

WDNC-AM, Raleigh, NC (620)
SIMULCAST ON WCLY-AM (1550)
QUARTERLY LISTING OF COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS
FOURTH QUARTER 2023

The following is a list of issues and concerns for Fourth Quarter 2023 (October-December) and addressed in Public Affairs Programming, Public Service Announcements, and special programming on WDNC-AM.

1. **CRIME/GUN VIOLENCE**
2. **CHILDCARE/ELDER CARE/FAMILY**
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7. **HEALTHCARE/MENTAL HEALTH/WOMEN'S HEALTH**
8. **POLITICS/VOTING RIGHTS**
9. **POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY/HOMELESSNESS**
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11. **TERRORISM/HOMELAND SECURITY/MILITARY**

This report was placed in the Public Inspection file on January 9, 2024

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

WDNC-AM aired 8 hours of Public Affairs Programming:

ON THE RECORD: ON THE RECORD: Produced by WRAL-TV, ON THE RECORD is a 30-minute local interview program discussing issues of concern in the Triangle and State. It airs Sundays 6-6:30 AM.

NEWS & VIEWS: NEWS & VIEWS is a 30-minute program focusing on government policy issues. It airs Sundays 6:30-7:00 AM.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS rotate throughout the broadcast day (24 hours) at random times. Dates/times are noted by air staff when broadcast.

NC LOTTERY - WCMC-FM airs one Problem Gambling PSA for every NC Lottery commercial scheduled on the station.

FOURTH QUARTER ISSUES

Issues are extrapolated from statements by local community leaders, including government, civic, church, and other organizations. Additionally, we monitor local news (TV, Radio, Newspaper, and the Internet) for comments/opinions of community leaders, in the effort to ascertain and prioritize community concerns.

COMMUNITY/FAMILY/FAITH

The lack of access to affordable, quality childcare and elder care is affecting families, the workforce, and the economy as a whole. The childcare industry is in crisis. NC lawmakers are pushing for government subsidies. The pandemic precipitated closures of many facilities. Many quality caregivers opted to leave the profession.

More than 12,000 children are in North Carolina's foster care system and Children's Home Society of North Carolina receives about 300 requests from the state Department of Social Services each month to help children in immediate need. A shortage of licensed foster families makes the situation dire.

Non-profit and faith organizations play critical roles in the economy and public health by reaching the underserved and building healthy communities.

CRIME/GUN VIOLENCE

Continuing a trend from 2022, the United States surpassed 100 mass shootings for the year. The nation has the most school shootings in the world. Raleigh-Durham area schools and universities are constantly experiencing lockdowns. The beginning of the school year included two shootings on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus and a seven-year-old bringing a gun to a Nash County elementary school.

ECONOMY/ECONOMIC SUPPORT

Since 2021, the demand for workers has outpaced the supply. The increased costs to retain workers and cover lower production rates are passed to consumers. The Federal Reserve raised interest rates through Q3 to restore price stability and balance the labor market.

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

On-going Issues: Retaining and recruiting high-quality teachers, addressing social and emotional learning needs of students, and adequately funding schools. The regulation of school curriculums divides state board of education members, educators, and parents.

ENVIRONMENT/NATURAL DISASTERS

In 2022, Governor Roy Cooper rolled out a slate of new climate pledges, including a commitment to get 1.25 million plug-in electric vehicles on the road by 2030 and to eliminate most fossil fuel vehicles by 2050.

Climate change is an ongoing discussion as it affects NC farmers, healthcare, and the frequency of natural disasters.

EQUALITY / HUMAN RIGHTS/IMMIGRATION

According to a 2022 study by the American Psychological Association, 70% of adults have pessimistic views on government and their civil liberties. Approximately 64% said they feel their rights are under attack. Over 45% said they do not feel protected by the laws in the United States. A century after a guarantee of gender equality was proposed in Congress, the United State Senate fell short of the votes needed to enshrine equal rights for women in the Constitution.

A lack of immigration reform has led to economic, security, and humanitarian challenges for border states and the American workforce.

The war between Israel and Hamas has heightened antisemitism around the globe.

HEALTHCARE/MENTAL HEALTH/WOMEN'S HEALTH

North Carolina politicians have attempted to pass comprehensive legislation for Medicaid expansion for 13 years. A bill was finally signed in March 2023. Implementation is the next course of action.

The debate continues on women's reproductive health with the 2022 Supreme Court decision to overturn *Rowe vs. Wade* and leave legislation to states. North Carolina's bill banning abortion after 12 weeks passed in June with concessions added.

In response to multiple suicides on UNC campuses, system leaders revealed \$7.7 million in funding for mental health initiatives.

POLITICS/VOTING RIGHTS

Political gerrymandering is in the national news with several state legislatures enacting maps designed to rig election outcomes and disenfranchise voters of color.

POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY/HOMELESSNESS

Fewer people in North Carolina live below the poverty line now than a decade ago. However, as food prices rose due to inflation, almost 900,000 households across North Carolina lost additional Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits on March 1. Additional SNAP benefits were part of the reason for the drop in poverty.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE/ REGULATION

As with most states, North Carolina is in an opioid crisis. In 2023, the state attorney general proposed a new unit to combat the opioid crisis and the FDA approved an over-the-counter version of the opioid overdose antidote Narcan.

North Carolina was one of a dwindling group of states yet to legalize medical marijuana, although polling showed broad public support for the idea. In March, North Carolina passed a bill to legalize medical marijuana.

