

WRMR-FM, Wilmington, NC (98.7)  
QUARTERLY LISTING OF COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES  
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS  
**3rd QUARTER 2022**

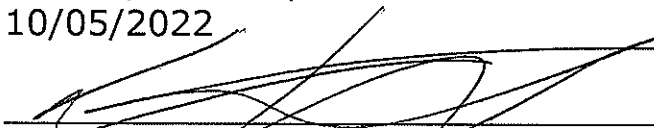
The following is a list of issues and concerns for 3rd Quarter 2022, and addresses in Public Affairs Programming, Public Service Announcements, Community Involvement, and special programming on WRMR-FM.

1. TAXES
2. JUSTICE SYSTEM
3. PUBLIC SCHOOLS
4. INFECTIOUS DISEASE
5. ROE V. WADE
6. DEATH PENALTY
7. CONSERVATION
8. HEALTH
9. AFL-CIO
10. DRUGS

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## **PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS**

During July, August and September, WRMR-FM broadcast 13 hours of Public Affairs Programming on Sundays from 6:00AM-7:00AM.

**NEWS & VIEWS WITH CHRIS FITZSIMON** is a 30-minute program, focusing on state policy issues that air Sundays at 6:00AM.

**NC NEWSMAKERS** is a 30-minute program focusing on State and Local north Carolinians making the news

## **2022 3rd QUARTER ISSUES**

### **1. TAXES**

The state of North Carolina's new fiscal year got underway July 1, but as usual, North Carolina lawmakers were late again in producing a new state budget adjustments bill to accompany the calendar change.

### **2. JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Every year thousands of innocent Americans are arrested and accused of crimes and later released or found to be not guilty.

### **3. PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The policy issues surrounding teacher pay are a perennial subject of debate in North Carolina, but of late, things have taken on a new and different tenor as some conservative officials have attempted to introduce a new way of calculating pay rates that deemphasizes teacher experience and elevates things like test scores and student surveys.

### **4. INFECTIOUS DISEASE**

Despite the vitally important service provided by vaccines, the COVID-19 virus continues to mutate and spread here and around the globe.

### **5. ROE V. WADE**

It's now been over a month since the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the Roe v. Wade decision and ended the half-century-old fundamental right enjoyed by pregnant Americans to control their own reproduction.

### **6. DEATH PENALTY**

This coming week marks the 16-year anniversary of the date on which North Carolina carried out its last execution of a person on the state's Death Row.

### **7. CONSERVATION**

As Americans suffer through yet another summer of record-breaking extreme weather and confront daily the many frightening impacts of the global climate emergency, recent action in Washington offers some rays of hope.

## **8. HEALTH**

A report released recently by the children's advocacy group NC Child paints a sobering picture of the way North Carolina is responding to a mental health crisis that's been afflicting the state's children.

## **9. AFL-CIO**

As our nation celebrates the annual Labor Day holiday, you don't have to be an economist or a policy wonk to discern that significant change is afoot in the relationship between American workers and employers.

## **10. DRUGS**

As we learned in the previous segment, the opioid crisis that's plaguing our state and nation is killing thousands of North Carolinians per year and this disturbing fact has prompted a number of responses from elected leaders – some helpful and some of questionable value.

## **PROGRAMMING:**

### **1. TAXES**

#### **News & Views for 7-10-22**

Guest: North Carolina Budget and Tax Center executive director Alexandra Sirota

The state of North Carolina's new fiscal year got underway July 1, but as usual, North Carolina lawmakers were late again in producing a new state budget adjustments bill to accompany the calendar change. And while Republican legislative leaders did, at almost the last minute, pass a bill and send it on to Gov. Cooper – one they crafted largely behind closed doors – the proposal looked sadly familiar.

As we learned earlier this week in a conversation with Alexandra Sirota, the executive director of the nonpartisan and nonprofit North Carolina Budget and Tax Center, despite the presence of billions in financial reserves, the budget bill leaves a host of core public structures and services underfunded and once again doubles down on the GOP strategy of enshrining regressive tax policies that shift the responsibility for funding government away from the wealthy and onto people of low and middle income.

## **2. JUSTICE SYSTEM**

### **News & Views for 7-17-22**

Guests: Quisha Mallette on the NC Justice Center and Lauren Robbins of the ACLU-NC

Every year thousands of innocent Americans are arrested and accused of crimes and later released or found to be not guilty. Unfortunately, for many of these people the trauma of such an experience doesn't always end there. In many places, including North Carolina, predatory businesses obtain the mugshots that law enforcement officers take during the initial booking process, publish the photos online or in giveaway magazines, and then demand payment from the exposed individuals to take them down.

