

Community Issues Programming for April 1 - June 30, 2020

WCLH has identified the following issues as significant issues facing our community this quarter. Following each issue is a list of programs aired addressing that issue.

Issue: 2020 Elections: Our community wishes to be informed about the issues and candidates for the upcoming 2020 presidential, congressional and state elections.

Democracy Now! "Suspending the Campaign, Not the Movement: Sanders Pulls Out of 2020 Race But Will Stay on Ballot" Senator Bernie Sanders has suspended his campaign for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, making former Vice President Joe Biden the presumptive nominee to face Donald Trump in November. Sanders says he will stay on the ballot in remaining primary races and continue to assemble delegates. We play highlights from Sanders's speech to supporters in a live stream on Wednesday. "Together, we have transformed American consciousness as to what kind of nation we can become, and have taken this country a major step forward in the never-ending struggle for economic justice, social justice, racial justice and environmental justice," he said.
Airdate 9 April 2020 8:16 AM Length 12 minutes.

Democracy Now! "Vote by Mail: Head of Postal Union Says Mailed Ballots Are Best Way to Secure 2020 Election". resident Trump calls the U.S. Postal Service "a joke," and as millions face orders to stay home, his attacks on the agency could also threaten efforts to vote by mail, a method Trump has called "a terrible thing." "We're talking now about basic access to the ballot box," says American Postal Workers Union President Mark Dimondstein, who notes "the Post Office is the most trusted federal agency."
Airdate 29 April 2020 8:37 AM Length 5 minutes.

Democracy Now! "Democracy At Stake: "Faithless Electors" SCOTUS Case Tests If Electoral College Members Can Go Rogue" The Supreme Court heard arguments on Wednesday in a case that could shape the outcome of future presidential elections. The question at hand was whether Electoral College members can "go rogue" and support candidates who did not win the state's popular vote. In 2016, one of Colorado's nine electors, Michael Baca, attempted to cast his Electoral College ballot for Republican John Kasich instead of Democrat Hillary Clinton. The Colorado secretary of state at the time — a Republican — removed Baca as an elector. Colorado is one of 31 other states that has a law requiring presidential electors to vote for the candidate who wins the state's presidential election popular vote. Baca sued Colorado, and the Denver-based 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled his removal was unconstitutional. The case reached the Supreme Court this week. We speak with Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold, who says, "What is at stake in this case is the foundation of our democracy."
Airdate 15 May 2020 8:31 AM Length 10 minutes.

Democracy Now! "Trump's Reelection Playbook: Racist Tropes & Downplaying COVID Pandemic by Slowing Down Testing". As the U.S. death toll from COVID-19 nears 120,000 and mass protests against police brutality and racism continue, President Trump faces condemnation for his remarks at his poorly attended campaign rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, when he repeated racist terms like "kung flu" and lashed out at protesters. "You just see this tremendous impulse to divide," says Emily Bazelon, staff writer at The New York Times Magazine. "This is what has worked for Trump in the past. He is not going to change now."
Airdate 22 June 2020 8:30 AM Length 7 minutes.

Issue: COVID-19 Virus: Our community is concerned about the spread of COVID-19 disease as well as the economic impact of "Stay at Home" and other mitigation policies.

Democracy Now! "'Profit Over People": UPS Workers Say Company Not Prioritizing Safety as Workers Test Positive". The White House is now estimating 100,000 to a quarter of a million people could die from the coronavirus pandemic. Some of those most concerned about exposure to the highly infectious virus are workers on the frontlines of grocery stores and delivery services. On Monday, Amazon warehouse workers in Staten Island walked off the job, and the company fired one of them in response. At least three employees at a large UPS facility near Boston have tested positive, and two dozen more have been quarantined. Details about the infections were shared by the workers' union because they said the company refused to provide the critical information to its employees. We speak with Richard Hooker, secretary-treasurer of the Philadelphia Teamsters Local 623, and David Levin, lead organizer with Teamsters for a Democratic Union and the coordinator of the UPS Teamsters United campaign.

Airdate 1 April 2020 8:16 AM Length 16 minutes.

Democracy Now! "With Hospitals Reaching Breaking Point, Pregnant People Face Additional Uncertainty During Pandemic" New York hospitals cannot force pregnant people to give birth without a chosen support person. That's what an executive order released by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo Sunday revealed. The order comes in response to a move by the New York-Presbyterian and the Mount Sinai hospital systems to bar partners from labor and delivery rooms, causing widespread outrage. But how are pregnant people coping with new hospital guidelines and uncertain conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic? We speak with freelance journalist Amy Littlefield, who focuses on the intersection of religion and healthcare, about what she is confronting now at the end of her pregnancy.."

Airdate 1 April 2020 8:32 AM Length 16 minutes.