TERRORISM/HOMELAND SECURITY/MILITARY

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has had wide-ranging consequences. They include a financial impact, a humanitarian crisis, threats of nuclear strikes, and cyberattacks on financial institutions and power grids.

The U.S. Army is working to recruit more young people to join the military as the pool of eligible Americans dwindles. The U.S. Department of Defense reports that only 2% of Americans ages 17 to 21 are eligible to serve in the military.

FOURTH QUARTER PROGRAMS

COMMUNITY/FAMILY/FAITH

RECORDED PSA: Adopt US Kids – Patience (October-December)

I learned patience from my adoptive dad. All he had to say was, “Hey, you got this. Just breathe” And, “Hey, we're pretty good. Yeah, we have to start a band.” I got it. Learn about adopting a teen from foster care. You can't imagine. The reward is visit, adopt U.S. kids dot org to find out more. This message is brought to you by Adopt U.S. Kids and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

RECORDED PSA: Adopt US Kids – Courage (October-December)

What I know about courage I learned from my adoptive mom, she said. Sometimes you just got to hold on and know we'll get through this. “Mom, we are so high up! Hold my hand. No, you hold my hand...Here we go.” Learn about adopting a teen from foster care. You can't imagine the reward. Visit Adopt US Kids dot org to find out more. This

RECORDED PSA: US Dept Caregiver Assistance/AARP -Roxanna’s Story (October-December)

Afghanistan in 2003, four in the morning, my phone rang. They said, I regret to inform you that your husband was wounded in action, later sustained a moderate traumatic brain injury. I was doing school full time and I was also then caring for Victor. One of the most important elements of caregiving is taking care of yourself. I just didn't want to forget that I also had goals and that I also had a life. What I did is I challenged Victor to meet me halfway. There are almost 6 million military veteran caregivers across the nation. We have our own journey, and we can fulfill that journey at the same time that we are helping our loved ones. Visit AARP dot org slash caregiving for a free military veterans guide to navigate your caregiving journey and better care for your loved one and yourself. Brought to you by AARP.

RECORDED PSA: Alzheimer’s Association - Patient Support (October-December)

If you are among the 6 million Americans living with Alzheimer's or care for someone with Alzheimer's or dementia, there is free help and support available 24/7. Visit ALZ dot org or call 800-272-3900

CRIME/GUN VIOLENCE

NEWS & VIEWS 11-5-23

Guests: Attorneys Laura Webb and Rochelle Sparko

There are a lot of significant real-world problems that the state legislature’s cheapskate budgeting practices have caused in recent years, and here’s a classic example: Because it receives inadequate funding, the state’s court system has been forced to try and fund itself by imposing big fines and fees on people accused of crimes. Of course, however, the big problem here is that most of these people are poor and unable to pay. Right now, the state tries to collect over time by converting these fines and fees into civil judgments, but this conversion gives rise to a whole new set of problems. The report is entitled “Waiving Criminal Court Fees Prevents Harms of Civil Debt,” and recently we caught up with attorneys behind it: Laura Webb of the NC Justice Center and Rochelle Sparko of the Center for Responsible Lending.

NEWS & VIEWS 12-3-23

Guest: Attorney Lindsay Bass-Patel of the Wilson Center for Science and Justice at Duke University Law School

As more and more states and localities have come to realize in recent years, there is a big practical conundrum that often arises when people of low income interact with the criminal justice system. The problem is this: While the system regularly imposes big fines and fees on those accused of violating the law and, indeed, depends on those fines and fees to fund itself, a huge proportion of defendants simply don’t have the money to pay. The result: As a new report from the Wilson Center for Science and Justice at Duke University Law School explains, approximately one in 12 North Carolina adults has an unpaid criminal court debt. Meanwhile, the system remains underfunded. The report is entitled “When dollars don’t add up to sense” and we caught up with one of the authors, attorney and policy analyst Lindsay Bass-Patel.

NEWS & VIEWS 12-10-23

Guest: North Carolina Deputy Secretary of Juvenile Justice Billy Lassiter

As we’ve discussed previously on NEWS & VIEWS s, one vitally important function of North Carolina government that

continues to be grievously underfunded is the state juvenile justice system. Thankfully, in recent years, the system has benefited greatly from the leadership of a determined and creative administrator who has regularly managed to work miracles with the inadequate appropriations meted out by the General Assembly – Deputy Secretary of Juvenile Justice, Billy Lassiter. We caught up with Lassiter to discuss the state of his agency’s work and the modest budget bump it received in the latest state budget – as well as the broader issue of juvenile crime and violence and how promoting the safe storage of firearms and addressing mental health issues in our schools could make an enormous difference.

ON THE RECORD 12-10-23 + 12-17-23

School leaders address student safety: More than one week after a student was stabbed at killed at Southeast Raleigh Magnet High School WRAL examines the safety of students in schools across North Carolina. WRAL Anchor/Reporter Lena Tillett speaks with educators and school officials who say they grapple with how to prevent conflicts from getting out of hand every day.

RECORDED PSA: Service Never Stops - Gun Safety (October-December)

I was in the United States Navy and I served overseas in the Middle East and Africa. Early on in my career, I had a commander that taught her suicide prevention training, and the very next day, he took his own life. 90% of suicide attempts involving a gun are fatal. My way of continuing my service is to help protect my community by being a responsible gun owner and by storing firearms safely. Store all your guns securely. Help stop suicide. Brought to you by End Family Fire.

