

Quarterly Programs and Issues
1st Quarter 2023 – WRHM & WVSZ

Programs:

WRHM/WVSZ provides local newscasts nine times each weekday. One-minute updates run on the half-hour, Mon-Fri, between 6 and 10am. In addition, longer newscasts air at 7:02 and 8:02am and on the half-hour between 3 and 6pm. On Saturday, the longer newscasts air on the half-hour between 9am and 12noon.

Public Service Announcements are aired on a rotating basis, and are prerecorded. Some are voiced by members of the community. Public service announcements air daily.

The FM107 Community Calendars air on a daily basis, and are updated two to three times per week. Those calendars provide dates, time and phone numbers of events occurring in Lancaster, Chester, York and Chesterfield Counties. These programs air multiple times per day.

Critical Issues facing the region, covered by FM107 news during the quarter include:

01/02 - A body found inside a donation bin in Kershaw County had likely been dead for at least several months, according to authorities. Someone found the body after checking the rusty bin well off U.S. Highway 1 in Lugoff after smelling a bad odor. Investigators first thought the body might be from someone seeking shelter from the recent cold snap, but quickly determined the remains had been in the bin for at least several months, Kershaw County Coroner David West said.

01/03 - Several South Carolina counties are seeing an increase in COVID-19 cases after the holidays. DHEC says numbers are up in Lexington, Kershaw, and Richland counties. Health officials say more cases are likely on the way and at-home tests are not being counted. Mask wearing and hand-washing are encouraged in communities with higher risk of community spread of COVID-19.

01/03 - Virginia “Ginny” Merck-Dupont has been named the new attorney for Lancaster County. She was previously a municipal judge, solicitor, and the Spartanburg County Attorney. Merck-Dupont’s hire marks the first time in nearly four years the County has had in-house legal counsel, having utilized contracted outside services in the recent past. Merck-Dupont most recently worked for Talley Law Firm in Spartanburg. Current contracted County Attorney John DuBois with Smith Robinson Law Firm will remain on a reduced contract basis with Lancaster County.

01/05 - A man has been gunned down in Lancaster. On Wednesday Deputy Coroner Joey Edwards and Coroner Karla Deese responded to John Street in Lancaster, SC, in reference to a shooting victim. The victim was pronounced deceased on scene and has been identified as 53-year-old Gene White of Lancaster, SC. The incident is being investigated by The Lancaster County Multi-Jurisdictional Team, and the Lancaster County Coroner’s Office. No further details are available at this time.

01/08 - The South Carolina Supreme Court struck the proposed 6-week abortion ban in 3-2 vote Thursday. In its conclusion, the court said the ban violates the constitutional right to privacy: "Six weeks is, quite simply, not a reasonable period of time" for a woman to know she is pregnant and "take reasonable steps to terminate that pregnancy." "We respectfully, but strongly, disagree with the Court's ruling," said Attorney General Alan Wilson. "We're working with the Governor's office and legislature to review all our available options moving forward." Gov. Henry McMaster said he looks forward to working with the General Assembly to "correct this error" made by the state's Supreme Court. The majority opinion was written by Justice Kaye Hearn, the only woman on South Carolina's five-person Supreme Court bench.

01/08 - South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster wants to increase 2022's record amount of capital investment and offset shortages across workforces like education and law enforcement, according to the budget request he released Friday. The proposal is just a first step. Lawmakers will soon begin writing and approving a spending plan when the General Assembly reconvenes next week. But the Republican expressed confidence Friday that his six years spent cultivating relationships with legislative leaders will lend serious weight to his suggestions. The lowest state debt in recent memory and a \$3.8 billion budget surplus mean South Carolina has a lot of extra money available. McMaster does not seek to spend it all. The executive budget proposal would allocate \$500 million toward what the governor's office said would be the largest rainy day fund balance in state history. The total far exceeds the minimum increase from 5% to 7% of the previous year's revenue as required by a constitutional amendment approved by voters this past fall.

01/11 - House Republicans are set to consider two bills that would limit access to abortion. The new majority will consider a measure to prohibit federal funding for abortion and another that aims to regulate how health care providers handle infants born alive after an abortion attempt. The bills are unlikely to pass the Democratic-controlled Senate. Republican Congresswoman Nancy Mace of South Carolina voiced opposition to bringing those bills up for a vote. She called it "tone-deaf," adding Republicans are only paying lip service to the pro-life movement.

