

WCLY-AM, Raleigh, NC (1550)
QUARTERLY LISTING OF COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS
1st Quarter 2021

The following is a list of issues and concerns for First Quarter 2021 (January-March) and addressed in Public Affairs Programming, Public Service Announcements, and Special Programming on WCLY-AM.

- 1. COVID-19**
- 2. CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM**
- 3. ECONOMY**
- 4. EDUCATION/SCHOOL**
- 5. ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS/NATURAL DISASTERS**
- 6. HEALTHCARE/ HEALTHCARE REFORM**
- 7. HUMAN RIGHTS/EQUALITY**
- 8. POLITICAL (JANUARY 6 INSURRECTION) /VOTING RIGHTS**
- 9. POVERTY/HOMELESSNESS**
- 10. PUBLIC HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH**

This report was placed in the Public Inspection file on April 9, 2021

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

In January-March 2021, 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 6 AM.

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

None

1st QUARTER ISSUES:

Issues are extrapolated from statements 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 the effort to ascertain and prioritize community concerns.

CORONA VIRUS

As COVID-19 cases spiked at the beginning of the year, the drive to vaccinate as many people as possible intensified. In March, it was announced that vaccines would be available to everyone ages 16 and over in April. Health officials worried about new variants that appear to be more easily transmissible. There is also a campaign to diminish public fear and skepticism towards vaccines.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Last year, a report from Duke University found that life without parole sentences have been on the rise in North Carolina even as violent crime and death sentences have been trending downward. Attorney General Josh Stein, co-chairman of a state task force aiming to increase racial equity in the criminal justice system, announced initial findings and recommendations.

ECONOMY/ ECONOMIC SUPPORT

The COVID 19 pandemic led to massive unemployment and a crash in tax revenues in 2020. North Carolina has performed much better than forecasted by economists. Federal relief spending and a recovering employment rate have boosted the NC economy. Unemployment in North Carolina in February 2020 was 3.6 percent, and unemployment peaked at 13.5 percent during the early months of the pandemic. The state's current unemployment rate is 6.1 percent. Some industries are surging, while others, most notably brick and mortar retail, may continue to struggle.

During the pandemic, charitable organizations are struggling to meet the needs of the public. More people are in need. These organizations depend on the media to relay their messages.

EDUCATION/SCHOOL

How to reopen schools during the pandemic was an ongoing debate. Retaining and recruit high-quality teachers – especially teachers of color, addressing the social and emotional learning needs of our kids during the stressful times, and adequately funding our schools. A proposal to revise North Carolina's social studies standards to include the uglier side of American history led to intense division among some state board of education members and the public.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS/NATURAL DISASTERS

Disposable masks, gloves and other types of personal protective equipment are safeguarding untold lives during the coronavirus pandemic. They're also creating a worldwide pollution problem. A new study published by Science in October 2020 found that the United States produced 92.6 billion pounds of plastic waste, more than any other country in the world.

A deadly winter storm amplified expert predictions about climate change: As climate change accelerates, deadly weather will be hitting the U.S. more often, and extreme weather events will put many electrical grids at risk of failure.

FAITH/RELIGION/COMMUNITY

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

HEALTHCARE/ HEALTHCARE REFORM

According to research from experts at Georgetown University, expanding Medicaid to cover more adults helps improve the health outcomes for their children. Yet, passing legislation continues to be problematic.

HUMAN RIGHTS/EQUALITY

Last year, 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?

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).

POLITICAL (JANUARY 6 INSURRECTION) /VOTING RIGHTS

The November election season brought matters of voter suppression, voter access, and election tampering to the forefront well beyond the election. Following a violent insurrection at the US Capitol on January 6, political party allegiance became even more splintered as former president Donald Trump faced impeachment proceedings.

POVERTY/HOMELESSNESS

Racial, healthcare and income disparities existed before the onset of COVID-19, but the lingering pandemic has only exacerbated these inequalities.

PUBLIC HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH

With restrictions easing and students of all ages returning to in-person learning for the first time in a year, mental health providers are noticing more people reaching out for help and support. Healthcare providers were worried about patients forgoing important health screenings due to COVID fears.

1ST QUARTER PROGRAMS:

CORONA VIRUS

NEWS & VIEWS 1/31

Guest: North Carolina Secretary of Health and Human Services Dr. Mandy Cohen

State health officials have spent weeks urging North Carolinians to be prepared to take the COVID-19 vaccine. But with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines in incredibly short supply nationwide, health officials are also urging patience. This week, Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mandy Cohen worked to explain the vaccine shift and provide greater certainty moving forward.