RECORDED PSA: Gun Safety – Dad (October-December)

It was a normal day. He was in some minor accident, a fender bender. And I had this impulse to call him that. I didn't because I thought I could call him. Later that week, he abandoned the car. He came home and he shot himself without ever talking to anyone. When I came home that night and I found her, they told me that she had shot herself and I couldn't believe it. I asked if he was OK. Shooting is unfortunately effective. There are not a lot of second chances. Once you pull that trigger, that's it. There is no coming back. 63 Americans a day die by gun suicide. By storing our guns safely locked, loaded, and away from ammo, we can give our loved ones a second chance at life. Learn more at End Family Fire dot org.

ECONOMY/ECONOMIC SUPPORT

NEWS & VIEWS 10-1-23

Guest: Wake County state Representative and former appellate court judge Joe John

As you’ve probably heard by now, North Carolina finally has a new state budget. After a delay that stretched almost three months into the new fiscal year, Republican legislators unveiled a massive budget document on September 20 and then pushed it through both houses of the General Assembly in less than 48 hours without affording any opportunity for amendments. We caught up with Wake County state Representative and former appellate court judge Joe John. And as Rep. John told us, the secrecy and lack of open debate that accompanied the development and passage of the budget, as well as the substance of several items, are things that ought to concern all caring and thinking North Carolinians.

RECORDED PSA: North Carolina Department of Adult Correction – Jobs (October-December)

North Carolina Department of Adult Correction is hiring with sign on bonuses from 7 to 10 thousand dollars. We're hiring statewide for correctional officers, probation officers, nurses, plumbers, electricians, food service officers, maintenance, HVAC counselors, and more. Visit NCDAC slash careers for details. That's NCDAC slash careers. Find your career today with North Carolina Department of Adult Correction, sponsored by North Carolina, Department of Adult Correction.

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

NEWS & VIEWS 11-12-23

Guest: Education researcher Lauren Fox of the Public School Forum of North Carolina

As news reports have made clear repeatedly in recent years, North Carolina is suffering from a big and deeply problematic teacher shortage – especially in rural low wealth districts and when it comes to teachers of color. The problem was big and bad even before the pandemic, and it’s gotten worse in its aftermath. Thankfully, the causes of the shortage are no particular mystery. Indeed, as researchers at the Public School Forum of North Carolina make clear in a

new report, there are several eminently doable and commonsense strategies that could make a huge dent in the problem and recently NC Newsline was lucky enough to catch up with one of the report authors, the forum's Senior Director of Policy and Research, Lauren Fox.

NEWS & VIEWS 12-17-23

Guest: NC Newsline investigative reporter Joe Killian

There was a big development recently in the state higher education system. On Friday, December 8, after several days of uncertainty, UNC-Chapel Hill chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz announced that he's leaving the school to assume the presidency of Michigan State University. This makes Guskiewicz the third chancellor to depart from the state's flagship university in recent years and, as with the previous two – Holden Thorp and Carol Folt – many observers attributed his departure to the system board of governors and campus board of trustees that the state's Republican legislature has packed with conservative appointees. However, as we were reminded in a recent extended conversation with NC Newsline investigative reporter Joe Killian, while Guskiewicz may have been frustrated by the political meddling he endured, for the most part, he did little to resist it during his four years as chancellor. And he may well face yet another set of political challenges when he arrives in the Midwest. In Part One of our special extended conversation, we discussed UNC-Chapel Hill chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz's announcement that he's leaving the job to assume the presidency at Michigan State University. In Part Two of our chat, Killian turns to some other matters of controversy in the UNC system, including some other ongoing chancellor searches, as well as questions that continue to arise more and more about who North Carolina public universities should enroll and the challenges posed by some notable and impending demographic shifts.

NEWS & VIEWS 12-31-23

Guest: K-12 education reporter Greg Childress

K-12 education reporter Greg Childress discusses some of the top stories from his beat – including efforts to further expand school vouchers and charter schools and a series of culture war bills that promise to add to the headaches of teachers and administrators.

RECORDED PSA: Talking is Teaching (October-December)

Did you know that when you make time to talk, read or sing with your child, you're helping to shape and strengthen their brains for the years to come? As a father, helping my child thrive is the most important thing to me. Each of us has the power to create a strong start for our children and to help them enter school, ready to learn and succeed in life starting from the day they are born. Visit Talking is Teaching dot org for free tips, resources, and ideas on how to transform everyday moments into magical moments for learning.

RECORDED PSA –U.S. Air Force - Education Kelly Clarkson (October-December)

Hey, what's up, y'all? I'm Kelly Clarkson. And as the daughter of a schoolteacher, I know just how important education is. No matter how old you are or your situation, continuing to learn will enrich your life and help remove barriers you didn't even know were there. So much opportunity, y'all. Whether it's a foreign language, history, or a different way to look at things, take some time each day to learn something new. This message is courtesy of the United States Air Force

ENVIRONMENT/NATURAL DISASTERS

RECORDED PSA: NC Clean Energy Technology Center – Budget Brenda (October-December)

Bravo, Brenda. You've always been a saver. Price matching your price matches the self-proclaimed queen of extreme couponing. But this time you truly outdone yourself by saving for this electric vehicle. You're locking in up to 1,000 dollars a year in fuel and maintenance savings, which will leave you saying, "cha ching" every time you unplug. Good for your wallet

RECORDED PSA: NC Clean Energy Technology – Countdown Carl (October-December)

Kudos, Carl. You've always had a need for speed. Racing anything with wheels yelling out "3-2-1" at every traffic light. But this time you've taken your power obsession to the next level. By purchasing this electric vehicle, you've given yourself an instant torch that blows your old launch times away, which will keep you saying "Oh weee," every time you

punch the pedal. Good for your adrenaline. Great for the planet. That's the power of EV sponsored by the RNC Clean Energy Technology Center.

