

WCLY-AM, Raleigh, NC (1550)
QUARTERLY LISTING OF COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS
3rd Quarter 2020

The following is a list of issues and concerns for the Third Quarter 2020 (July, August, September) and addressed in Public Affairs Programming, Public Service Announcements, and special programming on WCLY-AM.

- 1) EDUCATION/SCHOOLS
- 2) ECONOMY
- 3) ENVIRONMENT/NATURAL DISASTERS
- 4) VOTING/ELECTIONS
- 5) CRIME/ JUSTICE
- 6) PUBLIC HEALTH/COVID CONCERNS
- 7) HEALTHCARE DISPARITY/HEALTH INSURANCE
- 8) HUMAN RIGHTS/RACISM/EQUALITY
- 9) POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY

This report was placed in the Public Inspection file on October 9, 2020

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

During July, August, and September 2020, WCLY-AM broadcast 13 hours of Public Affairs Programming on Sundays from 7-8:00 AM.

NEWS & VIEWS WITH ROB SCHOFIELD is a 30-minute program, focusing on state policy issues that air Sundays at 6AM.

ON THE RECORD is a 29-and-a-half-minute program produced by WRAL-TV. It airs at 6:30AM Sundays.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rotate throughout the broadcast day (24-hours) at random times. Dates/times are noted by air staff when broadcast.

SPECIAL EVENTS

August 12: Band Together Against Racism

WCLY partnered with Band Together, a nonprofit organization that uses live music as a platform for social change, to stand up against racism. The virtual concert aired on 95.7 and featured performances from notable local bands.

3rd QUARTER ISSUES:

Comments are extrapolated from questionnaires completed by local community leaders, including government, civic, church and other organizations. Additionally, we monitor local news (TV, Radio & Newspaper, and well as internet) for comments/opinions of community leaders, in an effort to ascertain and prioritize community concerns.

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

With schools reopening in July and August, school systems followed models of in-person, virtual, and combinations of the two.

Quality of education and socialization were questioned for K-12 students. A group of Wake County parents staged a protest to get students back in school while other groups question teacher safety.

Several universities that welcomed students back to campus, soon found themselves returning to remote learning after clusters of COVID infections spread across campuses.

Remote learning highlighted the socioeconomic disparity in regard to resources available to students. Wake County School System distributed Chromebooks to students.

UNEMPLOYMENT

In August, the unemployment rate rebounded slightly from April and May heights (including 11% for Raleigh-Cary). The number of people reporting they had lost their jobs permanently, as opposed to being on temporary furlough, rose in September.

As of September, many North Carolinians are still waiting for unemployment benefits, even after losing their job closer to the beginning of the pandemic in May. Since April, the North Carolina Division of Employment Security has paid out more than \$7.7 billion in unemployment claims. However, almost \$1.7 million of that went to scammers.

Hopes of a second federal government stimulus check for families were dwindling in August. In early August, Congress could not agree on the next stimulus bill. The discussions included the expiring \$600/week unemployment benefit. As negotiations on the stimulus package crumbled, President Trump stepped in to sign an executive order to extend unemployment benefits offering \$300 per week. North Carolina offered an additional \$50 per week.

ECONOMY

Government data released in September showed that personal income fell in August and that consumer spending grew slower than expected. Economists are forecasting that growth will slow significantly in the final three months of this year to a rate of around 4 percent. The U.S. could move back into a recession if Congress fails to pass another stimulus measure or if there is a fall/winter resurgence of COVID-19.

Non-profit organizations continue to struggle as the coronavirus pandemic limits fundraising events. They rely on media outlets more than ever to relay their needs.

ENVIRONMENT/NATURAL DISASTERS

Atlantic Coast Pipeline: Dominion Energy and Duke Energy's plans to build the Atlantic Coast Pipeline between North Carolina and Virginia has been canceled. It would have crossed 8 counties in North Carolina alone. Environmental groups have long criticized and launched lawsuits against Dominion and Duke for their continued development of fossil fuel projects.

