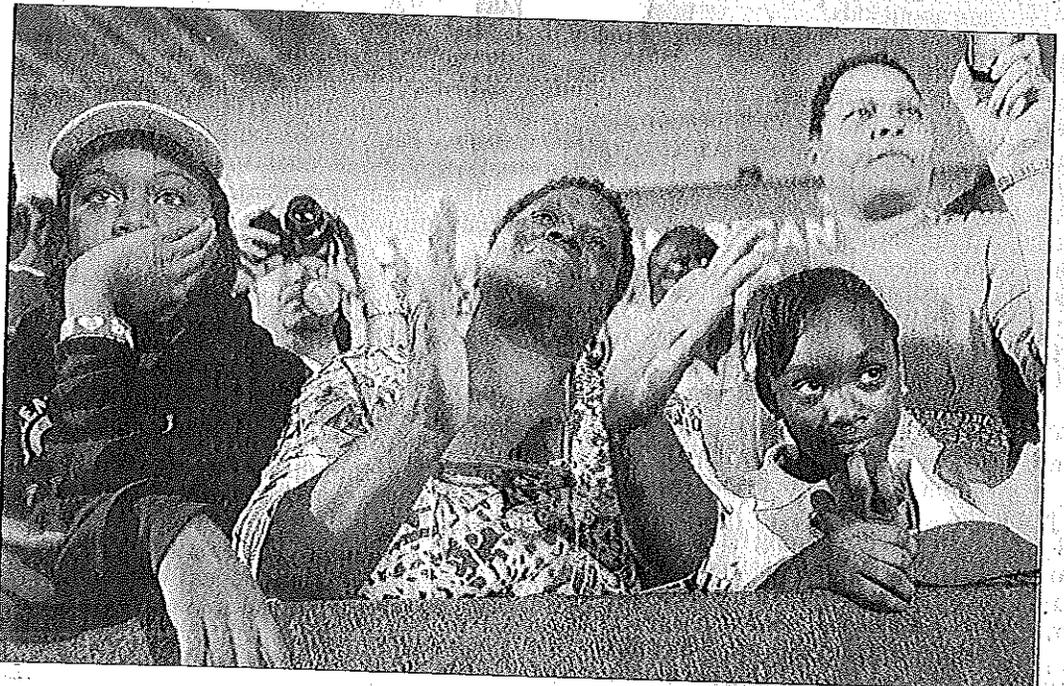
EMPORIA — Winding into Virginia on the second day of his bus tour, President Barack Obama on Tuesday pitched his jobs plan — and the cash it could direct to teachers, police and firefighters — and criticized Republican efforts to block the package.

He'll switch subjects this morning in Hampton to focus on hiring veterans, before motoring into the Richmond area, where he will visit a Chesterfield County fire station in House Majority Leader Eric Cantor's district.

Emporia, a majority African-American city in Southside Virginia, was among the localities that went for Obama in 2008 and helped him become the first Democratic presidential nominee in 44 years to carry the state.

At Greenville County High School on Tuesday, Obama bounded up to the podium before a hand-picked crowd that was vocal and supportive. An estimated 1,300 people gath-

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EVA RUSSO/TIMES-DISPATCH

The crowd reacts to Obama's speech at Greenville County High School.

Obama

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ered in the school's gymnasium, mainly students, parents, invited guests — and teachers who haven't had a raise in at least four years.

"It doesn't seem like your voices are heard enough in Washington," Obama said. "They don't seem to be listening," he said, mocking Senate Republicans for scuttling the \$447 billion jobs measure last week by refusing to debate it.

"All over the country, including here in Virginia, budget cuts are forcing schools to lay off teachers in disturbing numbers," the president said. "Here in Greenville County, you've lost some teachers. You could lose more if we don't pass this jobs bill, and that's not right."

He told the audience that his plan would mean nearly 11,000 education jobs in Virginia.

"So I need all of you to tell the Senate 'Put those teachers back to work.'"