RECORDED PSA: NC Clean Energy Technology – Upcyclers (October-December)

Congrats Cristina and Carmen. You've always been the green family composting to cut waste. You've even washed and reused the same straw for the past ten years. But this time you've taken it up another notch by purchasing this electric vehicle. You're putting gas, oil, and harmful emissions in the rearview for good, which will leave you thinking peacefully every time you plug in. Good for your conscience. Great for the planet. That's the power of EV.

RECORDED PSA: FEMA - Disaster at Doorstep (October-December)

If a natural disaster comes knocking, how prepared is your family? You can't just close the door on earthquakes, floods, or hurricanes and hope they go away. That's why it's important to make a plan. Now, ready.gov slash plan has the tools and tips you need to prepare your family for an emergency. So, if disaster shows up at your doorstep, you'll be ready. Visit ready dot gov slash plan and make a plan.

EQUALITY / HUMAN RIGHTS/IMMIGRATION

NEWS & VIEWS 11-5-23

Guest: WRAL TV sports reporter Chris Lea

A fascinating new documentary from WRAL TV looks at the hidden and troubling histories of some iconic sports venues in the Carolinas. "[Ghosts in the Stadium](#)" explores the sobering legacy of white supremacy at Kenan Stadium at UNC Chapel Hill, Carter-Finley Stadium at NC State, Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte and Memorial Stadium at Clemson University. Lea was kind enough to join us for a conversation about how the documentary came together and some of the sobering facts it reports.

NEWS & VIEWS 11-19-23

Guest: ACLU of North Carolina attorney Michele Delgado

In "The Consequences of Cops in North Carolina Schools," researchers report that current state law – which grants police broad and vaguely worded authority – has led to a situation in which school-based complaints of disorderly conduct against Black students occur at four times the rate of white kids. Recently, in order to get a better handle on the report and the recommendations it makes, NEWS & VIEWS caught with one of the experts behind it, ACLU attorney Michele Delgado. Issues covered: school discipline, school suspension, mental health, school counselors, etc.

NEWS & VIEWS 12-3-23

Guest: Dr. Ellen Gaddy, granddaughter of famously reactionary U.S. Senator, the late Jesse Helms

If you're an American of a certain age, you undoubtedly remember Jesse Helms. Helms was a North Carolina U.S. Senator from 1973 to 2003 – a period in which he was widely recognized as America's best known and most outspoken arch-conservative politician. On a long and sobering list of issues – race, reproductive freedom, equality for women and LGBTQ people, and dozens of others – Helms was consistently reactionary, outspoken, provocative, and uncompromising. In Part Two of our conversation, we delved into the details of her present-day work – including her efforts to secure repeal of the Helms Amendment – a federal law that greatly restricts access to reproductive healthcare for women in nations that receive U.S. government aid.

NEWS & VIEWS 12-10-23

Guest: Kendra Johnson, executive director of Equality North Carolina

For the last five-and-a-half years, few people have been busier and more visible in the fight for human and civil rights in our state than Equality NC executive director, Kendra Johnson. Whether she was responding directly to the political right's repeated and cynical attacks on LGBTQ people or championing a host of other causes to lift up vulnerable North Carolinians – from voting rights to healthcare access to public education – Johnson has made a big and positive mark on the state. Recently, however, Johnson announced that she'll soon be leaving Equality NC to start a new chapter in her life and earlier this past week we caught up with her to get some of her thoughts – both on the policy debates of the last year, voting rights, and her tenure on the frontlines.

NEWS & VIEWS 12-31-23

Guest: Investigative reporter Joe Killian

It's been several years since North Carolina lawmakers enacted, and then were forced by public opinion to repeal, HB2 – the infamous bathroom bill. Unfortunately, some lessons have to be learned over and over, and as has been made plain repeatedly at the Legislative Building, conservative state lawmakers remain wedded to a strategy of demonizing LGBTQ people and limiting their rights. And recently, we caught up with NC Newsline investigative reporter Joe Killian, to review some of the controversies and legislation he documented in this field in 2023.

RECORDED PSA: National Fair Housing Alliance (October-December)

What's the asking price on this house? You'd probably be more comfortable living somewhere else. How long a lease is the landlord looking for? I'm sure you can afford to live here, but what are the schools like in this district? Yeah, we have twins in the fifth grade. This neighborhood isn't really for your kids... Know what I mean? If you're black, Latino, Asian American or Middle Eastern and a real estate agent or rental agencies, anything like this, you know what it means? You're being discriminated against. Housing discrimination because of race, color, or national origin is against the law. If you believe you've experienced housing discrimination, contact HUD, go to [HUD.gov/Fair Housing](https://www.hud.gov/FairHousing). That's HUD.gov/Fair Housing. The law is on your side.

RECORDED PSA: Obesity Action Coalition (October-December)

"We don't want you on our team. You're too slow and fat." Those with the serious disease called obesity face weight bias every day. And blame themselves. Weight bias hurts. Let's stop. Weight bias. Be part of the solution. Go to [stop weight bias dot com](https://stopweightbias.com).

RECORDED PSA: Autism Speaks – Workplace Inclusion (October-December)

Only one in five people with autism are employed, despite many having the skill set and desire to work. Maybe it's because employers don't know what kind of jobs they can do. Like what about a programmer? That's a job for someone with autism. How about a healthcare worker? Yep. That is too. People with autism can do a lot of different jobs, but often get overlooked due to outdated stigmas. Introducing WIN by Autism Speaks. We help businesses lead the way in inclusive hiring. What about a ranch hand? To learn more, go to [Autism Speaks dot org slash WIN](https://autismspeaks.org/WIN).