SAS committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 joining other local companies, including Duke Energy and Dominion Energy who committed to similar goals to avoid the worst impacts from climate change.

Hurricane season started with a record number of disturbances. Isaias was the largest event to hit North Carolina thus far. One challenge was to keep North Carolina citizens alert and prepared during a pandemic.

VOTING/ELECTIONS

Concerns over mail-in and absentee ballots dominated the news cycle. From issues with the postal service, public health concerns, misinformation from political leaders, to questions of voter suppression, most media outlets seek to provide accurate information to the public.

Polls are largely by people ages 70 and over – the population most at risk to be debilitated by COVID-19. Recruiting younger poll workers is essential.

CRIME/ JUSTICE

According to recent data from Durham Police, shooting incidents are up 40 percent from last year. Federal agencies are assisting local law enforcement with current investigations and violent gun crime prevention. ShotSpotter, a sensory device that tracks gunfire without neighbors having to call 911, an idea that has been under debate for more than a year

The new North Carolina Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice has adopted its first three recommendations in response to protesters' calls for police reform. Requiring law enforcement to intervene, take action when they see an officer using excessive force, prohibiting the use of neck holds by law enforcement, and requiring that judges assess the ability to pay before any fines or fees are levied in court.

Public protests emerged with the senate unanimously passing SB168. Part of this legislation prevents family members of people who die in the custody of law enforcement from getting access to their loved one's medical records. It also limits public disclosure of the cause of death. In July, Governor Roy Cooper vetoed the bill.

PUBLIC HEALTH/COVID CONCERNS

With COVID-19 killing over 200,000 Americans, people continue to seek accurate information on protection and testing. There is also continued debate on wearing masks.

Preventative care visits have declined during the COVID-19 pandemic causing concern among health experts. Some screenings and symptoms are critical for staying healthy. The medical community seeks to convey their ability to safely treat patients. Organizations seek to keep the public aware of warning signs of serious problems.

HEALTHCARE DISPARITY/HEALTH INSURANCE

Over 4 million more Americans turned to Medicaid last spring as the coronavirus pandemic toppled the nation's economy.

The demand for Medicaid expansion continues to grow without much movement. House Bill 1040 would expand Medicaid in North Carolina. Governor Roy Cooper's secretary for Health and Human Services, Dr. Mandy Cohen, believes that expansion is, "the one thing our state could do right now to really help North Carolina families and rural hospitals."

HUMAN RIGHTS/RACISM/EQUALITY

Systemic racism was a point of emphasis in protests across the country, including several in the Raleigh-Durham area. Law enforcement continued to face scrutiny due to the high-profile cases of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Manuel Ellis, and other people of color who died by the hands of police officers.

Both COVID-19 and racial unrest in the country also highlighted the importance of understanding those with cognitive, mental, and social disorders. Are police equipped to recognize social and mental disorders?

POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY

Food banks across the country struggled to meet the huge increase in demand triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

MILITARY

COVID-19 has had an impact on military recruiting, closing enlistment stations, and forcing thousands of recruiters to find potential soldiers online or even on their front steps. As enlistments slowed, worries grew that the armed services would have to rely more on current troops re-enlisting to meet total force requirements by the end of the fiscal year (September).

FAITH/RELIGION

Today's society requires that religious services be available by digital means. The global pandemic made this more remote services more relevant as social distancing guidelines prevent churches from holding traditional services.

3rd QUARTER PROGRAMS:

EDUCATION

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 7-12-20

Guest: Public School Forum of North Carolina president Mary Ann Wolf - North Carolina's public education system already faced a raft of enormous challenges prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. From the glaring racial and geographic inequities that plague our schools, to the overall decline in per pupil expenditures provided by the legislature in recent years, to renewed demands from our judicial system that the state live up to its constitutional obligation to provide every student with access to a sound basic education, it's clear that state leaders face some daunting tasks. Fortunately, the state is not without a number of strong advocates and researchers who are working hard to blaze a trail forward. One of those leaders is the new president and executive Director of the Public School Forum of North Carolina, Mary Ann Wolf. Wolf, who assumed the helm at the Forum just last month, comes to the job with a long and impressive record of accomplishment in education and she joined us earlier this week to share her take on some of the most important issues confronting the state.