NEWS & VIEWS 2/28

Guests: National and state leaders about where things stand and what lies ahead in the COVID pandemic, as we mark 500,000 American lives lost. Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy Cohen marked the moment by addressing a legislative committee this week and focusing on the progress North Carolina has made in reducing the spread of the virus, and vaccinating thousands of our neighbors. Still, as teachers and essential workers queue-up for their turn to get vaccinated, Dr. Cohen said her team will be closely watching how new variants of the virus are spreading, and how that could impact children who are just now returning to the classroom. The variants and the ongoing shortage of vaccines are part of the reason that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently recommended Americans start double-masking to provide improved protection against exposure to the virus.

ON THE RECORD 1/9

Legislative preview session: Capitol Bureau Chief Laura Leslie sits down with state lawmakers and Statehouse Reporter Travis Fain to preview the session to discuss challenges the coronavirus pandemic has brought the state in addition to the usual business of the session.

ON THE RECORD 1/28

The next phase of the COVID pandemic: Guest speakers, including a one-on-one with Mandy Cohen, the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, explore what the next phase of the COVID-19 pandemic could look like in NC.

ON THE RECORD 3/13

Overcoming vaccine reluctance: Experts share the reasons people are hesitant to get a COVID-19 vaccine and strategies to overcome those concerns.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

NEWS & VIEWS 2/7

Guest: North Carolinians Against Gun Violence researcher Sara Smith

Late last year, the advocacy group North Carolinians Against Gun Violence released a new and sobering, but vitally important report entitled "Safe North Carolina 2020," which documented and reiterated the widely acknowledged truth that firearm violence in North Carolina is a public health epidemic. The report documents this situation with a wellspring of data – on homicides, suicides, accidental shootings, mass shootings -- and breaks the numbers down in a host of instructive ways – including by race, age, and geography. Its central conclusion, however, is simple and straightforward and it goes like this: quote "Simply put, no other high-income country in the world allows its citizens to die by guns the way that we do in the United States." Sara Smith discusses the findings of her research and offers recommendations for state policymakers.

NEWS & VIEWS 2/14

Guest: Attorney Dawn Blagrove of Emancipate North Carolina

One policy objective that's brought at least a measure of common ground to our politically divided state and nation in recent years is the acute need for criminal justice reform. After decades of incessant "get-tough-on-crime" policies that led to the discriminatory and unsustainable phenomenon that many refer to as "mass incarceration," progressives and conservatives alike are rethinking several basic premises of why and how we criminalize behavior and imprison people. Recently, we got a chance to talk with one of the leaders in our state in the fight for reforming our police, courts and jails, the executive director of the Durham-based nonprofit, Emancipate North Carolina, attorney Dawn Blagrove. While Blagrove agreed that there's

cause for optimism on some fronts, she also expressed deep frustration that many critically important needs -- in particular, the current pandemic-driven public health crisis in our prisons and jails and the persistence of racially discriminatory practices by virtually all law enforcement departments remain largely unaddressed.

NEWS & VIEWS 3/28

Guests: Durham District Attorney Satana Deberry and reform advocate Dawn Blagrove, Executive Dir. of Emancipate NC

Earlier this month, at an online NC Policy Watch Crucial Conversation, we had the opportunity to interview two of North Carolina's leading experts on the subjects of race, mass incarceration and criminal justice reform.

Satana Deberry is the District Attorney of Durham County and one of a small, but growing group of visionary American prosecutors who are bringing a new approach to law enforcement and the pursuit of public safety.

Attorney Dawn Blagrove is the executive director of Emancipate North Carolina, a nonprofit advocacy group that works with groups and individuals across the state to dismantle structural racism and mass incarceration.

In this excerpt from our conversation, DeBerry and Blagrove shared some of their thoughts on race, the criminal justice system, as well as rethinking some of our basic ideas about public safety and dramatically improving our investments in the infrastructure of our communities.

ECONOMY/ECONOMIC SUPPORT

NEWS & VIEWS 2/21

Guest: North Carolina's state budget director Charlie Perusse

Eleven months ago as the COVID 19 pandemic was first causing a massive shutdown of the economy, an expected crash in tax revenues was leading forecasters to make some dire predictions for the budgets of North Carolina and other states. Since that time, happily, things have not gone as badly as had been feared. Thanks to federal relief spending and the fact that incomes of wealthy people and large corporations have actually risen significantly during the crisis, revenues have remained strong and North Carolina has actually banked close to \$5 billion in surplus funds. Earlier this week, we got a chance to learn more about this surplus and how it might best be spent to relieve suffering and address unmet needs with North Carolina's state budget director Charlie Perusse.

