



Georgia Public Broadcasting
Quarterly Issues/Programs Report

October – December 2021
4th Quarter

Radio

Top 5 Issues Addressed:

1. Politics
2. Health
3. Education
4. Economy
5. Racism

Representative Programs That Addressed Issues:

1. Politics

Political Rewind

GPB

Weekdays, 9am and repeated at 2pm

As the Biden administration struggled to deal with the renewed surge from the Omicron variant of COVID-19 along with other issues, Political Rewind continued to address how political issues affect residents of Georgia. Not only did the program address attempts to limit voting in future elections and the scrambling already underway for the 2022 campaigns, but it also addressed other topics, particularly attempts to increase the number of COVID-19 vaccinations, gun violence, the Atlanta Mayor's race, and racial animosities.

Political Rewind

GPB

October 4, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today's *Political Rewind* focused on the first day of a new session for the United States Supreme Court as justices began to hear a raft of significant cases that hold consequences for Georgia law.

A New York gun rights case could decide Georgians' right to carry concealed weapons without a permit, while another case concerning religious liberty could allow state funds to be sent to religious schools. Meanwhile, the justices will consider a Mississippi case that could determine the fate of Georgia's restrictive abortion law.

"A year ago, I had said that I did not think that the Roe v. Wade would be overturned," state Rep. Mary Margaret Oliver said. "It would be weakened, but not overturned. Today, I can't say that with any confidence. I think the Supreme Court could be marching towards overturning Roe v. Wade."

Meanwhile, polling shows affordable housing is a top priority for voters as they prepare to cast their ballots in the Atlanta mayor's race. But, while most of the candidates signal support for plans to address the issue, experts say it may be a difficult problem to fix.

Plus, infighting among Democrats in Washington, D.C., continues to threaten President Joe Biden's economic agenda and could shape the issues headlining in next year's elections.

Rep. Oliver was joined by fellow panelists Edward Lindsey, a former GOP state legislator, Rene Alegria, CEO of *Mundo Hispanico Digital*, former political columnist Jim Galloway and host Bill Nigut.

Political Rewind

GPB

November 9, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today on *Political Rewind*: We remembered the life and political career of Georgian and former Sen. Max Cleland. Cleland served in the army during the Vietnam War, before entering into the state General Assembly and then serving as the head of the Veterans Administration under President Jimmy Carter. Cleland would go on to serve as Georgia's secretary of state and then as a U.S. senator for two terms until 2003. The 79-year-old died last night from heart failure, according to reports.

As a reporter, host Bill Nigut covered Cleland closely and said the representative had a remarkable zest for life.

"He wore a Mickey Mouse watch everywhere he went, and he told people that he wore it because he wanted to remind everyone that he shouldn't take life too seriously," Nigut said. "So, he was a remarkable public servant."

Meanwhile in redistricting news, Republican legislative leaders are facing pushback from some GOP voters who say they're being denied the right to elect candidates of their own choice as proposed redistricting maps surface. Some conservative voters south of Atlanta worry that a proposed change could endanger Republican state Rep. Phillip Singleton. His current Coweta district is poised to extend into South Fulton, a Democratic stronghold, in the new maps.

University of Georgia political science professor Dr. Charles Bullock has extensively studied redistricting and authored a book on the process. He believes that Republicans drawing the new lines are playing a long game.

"I think what's driving the Republicans here is when you draw this map, you're not just drawing for 2022 or 2024," Bullock said. "You really are drawing a map you hope is going to work for your party for 10 years. And so, you're anticipating what kind of changes may take place. That's hard to do."

Meanwhile, new reporting from *The New York Times* shows Fulton County district attorney Fani Willis is preparing to pursue a special grand jury to determine if former President Donald Trump should face criminal charges for working to convince Georgia GOP officials to overturn the results of the presidential race.

Nigut and Dr. Bullock were joined by fellow panelists Tamar Hallerman, senior reporter for *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Mariela Romero, Community empowerment director of *Univision*, and Dr. Jennifer McCoy, a Political Science professor at Georgia State University.

Political Rewind

GPB

December 13, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm

Today's Political Rewind focused on three political stories:

- 1) How former Sen. David Perdue's new gubernatorial campaign is focused on false claims regarding the 2020 election and how the race for Governor could affect other races down the ballot.
- 2) The role upcoming elections will have on the upcoming session of the Georgia General Assembly.

- 3) And what to do about an infamous restaurant made famous as an “ode to the old South” in Smyrna. Aunt Fanny’s Cabin has been closed since the early 1990’s. Some want to preserve the building as an historic site. The Smyrna City Council will soon decide the building’s fate.

Host Bill Nigut was joined today by panelists Dr. Andra Gillespie, Professor of political science and director, James Weldon Johnson Institute for the Study of Race and Difference, Emory University; Margaret Coker, Editor in chief, *The Current*; and Jim Galloway, former political columnist, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

2. Health

Political Rewind

GPB

October 1, 2021. 9am and repeated at 2pm.

On today’s *Political Rewind*: Georgia will follow CDC guidelines on who can receive the COVID-19 booster shot. Gov. Brian Kemp and state health director Kathleen Toomey announced health department vaccination sites have begun giving booster shots to eligible residents this week. The news comes even as Georgia remains in the lowest tier of states with fully vaccinated people.