Guests: Governor Roy Cooper, DHHS Sec. Mandy Cohen and Emergency Management Director Mike Sprayberry - State leaders discuss some of the hurdles officials are working through ahead of next week's announcement on the reopening of North Carolina's public schools.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 7-19-20

Guests: Governor Roy Cooper, Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy Cohen and State Board of Education chairman Eric Davis - Since March, parents have been wondering if their children would be going back to school this fall, and what exactly that would look like. They got some answers this week, with Governor Roy Cooper announcing that school districts will reopen next month with a mix of in-person instruction and remote learning for the state's 1.5 million public school students. Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy Cohen stressed that there are no perfect answers in this unprecedented situation, but the state has learned a lot since schools were closed in March. State Board of Education Chairman Eric Davis also put lawmakers on notice this week that a lot more money will be needed to keep students and educators safe under these new protocols.

Guest: State Representative Raymond Smith - For more than 25 years now, state leaders in North Carolina have struggled to comply with the state Supreme Court's landmark *Leandro* ruling that all students in the state have a constitutional right to a sound basic education. Earlier this year, prior to the full onset of the pandemic, the judge now overseeing the case and the Cooper administration took some important steps to, at last, put the state on the road to compliance with the ruling. Unfortunately, as COVID-19 took hold, the attention of state lawmakers was diverted from the issue. This week, we got a chance to chat with Rep. Raymond Smith who represents Wayne and Sampson Counties, who argues that now, more than ever, is the time for the state to move ahead with this vitally important work.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 7-26-20

Guest: American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten - When it comes to fierce and articulate advocates for public education, it's hard to find anyone in the United States who tops Randi Weingarten. For the past dozen years, Weingarten—a former classroom teacher -- has served as president of the 1.7 million-member American Federation of Teachers, where she's fought tenaciously for real education reform that strengthens traditional public schools. Earlier this week, we got the chance to talk with Weingarten from her office in Washington about the current crisis in public education brought on by the health pandemic, the Trump administration's desultory response and the options that remain for educating the nation's children in this moment of crisis.

Guest: New North Carolina Association of Educators president Tamika Walker-Kelly - New North Carolina Association of Educators president and Cumberland County elementary school teacher Tamika Walker-Kelly could probably be forgiven if she had second thoughts about taking on a position of statewide leadership in public education during a difficult time like the present. But, as we found out recently, Walker-Kelly has hit the ground running in her new job and is not looking back. In addition to offering an array of common-sense insights on the realities of reopening schools in the coming weeks, Walker-Kelly shared her strong belief that North Carolina must do much more (and soon) to live up to its constitutional mandate to provide every child in our state with an opportunity to obtain a sound basic education.

Guest: Duke University Law Professor Jane Wettach - Publicly-funded vouchers for students who attend private schools have always been a controversial topic and that's certainly the case here in North Carolina. While voucher defenders tout them as the ultimate tool for providing parents with freedom of choice, the state's lax regulatory structure often means that we know little about how taxpayer funds are being spent and what kind of outcomes they're generating. A few weeks back we got a chance to discuss this situation with Professor Jane Wettach of the Children's Law Clinic at Duke University Law School. Wettach, who also recently authored an essay for NC Policy Watch calling for better oversight of homeschooling, says North Carolina must do more to hold voucher schools accountable for producing quality outcomes if we're going to keep sending them hundreds of millions of public tax dollars.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 8-9-20

Guest: NC Policy Watch investigative reporter Joe Killian has the latest on how our universities are faring with COVID-19, what it means for students, and update on the continued political maneuverings within the leadership of the UNC system