EDUCATION/SCHOOL

NEWS & VIEWS 2/7

Guest: North Carolina Public School Forum Executive Director Mary Ann Wolf

When it comes to meeting its constitutional obligation to provide every student with access to a sound basic education, North Carolina already faced a raft of daunting challenges prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic -- challenges that the struggles of the past 11 months have only served to exacerbate. Fortunately, the state is home to a number of top-notch advocates who track these issues carefully and one of the best and most influential is the Public School Forum of North Carolina. Recently, the forum hosted a virtual version of its annual "Eggs and Issues Breakfast," at which it unveiled its list of the top education issues for 2021 and afterwards, we got a chance to have an extended conversation with the group's president and executive director, Mary Ann Wolf. Wolf shares some of her overarching assessments of the state of our education system in 2021 and, in particular, how the COVID-19 pandemic has ratcheted up the challenge while laying bare a host of constitutional deficiencies that can no longer be swept under the rug.

NEWS & VIEWS 2/21

Guest: Senator Jay Chaudhuri

The debate over reopening public schools seems never to have really gone away over the last 11 months, but in recent days, some of the dividing lines have been brought into sharper relief as the General Assembly has pushed ahead aggressively with legislation to mandate that all schools reopen -- even if they aren't in full compliance with CDC guidelines on containing the COVID-19 virus. Earlier this week we discussed this matter and a number of other current legislative issues with an elected leader who has been in the middle of the reopening debate -- Wake County state Senator Jay Chaudhuri, who is himself a parent of school age children

NEWS & VIEWS 3/21

Guest: State Rep. Zack Hawkins

After more than four years in which they battled and sought to undermine Gov. Roy Cooper at every turn, North Carolina Republican legislative leaders did something very different recently: they actually sat down with the governor and worked out a compromise on reopening schools. Now the question is whether this agreement is just a one-time deal or the start of

something new in state politics. Recently, we sat down with Durham County State Rep. Zach Hawkins to get his assessment of the situation – both with regard to the state of politics in Raleigh and our public education system. Hawkins also discussed an important bill he’s sponsoring this year that could make life much easier for parents of children dealing with the effects of autism.

ON THE RECORD 2/14

Coronavirus in the classroom: Listen as experts like Dr. Kanecia Zimmerman, the Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Duke, Amy Dragotta, Wake County Elementary Teacher, Eric Cunningham, Halifax County School Superintendent and Mary Anne Wolf, Executive Director Public School Forum discuss coronavirus in the classroom.

ON THE RECORD 2/27

High school students return to the classroom: Listen as local students from a variety of high schools discuss how COVID-19 has impacted their school years, and whether or not they are returning to in-class learning or staying remote -- and why.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS/NATURAL DISASTERS

NEWS & VIEWS 1/31

Guest: North Carolina’s state climatologist Dr. Kathie Dello

By any estimation, the news surrounding global climate change – what many scientists now characterize as the global climate emergency – continues to grow more dire. Recent reports indicate that we’re now witnessing a raft of deeply worrisome consequences – including a rapid decline in the polar icecaps, rising seas, and an increase in severe weather events. Of course, as much as we may be aware of this sobering news, it’s sometimes difficult to understand the connections between such a massive global problem and what we’re experiencing in our day-to-day lives – much less how we should respond and adapt. Thankfully, North Carolina maintains a state climate office to help us with these important tasks and recently we got a chance to have an extended conversation with the scientist who heads up that effort, our state climatologist, Dr. Kathie Dello. Dello joined us to discuss the urgent need for rapid societal action that will a) reduce carbon pollution in order to help slow the rise in global temperatures and, b) put all of us in a better position to avoid some of the worst impacts of the crisis – from increased flooding to dramatically warmer nighttime temperatures to enhanced stresses on agriculture.

HEALTHCARE/ HEALTHCARE REFORM

NEWS & VIEWS 3/7

Guest: Georgetown University professor and national healthcare expert Adam Searing

For years now, experts have demonstrated that expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act to cover uninsured working people who are ineligible under current guidelines and who can’t qualify for a subsidy in the private market would save lives and money. Unfortunately, thus far, North Carolina remains one of the 12 holdout states that have continued to ignore this research. A new report, however, adds still another compelling argument for expansion – helping kids. According to research from experts at Georgetown University, expanding Medicaid to cover more adults helps improve the health outcomes for their children, and recently we talked with one of the experts behind the report, Professor Adam Searing.

News & Views 3/21

Guest: Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy attorney Doug Sea

One of the many important policy changes that ended up getting put on hold in 2020 as a result of the pandemic was North Carolina’s long-planned shift in how it delivers the Medicaid health insurance program. Under the shift – which is now finally underway – Medicaid is being changed from a “fee for service” model to a managed care system. This shift will have a profound impact on the nearly two million North Carolinians Medicaid covers and, to its credit, the state is taking action to inform and empower them by establishing an ombudsman program that will serve as a resource and assist in the transition. Recently, in an effort to learn more about the transition and the ombudsman program, we got a chance to chat with one of the state’s most knowledgeable advocates when it comes to public safety net programs for people in need, veteran Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy attorney, Doug Sea.