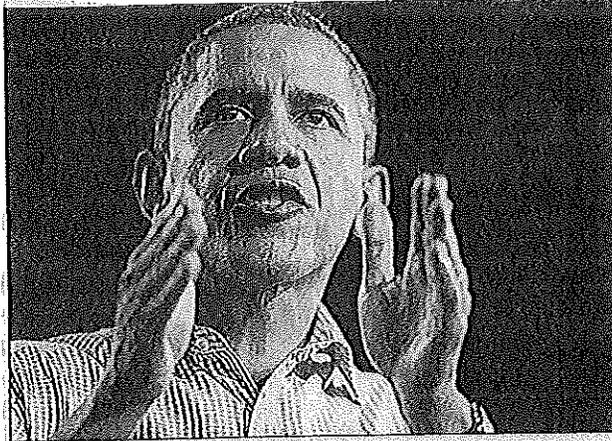
Virginia would receive more than \$740 million of the \$30 billion in the American Jobs Act to prevent teacher layoffs, which would support 10,800 jobs in the state, according to White House figures. The Greenville County school system would receive about \$1.6 million of that.

Greenville biology teacher Jami Clements drew huge applause during her introduction of the president when she mentioned teachers' frustration that they hadn't seen a raise in years.



EVA RUSSO/TIMES-DISPATCH

A crowd of people awaited the arrival of President Barack Obama at Greenville County High School on Tuesday.



Obama told the audience that his plan would mean nearly 11,000 education jobs in Virginia.

publicans to work with him," she said. "Everybody needs to work with him — support the jobs act."

Obama could take a similar message today to Cantor's district on the second day of his trip.

Republicans painted the trip as a taxpayer-funded, campaign-style tour through two battleground states — North Carolina and Virginia — that the president won three years ago and is making a play for again.

In an interview Monday with a Charlotte TV station, Obama said, "My intention is to win North Carolina again like we did last time."

"It will be close because obviously folks are frustrated with the challenges that we still face in the economy," he said.

In Virginia, that frustration contributed to the

president's 52 percent job disapproval rating in an early October state poll by Quinnipiac University.

Although some Virginia Democrats in tough legislative races have distanced themselves from the president, several Democratic lawmakers were in the Emporia audience, including Sens. Henry L. Marsh III, D-Richmond, and L. Louise Lucas, D-Portsmouth, and Dels. Roslyn C. Tyler, D-Sussex, and Rosalyn R. Dance, D-Petersburg. Brian Moran, chairman of the Democratic Party of Virginia, also was present.

As his entourage crossed the North Carolina border into Virginia on Tuesday afternoon, the president received a mixed welcome, according to reports filed by journalists who are traveling on the bus tour.

Crowds flocked to the

side of the road in South Boston to watch the motorcade pass by. Three men stood in a truck bed holding signs that read "Job?" and "liar." A sign at a bowling alley offered: "Presidents bowl free," while near Clarksville, a woman stood in a front yard and held a large Confederate flag.

On the way to Emporia, Obama stopped at Bluestone High School in Skipwith, south of Chase City, to tour a robotics classroom, marveling at "Skrappy," a 5-foot-tall, trapezoidal robot.

Obama's travels then took him along U.S. 58, past Parkview High School, where students, including the football team, lined the road. One group held an American flag and a Virginia state flag, with the state flag held at an angle to salute the president.

The president's entourage made an unannounced stop in Brodnax, where Obama shook hands with people waiting by the road.

Virginia State Police reported that a state trooper on a motorcycle, who was securing the roadway for the president's Emporia stop, suffered minor injuries in a crash on southbound Interstate 95.

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The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Cynthia Barnes, a 21-year-veteran special-education teacher at a Greensville County elementary school, said after the speech that she has gone without a raise for roughly five years.

The plan, she said, "sounded good, but whether he can do it or not is something else."

Linda Edwards of Emporia walked out of the speech hoping people would get on board with the president's plan.

"He just needs the Re-