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 8-16-20

Guest: UNC Chapel Hill faculty chairperson Professor Mimi Chapman - One of the most hotly debated controversies related to the COVID-19 pandemic in recent weeks has been the question of whether and how to reopen colleges and universities. Here in North Carolina, the UNC system's decision to plow ahead with at least a partial reopening has provoked grave concerns amongst staff, faculty, students and public health officials and the belief in some circles that the decision is being driven by the system's need for revenue more than anything else. Earlier this week we got a chance to discuss these concerns with the chairperson of the faculty at UNC Chapel Hill, Professor Mimi Chapman of the school of Social Work. Chapman, who has criticized university administrators in recent weeks for a lack of transparency in the decision-making process, struck a more conciliatory tone during our conversation and expressed at least a measure of optimism that the Chapel Hill campus can stay in business throughout the fall semester.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 9-27-20

Guest: North Carolina Association of Educators President Tamika Walker-Kelly - Well, fall is officially upon us, but unfortunately, so too is the COVID-19 pandemic. This past week saw the national death toll surpass 200,000 and despite some smatterings of good news here and there, the outlook remains sobering. Here in North Carolina, Gov. Roy Cooper continues to look for small ways to safely reopen long-shuttered parts of society (at least on a limited basis) from outdoor sporting events to gyms. Of course, one reopening discussion that remains subject to passionate debate is what to do about public schools. Recently, the governor gave a go-ahead to local districts to move toward more in-person instruction, but many people remain deeply concerned at this prospect. Earlier this week we got a chance to discuss some of those concerns and to learn more about how teachers are coping with the pandemic with the president of the North Carolina Association of educators, Tamika Walker-Kelly.

ECONOMY

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 7-19-20

Guest: Paul Meyer of the North Carolina League of Municipalities - We've all heard a great deal from national and state leaders in recent months about the toll the coronavirus pandemic is taking, but often we've heard less from leaders of local governments and sadly, the challenges there are often just as daunting if not more so. Earlier this week, we got a chance to chat about some of those challenges with the executive director of the North Carolina League of Municipalities, Paul Meyer. As Meyer explained, the pandemic (and, in particular, the huge drop in tax revenues it has brought about), is placing a huge strain on cities and towns that only the federal government can address. Other issues discussed: broadband, taxes, infrastructure.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 8-2-20

Guest: Bill Rowe, NC Justice Center General Counsel & Deputy Director - When federal and state officials enacted a number of emergency laws in response to the pandemic this past spring to, among other things, enhance unemployment insurance benefits and limit the ability of landlords to evict tenants, there was a hope and expectation that the pandemic (and the need for the laws) would have subsided by now as people got back to something resembling normal life. Unfortunately, that's not the case. Unlike many other countries in which the national government took strong steps to control the virus, the U.S. largely left the matter up to state and local governments and, as a result, the crisis remains acute. So, what should law and policy makers do now? Earlier this week, we got a chance to ask that question of one of North Carolina's most experienced anti-

poverty attorneys, Bill Rowe of the North Carolina Justice Center. And as Rowe explained, now is no time for our leaders to retreat from taking strong action to keep families (and the broader economy) afloat.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 8-9-20

Guest: North Carolina Budget and Tax Center - Economist Patrick McHugh talks about the recession that's gripped the economy and what federal and state leaders ought to be doing to limit the damage to you again next week.

Guest: Durham County state Representative Marcia Morey, who is worried that we're reopening things too fast and not doing enough to help those who've suffered economic harm. Other issues discussed: Criminal justice reform and voting rights.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 9-13-20

Guest: North Carolina state AFL-CIO communications director Jeremy Sprinkle - Despite the rose-tinted glasses that some politicians have been using to look back on the state of the economy prior to the onset of the pandemic, the hard truth is that millions of workers and their families have been struggling mightily for years thanks to a toxic combination of falling wages, lack of access to health insurance and poor workplace safety protections. Earlier this week we learned more about this situation in a phone conversation with one of our state's most knowledgeable and outspoken advocates for the workers of the state – North Carolina AFL-CIO communications director Jeremy Sprinkle. As Sprinkle observed, one of the great tragedies of this situation is that we know what to do – the problem lies with politicians who refuse to listen or, by all indications, care. Other issues discussed: healthcare, wages, and unemployment insurance.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 8-23-2020