HUMAN RIGHTS/EQUALITY

News & Views 3/28

Guest: Chavi Khanna Koneru of North Carolina Asian Americans Together

These are especially difficult times in the United States when it comes to matters of race and ethnicity. Thanks in part to

former President Trump's cynical tolerance and encouragement of white supremacists, race-based hate crimes have spiked in recent years. Attacks on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in particular – like the horrific murders in Atlanta last week – are up dramatically.

Earlier this week, we got a chance to discuss this very troubling situation with the executive director of the group North Carolina Asian Americans Together, attorney Chavi Khanna Koneru. And as Koneru noted, this is a real and complex crisis that demands a determined response from elected leaders. Other issues discussed: new proposed hate crime legislation, education funding, and the need for better language translation services to help remove barriers to public services for Asian Americans.

POLITICAL (JANUARY 6 INSURRECTION) /VOTING RIGHTS

NEWS & VIEWS 2/14

Guests: Counter-terrorism expert David Schanzer of the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security and Intelligence expert Sue Gordon of the Duke Sanford School of Public Policy. The U.S. Senate opened the impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump this week. And while many Republicans have signaled that they're unwilling to convict Trump for his role in the January 6th attack on the Capitol, experts at Duke University recently explained why Congress must do more to address homegrown terrorism to prevent these extremists from repeating the success that many of them believe they realized during the Jan. 6th insurrection. Gordon - the former deputy director of national intelligence – also proposes restricting the access that former President Trump has to sensitive information moving forward.

News & Views 2/28

Guest: Catawba College political scientist Dr. Michael Bitzer

It's only been a few weeks since the victors in the 2020 election took office, but action in the 2022 election is well underway. Here in North Carolina, candidates of both major parties are already lining up to compete for retiring U.S. Senator Richard Burr's seat – a contest that's sure to be impacted by Burr's vote to convict former President Donald Trump in his recent impeachment trial. Earlier this week we caught up with one of the keenest observers of the North Carolina politics scene, Catawba College political science professor, Michael Bitzer. And, as Bitzer told us, while there are a lot of uncertainties in these tumultuous times, one thing that increasingly clear is that loyalists to Trump are now in complete control of the North Carolina Republican Party.

NEWS & VIEWS 3/7

Guest: Democracy NC Executive Director Tomas Lopez

One of the top duties for state lawmakers in the year after a national census is to redraw congressional and legislative districts to account for changes in population. This is almost always a fraught and contentious process and one that has been especially hard fought in North Carolina where maps drawn by Republican lawmakers in recent years have repeatedly been struck down as illegal gerrymanders. This year, a new wrinkle has been thrown into the process by the fact that census results won't be available until September. Recently, we got a chance to learn more about this development and to catch up on the other front burner issues from the world of voting and voting rights with one of our state's best-informed advocates, attorney Tomas Lopez of the group Democracy North Carolina.

NEWS & VIEWS 3/7

Guest: Congresswoman Deborah Ross

Freshman North Carolina Congresswoman Deborah Ross sure didn't pick a boring time to embark upon a career in our nation's capital. From the January 6 insurrection to the inauguration of a new president to the casting votes on an array of hugely important issues – all while somehow dealing with the challenges posed by the pandemic – Ross has experienced a whirlwind first two months in office.

Earlier this week, she was kind enough to take a few minutes from her busy schedule to update us on the pandemic relief legislation, and several other issues on which she's already spoken out – including the Equality Act and the long overdue need to add more judges to the federal courts.

POVERTY/HOMELESSNESS

NEWS & VIEWS 2/21

Guest: Dr. Peter Morris, Executive Director of Urban Ministries of Wake County

One of the organizations that's truly on the frontlines in the ongoing battle against poverty in our community is Urban Ministries of Wake County. Now celebrating its 40th year of combating hunger, homelessness, and lack of access to health care, Urban Ministries serves thousands of North Carolina's most vulnerable residents with an array of vital services that many

can find in no other place. Not surprisingly, the challenges of performing this difficult work have only been enhanced during the pandemic, but as the organization's executive director, Dr. Peter Morris, told us earlier this month, COVID-19 has also brought out the best in a lot of Urban Ministries friends and supporters.

PUBLIC HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH

News & Views 2/28

Guest: NC Child's executive director Michelle Hughes

The COVID-19 pandemic has obviously taken a large toll on the health and well-being of millions of North Carolinians, but as a new report released by the children's advocacy group NC Child makes clear, kids in our state were already struggling beforehand. Indeed, the group's new 2021 child health report card gives the state an "F" in several categories, including mental health, substance abuse, and housing & economic security. Fortunately, as the group's executive director Michelle Hughes told us earlier this week, the solutions to these problems aren't rocket science and are mostly a function of state elected leaders mustering the will to support proven public programs and services.