

WRMR-FM, Wilmington, NC (98.7)  
QUARTERLY LISTING OF COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES  
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS  
**4TH QUARTER 2022**


The following is a list of issues and concerns for 4TH Quarter 2022, and addresses in Public Affairs Programming, Public Service Announcements, Community Involvement and special programming on WRMR-FM.

1. SUPREME COURT
2. BOARD OF ELECTIONS
3. MENTAL HEALTH
4. EPIDEMIC
5. N.C. LAW
6. U.S. TECH
7. FOOD BANK
8. POLITICS
9. COMMON CAUSE
10. CIVIL RIGHTS

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Date

  
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## **PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS**

During October, November and December, 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.

**CAROLINA NEWS MAKERS (30 Minutes)** Each week Don Curtis interviews newsmakers from across the Tar Heel State on the issues of the day. From the local economy to crime to social programs to taxes and education... stories that affect our day-to-day lives are hot topics for Carolina News Makers.

## **2022 4th QUARTER ISSUES**

### **1. SUPREME COURT**

With the arrival of the first week in October, the U.S. Supreme Court has commenced a new term and is already plunging into a crowded docket of potentially momentous cases, including at least two that could upend some long-established rules for how elections are conducted in our country.

### **2. BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

Almost two years after Donald Trump falsely claimed that voter fraud cost him the 2020 presidential election and inspired a web of likeminded supporters and candidates, it's clear that such lies, and conspiracy theories continue to infect our politics and render our democracy unstable..

### **3. MENTAL HEALTH**

A report released this past summer 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.

### **4. EPIDEMIC**

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.

### **5. N.C. LAW**

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.

### **6. U.S.TECH**

As America changes, the tech industry has been slow to keep up. More than half of children born today are people of color, and 1 in 4 have an immigrant parent. Yet Silicon Valley and the U.S. tech economy don't really resemble the nation's diverse population. And that results in a lot of missed opportunities.

## **7. FOOD BANK**

As we head into Thanksgiving week 2022 there's good and bad news when it comes to poverty and hunger in America. The good news is that thanks to the Biden administration's pandemic relief programs and the general economic recovery, our nation made a sizable dent in hunger and poverty over the last two years.

## **8. POLITICS**

As we discussed last week on News & Views, the recently completed fall election is being widely interpreted by political observers and analysts as a rejection of the extremism, divisiveness and conspiracy theories voiced by Donald Trump and his supporters. That said, the election was far from a complete repudiation of Trump's Republican Party. Here in North Carolina, for instance, the GOP slightly increased its majorities in the General Assembly and fell just a single seat short of making those majorities veto-proof.

## **9. COMMON CAUSE**

As news stories across the country -- including several written by NC Policy Watch's Lynn Bonner -- have been reporting in recent weeks the U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments on December 7th in a case out of North Carolina that has the potential to dramatically alter American democracy.

## **10. CIVIL RIGHTS**

At noon on Saturday December 10, people representing a variety of human and civil rights groups will gather in Raleigh for a march and demonstration at which they'll call for the once-and-for-all abolition of the death penalty in North Carolina. The group will gather outside the gates of Central Prison and walk two miles to the Governor's Mansion, where they'll gather at around 1:15 to hear from several speakers.

## **PROGRAMMING:**

### **1. SUPREME COURT News & Views for 10-9-2022**

Guest: Tom Wolf, deputy Director of the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice

With the arrival of the first week in October, the U.S. Supreme Court has commenced a new term and is already plunging into a crowded docket of potentially momentous cases, including at least two that could upend some long-established rules for how elections are conducted in our country.

One of those cases is Moore vs. Harper – a case brought by North Carolina Republican lawmakers who say they should be free under something they’ve dubbed the Independent State Legislature Theory (or ISLT) to draw congressional district maps with no oversight by state courts. And earlier this week we caught up with Tom Wolf, deputy Director of the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice to learn more about the case and the threat it poses to U.S. elections. As Wolf explains the theory legislators are pushing would throw elections into chaos, nullifying hundreds of election rules put in place through ballot initiatives, state constitutions, and administrative regulations — including foundational state policies like the processes for voter registration and mail voting and basic guarantees like the secret ballot. State lawmakers would be able to adopt vote suppression legislation without any checks or balances from state courts or even gubernatorial veto. In other words, the theory would upend key aspects of our elections.