Guest: State Senator Wiley Nickel - It's been more than three weeks now since the enhanced federal unemployment insurance benefit that was a part of the original coronavirus relief package ran out and thus far, Republicans in Washington have refused to agree to a meaningful renewal of the benefit – much less any kind of comprehensive relief package. The failure in Washington is hitting especially hard here in North Carolina, where the General Assembly long ago made our state unemployment benefits among the stingiest in the country. Earlier this week we got a chance to discuss this destructive failure – as well as some other aspects of the pandemic and the desperate need for state and federal action with state Senator Wiley Nickel of Wake County. Nickel, who's become a spokesperson for improving the unemployment safety net, told me he'll try again when the legislature returns to Raleigh next month. Other issues discussed: voting rights, COVID relief funds.

ENVIRONMENT

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 8-23-2020

Guest: NC Policy Watch Environmental Reporter Lisa Sorg - For anyone who's ever spent time tilling the earth, it's usually a given that compost is a natural and healthy product that can benefit one's farm or garden. As in so many other areas of modern life, however, our failure to properly regulate pollution is causing problems—even for compost. Recently, in an exclusive report, award-winning NC Policy Watch environmental reporter Lisa Sorg uncovered the fact that the compost from one major North Carolina producer had been tainted with a potentially destructive herbicide. Earlier this week, we caught up with Lisa to discuss the compost story as well as some other recent developments in the world of environmental policy, including the demise of two planned natural gas pipelines and the ongoing problem of so-called forever chemicals polluting the Cape Fear river basin.

VOTING/ELECTIONS

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 7-12-20

Guest: State Senator Natasha Marcus - The General Assembly finally appears to have wrapped up its 2020 short session and most analysts are giving it mixed reviews. While lawmakers did come together to pass important coronavirus relief legislation and a bill to address some of the challenges of conducting an election this fall during a pandemic, they remained deeply divided over matters related to reopening the state and left many of the needs of public schools unaddressed. Earlier this week, we got a chance to chat about several of these matters with one of the up and coming members of the General Assembly, Mecklenburg County state senator Natasha Marcus.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 8-2-20

Guest: North Carolina State Board of Elections Executive Director Karen Brinson Bell - It's hard to believe it, but the start of in-person early voting in the fall election starts in just a little over two months and absentee ballots start going out in just over 30 days. And with the COVID-19 pandemic showing no signs of easing, state election officials clearly have their work cut out

for them. Whether it's dealing with an expected massive increase in voting by mail, recruiting an adequate number of poll workers, keeping polling sites clean, safe, and accessible, or dozens of other issues, the work will go on nonstop until November. Recently, we got an update on how this vital work is going with the executive director of the North Carolina state Board of Elections, Karen Brinson Bell. In part one of our conversation, Brinson Bell discusses the preparations that are underway, the issue of cybersecurity, and the progress North Carolina has made in assuring that every vote is recorded on a paper ballot. In the second part of our extended conversation, we discussed the challenge of recruiting poll workers – what the Board is now calling “Democracy heroes” – some of the details of the plans to maintain social distancing at polling sites while keeping them disinfected and safe and how some steps that could make voting by mail a lot easier have been thwarted by the actions and inactions of the General Assembly.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 8-9-20

Guest: Durham County state Representative Marcia Morey, who is worried that we're reopening things too fast and not doing enough to help those who've suffered economic harm. Other issues discussed: Criminal justice reform and voting rights.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 9-13-20

Guest: Catawba College political scientist Prof. Michael Bitzer - With the distribution of absentee ballots proceeding at a record pace, the 2020 election is already well underway and, as has been the case for many years now, North Carolina is once more at the epicenter of the national presidential race. Earlier this week, we got the opportunity to discuss this enormously important situation with one of our state's top political scientists, Catawba College's Prof. Michael Bitzer. As Prof. Bitzer explained, not only is this one of the most important elections in state and national history, but it's also truly unique given the impacts of the coronavirus and changes that the pandemic has wrought on the way candidates campaign and voters cast their ballots.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 9-20-20

