

Quarterly Issues Programs List

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Stations: KWWK, KDCZ, KROC-FM, KYBA

April 1st, 2023 through June 30th, 2023

SECTION I. Issues

A) Women's Rights – Abortion rights in Minnesota were already protected because a Doe v. Gomez, a 1995 Minnesota Supreme Court decision, but this became a top issue following the U.S. Supreme Court decision last summer to vacate federal abortion rights and leave the issue to the states.

B) Gun Control – A bipartisan survey of Minnesotans conducted by KSTP/Survey USA found that nearly three quarters of Minnesotans are in favor of increased gun safety measures including background checks.

C) Weather Awareness – Each spring, Minnesotans face weather dangers such as severe thunderstorms, which can bring damaging winds, large hail, and even tornadoes, posing risks to lives and property. Additionally, springtime in Minnesota also brings the potential for flooding due to snowmelt and heavy rainfall, threatening homes, roads, and infrastructure.

D) Public Education – A report from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) shows the state's public schools are falling behind after statewide assessments done in 2022.

E) Public Health – In 2022 Minnesota nursing homes reported staffing shortages that were worse than anywhere else in the country. A Minnesota Department of Health survey confirmed health care worker burnout and show workforce shortage trends are affecting a wide range of health care professionals.

SECTION II – RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS

MINNESOTA MATTERS, hosted by Scott Peterson, Tasha Redel, Bill Werner, Mark Dorenkamp and Mike Grim is a weekly locally produced public affairs program that discusses matters of importance to Minnesotans.

Minnesota Matters runs every Sunday morning on KROC-FM, KWWK, KDCZ, and KYBA from 6:00 a.m. and 6:30 a.m.

April 2nd, 2023 - Issues Discussed: Public Health, State Economy, Weather Awareness

Doctor Shauna Voss, a senior veterinarian in charge of poultry with the Minnesota Board of Animal Health, joined the program to discuss the highly pathogenic avian influenza. Voss discussed the economic impact in Minnesota which is the largest Turkey producing state in the country and addressed public safety concerns.

Boyce Olsen discusses the critical funding and staffing shortages long term care centers are facing around the state. Senator Liz Bolden joins to talk about the urgency of the situation and explain how the system is on the verge of collapse. Bolden says state lawmakers are discussing the issue.

Jennifer Pippa, Vice President of disaster programs for the American Red Cross, joined the program to discuss severe weather awareness. Pippa shared Minnesota weather stats and offered tips on how people can protect themselves including how to build an emergency survival kit for when bad weather strikes.

April 9th, 2023 - Issues Discussed: Women's Rights, Abortion Rights, Public Health, State Economy

Bill Werner updates the latest from the Minnesota Legislature including reproductive rights, voting rights and environmental legislation. Werner also compares how state democrats want to spend the \$17.5 billion surplus to how state republicans want to use the money.

Megan Dayton, a senior demographer with the State, joins to discuss how Minnesota's demographic shift is creating a workforce shortage as Minnesota ages. Dayton says the state will need to entice more people to move here in order to create a balance between the aging population and the workforce, or the younger workers.

Katie Mutchler, program coordinator for Minnesota Department of Agriculture, appeared on the program to discuss a decline in hemp growing licenses. Mutchler did say she anticipates the number of farmers to grow when Minnesota legalizes recreational cannabis.

April 16th, 2023 - Issues Discussed: Public Health, Public Education, Traffic Safety

The hosts discuss a \$4 billion Higher Education Funding package, which includes a tuition freeze and increased funding for state colleges and universities. The discussion also touches on the compensation for the University of Minnesota's president and proposed tax increases in the transportation budget bill.

The conversation then shifts to gun violence prevention laws and the push for background checks on all gun sales and red flag laws. Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison expresses determination to pass such legislation, despite opposition from groups defending Second Amendment rights.

The 2023 road construction program in Minnesota is outlined during this show. Jake Lash from the Minnesota Department of Transportation provides an overview of the projects, highlighting significant ones such as the Hwy. 52 project and the expansion of Hwy. 14 in southern Minnesota. The hosts remind listeners to plan ahead, check for project impacts, and drive safely in work zones.

Kenzie Christopher, site manager at Martin Luther Campus, joins to discuss the critical workforce shortage that long-term healthcare centers in Minnesota are facing. She explains the types of services offered in these centers, outlines the worker shortage, offers possible solutions, and explains how this crisis is affecting all Minnesotans.

April 23rd, 2023 - Issues Discussed: Gun Control, State Economy

This episode covers discussions on taxes, budget proposals, and legislation. House Democrats present their plan to exempt more Minnesotans from state income tax on Social Security benefits, while Republicans argue for a full solution to eliminate double taxation. Other topics include proposed increases in hunting and fishing license fees, a statewide fee on deliveries, and Governor Tim Walz's State of the State address, where he pushed for gun safety measures.

Adam Frock, the executive director of the Minnesota Lottery, joins to talk about where lottery proceeds go and the impact of the funds on community projects. Frock explains that the lottery's mission is to raise money for programs that benefit Minnesotans, with over 3.5 billion dollars raised since 1990. The lottery funds various programs, including environmental initiatives, throughout the state.

This episode also featured an interview with Dan Schaub, an assistant adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota's College of Design, discussing the importance of using plants that attract pollinators in yards and gardens. The decline of pollinator species and their role in sustaining ecosystems and pollinating food crops are highlighted.