### **2. BOARD OF ELECTIONS News & Views for 10-16-2022**

Guest: State Board of Elections executive director Karen Brinson Bell

Almost two years after Donald Trump falsely claimed that voter fraud cost him the 2020 presidential election and inspired a web of likeminded supporters and candidates, it’s clear that such lies, and conspiracy theories continue to infect our politics and render our democracy unstable.

Fortunately, the officials overseeing elections in North Carolina have continued to do a tremendous job of keeping calm, busting myths, strictly enforcing and abiding by the law, and working tirelessly to assure that our elections are conducted fairly and transparently.

And earlier this week we got a chance to learn more about this work in an extended conversation with the state official who oversees these efforts: State Board of Elections executive director Karen Brinson Bell

In Part One of our chat, Brinson Bell reminded us about some of the key dates and deadlines for the upcoming election and explained some of the steps her office is taking to respond to threats targeting election workers and to deescalate tensions that could arise on Election Day.

In Part Two of our conversation, we dove into more of the details of how this fall's election will be conducted – including, among other things, the rules governing poll observers, the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, how state law makes tampering with ballots and vote counting all but impossible, and how thousands of people who were formerly disenfranchised because of old criminal convictions are now newly eligible to vote.

### **3. MENTAL HEALTH**

#### **News & Views for 10-30-2022**

Guest: Kaylan Szafranski of the advocacy group NC Child  
A report released this past summer 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 2022 Kids Count data book reported 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.

Soon after the report was released, 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.

#### **4. EPIDEMIC**

##### **News & Views for 11-06-2022**

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.

#### **5. NC LAW**

##### **News & Views for 11-06-2022**

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.

## **6. U.S.TECH News & Views for 11-13-2022**

Guest: Dan Rearick, the founder and co-executive director of Code the Dream

As America changes, the tech industry has been slow to keep up. More than half of children born today are people of color, and 1 in 4 have an immigrant parent. Yet Silicon Valley and the U.S. tech economy don't really resemble the nation's diverse population. And that results in a lot of missed opportunities.

Fortunately, an impressive Triangle-based nonprofit is tackling this issue head-on. Code the Dream provides direct training to young people from immigrant backgrounds and communities of color in tech skills so that they can break into a world that's long lacked racial, ethnic and gender diversity. And recently, we got a chance to learn more about the organization, its accomplishments, and an upcoming training event it's sponsoring



on Nov. 15 in a conversation with its founder and co-executive director, Dan Rearick.

## **7. FOOD BANK**

### **News and Views for November 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2022**

Guest: President and CEO of the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina Ashley McCumber

As we head into Thanksgiving week 2022 there's good and bad news when it comes to poverty and hunger in America. The good news is that thanks to the Biden administration's pandemic relief programs and the general economic recovery, our nation made a sizable dent in hunger and poverty over the last two years. The bad news is that many of the relief efforts that were so effective have been allowed to expire, and as we enter this year's holiday season, the number of people of all ages who are often unsure about where their next meal will come from remains obscenely high. Nearly 600,000 people in just the 34 counties served by the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina, for instance, are food insecure. Recently, in order to get a gauge on the size and scope of the challenge and what average folks can do to help out in the coming weeks and months, we sat down with the new president and CEO of the Food Bank, Ashley McCumber.

## **8. POLITICS**

### **News and Views for November 27th, 2022**

Guest: State Senator Natalie Murdock

As we discussed last week on News & Views, the recently completed fall election is being widely interpreted by political observers and analysts as a rejection of the extremism, divisiveness and conspiracy theories voiced by Donald Trump and his supporters. That said, the election was far from a complete repudiation of Trump's Republican Party. Here in North Carolina, for instance, the GOP slightly increased its majorities in the General Assembly and fell just a single seat short of making those majorities veto-proof.

What all of this means for our politics and the process of law and

policymaking come 2023 is, of course, already a subject of discussion and debate, and recently, we got a chance to try and make some sense of it all in a special extended conversation we had with a state lawmaker who figures to play a leading role in championing progressive causes in the new General Assembly, Durham County state Senator Natalie Murdock. In Part One of our chat, Murdock helped decipher some of the forces that contributed to the election results we saw in North Carolina, including the impact of local contests, the reversal of Roe vs. Wade and – at least in the legislature – the continued power of partisan gerrymandering.

In Part Two of our conversation, we delved into the specifics of some important policy debates on the front burner in North Carolina, including the political right's ongoing effort to advance an extreme social agenda, the future of education funding in light of the state Supreme Court's recent directive to the General Assembly, the chances that our state will finally expand Medicaid, and the continuing need for policy solutions to combat the global climate emergency.