01/13 - Former President Donald Trump is planning to hold the first public campaign event of his 2024 White House bid in the early-voting state of South Carolina. Campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung told The Associated Press on Thursday that Trump will visit South Carolina later this month. No other details were immediately announced. Since announcing his latest presidential run in November, Trump has limited his public campaign appearances to events at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida before an invited crowd or in a virtual setting. The South Carolina visit, first reported by Politico, comes as Trump's campaign has faced criticism, even among some longtime allies, for its low profile since the announcement.

01/15 - Duke Energy has decided not to pay liability claims from its customers who were affected by the outages the company instituted at the end of December. Last month, Duke Energy turned off power ahead of a cold blast that arrived the week of Christmas. The blackouts came as a surprise to many customers. Later, in a statement, Duke Energy said it had less power available over the Christmas weekend than it had originally estimated, which led to the decision to institute the rolling blackouts. Duke Energy has decided not to pay liability claims from its customers who were affected by the outages the company instated at the end of December.

According to Channel 9, Duke Energy has recommended that customers file a claim with FEMA or their insurance.

01/19 - A new report on crime in South Carolina is a mixed bag. The report by the home security and safety website Safewise.com says violent crime across the state went up by more than 5 percent in 2022, going from 5.1 incidents per 1,000 people to 5.3. But property crime continued on a downward trend, falling from 29.5 crimes per 1,000 people to 27.2. Safewise says South Carolina has the highest rates of violent and property crime in the South Atlantic region of the country and the Palmetto State's crime rates are higher than the national rate.

01/20 - The Lancaster County Council will meet at 6 p.m. Monday. During this meeting, Council will receive an update on current County road projects, as well as those projected through 2024. During the presentation, Lancaster County Public Works Director Jeff Catoe will highlight how growth in certain areas has affected current projects and how it may touch future projects. Since the projects began in 2018, the County has completed work on 40 roads, approximately 42 miles, costing more than \$18 million. Over the next two years, the County will complete work on 25 more roads, approximately 27 miles, costing more than \$7 million.

01/23 - The trial for disbarred South Carolina attorney Alex Murdaugh is set to begin Monday after he allegedly shot and killed his wife and son. The disgraced heir to a Lowcountry legal dynasty stands accused in the June 2021 shooting deaths of his wife, Maggie, 52, and their son, Paul, 22. In December, prosecutors alleged Murdaugh killed his wife and son to gain sympathy, thereby providing a cover from damning financial crimes. Murdaugh's defense claims he had no reason to benefit from the crimes. According to prosecutors, at the time of the killings, Murdaugh was terrified about a pending motion that threatened to expose years of substantial debts and illicit financial crimes by revealing his personal records. The defense has criticized what they see as the slow release of evidence linking Murdaugh to the killings and so-called vague promises of the financial crimes' relevance to the murder charges. The case has brought in worldwide attention. Murdaugh is also accused of stealing nearly \$9 million dollars from his clients and law firm.

01/30 - Authorities are investigating a person's death after an elderly woman was reported missing in Chester County on Saturday morning. According to the Chester County Sheriff's Office, dispatch received a call reporting the woman missing from the Great Falls area just after 7:30 a.m. Shortly after, at approximately 7:49 a.m., deputies were called to a scene on McClinton Road where they found a deceased individual. Investigators responded to the scene and are currently conducting an investigation. Deputies have not yet released the identity of the deceased individual.

01/30 - Senator Lindsey Graham is proposing a compromise on police reform legislation. Republicans and Democrats have been at odds on qualified immunity, a rule that protects law enforcement from being liable in civil lawsuits unless accusers can prove they violated their rights. The South Carolina Republican said on social media he doesn't believe individual officers should have lawsuits filed against them, but police departments should be held accountable. His remarks come after five Memphis police officers were fired and charged with second-degree murder for the death of Tyre Nichols.

01/31 - Rep. Ralph Norman (R-SC) introduced H.R. 587, authorizing President Biden to award Major James Capers Jr. the Medal of Honor. Major Capers was responsible for incredible acts of valor when his Marine Corps special operations team was ambushed during a mission in Phu Loc, Vietnam in 1967 during the Vietnam War. H.R. 587 is a reintroduction of H.R. 7761 during the 117th Congress. Capers a native of Lee County currently resides in North Carolina.