PSA RECORDED: Easter Seals - My Easter Seals (October-December)

One in four Americans today are living with a disability. I'm one of them. People with disabilities are extremely talented, resilient, problem solvers that have so much to offer. And we've got a trusted ally on our side, an organization we can rely on - Easter Seals. Easter Seals is leading the way to full equity, inclusion, and access to healthcare, employment, and education for people with disabilities, families, and communities. That's my Easter Seals. Make it yours. Learn more and get involved at [Easter Seals dot org](https://easterseals.com).

HEALTHCARE/MENTAL HEALTH/WOMEN'S HEALTH

NEWS & VIEWS 10-1-23

Guest: North Carolina Health News founder and editor Rose Hoban

As we discussed in our previous segment, North Carolina has a new state budget. After months of delay, Republican legislative leaders pushed through the massive collection of appropriations and new state laws in less than 48 hours the week before last. And since then, experts and observers have been trying to piece together and decipher the scores of new laws – many highly questionable and never seen before – that are now in the state statute books. One budget provision, however, that came as no surprise was the much-delayed final approval of expanding the state's Medicaid program – a change that will extend health insurance coverage to as many as 600,000 people. Earlier this week, in order to understand the details of this long-overdue development (as well as numerous other changes to state healthcare law) I got a chance to have an extended conversation with a journalist who has chronicled these debates for decades, Rose Hoban. In Part One of our extended conversation, we discussed the details of Medicaid expansion – the new and momentous change that will be coming to our state on December 1 as a result of the recent enactment of a new state budget. In Part Two of our conversation, we delved into several other healthcare topics inserted in the budget bill – including a big and rather ill-defined new collaboration between UNC and ECU to create a new rural health initiative,

plans to build a new children's hospital, changes to laws and programs impacting mental health care, and some big new appropriations to a network of controversial nonprofits known as crisis pregnancy centers.

NEWS & VIEWS 10-8-23

Guest: Senator Natalie Murdock

The NC General Assembly has finally voted to expand the state's Medicaid program – thereby making affordable health insurance available to more than a half-million uninsured people. It was a long overdue action that will save numerous lives and struggling hospitals and create thousands of jobs in our state. Unfortunately, the process for passing the new law was anything but smooth. Not only did it take way too long, but the expansion was attached to a new state budget that's packed with all manner of deeply problematic new laws. Recently, in order to get a better handle on these developments, we sat down for a special extended conversation with one of the state Senate's rising stars, Senator Natalie Murdock of Chatham and Durham Counties. In Part One we discussed the Medicaid expansion victory and the less-than-noble process in which it came to fruition. In Part Two of our conversation, we delved into several other topics with which state lawmakers have been dealing in the waning weeks of the 2023 legislative session – some productively and some not so much -- including state tax policy, education funding, childcare, maternal health, and state election law.

NEWS & VIEWS 10-29-23

Guest: North Carolina state health Director Dr. Betsey Tilson

It's hard to believe, but it's now been over three and a half years since the COVID-19 virus began its deadly sweep across the United States. And while the passage of time and the deployment of vaccines and medicines have thankfully allowed life to return to something akin to normal, COVID remains a dangerous and potentially deadly health threat that demands our attention. What's more, it's not the only respiratory virus of which we need to be wary these days. Fortunately, as we learned in a recent conversation with Dr. Betsey Tilson, North Carolina's State Health Director and the Department of Health and Human Services' chief medical officer, the knowledge and tools at our disposal to protect ourselves and our loved ones in the fall of 2023 are formidable and there are some easy, effective, and affordable steps we all can and should take in the coming weeks.

NEWS & VIEWS 11-26-23

Guest: North Carolina state Health and Human Services Secretary Kody Kinsley

On December 1, after years of political-motivated and hugely destructive delay, North Carolina will, at long last, finally expand its Medicaid program under the terms of the Affordable Care Act. This expansion will allow hundreds of thousands of lower income people – the vast majority of whom are employed – to gain access to affordable quality healthcare. The move is a huge victory for the state as a whole and, in particular, the Cooper administration -- which has been pushing for expansion for nearly seven years. NEWS & VIEWS sat down for a special extended conversation with the Cooper administration's point person on the issue, state Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kody Kinsley. In Part One of our conversation with Secretary Kinsley, we discussed the exciting fact that our state will soon expand its Medicaid program to cover hundreds of thousands of uninsured people. In Part Two of our conversation, we delved further into the details of the expansion plan, how the state will accommodate so many newly insured consumers, and how the huge influx of federal dollars accompanying the expansion will allow the state to make some extremely helpful investments in areas where services have long been sorely lacking – most notably in the world of mental health and substance abuse. And with World AIDS day right around the corner, we also discussed the hugely beneficial impact that a medication known as PrEP is having in the battle against HIV.

ON THE RECORD 11-26-23

Vaccine mistrust: A Pew survey this month shows - the percent of American adults who say science has a "mostly positive" effect on society now sits at 57%, that's down from 65% in November of 2021 - and 73% before the pandemic. WRAL goes 'On the Record' with three of the state's top doctors to ask what's causing the decline and what needs to happen to regain the trust lost.