## **9. COMMON CAUSE**

### **News & Views for 12-04-2022**

Guest: Common Cause North Carolina executive director Bob Phillips

As news stories across the country – including several written by NC Policy Watch's Lynn Bonner -- have been reporting in recent weeks the U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments on December 7th in a case out of North Carolina that has the potential to dramatically alter American democracy.

In Moore v. Harper, Republican lawmakers argue that state courts should be barred from reviewing the actions of state legislatures when it comes to regulating elections for federal offices – including the maps that are drawn and the way the elections themselves are conducted. And earlier this week we caught up with an advocate whose organization is at the epicenter of the

controversy and deeply concerned about its potential implications – Common Cause of North Carolina executive director, Bob Phillips. Phillips discusses the case before the U.S. Supreme Court and what the outcome could mean for voting rights and future elections.

## **10. CIVIL RIGHTS**

### **News and Views for December 04, 2022**

Guest: Jean Parks, NC Coalition for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

At noon on Saturday December 10, people representing a variety of human and civil rights groups will gather in Raleigh for a march and demonstration at which they'll call for the once-and-for-all abolition of the death penalty in North Carolina. The group will gather outside the gates of Central Prison and walk two miles to the Governor's Mansion, where they'll gather at around 1:15 to hear from several speakers.

One of the people slated to address the crowd is Jean Parks. Many decades ago, Parks lost her sister to a senseless murder, but as she eloquently explained to us in a recent conversation, the research she's conducted in the intervening years has convinced her that not only is the man who's been imprisoned for the murder innocent, but that the death penalty has been repeatedly exposed as a cruel, ineffective, and unjust punishment that must now, at long last, be abolished. Park discusses flaws in the current system and what advocates from the NC Coalition for Alternatives to the Death Penalty hope to accomplish during the Dec. 10th event.

## **Additional Topics aired**

Guest: North Carolinians Against Gun Violence executive director Becky Ceartas

As has been made clear repeatedly of late, the gun violence madness afflicting modern America is quickly transforming from a crisis into a catastrophe. The pace of the mass murders committed by people using military-style weapons – killing machines that should never have been made available to the general public – is so rapid now that it's almost impossible to keep up with. To date, there have been more than 611 mass shootings in America in 2022.

Thankfully, some courageous advocates continue to speak out for simple and commonsense policy changes that could save countless lives without harming the right of individuals to keep firearms for self-defense, and earlier this week we caught up with one of those advocates, North Carolinians Against Gun Violence executive director Becky Ceartas. Ceartas discusses the new NCDHHS white paper and treating mass shootings as a public health crisis.

Guest: Equality North Carolina executive director Kendra Johnson  
One of the most disturbing trends to afflict American politics and policy debates in recent years has been the rise of violent right-wing extremism. Time and again, people have been victimized and even killed because of their race, color, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Recently in North Carolina, we've seen a spike in this kind of hate-based criminality – particularly in the form of physical attacks on (and threats against) the LGBTQ community. And recently, in a conversation we recorded before the attacks on two Moore County electric substations that many have speculated could be connected to these trends, we got a chance to talk with Kendra Johnson, the executive director of the nonprofit advocacy organization, Equality North Carolina. And as Johnson made clear, it's no coincidence that the rise in violence is taking place at the same moment that conservative public officials are advancing policies designed to rollback LGBTQ rights.

Guests: WRAL investigative documentary reporter Cristin Severance and NC Policy Watch investigative reporter Lisa Sorg

It's been six years since Hurricane Matthew hit North Carolina and four years since Hurricane Florence caused catastrophic flooding and damage across the state.

And this past spring my NC Policy Watch colleague Lisa Sorg was first to report on the remarkable fact that thousands of homeowners who were enrolled in a state-run program to help them rebuild and recover from the storms are still waiting to go home. Many have been stuck in motels for years with little or no access to any of their belongings and some of them have even died waiting for answers.

This week, a new WRAL investigative documentary will shine a light on this sad story – it's entitled "Aftermath: North Carolina Hurricane Victims left behind." And recently we got a chance to learn more about it in a conversation with Lisa Sorg and the journalist behind the documentary -- WRAL investigative documentary reporter Cristin Severance.

In Part Two of our conversation, we heard about the way state officials – including Gov. Cooper -- have (and haven't) been responding to the program's failures, the growing demands of state legislators, and the prospects for officials actually delivering the help they've promised to displaced families before the next big storm blows through. State legislators will revisit the progress of the state's ReBuild NC program at a hearing on December 14th.