Guest: Voting rights attorney Hilary Harris Klein - The 2020 election is now underway in earnest, but that doesn't mean there aren't a lot of election issues that still need attention. Especially in light of the pandemic and its impact, this year's election promises to be more complicated than usual – with issues related absentee ballots and voting by mail topping the list. Earlier this week we got a chance to catch up with one of our state's top experts on such matters – voting rights attorney Hilary Harris Klein of the Southern Coalition for Social Justice. In addition to providing us with the low down on several top voting controversies, Harris Klein also offered some practical tips for North Carolinians looking to make sure their votes get counted.

CRIME/ JUSTICE

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PUBLIC HEALTH / COVID CONCERNS

PA BLOCK ON THE RECORD 7-11-20

Coronavirus and how it's impacted us all - We're joined by four experts in the field who have dealt with the coronavirus pandemic in one way or another. Cameron Wolfe is a professor in the Duke University School of Medicine and an expert in infectious diseases. John Sanders studies Infectious Diseases at Wake Forest Baptist Health. He's running a study now on the prevalence of COVID-19. Pia MacDonald is an infectious disease epidemiologist at RTI International. Chris Kippes is Wake County Public Health Division Director. He and his team are tracking this disease in real time in Wake County.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 8-23-2020

Guest: Dr. Anu Kumar of the Triangle-based global reproductive health nonprofit, IPAS - The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a deadly serious reminder of just how interconnected our planet has become, but the phenomenon obviously goes back much further. Nearly a half-century ago, for instance, an act of the United States government spurred by a North Carolina politician, helped assure that poor women across the globe would be denied access to essential reproductive health services. The Helms Amendment, named after the late Senator Jesse Helms, prohibits the use of U.S. foreign assistance funds to pay for “abortion as a method of family planning” and has, tragically, been over-interpreted to ban abortion counseling and referrals, post-abortion care and abortion in cases of rape, incest, and when a woman's life is in danger. Recently, in an effort

to learn more about this destructive law and other similar efforts, we got the chance to chat with Dr. Anu Kumar of the Triangle-based global reproductive health nonprofit, IPAS.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 9-20-2020

Guest: North Carolina Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mandy Cohen - North Carolinians got some good news this week in the ongoing battle against COVID-19. The state saw the percentage of positive cases dip to a level that Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy Cohen has been targeting for months. But Dr. Cohen cautions that progress is very fragile. Cohen discusses the need to continue to practice the 3 Ws, and to get a flu shot in the next 2-3 weeks. Cohen also discusses the president's promise of a COVID-19 vaccine by Election Day.

HEALTH INSURANCE/ HEALTHCARE DISPARITY

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 8-16-20

Guest: Michelle Hughes, Executive Director of NC Child - North Carolina had far from the best support system for children and their families prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the events of recent months have clearly made things much tougher on people of modest means. Topping the list: a lack of access to health insurance for hundreds of thousands of residents – a problem that the legislature's stubborn refusal to expand Medicaid has greatly exacerbated. Earlier this week, we got a chance to discuss the health insurance gap with the director of the research and advocacy organization NC Child, Michelle Hughes. Hughes told me about a new report her organization recently released that draws a direct line between the closure of numerous rural hospitals and the failure to expand Medicaid. We also discussed several other issues impacting vulnerable kids and their families – from the state's failure to fund enough school nurses to the lack of access to broadband internet in numerous regions of the state.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 9-27-20

Guest: Erica Palmer Smith of the Care 4 Carolina Coalition

In the aftermath of recent votes in Oklahoma and Missouri, the number of states who still refuse to close their health coverage gaps by expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act continues to dwindle. At this point, only a dozen states – most of them in the South – continue to resist expansion and the numerous benefits it would bring. Happily, there continue to be indications that the public's tolerance for this blockade is wearing thin. According to recent polling conducted by the group Care 4 Carolina, North Carolinians of all political stripes strongly support expansion – a reality that could impact this fall's election. Recently, we got a chance to discuss the details of this polling and what it uncovered with the coalition's director, Erica Palmer Smith.