In news from the U.S. Capitol, a last-minute vote in Washington, D.C., averted a federal government shutdown last night. Georgia’s congressional delegation voted along partisan lines on the resolution to authorize continued federal funding. Why did Georgia Republicans line up against the measure?

Those stories and more were discussed by host Bill Nigut and panelists Stephen Fowler, Politics reporter for GPB News; Patricia Murphy, Politics reporter and columnist for *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*; and Leroy Chapman, Managing Editor of *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

Political Rewind

GPB

November 29, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

On today’s *Political Rewind*: Our panel discussed the latest incarnation of COVID-19. Scientists say there is much to learn about the dangers of the new Omicron variant of the coronavirus. They urge a redoubled effort to vaccinate in states like Georgia, where hesitance at getting the shots continues.

Also discussed, residents in Brunswick and Glynn County go about their lives in the aftermath of the Ahmaud Arbery murder trial. According to local organizers, there is a heightened awareness of solving social justice problems along coastal Georgia.

Plus, U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene is unhappy with her new congressional district lines. So are a good many of her new constituents. Meanwhile, the Board of Regents refuses to rename buildings with ties to slavery and segregation on campuses across the state.

Joining host Bill Nigut today were Dr. Heather Farley, chair of the Department of Criminal Justice at the College of Coastal Georgia; Jim Galloway, former politics columnist for *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*; Raisa Habersham, an investigative reporter for *Savannah Morning News*; and Dr. Audrey Haynes, Political Science professor at the University of Georgia.

Political Rewind

GPB

December 15, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today on *Political Rewind*, host Bill Nigut was joined by Greg Bluestein, politics reporter for *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

Among the topics discussed:

Governor Brian Kemp's proposal for a limited expansion of Medicaid. The plan adds a work requirement to access Medicaid. The Trump administration approved the plan in late 2020 but the Biden Administration has put those plans on hold. With more than 500,000 Georgians uninsured under the state's current Medicaid rules, Gov. Kemp was not invited to meet with the Biden administration's top Medicaid official, Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, when she visited Atlanta earlier this week.

A man with Georgia ties was sentenced to more than two years for threats against House Speaker Nancy Pelosi following the Jan. 6th Capitol insurrection. 53-year-old Cleveland Grover Meredith, Jr., graduated from the University of the South in 1990 and owned and operated a car wash in Cobb County.

The strategy of former U.S. Sen. David Perdue in his attempt to defeat incumbent Gov. Brian Kemp in the Republican primary. An incumbent governor has not lost a primary in Georgia in almost 100 years.

And Atlanta Mayor-elect Andre Dickens continues to work to halt the Buckhead cityhood movement, which would remove a major chunk of tax revenue from the city of Atlanta if approved. Dickens has met several times with Ga. House Speaker David Ralston about the issue. Bluestein discussed the likelihood that the proposal would reach the floor of the House in the upcoming General Assembly session.

3. Education

Political Rewind

GPB

October 15, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today's program looked at the recent decision by the Georgia Board of Regents to make sweeping changes to the rules governing how tenured faculty at state universities are evaluated, drawing alarm from many members of faculty. Some believe the rules will have a chilling effect on what professors teach in their classrooms.

Plus, the trial for three men accused of murdering Ahmaud Arbery begins Monday. The country will watch as lawyers on both sides grapple with the role race played in the young man's killing.

Host Bill Nigut was joined by Leroy Chapman, Managing Editor for *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*; Dr. Andra Gillespie, Professor of Political Science at Emory University; Patricia Murphy, columnist and lead political writer for *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*; and Dr. Karen Owen, Professor of Political Science at the University of West Georgia.

Political Rewind

GPB

November 24, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today, host Bill Nigut and his panel discussed how Education has re-emerged as a top issue in state and national politics.

In Georgia, Democrats said they feel blindsided by a proposal that would — among other things — reshape school boards across the state.

Banning so-called "critical race theory" has also become a primary issue for some Republican lawmakers. However, Georgia Budget and Policy Institute senior analyst Dr. Stephen Owens pointed out that it is not taught in Georgia schools.

"When I talked to teacher and leader groups, they're very concerned about the lack of substitute teachers, school bus drivers," he said. "And those are things that can be addressed with state action, versus trying to ban CRT, (which) is like trying to ban Siberian tigers in public schools. It's just — it's not a concern that leaders may actually deal with."

Republican state Sen. Clint Dixon said he is interested in legislation to make school board elections nonpartisan. Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan named Dixon to a study committee to look at the issue.

Plus, a fight over "banning books" in classrooms is brewing among lawmakers.

A trio of Republican state lawmakers said they plan on introducing legislation in the 2022 session banning "obscene materials." But what exactly falls under the definition of obscene?

Host Bill Nigut was joined by Nicole Carr, a reporter for *ProPublica*; Dr. Stephen Owens, Senior policy analyst with the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute; Sen. Sonya Halpern, a Democratic state senator; Rep. Dave Belton, a Republican state Representative; and Greg Bluestein, politics reporter for *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

4. [Economy](#)

Political Rewind

GPB

October 21, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Thursday on *Political Rewind*: The gap between the rich and poorer Americans continues to grow. We asked our panel crucial questions about the future of urban life.