Democracy Now! "#CancelRent: Tenants Demand Rent Relief & Organize Strikes as Unemployment Surges Due to COVID-19". Today is April 1, and millions across the country don't have the money to pay rent. But despite eviction moratoriums and relief on mortgage payments in hard-hit states like California, Washington and New York, no rent freeze has been ordered. In response, tenants around the country are calling for immediate rent cancellation. Some are planning to "rent strike." Meanwhile, many workers who lost their income due to the pandemic haven't even been able to file for unemployment in New York state, with the unemployment website continually crashing and phone lines jammed. Seven-point-eight million people called the New York state Labor Department hotline last week, compared to the average 50,000. We get an update from Cea Weaver, campaign coordinator for Housing Justice for All, which is organizing to cancel rent during the coronavirus

Airdate 1 April 2020 8:48 AM Length 11 minutes.

Democracy Now! "'Exposing U.S. Racism in a Stark New Way": COVID-19 Kills Disproportionate Number of Black Americans". We speak with family physician and epidemiologist Dr. Camara Phyllis Jones about how the coronavirus is taking a devastating toll on black Americans, who are disproportionately dying from the virus across the country as a result of entrenched racial inequality. Black Americans are more likely to have chronic health problems and less likely to have insurance. They also make up significant numbers of frontline workers that are still going to work amid the pandemic. Jones is the former president of the American Public Health Association. Her recent piece for Newsweek magazine is headlined "Coronavirus Disease Discriminates. Our Health Care Doesn't Have To."

Airdate 9 April 2020 8:51 AM Length 8 minutes.

Democracy Now! "What Trump Knew & When He Knew It: NYT on How Trump Ignored COVID-19 Warnings Until It Was Too Late". As the United States surpasses the coronavirus death toll of any country in the world with more than 22,000 dead, we look how President Trump led the country to this point with Eric Lipton, lead author of The New York Times's explosive new exposé, "He Could Have Seen What Was Coming: Behind Trump's Failure on the Virus."

Airdate 13 April 2020 8:19 AM Length 25 minutes.

Democracy Now! "Juan González: My 92-Year-Old Mother's COVID-19 Experience Shows Me How Rotten Our Health System Is" aAs the United States leads the world in both reported COVID-19 cases and death toll, hospitals at other coronavirus hot spots around the country are reporting dire conditions as they deal with a surge in critically sick patients. "We have to ask ourselves why, in a country that spends so much money on healthcare, are we still having problems producing the most basic equipment, [such as masks, gowns and tests]," says Democracy Now! co-host, Juan González, who describes how he struggled to get his own 92-year-old mother tested when he took her to the emergency room in New Jersey. "It is just an outrage that this discontinues to bedevil a country as wealthy as ours. And I really believe it's part of this whole situation of this neoliberal view of how to run the market."

Airdate 14 April 2020 8:14 AM Length 12 minutes.

Democracy Now! "'Terrified to Go to Work': Hundreds of Workers in Meat & Poultry Plants Test Positive for COVID-19". We look at the spike in coronavirus infections at meatpacking plants. In just one case, Smithfield Foods shut down a plant responsible for 5% of U.S. pork production after more than 350 workers at the facility tested positive for COVID-19. Meanwhile, deaths of slaughterhouse workers have been reported in Pennsylvania, Georgia and Colorado. Many meat processing facilities employ large numbers of immigrants, including undocumented workers. We speak with Wenonah Hauter, executive director and founder of Food & Water Watch, and with Magaly Licolli, executive director of Venceremos, an advocacy group for poultry plant workers, based in Springdale, Arkansas, home to Tyson Foods headquarters.

Airdate 14 April 2020 8:47 AM Length 12 minutes.

Democracy Now! "'Pure Baloney': Zoologist Debunks Trump's COVID-19 Origin Theory, Explains Animal-Human Transmission". With the largest one-day death toll in the U.S. yet — 2,400 in just 24 hours — President Trump is trying to deflect attention from his handling of the pandemic by waging a war on public health experts and science, threatening to cut World Health Organization funding and fueling a theory that the coronavirus came from a lab in Wuhan, China. We speak to a zoologist who has been sounding the alarm about a coming pandemic for years. "The idea that this virus escaped from a lab is just pure baloney," says Peter Daszak, disease ecologist and the president of EcoHealth Alliance, a nonprofit that works globally to identify and study our vulnerabilities to emerging infectious disease. "These pandemic viruses that emerge originate in wildlife."

Airdate 16 April 2020 8:19 AM Length 21 minutes.

Democracy Now! "Coronavirus Relief Bills Bail Out Corporations as Small Businesses & Workers Suffer". As the White House and Democrats near a deal on a \$450 billion coronavirus relief package, members of the Progressive Caucus say it bails out businesses once again and fails to protect working people. "In general, there's been kind of a disproportionate response that is reflected in the CARES Act. For individuals, for small businesses, it's very hard to get relief," says The American Prospect's executive editor, David Dayen. "But if you're a big corporation, the Federal Reserve has \$4.5 trillion in reserves ready for you."

Airdate 21 April 2020 8:41 AM Length 8 minutes.