And while it's true that such photos are public records, advocates like attorney Quisha Mallette of the North Carolina Justice Center and litigation paralegal Lauren Robbins of the ACLU of North Carolina say it ought not to be legal for profiteers to, effectively, extort money from people – especially those who are innocent – to take them down.

## **3. PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **News & Views for 7-24-22**

Guest: Charlotte-Mecklenburg public school teacher and education policy analyst Justin Parmenter

The policy issues surrounding teacher pay are a perennial subject of debate in North Carolina, but of late, things have taken on a new and different tenor as some conservative officials have attempted to introduce a new way of calculating pay rates that deemphasizes teacher experience and elevates things like test scores and student surveys.

Recently, in an effort to get a better handle on this potentially momentous change, we caught up with an education policy analyst who's done yeoman's work in uncovering and publicizing details of this controversial initiative, veteran Charlotte Mecklenburg public school teacher Justin Parmenter. And as Parmenter, who posts regular updates at the website Notes from the Chalkboard, told us, the new scheme (and the less than

transparent way proponents have been attempting to sell it) raise a host of serious questions.

Issues discussed: teacher recruitment and retention, teacher satisfaction, teacher pay, state Superintendent Catherine Truitt, former Governor Jim Hunt.

#### **4. INFECTIOUS DISEASE**

##### **News & Views for 7-24-22**

Guest: UNC infectious disease expert Dr. David Wohl

Well despite the vitally important service provided by vaccines, the COVID-19 virus continues to mutate and spread here and around the globe. And despite the recent emergence of the extremely contagious BA5 variant of the virus, it seems that a majority of Americans have – for now, simply decided to move on with their lives as if the precautions that marked the early months of the virus are no longer relevant or necessary.

Unfortunately, while this attitude may be understandable, throwing caution to the wind is not the path we should be following according to Dr. David Wohl – an infectious disease expert and practicing physician at UNC Chapel Hill. Recently we sat down with Dr. Wohl to discuss where things stand two and half years into the pandemic and while he acknowledged that there are many gray areas and things about which we continue to learn, the efficacy and benefits of vaccines and proven public health practices remain clear and as important as ever.

In Part Two of our conversation, we delved deeper into the benefits, risks and future of COVID vaccines and what parents ought to know as they contemplate vaccinating their children. We also discussed the emergence of the so-called monkeypox virus, how it's spread, and what North Carolinians ought to know about this new public health threat.

## **5. ROE V. WADE**

### **News & Views for 8-7-22**

Guest: North Carolina Congresswoman Kathy Manning

It's now been over a month since the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the Roe v. Wade decision and ended the half-century-old fundamental right enjoyed by pregnant Americans to control their own reproduction. And as we've come to learn from legal experts in the days that have followed, the Court's right-wing majority may well target other constitutional protections – including the right to use contraception and the right of same-sex couple to marry.

Fortunately, some members of Congress are working to forestall such a disastrous result by advancing federal legislation to protect these basic rights, and recently we caught up with one of the leaders in this important effort, North Carolina congresswoman Kathy Manning. And as Manning told me, while she's proud of having shepherded a bill through the House to guarantee access to contraception, there's still a long way to go to make such rights a part of federal law. Also discussed: the January 6th Committee and findings related to the insurrection.

## **6. DEATH PENALTY**

### **News and Views for 8-14-2022**

Guest: Tom Jensen of Raleigh-based Public Policy Polling

Well, amazingly enough, early voting in the fall midterm elections in North Carolina starts in just over two months and all across the state and nation, candidates, journalists, political observers and average citizens are attempting to divine what's going to happen.

If past experience is any indication, 2022 should be a big year for Republicans given that they're the party out of power in Washington, but as veteran pollster Tom Jensen of Raleigh-based Public Policy Polling told us earlier this week, some other important factors could give a big boost to Democrats – perhaps most notably, the new energy that the Supreme Court's reversal of Roe v. Wade has provided to millions of people of both parties who want to protect reproductive rights.

## **7. CONSERVATION**

### **News and Views for 8-21-2022**

Guest: Will Scott of the North Carolina Conservation

As Americans suffer through yet another summer of record-breaking extreme weather and confront daily the many frightening impacts of the global climate emergency, recent action in Washington offers some rays of hope.

Under the climate provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act that President Biden signed into law last week, the U.S. will make some vitally important headway in lowering carbon emissions through an array of new investments in clean and sustainable energy, electric vehicles and environmental justice.

And recently we got a chance to learn more about these important and promising new laws and investments in a conversation North Carolina Conservation Network Energy Policy Manager Will Scott. Issues discussed: climate change, energy conservation, the Inflation Reduction Act.

