



Georgia Public Broadcasting

Quarterly Issues/Programs Report

3rd Quarter

July – September 2022

Radio

Top 5 Issues Addressed:

1. Politics
2. Health
3. Education
4. Economy
5. Gun Violence

Representative Programs That Addressed Issues:

1. Politics

Political Rewind

GPB

Weekdays, 9am and repeated at 2pm

Numerous major topics were addressed on *Political Rewind* during the quarter, starting with the heated races for statewide offices in Georgia. The Governor's race and the contest for U.S. Senate received the bulk of attention, but the economy, inflation, healthcare, abortion, gun violence and the numerous probes of former President Donald Trump also were regularly addressed on the program.

Political Rewind

GPB

July 27, 2022, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

On today's *Political Rewind*, host Bill Nigut and his panel looked at the latest polling from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. The most striking finding was that 78% of Georgians think the country is NOT on the right track and only 10% believe it is. The polling also showed a 5-point lead for incumbent Republican Gov. Brian Kemp over challenger Stacey Abrams and incumbent Democratic Sen. Rafael Warnock with a slight lead over Republican Herschel Walker in what looks to be a very tight race. Otherwise, Republicans hold the lead over their challengers in the races for other statewide offices. Also on the show, GPB reporter Riley Bunch explained the new lawsuit filed challenging the state's recently-cleared ban on abortion. Panelists on today's show included AJC political reporter Greg Bluestein, DeKalb County CEO Michael Thurmond, and former Ga. Attorney General Sam Olens.

Political Rewind

GPB

August 12, 2022, 9am and 2pm.

Today's *Political Rewind* focused on a number of political issues. First, was the looming deadline for Attorney General Merrick Garland to unseal the warrant which led to the seizure of documents from former President Trump's Mar-a-Lago home in Florida. Then, host Bill Nigut and his panel took a deep look at the history of voting rights in Georgia and how they affect voters of color. This includes SB 202, the 2021 election overhaul that changes requests for absentee ballots, early voting and drop boxes. Panelists today were Andra Gillespie, professor of political science at Emory University; Bartow County elections director Joseph Kirk; AJC elections reporter Mark Niese and Matt Brown, a Democracy Team reporter for the *Washington Post*.

Political Rewind

GPB

September 13, 2022, 9am and repeated at 2pm

On *Political Rewind* today, host Bill Nigut and his panelists looked at several important issues currently facing Georgia. The group discussed the recent subpoenas issues to forty aides to former President Trump regarding efforts to overturn the 2020 presidential election results. They also talked

about recent comments from Georgia House speaker David Ralston. In a speech in Savannah, Ralston said the current political climate is too heated, though he did not address issues like abortion, divisive education concepts or permit less gun carry. In addition, the group looked at efforts by Democratic gubernatorial nominee Stacey Abrams to attract more Black men in her campaign and discussed what looks to be a competitive race in Savannah's 1st Congressional District. Panelists included Donna Lowry, host of GPB-TV's *Lawmakers*; Margaret Coker, editor-in-chief of *The Current*; GPB political reporter Stephen Fowler; and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* senior reporter Tamar Hallerman.

2. [Health](#)

Political Rewind

GPB

July 19, 2022. 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today's *Political Rewind* focused on mental health, looking at the Mental Health Parity Act, which was a priority of House Speaker David Ralston during this year's legislative session. The bill, which received bi-partisan support, requires all health insurance plans to cover mental health conditions on par with physical ones. The legislation also authorizes loan forgiveness for people studying to become mental health professionals. Host Bill Nigut and his panel also looked at the new 988 crisis line which recently launched and discussed which communities in the state need the most help fighting the stigmas around mental health. Panelists today included Judy Fitzgerald, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health, and Developmental Disabilities; Monica Johnson, director of the Division of Behavioral Health; GPB News reporter Riley Bunch; and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* senior reporter Tamar Hallerman.