02/01 - South Carolina's attorney general on Monday asked the state's high court to reconsider its ruling striking down the state's six-week abortion ban. South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson filed a rehearing request with the South Carolina Supreme Court. The court, in a 3-2 decision earlier this month, ruled that the 2021 law banning abortions when cardiac activity is detected, about six weeks after conception, violated the state constitution's right to privacy. The January court ruling striking down the ban was a significant victory for abortion rights' advocates looking for safeguards in state constitutions to protect abortion access after the U.S. Supreme Court stripped away federal protections by overturning Roe v. Wade.

02/02 - South Carolina senators on Wednesday approved a scholarship accounts program that would vastly expand eligibility for private school tuition vouchers -- making them available to middle-class families rather than just those who qualify for Medicaid. The House still must sign off on the proposal for South Carolina to enact the long-sought Republican priority that has seen a revived push nationwide in other GOP-led legislatures following pandemic-era school closures. Republican senators made some consequential changes on its final day of consideration. The measure initially limited eligibility to families qualifying for Medicaid, which is usually about twice the federal government's poverty level. Now, middle-class families would eventually have access to the 6,000 vouchers funded by public tax money intended to help cover the cost of K-12 private school tuition and other expenses.

02/03 - A judge has ruled that prosecutors can call witnesses to testify how Alex Murdaugh allegedly stole money as part of the double murder trial for the disbarred South Carolina attorney as long as they can show it is convincing evidence and linked to the killings. Murdaugh, 54, is standing trial in the shootings of his 52-year-old wife, Maggie, and 22-year-old son, Paul, on June 7, 2021, at their Colleton County home. He faces 30 years to life in prison if convicted of murder. Judge Clifton Newman on Thursday heard from witnesses outside the presence of the jury to decide whether they can give evidence in the case.

02/05 - Prosecutors asked a judge Friday to consider allowing the son of Alex Murdaugh's longtime housekeeper to tell jurors about how after she died in a fall at Murdaugh's home, he promised her family to take care of them and then stole millions in settlements with his insurers. Tony Satterfield said his mom cleaned the Murdaugh home, but also babysat their two sons and did anything else they asked over 20 years. She died at age 57 a few weeks after hitting her head in a fall in February 2018 on steps at the family's house. Prosecutors are asking Judge Clifton Newman to allow them to present evidence of Murdaugh stealing money from clients and his law firm to bolster their premise that Murdaugh killed his family to gain sympathy and buy time because his thefts and massive debts were about to be discovered.

02/06 - Last week the South Carolin Senate, under Republican leadership, overwhelmingly adopted S. 164, a bill to end certification of need requirements for healthcare facilities. The bill,

which received bipartisan support, aims to increase access to healthcare and decrease the cost of treatment. Senator Wes Climer of York County adopted it and has been strong on it since last year.

02/07 - A federal appeals court has denied South Carolina Republicans' motion for a stay in the ongoing challenge over the state's congressional district map. Leading GOP lawmakers will now take their case to the U.S. Supreme Court in attempt to avoid redrawing the map that a three-judge federal panel last month deemed unconstitutional as a discriminatory racial gerrymander. The judges ruled in early January that the boundaries passed last year by the Republican-dominated state Legislature marked an intentional splitting of Black voters in South Carolina's 1st District, which runs from Charleston to Hilton Head Island. The Feb. 4 order postponed the date by which new maps may be presented.

02/10 - The South Carolina Senate passed an abortion ban on Thursday in the Republican-led chamber's latest quest to craft a law that passes constitutional muster, but differences with a stricter proposal from the House could derail the effort once again. Republicans have faced several setbacks in their efforts to further restrict abortion since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned federal protections this summer, allowing the conservative state's previous ban to take effect. With Thursday's 28-12 vote, Senate Republicans insist they have found their solution in a ban on abortions after cardiac activity is detected around six weeks of pregnancy. Senate Majority Leader Shane Massey emphasized that several clarifications of the bill's language and repeals of conflicting laws will satisfy a majority on the South Carolina Supreme Court.

02/15 - A lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court this week claims New-Indy Containerboard is releasing dangerous chemicals called dioxins into the Catawba River. Attorneys for residents in the area first made that claim in October 2022 in a letter sent to New-Indy Containerboard and South Carolina health officials. At that time, a statement from New-Indy Containerboard said recent groundwater monitoring found no hazardous levels of dioxin on mill property. The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control said extensive data showed no indication of the release of dioxins into the Catawba River.