## **8. HEALTH**

### **News and Views for 8-21-2022**

Guest: Kaylan Szafranski, NC Child Health Program Director

A report released recently by the children's advocacy group NC Child paints a sobering picture of the way North Carolina is responding to a mental health crisis that's been afflicting the state's children.

The new Kids Count data book by the Annie E. Casey Foundation finds that while the state and nation have made some headway in reducing child poverty, there have been big and disturbing jumps in the number of kids experiencing anxiety and depression (and even attempting suicide) in recent years.

And earlier this week we sat down with NC Child's Health Program Director Kaylan Szafranski to learn more about the crisis and some steps state lawmakers should be taking to address it. Issues discussed: Mental health, Medicaid expansion, wrap-around services for school children.



## **9. AFL-CIO**

### **News and Views for 9-04-2022**

Guest: North Carolina AFL-CIO communications Director Jeremy Sprinkle

As our nation celebrates the annual Labor Day holiday, you don't have to be an economist or a policy wonk to discern that significant change is afoot in the relationship between American workers and employers. Thanks to a combination of factors – the pandemic, changing demographics, the fast-evolving nature of work, and widespread frustration with wealth and income inequality -- workers are standing up to demand better pay and working conditions.

And, in many places, those efforts are leading to a resurgence in public support for (and a willingness to join) labor unions.

Indeed, as some recent successful organizing efforts attest, this phenomenon is even taking hold in a so-called "right to work" state like North Carolina. And earlier this week, we got a chance to learn a little bit more about this shift – where it's taking hold, why it's happening, and what's next – in a conversation with the communications director and operations manager for the North Carolina state AFL-CIO, Jeremy Sprinkle.

## **10. DRUGS**

### **News and Views for 09-11-2022**

Guest: North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein

As we learned in the previous segment, the opioid crisis that's plaguing our state and nation is killing thousands of North Carolinians per year and this disturbing fact has prompted a number of responses from elected leaders – some helpful and some of questionable value.

Thankfully, one state official whose office has been making a real difference in bringing some of the instigators of this crisis to justice and directing funding to where it can help save lives is Attorney General Josh Stein. Thanks in large part to the work of attorneys in Stein's office, billions of dollars in ill-gotten profits raked in by the pharmaceutical industry are now flowing back to states and local governments to help fund programs designed to attack the crisis.

And recently the Attorney General was kind enough to join us for a special extended conversation in which he detailed these efforts, several other consumer protection initiatives in which his office has recovered large sums from corporate bad actors, and why he has made protecting reproductive rights of North Carolina women a top priority.

In Part Two of our conversation, we delved into several other topics, including a number of consumer protection lawsuits brought by Stein's office to target companies harming and ripping off North Carolina consumers, his efforts to help people working in public service jobs access federal student loan forgiveness, and his thoughts on the gun violence crisis that's been wreaking such deadly havoc across our state.

## **OTHER GUEST**

**Guest:** Policy Watch investigative reporter Joe Killian  
Most North Carolinians are aware of the ongoing and deadly statewide opioid epidemic, but there's an aspect of the crisis about which many remain dangerously uninformed: it's called fentanyl. As NC Policy Watch reporter Joe Killian detailed in a recent report, fentanyl – a powerful synthetic opioid that's found its way onto the street – is the main driving factor behind the crisis in recent years.

Because fentanyl is so cheap, easy to manufacture and manipulate, and up to 50 times more potent than heroin, it's often used as a filler with other drugs – like heroin, cocaine and meth. And this hard fact can easily lead to quick and tragic results – even for people who are just casual users. Fentanyl killed more than 3,000 North Carolinians last year and the number will soar even higher this year.

And recently we sat down with Joe to discuss his reporting on the toll fentanyl is taking, as well as some of the approaches – some helpful, some questionable – that are being advanced to help address the crisis.

**Guests:** Former Charlotte Mayor Jennifer Roberts and former state Supreme Court Justice Bob Orr, co-directors of the North Carolina Network for Fair, Safe and Secure Elections

One of the most destructive and worrisome phenomena to afflict American politics in recent years has been the viral spread of crazy lies and conspiracy theories about the honesty of our elections. Spurred on by former President Trump and a confused but noisy group of his supporters, an unfounded perception has arisen in many corners that American elections have somehow become dishonest and rigged by mysterious and nefarious forces. The truth, of course is that this claim is simply false. In fact, American elections remain among the world's most honest and secure. And recently, in an effort to help spread this important truth, some prominent North Carolinians of varying political persuasions have formed a new bipartisan group called the North Carolina Network for Fair, Safe and Secure Elections and recently we got a chance to have an extended conversation with the founders of the group, former Charlotte Mayor Jennifer Roberts and former state Supreme Court Justice Bob Orr.