RECORDED PSA - Women's Heart HealthAlliance – We Can Have It All (October-December)

Women can have it all. Including heart attacks. But symptoms like jaw pain, nausea, unusual fatigue, dizziness, and backache are often different and more subtle than for a man. The fact is heart disease is the number one killer of

women. Know the signs. Learn more at Get Heart Checked. Bought from Women's Heart Alliance in partnership with Women Heart.

RECORDED PSA – Stand Up to Cancer – Colorectal Screenings (October-December)

What's up? This is Will I Am. I'm joining Stand up to Cancer and Providence Health System to let you know if you're 45 and older, go get a colon cancer screening right now. Ask your doctor or go to Providence Northgate colon cancer to determine which screening option is right for you.

RECORDED PSA: American Cancer Society- Get Screened (October-December)

Cancer can feel like something we can't do anything about, but you can. There are screening tests that can catch cancer early when it may be easier to treat. Begins cervical screening at age 25. At 45, start colorectal, and breast screening at 50. Discuss lung screening with the doctor. Find resources for free and low-cost screening at cancer dawgs get screened.

RECORDED PSA – National Pest Management Association – Sick Day (October-December)

Amanda had another asthma attack. She's really sad to miss school again. Asthma can be triggered by allergens from common pests. Just can't shake this fever. Mosquito bites can cause West Nile and Zika virus infections. Sorry, boss. I'm gonna be out of work for a while. The CDC estimates that more than 300,000 Lyme disease cases spread by ticks occur in the U.S. each year. Don't let pests force you to take a sick day. Learn how to protect your family. A pest world dot org. A public service message from the National Pest Management Association and the CDC.

RECORDED PSA: People You Know - Type 2 Diabetes (October-December)

One in three adults has prediabetes. One in three. That means it could be you, your football buddy, your futbol buddy, or you your best man, your worst man, you, your dog walker, your cat jogger... While one in three adults has prediabetes with early diagnosis, prediabetes can be reversed. Take the risk test at Do I Have Prediabetes Dot Org. Brought to you by the Ad Council and its prediabetes awareness partners.

RECORDED PSA: American Stroke Association – F.A.S.T. (October-December)

For my friend Luke. For my mom, Paulette. And for my mom, Phoenix. For my husband, Helmut. Honor someone you love by learning the warning signs of stroke. If you see face drooping arm weakness or speech difficulty, it's time to call 911. A stroke can happen to anyone at any age. Be ready to spot a stroke fast. Learn more from the American Stroke Association at stroke dot org.

RECORDED PSA: Komen Foundation – Breast Cancer (October-December)

It's Susan G. Komen. Do you believe that ending breast cancer needs all of us working together? Because if you've just been diagnosed and don't know where to turn, we've got you. If you can't afford the treatment you need, we've got you. And if you are driven to honor the loved one you've just lost, we have a place for you here. Because of you, we're supporting those who need help today while tirelessly searching for tomorrow's cures. Visit Komen dot org and be a part of our Susan G. Komen community today.

RECORDED PSA: Pivotal Ventures – Middle School Mental Health (October-December)

Hey, son. How are you feeling? I'm fine, Pops. What's on your mind? I just. I can't explain it now. My dad's retired a cop. His eyes really started to wander. And obviously, loss of who you talk to. When your kid can't find the language, you help them find the lyrics, listen to the sound it out album, and get tips and tools to start a conversation. Sound it out together.

POLITICS/VOTING RIGHTS

NEWS & VIEWS 10-8-23

Guest: Meredith College pollster and political scientist David McLennan

In just five months, North Carolinians will go to the polls in the 2024 primary election. In addition to helping select the nominees for the presidency in the Democratic and Republican parties, voters will nominate candidates for every major political office in our state, save for U.S. Senate. So, what do we know at this point? Is Donald Trump a shoo-in for a rematch with President Biden despite facing multiple criminal charges? Who will voters nominate to replace outgoing

Governor Roy Cooper? And where do they stand on some of the key controversies of the day? One place to find quality answers to these questions is the Meredith College poll and recently we got a chance to speak with the political scientist who directs the poll about the latest findings: Meredith College political science professor, David McLennan.

NEWS & VIEWS 10-15-23

Guest: Southern Coalition for Social Justice senior voting rights counsel Hilary Harris Klein

As we've reported many times previously on NEWS & VIEWS s, North Carolina Republican lawmakers maintain large and gerrymandered veto-proof majorities at the state Legislative Building but sadly, that isn't stopping them from taking aggressive action to help them maintain their control. Indeed, the 2023 legislative session has seen the advancement of several new laws designed to make voting harder – particularly for people of color and low income – as well as a process for crafting new legislative and congressional districts that are sure to favor the GOP. And while the list of these new laws is maddening long and complex, we recently got a chance to get a helpful summary when we caught up with one of our state's most knowledgeable advocates for voting rights and fair elections, Attorney Hilary Harris Klein of the Southern Coalition for Social Justice.

NEWS & VIEWS 11-5-23

Guest: NC Newsline investigative reporter Lynn Bonner

Gerrymandering. It's a topic that's been on a lot of lips in recent weeks as the Republican leadership of the North Carolina legislature, for what seems like the umpteenth time, drew new legislative and congressional maps for our state. Interestingly, while gerrymandering – that is to say, rigging maps to favor certain outcomes – is something politicians are normally rather circumspect about, this time that wasn't the case. Instead, Republican legislators openly bragged that they were drawing maps to guarantee Republicans victories in most legislative and congressional races – even if Democrats get more votes statewide. So how did things get this openly dysfunctional and what's next? Recently we caught NC Newsline investigative reporter Lynn Bonner, to find out. Bonner discusses the redistricting process, why it matters, and why some feel disenfranchised by the new legislative maps.