02/17 - Throughout several hours of sworn testimony before lawmakers tasked with investigating a \$3.5 billion accounting error, South Carolina's chief fiscal watchdog struggled to delineate a clear timeline about an admittedly complex mapping problem that plagued the office for at least a decade. The chair of the Senate Finance subcommittee probing the issue said he lost confidence Thursday in South Carolina Comptroller General Richard Eckstrom's ability to accurately answer questions about the state's overstated cash balance, first publicly shared Feb. 9. Republican Sen. Larry Grooms expressed concern that the office failed its primary duty of producing an accurate annual financial report from at least 2017 to 2022 under Eckstrom, who was reelected this fall to the position he has now held for two decades. Eckstrom emphasized that the state's financial position remains strong. He said the reporting omissions did not impact South Carolina's actual available cash or the General Assembly's budgeting process. Subcommittee members weren't convinced. Democratic Sen. Thomas McElveen expressed concern that the error may impact the state's credit score going forward.

02/19 - Agents of the Lancaster County Multijurisdictional Narcotics Task Force were tipped off that a package containing Cocaine was being delivered from abroad to a Kershaw address. The parcel contained two sizable bricks of powdered substances. Law enforcement agencies carried out a monitored delivery of the parcel, which had been addressed to Quanisha Lashay Manago (28 years old) on Richland Street. Manago seized the parcel from the undercover agent and placed it in the rear of a 2012 Ford Focus in the yard, then moved to the driver's seat. With the another woman already in the front passenger seat, law enforcement moved in, arresting both parties without incident.

02/22 - Here's an interesting fact for you. Did you know, South Carolina has one of the lowest property tax rates in the country. That's according to a new WalletHub report that compared real-estate and vehicle property taxes across all 50 states and Washington D.C. The Palmetto State ranked sixth overall. The state with the lowest taxes property taxes is Hawaii, while the state with the highest property taxes is New Jersey.

02/23 - FORMER SOUTH CAROLINA ATTORNEY ALEX MURDAUGH TESTIFIES AS A WITNESS DURING HIS OWN DOUBLE MURDER TRIAL. ON THE STAND IN THE WALTERBORO COURTROOM, ALEX MURDAUGH ADMITS HE LIED TO INVESTIGATORS AND HIS OWN FAMILY ABOUT WHEN HE HAD LAST SEEN HIS WIFE AND SON. HE SUGGESTS HIS ADDICTION TO OPIOIDS WAS A FACTOR AS WELL. PROSECUTORS CLAIM MURDAUGH KILLED HIS WIFE AND SON TO GARNER SYMPATHY AND DISTRACT FROM HIS ALLEGED FINANCIAL CRIMES. THE DEFENSE CLAIMS THERE'S NO HARD EVIDENCE TYING HIM TO THE MURDERS ... AND THAT MURDAUGH WAS A DEDICATED FAMILY MAN.

02/24 - A Democratic lawmaker who called the late pastor of Emanuel AME Church a friend is continuing his push to make South Carolina the 49th state with a hate crime law. After an avowed white supremacist murdered nine members of the oldest African Methodist Episcopal church in the U.S. South in 2015, Rep. Wendell Gilliard revamped his ongoing pursuit of enhanced state penalties for hate crimes. The measure took its first steps this year when a House subcommittee unanimously advanced the bill Thursday. The proposal is named after Clementa C. Pinckney, the former state senator and pastor who died in the racist Charleston massacre. The bill would allow harsher punishments for perpetrators of violent crimes motivated by their perception of someone's race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability. Additional fines no more than \$10,000 and up to five years imprisonment could be imposed for anyone convicted. South Carolina and Wyoming are the only two states without a hate crime statute.

02/28 - The defense in the Alex Murdaugh double-murder trial rested its case after calling 14 witnesses over the course of a week. The last witness that jurors heard from was Murdaugh's brother, John Marvin Murdaugh. Murdaugh's brother testified about the night of the murders and going to Moselle the next morning. After the defense rested its case, the state said they had four or five witnesses to call in their reply case. Once the state has concluded its reply case, jurors will be taken to the Moselle property to see the crime scene. After the visit to Moselle, the jurors will begin to hear closing arguments.