Political Rewind

GPB

August 16, 2022, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Health issues were the focus of today's edition of *Political Rewind*. Host Bill Nigut and his panel discussed a recent court ruling that determined Georgia's six-week abortion law will stay in effect while challenges to the law move through the court system. Challengers claim the abortion law violates "the fundamental rights to liberty and privacy" under the Georgia Constitution. Panelists also discussed new support around the idea of expanding Medicaid in Georgia. The state is one of only a dozen across the country still refusing the government's offer to extend coverage. Panelists today included Adam Van Brimmer, editorial page editor of the *Savannah Morning News*; Emma Hurt, a reporter for *Axios Atlanta*; Rafael Olavarria, fact checker for *Factchequeado*; and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* senior reporter Tamar Hallerman.

Political Rewind

GPB

September 2, 2022, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

On today's *Political Rewind*, host Bill Nigut and his panel looked at the recent bombshell announcement that Atlanta Medical Center was closing after 120 years. The move by Wellstar leaves Atlanta with only one Level I trauma center which will now be faced with picking up the slack. The news comes as many rural communities in Georgia are losing access to healthcare, while clinics and hospitals across the state are experiencing staffing shortages. Panelists included Eric Tanenblatt, Global Chair of the Dentons Law Firm; retired political columnist Jim Galloway; political consultant Leo Smith; and state Rep. Mary Margaret Oliver.

3. [Education](#)

Political Rewind

GPB

July 25, 2022, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today's *Political Rewind* took a deep dive into the student loan issue. While student loan payments were suspended since the start of the Covid pandemic, they are slated to resume on September 1st—and Georgians are sixty-eight billion dollars in debt. Guest Host Donna Lowry and her panel looked at the racial disparities of student debt, with Black college graduates owing an average of \$25,000 more in student loan debt than white graduates. The group also discussed the possibility of President Biden erasing at least some student loan debt, having campaigned on canceling at least \$10,000 of student debt per person. Panelists today included David Schaefer, research director for the Georgia Budget & Policy Institute; Eric Sturgis, education editor for *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*; Maria Lumpkin, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives & Chief Transformation Director of Stillman College; and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* columnist Patricia Murphy.

Political Rewind

GPB

July 22, 2022, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

On today's *Political Rewind*, guest host Donna Lowry and her panel looked at the state of education as another school year is about to start. This year, state legislators passed a ban on teaching “divisive concepts,” and the panel discussed what that might mean for classrooms this fall, particularly with high teacher burnout making it difficult for many school districts to find enough teachers. Gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams has proposed a \$50,000 minimum salary for state teachers, while incumbent Gov. Brian Kemp raised teacher salaries by \$5,000 over the past four years. The panel also discussed the repercussions of the Uvalde school shooting on school safety. Clayton County schools have moved to require clear backpacks for students, and many school districts have added more policing and resource officers. Panel members today included Giulia Heyward, national education reporter for Capital B; retired columnist Jim Galloway; Laura Corley, Civic Journalism Fellow for *The Macon Newsroom*; and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* education columnist Maureen Downey.

Political Rewind

GPB

September 1, 2022, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

In the wake of the recent resumption of school in Georgia, host Bill Nigut and his panel decided to take a look at how teachers are doing following passage of a bill banning the teaching of “divisive concepts” in Georgia schools. *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* education reporter Ty Tagami explained that the bill bans teachers from “advocating” divisive concepts, but he says that was never clearly defined in the legislation. And *Pro Publica*'s Nicole Carr noted that while the bill called for a “parents bill of rights,” parents have always had recourse in their children's schools. Meanwhile, the *New York Times* is reporting that students are falling behind in math and reading following the pandemic closing schools. In addition, the panel discussed how Georgia's upcoming elections could determine the direction of public education with the candidates for state School Superintendent divided on party lines concerning issues like divisive concepts and critical race theory. Joining Tagami and Carr on today's panel were Donna Lowry, host of GPB-TV's *Lawmakers*, and Kevin Riley, editor of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