Will living in cities like Atlanta soon be out of reach for lower income families and individuals? As the Atlanta mayoral race unfolds, crime is by far the issue that voters said matters most to them. But assuring that Atlanta creates opportunities for affordable housing was second on the voters' minds.

We spoke with a panel of experts who are attempting to balance development with affordability in the city. Joining host Bill Nigut were Bill Bolling, founder of the Atlanta Housing Forum and former executive director of Atlanta Community Food Bank; Sarah Kirsch, Executive Director of the Urban Land Institute, Atlanta; Ashani O'Mard, Executive Director, Atlanta Affordable Housing Fund; and Kevin Riley, Editor of *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

Political Rewind

GPB

December 20, 2021 9am and repeated at 2pm.

On today's *Political Rewind*, guest host Donna Lowry took a deep dive into the state of the Georgia film industry and its role in the state's economy. Georgia recently was listed as tied for third in the number of movie and TV productions, behind only Los Angeles and New York. Georgia's growth in the industry was fueled by the generous film tax credit approved by the General Assembly in 2008.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused the state to essentially halt productions in the Spring of 2020. However, production was able to return by Summer of that year. Revenues dropped from \$2.9 billion to \$2.2 billion that year, but hopes are that explosive growth will return once the virus threat is over. Lowry was joined by **Jeffrey Stepakoff**, Executive director, The Georgia Film Academy; **Ronda Penrice**, a free-lance journalist and writer; and **Shaunya Chavis-Rucker**, Divisional head, Fulton Films Office.

5. Racism

Political Rewind

GPB

October 18, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today on *Political Rewind*: The trial for the men charged with the murder of Ahmaud Arbery begins in Brunswick, Ga., this week.

The murder of 25-year-old Arbery by three white men led to changes in Georgia law, the indictment of a long-serving district attorney and an effort to clean up and diversify the Glynn County Police Department. We looked at what to expect as the trial gets underway and how the case reverberated across the legal and political landscape in Georgia.

The Georgia Recorder's Stanley Dunlap said the trial will have consequences for how members of Georgia's Black communities view their relationship with the criminal justice system.

"Things may continue to play out how many people feel, and particularly in the Black community, that justice isn't there for them and the police aren't there to protect them," Dunlap said. "That's one of particular concern, depending on the outcome of the trial."

Host Bill Nigut was joined by **Margaret Coker**, Editor-in-chief, *The Current*, **Stanley Dunlap**, Reporter for *Georgia Recorder*; **Adam Van Brimmer**, Editorial page editor, *The Savannah Morning News*; and **Jim Galloway**, Former political columnist, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

Political Rewind

GPB

November 12, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today on *Political Rewind*: In a trial already infused with questions about racism, a defense lawyer added fuel to the fire yesterday with comments about the presence of Black religious leaders in the courtroom.

Meanwhile, Sen. Raphael Warnock says Democrats have to do a better job telling voters how their big-ticket legislative agenda will improve daily lives.

Plus: a look at candidates already on the Georgia ballot in 2022. Will Stacey Abrams decide against running for governor? Will former Sen. David Perdue challenge Gov. Brian Kemp?

Joining host Bill Nigut were panelists **Patricia Murphy**, Political reporter and columnist, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*; **Dr. Tammy Greer**, Political science professor, Clark Atlanta University; **Dr. Audrey Haynes**, Political science professor, University of Georgia; and Dr. **Amy Steigerwalt**, Political science professor, Georgia State University.

Political Rewind

GPB

November 26, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

A verdict in a racially-charged trial from a small town in Georgia gripped the nation. Travis McMichael, Gregory McMichael and William "Roddie" Bryan were found guilty of murder charges this week. The verdict was discussed today on a special edition of *Political Rewind*.

In February 2020, the three men chased Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year-old Black man, in pickup trucks as he jogged in a Coastal Georgia neighborhood. Travis McMichael shot and killed Arbery during the chase. Bryan filmed the killing on his cellphone.

Travis, the shooter, was found guilty on all nine counts. His father, Greg McMichael, was convicted on eight of the nine. Bryan was convicted on six counts.

However, questions linger. This trial may never have happened, were it not for the shocking video that exposed the shooting and the failure of law enforcement to initially hold anyone accountable. Outside the courtroom following the verdict, the Rev. Al Sharpton told a crowd much work was left to be done. So, what should we make of the outcome of the trial?

Emory University professor Dr. Andra Gillespie said more consideration is needed of subtle examples of racism in society.

"My concern in the grand scheme of things is when can we develop a consensus that racism manifests itself in ways that is not as obvious as a bunch of guys hunting a Black man as he's walking down the street," she said. "That's when I know that our society has made progress, and that's the thing that I'm still hopeful we can get there."

Gillespie was joined by host Bill Nigut and fellow panelists **Margaret Coker**, Editor-in-chief, *The Current*, and **Patricia Murphy**, Politics columnist, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.