03/01 - The Indian Land area could grow by nearly 100 homes. An application has been put in by Eastwood Homes to build a 99 lot subdivision on Old Pettus Place and Pettus Farm Road. The development would be over 60 acres. A site plan submitted to the county shows 8 additional roads and three different cul-de-sacs on the design for the property. Future development has also been mapped out if needed. Within this plan there is a small park and walking trail along with a wetland space. The County planning commission will see this project at a workshop on Thursday (tonight). Also on the agenda for the planning commission is a new car wash at Dobys Bridge and US 521.

03/02 - Jerry Richardson, the founder of the Carolina Panthers, died Wednesday night, the team announced. He was 86... Jerry Richardson's contributions to professional football in the Carolinas are historic," current Panthers co-owners David and Nicole Tepper said in a statement. "With the arrival of the Panthers in 1995, he changed the landscape of sports in the region and gave the NFL fans here a team to call their own. .. He was incredibly gracious to me when I purchased the team, and for that I am thankful. Nicole and I extend our deepest condolences to Rosalind, the entire Richardson family, and their loved ones. We wish them much peace and comfort." Carolina was awarded the NFL's 29th franchise in 1993. The team would debut in 1995.

03/06 - South Carolina is set to award 35-million dollars to hospitals that will expand access to crisis stabilization services. The grants will help the hospitals create specialized departments for emergency behavioral health services. The Department of Health and Human Services said the state has seen an increase over the past few years of people using emergency rooms to address behavioral health crises. Those include both substance and mental health issues.

03/09 - A former executive utility who gave rosy projections on the progress of two nuclear power plants in South Carolina while they were hopelessly behind will spend 15 months in prison for the doomed project that cost ratepayers billions of dollars. Ex-SCANA Corp. Executive Vice President Stephen Byrne apologized in court Wednesday, saying he thinks about how he let down customers, shareholders, employees, taxpayers and his family almost every day. Byrne is the second SCANA executive to head to prison for the nuclear debacle. Former CEO Kevin Marsh was sentenced to two years in prison in October 2021 and released earlier in March after serving about 17 months. Two executives at Westinghouse, which was contracted to build the reactors, are also charged. Carl Churchman, who was the company's top official at the Fairfield County construction site at V.C. Summer, pleaded guilty to perjury and is awaiting sentencing. Former Westinghouse senior vice president Jeff Benjamin faces 16 charges. His trial is scheduled for October.

03/09 - The South Carolina House is advancing hate crimes legislation. The bill would add penalties for those who commit a violent crime against a person based on race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability. The bill is named the Clementa C. Pinckney Hate Crimes Act after the pastor and senator who was one of nine people killed by a white supremacist at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston in 2015. South Carolina is currently one of just two states without some sort of hate crimes law on the books.

03/15 - Senator Lindsey Graham is pushing back against comments made by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis regarding sending aid to Ukraine. DeSantis called the Ukraine war a "territorial dispute" and not one of America's "vital national interests." Graham said if the U.S. capitulates to Russia, "more conflict is coming." Senator John Kennedy of Louisiana declared, "We need to stop Putin." Senator John Thune of South Dakota said he would argue that the majority of people in the U.S. "recognize how important it is that Ukraine repel Russia."

03/17 - York Preparatory Academy, a K-12 public charter school, is no longer planning to construct a second campus to serve the more than 1,100 students on its waiting list. Citing ongoing delays over a grading permit not being issued by York County resulting in construction cost increases and delayed opening, the York Prep Board last night voted not to build a second campus. According to sources, the York Prep school board could no longer absorb any more cost increases and decided to forgo their plans for a second campus. All other construction plan approvals and permits were in hand with only the grading permit needed. Gone is a 46 million dollar campus that was planned for the south side of Rock Hill in a proposed community called Kettlesong, 109 new jobs and seats for 1125 students. Currently York Prep has a waiting list of 1614 students.

03/21 - A woman has filed a federal lawsuit against the City of Lancaster and its police department, claiming she was racially profiled by a former officer prior to her August 2020 arrest. Attorneys for Anaysheon Coffey filed the suit on March 6 in U.S. District Court in Rock Hill. Former chief Scott Grant and former detective sergeant Peter Beck were also named as defendants. Coffey alleges that on Aug. 25, 2020, Beck knocked on her door and asked if her father's child was there. After a brief conversation, Beck asked if he could come inside the plaintiff's home, to which Coffey told him he couldn't because he didn't have a warrant, court documents state. Coffey claims Beck then "barged in and began to illegally search the apartment" before placing her under arrest. She was eventually released on bond, the lawsuit states. Coffey claims in the suit that she learned on April 3, 2022, through her own independent means, that the criminal charges against her had been dismissed on Jan. 24, 2022. She also alleges that the arrest led to the loss of her housing. Coffey is demanding a jury trial and seeking an unspecified amount of damages and attorneys' fees. A spokesperson for the Lancaster Police Department said they cannot comment on an active lawsuit. Beck was placed on leave in March 2021 before ultimately resigning a month later. The Lancaster City Council voted in May 2021 to fire Grant for what was said to be a loss of confidence.