4. [Economy](#)

Political Rewind

GPB

August 1, 2022 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today on *Political Rewind*, host Bill Nigut and his panel investigated the news that the nation's economy shrunk for a second consecutive quarter, which normally signals the start of a recession. Gov. Brian Kemp is trying to link the economic woes to his challenger, Stacey Abrams, and her support of President Joe Biden. Meanwhile, Sen. Raphael Warnock has taken a more critical approach to President Biden, pushing the President to fulfill his campaign promised to cancel student loan debt.

Meanwhile, Gov. Kemp announced a program to give teachers an extra \$125 each to buy school supplies. The money comes from federal COVID-19 relief money. Panelists today included former Congressman Buddy Darden; Adrienne Jones, professor of political science at Morehouse College; former State Rep. Edward Lindsey; and Karen Owen, professor of political science at University of West Georgia.

Political Rewind

GPB

August 23, 2022 9am and repeated at 2pm.

On today's *Political Rewind*, host Bill Nigut welcomed a panel of mayors from across Georgia to report on the issues they are facing regarding the economy and other issues of concern to their constituents. Mayor Julie Smith of Tifton, Mayor Deana Holiday Ingraham of East Point and Mayor Kelly Gifts of Athens joined *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* senior reporter Tamar Hallerman in today's discussion. Mayor Smith talked about using funds from the American Rescue plan in the wake of COVID and said he has been encouraging her citizens to get the COVID vaccine. Over half of her city's residents have gotten at least one dose. Mayor Girtz addressed the challenges law enforcement officials face when responding to mental health problems and said the state's new 988 emergency number should help alleviate the stress on the current system by connecting people to trained behavioral health professionals. And Mayor Ingraham says her constituents are most concerned with the repercussions of the Supreme Court striking down the Roe vs. Wade decision on abortion.

5. Gun Violence

Political Rewind

GPB

July 5, 2022, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

On today's edition of *Political Rewind*, host Bill Nigut and his panel discussed the Independence Day weekend shooting at a parade in Highland Park, Illinois, that killed six people ranging in age from 8 to 85. This comes after Congress recently passed a new gun control law. Georgia, meanwhile, made it easier for gun owners to open carry across the state. Taking part in the discussion were WRBL-TV reporter Chuck Williams; *Capital B Atlanta* reporter Kenya Hunter; GPB News political reporter Stephen Fowler and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* senior reporter Tamar Hallerman.

Political Rewind

GPB

July 28, 2022, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today on *Political Rewind*: a look at who should take responsibility for the increase in gun violence across the country. Marty Daniel, CEO of Daniel Defense, the Georgia company that produced the rifle used in the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, testified before Congress recently. Daniel cited an "erosion of personal responsibility" as the cause of mass shootings, not the business practices of gun manufacturers. Joining host Bill Nigut on today's panel were John Bailey, editor of the *Rome News-Tribune*; Kevin Riley, editor of *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*; GPB Reporter Riley Bunch; and Clark Atlanta University assistant professor of political science, Tammy Greer.

Political Rewind

GPB

August 2, 2022, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

On today's *Political Rewind*, host Bill Nigut and his panel discussed the cancellation of this year's Music Midtown Festival which had been held each year in Atlanta's Piedmont Park. The festival normally brings in thousands of visitors who spend multi-thousands of dollars at area businesses. While festival organizers did not give an official reason for the cancellation, numerous reports indicated it happened over concerns about a recent court ruling that limits the ability of organizers to

ban guns at public festivals. This has prompted people to speculate whether that ruling might lead to other larger events pulling out of the state. Discussing the situation were Amy Steigerwalt, political science professor at Georgia State University; Chauncey Alcorn, reporter at *Capital B Atlanta*; GOP consultant Leo Smith; and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* senior reporter Tamar Hallerman.