In Part Two of our interview, we further discuss some of the reasons behind the unease that many people have come to feel about our elections and how the group is working to address them – including a series of public events its hosting in all of the state's congressional districts that will feature both conservative and progressive speakers and detail the many lawful and effective ways that exist for candidates and advocacy groups to monitor elections and verify the results.

**Guest:** UNC Health infectious disease expert Dr. David Wohl  
The U.S is now two and a half years into the COVID-19 pandemic and while we have, thankfully, made tremendous progress since those dark and chaotic early days, hundreds of thousands of people continue to become infected, and hundreds of people continue to die, every day.

Happily, however, we now have an exciting new tool to combat the virus.

As we learned in a recent conversation with Professor David Wohl of the Division of Infectious Diseases at UNC Health, the latest COVID vaccine booster represents a huge scientific

breakthrough. For the first time, we now have a safe and powerful vaccine that specifically targets the dominant COVID virus of the moment – the BA5 omicron variant.

What's more, as Wohl also told us, it now seems likely that annual COVID boosters may soon become as commonplace and lifesaving as annual flu shots.

Issues discussed: vaccine and anti-viral improvements, flu season, and the latest of monkeypox.

**Guest:** Duke University professor David Schanzer, director of Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security

It's been more than two decades now since the September 11th attacks made the word "terrorism" a dominant topic in American policy and politics.

And while strong disagreement remains as to the wisdom of the so-called "war on terror" our nation conducted in response, one thing almost all Americans would have thought unimaginable during most of the last 21 years is the situation we confront today.

As Duke University Professor and terrorism expert David Schanzer explained to us in a conversation we had earlier this week, the top present day terrorism threat in our country comes not from abroad, but from domestic extremists– disaffected and delusional people like those who invaded the U.S. Capitol last January 6.

In Part One of our chat, we discussed how this transition – the demise of the emphasis on combating Islamic extremism and the rise of domestic terror -- came about. In Part Two of our conversation, we dug into several aspects the top terror threat facing our country in 2022 – the rise of domestic right-wing extremism like that which gave rise to the January 6 2021 invasion of the U.S Capitol. And as Schanzer told us, while recent law enforcement actions like the prosecution of hundreds of January 6 insurrection participants has almost certainly had an important deterrent effect, the challenge to our country remains significant – especially as more and more once mainstream conservative groups embrace the disturbing rise of white Christian nationalism.

**Guest:** NC Policy Watch environmental investigative reporter Lisa Sorg

Over the last several months, NC Policy Watch investigative environmental reporter Lisa Sorg has produced a series of damning (and often heartbreaking) reports on the struggles of the North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency to aid homeowners displaced by Hurricanes Matthew and Florence. Recently, in partial response to Sorg's reporting, state and federal officials have started to investigate this situation and earlier this week we got a chance to ask Lisa about a recent legislative oversight committee hearing on the matter at which state lawmakers and homeowners expressed great frustration with the state's painfully slow efforts. We also got a chance to ask her about another environmental controversy brewing in southeastern North Carolina involving the chemical company known as Chemours.

**Guest:** State Senator Kirk deViere

As we heard in the previous segment with NC Policy Watch environmental investigative reporter Lisa Sorg, North Carolina legislators have started to demand answers from the state's troubled Office of Recovery and Resiliency (also known as Rebuild NC) about why thousands of the state's residents remain displaced from their homes by hurricanes that hit the state years ago.

And earlier this week, we were lucky enough to catch up with one of the legislators who serves on the oversight committee investigating this situation – Cumberland County State Senator Kirk deViere. And as deViere told us, it's clear that the state officials in charge of hurricane recovery have failed, that further delays and excuse-making are simply unacceptable, and that the need for swift action is urgent.

**Guest:** WRAL TV investigative documentary reporter and producer Cristin Severance

As several news reports – including some from NC Policy Watch – have documented in recent months, mothers and babies – and particularly Black mothers and babies -- are dying from pregnancy related complications at deeply disturbing rates across the country and in North Carolina. Indeed, the US has the worst maternal death rate compared to all wealthy countries and North Carolina ranks in the 10 worst states for infant deaths.

Recently, a new WRAL-TV documentary entitled “Critical Term: Why are Black mothers and babies dying?” dug into this crisis and earlier this week, we got a chance to sit down with the program’s producer, investigative documentary reporter Cristin Severance. And as Severance explained to us, her reporting makes clear that one can’t discuss the maternal and infant death crisis without discussing the systemic racism that underlies so much of it.