03/22 - The legislative fallout over a \$3.5 billion accounting blunder by South Carolina's comptroller general took a new turn Tuesday as lawmakers moved to make his job a gubernatorial appointment instead of an elected position. A Senate subcommittee unanimously advanced a constitutional amendment allowing the governor to nominate the official for Senate approval. Currently, South Carolina is one of only nine states where voters elect the chief accountant, said sponsor and state Sen. Chip Campsen. Campsen filed the same legislation in previous years without results. But Comptroller General Richard Eckstrom's revelation last month that he had overstated the state's cash position by \$3.5 billion has provided likely impetus for its support. Campsen, a lawmaker from the Isle of Palms, said he believes the amendment will allow better oversight and prevent similar failures going forward. Tuesday's move is one of several recommendations suggested in last week's damning report by a Senate panel

investigating the error. It is also a change supported by Eckstrom, who has held the post for the past 20 years. But he has resisted senators' demands that he quit or be fired. A separate resolution introduced Thursday seeks a two-thirds vote from the House and Senate to trigger a constitutional provision requiring the governor to remove Eckstrom for "willful neglect of duty."

03/23 - Attorneys for two Lake City natives who were kidnapped in Mexico say they're looking for justice. Eric Williams and Latavia McGee survived the crime this month, but two others who traveled with them were killed. A statement released yesterday on behalf of Williams and McGee thanked everyone for support as the pair recovers from physical and psychological injuries. The group was reportedly caught in the middle of a drug cartel shootout.

03/26 - The Senate Ethics Committee is admonishing South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham for soliciting campaign contributions inside a federal building after a Nov. 2022 Fox News interview in which he asked viewers to donate to a GOP candidate. Graham violated Senate rules and standards of conduct because he was in a Senate office building when he did the interview, the leaders of the ethics panel said in a rare public letter released last Thursday. Senate Ethics Committee Chairman Chris Coons, D-Del., and Oklahoma Sen. James Lankford, the panel's Republican vice chairman wrote that Graham solicited campaign contributions for Georgia Senate candidate Herschel Walker's campaign committee "five separate times" during the Nov. 30, 2022 interview on Fox News. They noted that Graham reported himself to the committee after the interview was over. The ethics committee dismissed that complaint and notified Graham in a private letter, Coons and Lankford wrote. The panel did not publicly reveal that violation until now, having determined at the time that his conduct was "inadvertent, technical, or otherwise of a de minimis nature," the letter said.

03/28 - South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson along with 18 sheriffs and 10 solicitors called for judicial reform. Executive branch involvement in the selection process of judges is necessary, the group stated in a news release Monday. Judges in the Palmetto State are selected through the Judicial Merit Selection Commission and voted on by the legislature. Wilson and the bipartisan law enforcement coalition are advocating for reforming the JMSC and giving the executive branch meaningful representation in that process. The push for judicial reform will continue for years, Wilson said.

03/30 - About five dozen advocates for transgender youth rallied outside the South Carolina State House as Republican senators joined their conservative counterparts nationwide in advancing a ban on gender-affirming medical care for minors. A South Carolina bill to ban gender-transition surgeries, hormone therapy and puberty blockers for people under the age of 18 passed a Senate subcommittee on Wednesday. The vote along party lines aligns South Carolina with a broader effort in Republican-dominated legislatures across the country. At least 11 states have enacted laws restricting or banning gender-affirming care for minors: Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Utah, South Dakota and West Virginia.

03/31 - Lancaster remains one of the fastest-growing counties in the region, this according to the newest population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. Lancaster County grew 4% between July 1 of 2021 and 2022 to reach an estimated 104,577 residents. That's up 8.9% since the 2020

Census. Staying with the Tri-County, Chester had a decline as their population fell .5% by 166 people over the past year to just under 32,000 people. North of the border, no surprise that Mecklenburg had a surge as well. The county grew in the last year by 2.7% with an estimated population of 1.1 million people as of July of last year.