April 30th, 2023 Issues Discussed: Traffic Safety, Public Health, Weather Awareness

This episode begins with a discussion on state politics at the Minnesota Capitol. The focus is the state budget and the controversial abortion provisions within it. Republicans attempt to ban third-trimester abortions and require parental notification for minors seeking abortions. Democrats argue for preserving bodily autonomy and repealing anti-abortion laws. The discussion highlights the ongoing debate and differing perspectives on abortion rights in Minnesota.

Patrick Moses from the US Army Corps of Engineers also joined the program to discuss the economic impact and public safety concerns caused by flooding on the Mississippi River. Moses talks about the impact on navigation, provides insights on the closure of several locks and dams due to safety concerns, and explains how the closures disrupt barge traffic.

May 7th, 2023 - Issues Discussed: Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Public Health

Bill Werner talks about the newly passed tax bill which includes one-time rebates. He also discusses how lawmakers are working to address the issue of Social Security - About half of Minnesota recipients currently pay no state income tax on their Social Security benefits. That would go up to about 3/4 paying no state tax whatsoever under both the Senate and House bills. State Republicans want the tax to be eliminated.

This fall, the Hazelton Betty for Graduate School will launch a pilot program called Alternative Admission Pathways, addressing the growing need for addiction counselors. President Kevin Doyle joined the program to discuss the need for more counselors and how this program will help train and place qualified individuals that can assist with addiction issues.

May 14th, 2023 - Issues Discussed: Public Education, Public Health, Gun Control

The first topic discussed is the recent approval of boys' volleyball as a state-sanctioned sport, with Jenna Kilkelly from the Minnesota Boys High School Volleyball Association sharing the significance and growth of the sport.

The program also outlines the increasing number of individuals living with Alzheimer's disease in Minnesota, shedding light on the concerning trend and the need for increased awareness and support for affected individuals and their families

Finally, the program addresses controversial issues in the Minnesota Legislature, including the debate over state-run paid family and medical leave, staffing concerns in hospitals, and the potential implementation of anti-gun violence initiatives.

May 21st, 2023: Issues Discussed: Gun Safety, Public Education, Public Health

The legislative session is a key focus on this program, with a major public safety bill being signed by Governor Tim Walls, including provisions for expanded background checks on gun sales and transfers and a red flag law. The lawmakers also address early release for inmates who complete treatment or earn degrees and the increased funding for K12 public schools. The program also touches on paid family and medical leave, the tax plan, and the legalization of recreational marijuana.

May 28th, 2023: Issues Discussed: Affordable Housing

The legislative session ended this week and the hosts discuss this year's accomplishments including a new bonding bill.

Lawmakers made a \$2 Billion investing to help with housing and homelessness and the executive director of Minnesota Housing Partnership says this will be transformative in communities across the state. Anne Mavity appeared on the program to explain how the funding will help first time homeowners with down payment assistance. The investment will also be used to construct more affordable housing options.

June 4th, 2023 – Issues Discussed: Public Health

Recreational marijuana was approved by state lawmakers and the bill was signed by Governor Walz this week. The hosts explain the new rules to those seeking to use cannabis when it becomes legal on August 1st. Governor Walz also signed the state's largest infrastructure bill ever this week. The hosts explain how lawmakers reached the deal and what the money will be used - \$300 million will go to the state's nursing homes.

Planned Parenthood's President and CEO, Ruth Richardson, joined the program to discuss how their organization is proving gender affirming care and expanding services to the LBGQ+ community.

Jessica Hancock Allen, Infections Disease Director with Minnesota Dept. of Health, joins the program to discuss her role and talk about food born illnesses, tick and mosquito related diseases, and she talks about how the state has adapted during the COVID pandemic.

June 11th, 2023 - Issues Discussed: Public Health, Gun Control, Women's Rights, Abortion Rights, Public Education

In this episode of "Minnesota Matters," the hosts recap the recent legislative session in Minnesota with Governor Tim Walz. They mention the session's historic and transformative nature, touching on topics such as tax cuts, unemployment insurance, transportation funding, voting rights restoration for formerly incarcerated individuals, universal meals, crime and public safety, bonding bill for local infrastructure, paid family and medical leave, and clean energy goals.

Governor Walz expresses pride in the signing of the universal meals program at elementary schools, highlighting the importance of creating a climate where people feel valued and can thrive.

The conversation then shifts to strategic considerations for future legislative sessions, with the governor acknowledging the possibility of a constitutional amendment to protect reproductive rights. They also touch on the importance of implementation for programs like paid family and medical leave and the new cannabis program.

June 18th, 2023 - Issues Discussed: Public Health, Women's Rights, Abortion Rights

This episode covers the legislative session's accomplishments and challenges, with a focus on taxation, infrastructure, and nursing homes. It also touches on the partisanship experienced during the session and the potential for a constitutional amendment regarding abortion in the future. The guests featured in the episode include Governor Tim Walz and Senator Mark Johnson.

June 25th, 2023 - Issues Discussed: Public Health

This program covers topics related to adolescent sexual health, the impact of the pandemic on pregnancy and birth rates, and STI trends.

The hosts discuss the University of Minnesota's newest adolescent sexual health report, featuring an interview with Jill Faris, the EMS director of adolescent sexual health training and education. The report reveals that while the pregnancy rate increased during COVID-19, the birth rate did not follow the same trend. This indicates that fewer young people carried pregnancies to term in 2021, potentially due to limited access to medical care, contraceptives, and abortion services during the pandemic.

The conversation then shifts to the decline in sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates in Minnesota during the pandemic. Jill Faris highlights the complex nature of STI data and suggests that the decrease in reported cases may be influenced by factors such as reduced access to testing and treatment.