NEWS & VIEWS 11-19-23

Guest: House Democratic Leader Robert Reives

The job of leading North Carolina House Democrats – a diverse and sometimes unruly group with an array of ideologies and priorities -- has always been a tough job. And in the current era in which aggressive Republican gerrymandering has rigged the outcome in so many districts that it's all but impossible for Democrats to win their fair share of seats, the leader's role can frequently be a downright thankless task. All that said, the current holder of the position – State Rep. Robert Reives of Chatham and Randolph Counties – has somehow managed to negotiate a tough balancing act in which he serves as the principal voice of opposition to the Republican majority's hard right policy agenda, while also keeping his caucus united and articulating a different vision for the state. And recently we caught up with Reives for a post-mortem on the 2023 session, recent election results and what's he hopes may be on tap as we look to 2024. In Part Two of our conversation, we discussed how the state's new budget was written behind closed doors and includes all manner of policy changes never openly debated, as well as one very happy exception to the regressive policy agenda that's dominated things on Jones Street – the impending and long overdue expansion of the state's Medicaid program.

NEWS & VIEWS 11-26-23

Guest: Meredith College political scientist and pollster David McLennan

Well, we're still a year out from the 2024 election, but here in North Carolina, the 2024 primary election is only just over three months away. What's more, according to the most recent Meredith College poll, we may very well already know which major party candidates are likely to prevail. The poll found Democratic Attorney General Josh Stein and Republican Lt. Governor Mark Robinson way ahead of their top challengers – Democratic former Supreme Court Justice Mike Morgan and Republicans, attorney Bill Graham and state Treasurer Dale Folwell. As McLennan told NEWS & VIEWS s, however, the undecided vote in both races remains very large. What's more, in all likelihood, whoever prevails in March will almost certainly face a tight general election race. McLennan also discussed his findings that a large percentage of North Carolina voters remain worryingly uninformed on some basics of state government and civics, along with some of his thoughts on why this is the case.

NEWS & VIEWS 12-24-23

Guest: Political science professor Steven Rogers

Despite multiple legal challenges to what the Republican legislators who drew them admit are blatantly rigged and gerrymandered districts, it looks like North Carolina's 2024 congressional and legislative elections will go ahead as scheduled. What's more with the candidate filing period having recently concluded, it's already clear in several districts who will emerge victorious in next November's elections. Indeed, in some cases, the races will be decided in the March primary election because no one has even filed to be the sacrificial lamb in a general election that's been pre-decided. In Part One of a special extended conversation with Prof. Rogers, we discussed the sobering fact that a huge share of American state legislators – including here in North Carolina – have little or no reason to pay much attention to the views of voters or have any concern about whether they will be reelected (or even face a viable opponent). In Part Two of our conversation, we explored more of the reasons behind this remarkable state of affairs, how it undermines democracy, and perhaps more importantly, some of the things we can and should do to address the situation.

ON THE RECORD 12-31-23

Top political stories of 2023: As 2023 comes to a close WRAL Anchor/Reporter Lena Tillett breaks down the biggest stories in North Carolina politics. Watch as we revisit some of the key moments from the past year - and hear analysis from WRAL State Government Reporter Travis Fain on how it all happened - and what could come next.

POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY/HOMELESSNESS

NEWS & VIEWS 12-24-23

Guest: Durham County educator Turquoise Parker

Hunger. Ever since congressional Republicans refused to renew key anti-poverty initiatives that President Biden launched during the pandemic, it's been on the rise in many places in our country. It's a maddening state of affairs that deserves all our attention. One person, however, that's long been doing something about this situation is Turquoise Parker, a teacher at Durham's Lakewood Elementary School. Over the last several years, Parker's response to the needs of an individual family for food over a Christmas holiday has morphed into a large and growing volunteer program that helps provide free and nutritious food to scores of low-income children and their families over the winter and spring breaks. And recently, we sat down with Ms. Parker to learn more about her efforts, and how interested people can support this ongoing effort.

PSA RECORDED: Communities in Schools (October-December)

For the safety of students, families, and teachers, schools across our country are closing. School closures can have significant and lasting consequences, particularly for vulnerable students, students who may face hunger, homelessness and even trauma. That's where our organization, Communities in Schools can help. For years, we've had caring adults inside schools helping these students stay in school. Now we are taking our work beyond the school walls. Our caring adults are delivering meals, providing household supplies, connecting kids with online classrooms, and using technology to maintain the one-on-one relationships we know can transform the lives of students and their families, communities and schools going wherever we are needed, doing whatever it takes to empower students to succeed in school and in life. To see how you can help kids succeed, visit [CommunitiesInSchools Dot Org](https://www.CommunitiesInSchools.org).

RECORDED PSA: Feeding America – Ending Hunger (October-December)

The impact of a meal goes well beyond feeding our bodies. Because when people are fed, futures are nourished. And with your help, together, we can end hunger. Join the movement at [Feeding America Dawgs Act](https://www.FeedingAmerica.org) now brought to you by Feeding America and the Ad Council.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE/ REGULATION

NEWS & VIEWS 10-29-23

Guest: Barb Walsh, founder of the Fentanyl Victims Network of North Carolina

In the list of horrors that a parent might ever experience, losing one's child because she unknowingly grabbed and drank a bottle of water laced with fentanyl must be among the worst imaginable. Tragically, that's what happened to a North Carolina woman named Barb Walsh in 2021 when her 21-year-old daughter Sophia died almost instantly from fentanyl

poisoning. Of course, the pain of this disaster will always be with Walsh and her husband, but to their enormous credit that hasn't stopped them from founding a nonprofit dedicated to combating the fentanyl crisis that's taken the lives of more than 13,000 North Carolinians in recent years and that's currently killing eight North Carolinians a day. The group is called Fentanyl Victims Network of North Carolina and recently Walsh was kind enough to join NC Newsline for an extended conversation, in which she shared her story, described the organization she leads, and shared some of the policy changes it's asking from state leaders.