Democracy Now! "'The Virus Is Still Out There": Infectious Disease Expert Warns Against Reopening States Too Soon". Despite strong objections of public health officials, governors in Georgia, Tennessee and South Carolina still plan to reopen parks, beaches and nonessential businesses. Even Trump reversed his support. Increased testing is critical for the whole country. But where are the tests? We look at the path ahead with Dr. Syra Madad, infectious disease specialist and special pathogens expert, who was recently featured in the Netflix docuseries "Pandemic."

Airdate 23 April 2020 8:16 AM Length 30 minutes.

Democracy Now! "Scientific American: As Trump Touts Dangerous Cures, Here's What We Know About COVID-19 Drug Tests". President Trump dangerously suggested injecting disinfectants could help patients sick with the coronavirus, then said he was being "sarcastic." But his remarks led to a spike in calls to helplines about taking disinfectants. We look at "What We Know About the Most Touted Drugs Tested for COVID-19" with Tanya Lewis, associate editor for health and medicine at Scientific American.

Airdate 27 April 2020 8:50 AM Length 9 minutes.

Democracy Now! "Trump Attacks Post Office While Carriers & Clerks Die from COVID-19". President Trump has lashed out at the U.S. Postal Service as the pandemic brings it to the brink of collapse and more people than ever are relying on the mail. Trump claims the agency is only losing money because it is undercharging Amazon and other companies for shipping. "It just isn't true," says American Postal Workers Union President Mark Dimondstein.

Airdate 29 April 2020 8:18 AM Length 19 minutes.

Democracy Now! "'It's Very Scary": COVID Surges in Meat Plants as Activists Demand Worker Safety & Meatless Mondays". At least 20 workers at meat processing plants have died from COVID-19, and around 5,000 have tested positive, but President Trump invoked an executive order to bar local governments from closing meat plants. We hear from meat plant workers and organizers about conditions during the pandemic and speak with Sindy Benavides, CEO of the League of United Latin American Citizens, which is supporting the workers with a virtual town hall on food worker safety with presumptive Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and calling for Meatless May Mondays.

Airdate 4 May 2020 8:20 AM Length 22 minutes.

Democracy Now! "As Trump Claims "Fantastic Job" on COVID, Reporter Laurie Garrett Warns Pandemic May Last 36+ Months". As President Trump starts to reopen the country, Pulitzer Prize-winning science writer Laurie Garrett predicts the pandemic will last at least 36 months. Meanwhile, a top government vaccine specialist says he was forced from his job after he resisted the administration's promotion of untested treatments for COVID-19. Garrett predicted the pandemic. In an extended interview, she discusses what's next.

Airdate 6 May 2020 8:18 AM Length 31 minutes.

Democracy Now! "As States Loosen Pandemic Restrictions, Dr. Leana Wen Warns "We Are Not Ready for a Safe Reopening". As more than 40 states begin to reopen, President Trump is downplaying the need for mass COVID-19 testing, even as he himself is now being tested every day for the virus. We speak with emergency physician Dr. Leana Wen, who says, "Widespread testing is so critical. ... Why shouldn't this testing be available to all Americans?"

Airdate 8 May 2020 8:45 AM Length 14 minutes.

Democracy Now! "How Will COVID-19 Change the World? Historian Frank Snowden on Epidemics

from the Black Death to Now". Pandemics, like revolution, war and economic crises, are key determinants of historic change. We look at the history of epidemics, from Black Death to smallpox to COVID-19, and discuss how the coronavirus will reshape the world with leading medical historian Frank Snowden, author of "Epidemics and Society: From the Black Death to the Present." He is a professor emeritus at Yale University who has been in Italy since the pandemic began, and himself survived a COVID-19 infection.

Airdate 18 May 2020 8:20 AM Length 39 minutes.

Democracy Now! "Harvard Doctor: As States Rush to Reopen, Lack of COVID-19 Testing Is "Achilles Heel" for U.S." President Trump claimed Monday he's been taking the antimalarial drug hydroxychloroquine, even though multiple studies show the drug can be dangerous and is not an effective treatment for COVID-19. This comes as the U.S. COVID-19 death count tops 90,000 and all 50 U.S. states prepare to partially reopen by Memorial Day. We speak with Dr. Ashish Jha, the director of Harvard University's Global Health Institute, who says that testing needs to vastly improve in order for widespread reopenings. He calls the lack of accurate tests in the U.S. the nation's "Achilles heel," saying, "The testing saga will go down as one of the big fiascos that led to us being where we are today."

Airdate 19 May 2020 8:18 AM Length 25 minutes.

Democracy Now! "U.S. Passes 2 Million Coronavirus Cases as States Lift Restrictions, Raising Fears of a Second Wave". The number of confirmed U.S. coronavirus cases has officially topped 2 million as states continue to ease stay-at-home orders and reopen their economies and more than a dozen see a surge in new infections. "I worry that what we've seen so far is an undercount and what we're seeing now is really just the beginning of another wave of infections spreading across the country," says Dr. Craig Spencer, director of global health in emergency medicine at Columbia University Medical Center.

Airdate 11 June 2020 8:15 AM Length 18 minutes.