Guest: Retired U.S. Marine, Afghanistan veteran and North Carolina-based writer Worth Parker

One of the greatest failures of American policy related to the long occupation of Afghanistan has been the way the nation's broken immigration system has left thousands of Afghans who ought to be on a path to obtaining refuge in this country in a dangerous state of limbo.

As retired U.S. Marine, Afghanistan veteran and North Carolina-based writer Worth Parker explained to us in a recent conversation, people who worked beside Americans and literally put their lives on the line to aid them, could soon face deportation and even death at the hands of the Taliban without congressional action to pass a bipartisan bill known as the Afghan Adjustment Act. Fortunately, there's still time for the current

Congress to act before year's end. Issues covered: Afghanistan refugees, refugee rights, homeland security, and the Afghan Adjustment Act.

Guest: North Carolina Congressman David Price

One of the longest terms ever served by a North Carolina member of Congress will come to a close in the New Year when veteran Democrat David Price retires. Price, who's represented a Triangle-area district of varying configurations for 34 of the last 36 years will take his leave as one of the most respected members of the U.S. House and a lawmaker best known as an honest, serious, and sober hard worker who prioritized passing legislation over attracting headlines.

Recently, the congressman was kind enough to take a few moments out of his hectic final days in the Capitol to join us for a special extended conversation in which he discussed some of his many accomplishments while in office, as well as his takes on some of the enormous challenges that face the country. In Part One of our chat, we looked at some of the what's turned out to be a remarkably productive Congress these past two years and why many of those successes seem not to have translated into greater popularity for the President and his fellow Democrats. In Part Two of our conversation, we delved deeper into some of the congressman's current top concerns and priorities, including the momentous Moore v. Harper gerrymandering case that's currently before the U.S. Supreme Court, the inspiring work for gun violence reform of his late wife, Lisa Price, and some important work Congress needs to complete before the end of the year.

Guest: Veteran Rockingham County physician Steve Luking about his decades of serving rural blue-collar patients and why it's made him into a such passionate advocate for expanding Medicaid

Guest: State Board of Education member and former teacher of the year James Ford on the big and worrisome teacher shortage and some of the other top challenges and controversies confronting North Carolina public education leaders

Guest: And with the holiday season in full flight, we'll discuss the state of hunger in North Carolina with the President and CEO of the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina, Ashley McCumber

Guest: North Carolina Congressman G.K. Butterfield

A new U.S. Congress takes office this week, and for the first time close to two decades, it will do so without veteran eastern North Carolina representative G.K. Butterfield. Butterfield chose not to seek re-election in 2022 after Republicans mapmakers at the General Assembly dramatically altered – some would say 'gerrymandered' – what had been his district.

Despite this development and the fact that he remains healthy and vibrant with a lot more to energy to give to public service, Butterfield evinces no bitterness at being forced to give up his seat and recently, he was kind enough to take few minutes out of his hectic last few days in Washington to talk with us about his proudest accomplishments, the many unheralded successes of the outgoing Congress, and his plans to for the future as he returns to his native state.

Guest: Education policy researcher Kris Nordstrom

Debates over public education funding have long been a feature of the legislative and legal landscapes in North Carolina, but as a pair of damning new national reports make clear, there's really no disputing the fact that our schools are falling behind.

Of the 49 states that researchers at the Albert Shanker Institute examined for funding adequacy, North Carolina came in dead last. Meanwhile, researchers at the Education Law Center ranked the state near the bottom of the national pack in multiple categories and gave it an 'F' grade for both the level of funding and funding effort.

And recently, in order to try and make sense of these findings and what state law and policymakers can and should be doing to address this unacceptable situation, we sat down for a conversation with veteran North Carolina Justice Center education policy analyst, Kris Nordstrom.

Guest: NC Policy Watch investigative reporter Kelan Lyons

One of the most neglected corners of state government in the modern era is the one that houses our systems of criminal and juvenile justice. Thanks to chronic underinvestment and increasingly antiquated sentencing laws, North Carolina does precious little to help rehabilitate offenders, even though the vast majority will return to society.

Last year, however, our team at NC Policy Watch was lucky enough to add a journalist who possesses a wealth of experience in covering criminal justice and corrections in other states, and over the last several months, Kelan Lyons has produced a steady stream of reports documenting the frequently sorry state of these systems. And recently, Kelan sat down with me to discuss some of what he's found so far – including a crisis that's arisen in our juvenile detention facilities, some questionable changes to the way the state prison system handles inmate mail and calls for the governor to address big racial disparities and inequities.