Guest: North Carolina Justice Center health policy advocate Rebecca Cerese

As we heard in our last segment, the national tide in favor of Medicaid expansion continues to grow. Not only are the number of holdout states steadily dwindling, but public opinion continues to favor expansion by wide margins. Unfortunately, in the states that resist expansion, thousands of Americans remain condemned to premature deaths for want of access to basic health care – a crisis that's only been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. This coming Thursday evening, in response to this scandalous situation, thousands of people from across the South will gather for an online vigil to call out this unnecessary suffering and to demand change. Recently, I got a chance to learn more about this event and how people can participate and contribute in a conversation I had with North Carolina Justice Center health policy advocate, Rebecca Cerese. Issues discussed: healthcare costs and Southerners for Medicaid Expansion.

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HUMAN RIGHTS/RACISM/EQUALITY

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 7-5-20

Guest: Moises Serrano, immigrant rights advocate and DACA recipient - Independence Day weekend is upon us - an ideal time to reflect for a few minutes about what it means to be an American, the genius of a nation that’s unified by a commitment to an idea rather than merely a common race, religion, or ethnic heritage, and how we still have a lot of work to do to preserve our country’s status as a beacon of hope and prosperity. We begin with an interview with immigration rights advocate Moises Serrano. Moises came with his undocumented parents to the U.S. as an infant and has somehow managed to survive and thrive despite the challenges of growing up as both gay and a DACA program participant in rural North Carolina. Serrano shares his thoughts on the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling preserving the DACA program and what he hopes can happen next to improve U.S. immigration policy.

Guest: Oscar Romero, software engineer and DACA recipient - In Part Two of our Independence Day weekend look at the lives of young immigrants struggling to pursue the American dream despite our country’s broken and dysfunctional immigration policies, we talk with Charlotte-area resident Oscar Romero. Like our first guest Moises Serrano and hundreds of thousands of other young people, Romero was brought to the U.S. as a tiny child and knows no other home. Romero talks about the recent Supreme Court decision on DACA and how it may change his fortunes.

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 8-16-20

Guests: Governors, Kate Brown, Gretchen Whitmer, Roy Cooper, Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton and former U.S. Education Sec. John B. King - As state and national leaders continue to debate how to protect workers and best revive the economy, the Durham-based Hunt Institute held an important discussion on the critical role of high-quality childcare. The Institute, which honors the legacy of former North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt, invited Governor Roy Cooper as well as the governors of Oregon, Michigan, and the Lt. Governor of Illinois to discuss the value of early childhood learning. Issues discussed: Childcare, literacy, racism, broadband connectivity, restarting the economy, and federal funding from the CARES Act.

PA BLOCK: ON THE RECORD 8-22-20

After George Floyd protests, what can we do next? The death of George Floyd while in police custody in May spurred a movement across America. People took to the streets in protest, wanting their voices heard and wanting action to address racism and injustice. Now that the demonstrations have wound down, what can we do next?

POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY

PA BLOCK: NEWS & VIEWS FOR 9-20-20

Guest: UNC Chapel Hill journalism professor Paul Cuadros - If there’s an “in-the-know” North Carolinian when it comes to the state’s rapidly changing demographics, the realities that confront our fast-growing Latinx population and the implications that these changes herald for state politics, it’s veteran journalist and UNC Chapel Hill journalism professor Paul Cuadros. Earlier this week, we caught up with Cuadros and got a chance to ask him about these and other related issues and some of his observations provided cause for concern. In particular, Cuadros is deeply worried that we haven’t seen the worst impacts yet when it comes to evictions, homelessness and other impacts of the coronavirus recession. He also noted that while some people may assume otherwise, the Latinx community is anything but a monolithic voting bloc.