RECORDED PSA: American Lung Association – Youth Vaping (October-December)

I think it's just vapor. Vaping is safer than smoking, isn't it? There's really not even that much nicotine in them, right? One big pot has as much nicotine as one pack of cigarettes. I kid my kid knows it's dangerous. Five point four million American kids vape and most think it's harmless. Get your head out of the cloud. Talk to your kid about vaping. Visit, talk about vaping dot org. That's talk about vaping dot org. Brought to you by the American Lung Association and the Ad Council

RECORDED PSA: CDC – Drug Overdose Campaign -Naloxone (October-December)

Hey, you got any gum? Yeah. Check my backpack. What's this? Oh, that's Naloxone. It can reverse an opioid overdose. I decided to always keep it on me after my friend almost died. It saved his life. Oh, wow. I'm so sorry. That makes me want to have it with me too. You totally should. Check the pharmacy. It was actually really easy to get and it's easy to use. I definitely will. Thanks. Naloxone saves lives. Learn more at [CDC.gov/Stop overdose](https://www.cdc.gov/stopoverdose/).

RECORDED PSA: CDC Drug Overdose - Fentanyl (October-December)

Only a fraction of a raindrop, three grains of salt, and up to 100 times more potent than morphine. The tiniest amount of illegal fentanyl is all it takes to cause an overdose. Fentanyl can be mixed into heroin, cocaine, press pills, meth, and other drugs. It could be in your drugs and you wouldn't be able to see it, taste it or smell it. Learn more at [CDC.gov/Stop overdose](https://www.cdc.gov/stopoverdose/).

RECORDED PSA: National Association Boards of Pharmacy (October-December)

Unused prescription opioid pain medicines can spell trouble. They can spell risk if taken by someone they weren't prescribed for, harm if accidentally taken by a child or pet, or overdose if they're not used as directed. Safely dispose of opioids before they can hurt your family. Find a drug takeback option such as medicine drop boxes. You may find these in your community at local pharmacies or police stations. Visit [www.fda.gov\drug disposal](https://www.fda.gov/drug-disposal) for more information.

RECORDED PSA – CDC Drug Overdose - Polysubstance (October-December)

Yo, sorry, man. I took an upper to stay awake. My heart started pounding, so I took a downer to take the edge off. Honestly, I feel worse now. One of my friends overdosed after mixing drugs like that. I don't want that to happen to you. Yeah, I definitely won't be doing that again. Well, let's stay online for a bit so I know you're okay. Yeah, man. Let's go. There is no safe way to mix drugs. Learn more at [CDC dot gov slash Stop Overdose](https://www.cdc.gov/stopoverdose/)

TERRORISM/HOMELAND SECURITY/MILITARY

NEWS & VIEWS 11-12-23

Guest: North Carolina sixth district Congresswoman Kathy Manning

U.S. Representative Kathy Manning of central North Carolina's sixth congressional district is less than halfway through her second two-year-term in Washington, but it's already been one heck of a tumultuous ride. From the January 6 insurrection, the pandemic, an economic recovery, two chaotic House Speaker elections and dozens of controversial policy debates and court rulings, Manning has remained a remarkably active and outspoken voice for progressive change. Now, however, thanks to the latest Republican redistricting scheme, Manning finds herself living in a district that's likely impossible for a Democrat to win. Not surprisingly, however, that hasn't stopped her from continuing to speak out forcefully on an array of issues – from a possible government shutdown to aid for Israel and Ukraine.

RECORDED PSA – Homes for Our Troops (October-December)

Serving my country required sacrifice. Sacrifice that changed my life forever. I remember the day I came home because of my injuries. This house wasn't right for me anymore. I remember the narrow doorways, the small bathrooms, the

shelves out of reach when in my wheelchair...Every day was full of obstacles. I felt trapped. I remember a better day - The day my family received a specially adapted custom home from Homes for Our Troops. That day changed everything. Now we have a safe and accessible home to enjoy the freedom I fought for. This place. Our home is exactly what we needed to rebuild our lives. Homes for Our Troops builds and donates specially adapted custom homes nationwide for severely injured post-9-11 veterans and enables them to rebuild their lives. Join our mission HFT USA dot org.

RECORDED PSA: Department of Homeland Security – See Something, Say Something (October-December)

Why? Why do we ignore the things that give us pause that seem out of place, that don't feel right? The answer to why defines who we are. So, if you see something, why do you say something? I see. Save for my friends, for my community, for my family, for each other. Because all of this matters. We all have something worth protecting. So why is the U.S. saying report suspicious activity to local authorities? If you see something, say something.

RECORDED PSA: Department of Defense – Today's Military (October-December)

As a young adult, at this point in your life, you probably have a lot of questions. Like what's next? What does my future hold? The thing is, there's no right answer, only your answer, your friendships, experiences, and purpose. It's all your choice. So, what will you choose as you make choices about the future? The military can be a resource for information to help bring a fulfilling path and to focus a public service message from the Department of Defense. To learn more, visit today's Military.com.