



**Issues/Program List for Withers Broadcasting
Paducah, Kentucky, Studios**

**WREZ-FM (Metropolis, Illinois)
WZZL-FM (Reidland, Kentucky)
WGKY-FM (Wickcliffe, Kentucky)
WRJJ-FM (LaCenter, Kentucky)**

The following programs are weekly broadcasts provided as timely and pertinent information or the community needs of Paducah, Kentucky, and the surrounding region in western Kentucky and southern Illinois.

Sundays at 5:00 am, the stations air InfoTrak.

Sundays at 5:30 am, the stations are Kentucky News Connection

Weekly program information can be found on the proceeding pages.



Call Letters: WILY-AM, WRXX-FM, WZZL-FM, WGKY-FM, WRJJ-FM, WMOK-AM, WREZ-FM, KGMO-FM, KREZ-FM, WKIB-FM, KAPE-AM, KJXX-AM, KYRX-FM KBXB-FM, KRHW-AM, KBHI-FM

Time Aired: 5:00 AM WEEKLY

Weekly Public Affairs Program

QUARTERLY ISSUES REPORT, OCTOBER-DECEMBER, 2022

Show # 2022-40

Date aired: Sunday, October 2, 2022

Ted Rossman, Senior Industry Analyst at CreditCards.com

Recent interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve are leading to substantially higher costs for anyone with credit card debt. Mr. Rossman said roughly half of American consumers are carrying a credit card balance from month to month, and the numbers are increasing due to inflation. He offered suggestions to try to pay down debt and consolidate balances with low- or no-interest credit cards.

Issues covered:
Personal Finance
Inflation

Length: 7:58

Marisa G. Franco, PhD, Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Maryland, author of "*Platonic: How the Science of Attachment Can Help You Make - and Keep - Friends*"

Many people, particularly men, have few friends. Prof. Franco discussed the critical importance of friendship, and how to make and keep friends in an era of distraction, burnout, and chaos. She said making friends, like cultivating any relationship, requires effort, and the idea of "friendships happening organically" is generally a myth. She outlined several specific, research-based steps to improve the number and quality of friendships.

Issues covered:
Mental Health

Length: 9:23

Arpita Ghosh, PhD, Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Kansas

When veterans leave the military, they face a multitude of major challenges, including a transition into higher education or a new career field. Prof. Ghosh led a recent study that found that assistance typically designed to help civilian students are also effective for veterans. She talked about the strengths that veterans can bring to a company and outlined the resources that are available to veterans to make the transition.

Issues covered:
Veterans' Concerns
Career
Mental Health

Length: 5:09

Show # 2022-41

Date aired: Sunday, October 9, 2022

Sally Helgesen, women's leadership consultant and speaker, author of "*How Women Rise: Break the 12 Habits Holding You Back from Your Next Raise, Promotion, or Job*"

Ms. Helgesen believes that women face specific and different roadblocks from men as they seek to advance in the workplace. She discussed the most common errors made by women, and what they can do to get proper credit for their achievements at work. She also discussed how the #MeToo movement has affected job opportunities for women.

Issues covered:

Women's Issues

Career

Sexual Harassment

Length: 8:43

Sara Goldrick-Rab, PhD, Professor of Higher Education Policy and Sociology at Temple University

Prof. Goldrick-Rab was the lead author of study that found that 36 percent of students at 66 surveyed colleges and universities do not get enough to eat, and a similar number lack a secure place to live. She said skyrocketing college tuition and other fees, inadequate aid packages and growing enrollment among low-income students are some of the factors. She outlined several policy changes that could help.

Issues covered:

Poverty

Homelessness

Education

Length: 8:19

Anupam Jena, MD, PhD, Ruth L. Newhouse Associate Professor of Health Care Policy at Harvard Medical School, physician in the Department of Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital, Faculty Research Fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research Policy

It's an age-old axiom, but is joint pain, back pain or just a feeling in your bones a reliable predictor of rainy weather? Dr. Jena led a study that examined the question and he found no relationship between rainfall and aches or pains.

Issues covered:

Personal Health

Aging

Length: 4:39

Show # 2022-42

Date aired: Sunday, October 16, 2022

Stephen Smagula, PhD, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Epidemiology at the University of Pittsburgh

Prof. Smagula led a recent study that found that older adults with regular activity routines are happier and do better on cognitive tests. He said that his findings suggest that staying active all day and following the same routine each day are important for healthy aging and mental health.

Issues covered:

Aging

Personal Health

Length: 8:12

Catherine Pearlman, PhD, Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of Massachusetts Global, licensed clinical social worker, author of *“First Phone: A Child’s Guide to Digital Responsibility, Safety, and Etiquette”*

Dr. Pearlman shared advice for parents of eight- to twelve-year-old children about digital safety. She talked about the inability of kids to recognize dangers online, the pros and cons of social media and how to maintain parental limitations on smartphone use. She also explained how to impress on kids that anything posted online can potentially haunt them forever.

Issues covered:

Length: 9:05

**Digital Safety for Children
Parenting**

James S W Wolffsohn, PhD, Professor of Optometry at Aston University in Birmingham, England

Digital eye strain is a widespread and growing problem for people of all ages. Prof. Wolffsohn led a recent study that tested the 20-20-20 rule: taking a screen break of at least 20 seconds, every 20 minutes, to look at least 20 feet away. He found the practice does help ease some of the symptoms of prolonged computer use, and he suggested ways to take breaks frequently enough.

Issues covered:

Length: 5:08

**Personal Health
Media**

Show # 2022-43

Date aired: Sunday, October 23, 2022

Caroline Tocci, President & Co-Founder/Director of The Vanessa T. Marcotte Foundation, which advocates for safety awareness to prevent violence, objectification and harassment against women

Ms. Tocci’s cousin, Vanessa Marcotte, was a 27-year-old woman who, while running on a rural road in Princeton, Massachusetts, was assaulted and murdered in 2016. She offered safety tips for women to avoid violence or harassment, particularly when running. She said apps are available to track a runner’s location and share it with emergency contacts. She also explained how a woman should choose routes or schedules for a run.

Issues covered:

Length: 6:56

**Crime
Women’s Issues**

Marta L. Tellado, PhD, President and CEO of Consumer Reports, author of *“Buyer Aware: Harnessing Our Consumer Power for a Safe, Fair, and Transparent Marketplace”*

Ms. Tellado discussed the rampant abuse of online privacy and the misuse of consumer data. She said the virtual monopolies held by four online companies are a genuine problem for privacy and consumers’ rights. She believes that online algorithms are often biased towards people of color. She also discussed common misconceptions about safety testing and the mission of Consumer Reports.

Issues covered:

Length: 10:08

**Consumer Matters
Racial Bias
Online Privacy**

Frieda Birnbaum, PhD, research psychologist and psychotherapist, author of *“Life Begins At 60: A New View of Motherhood, Marriage, and Reinventing Ourselves”*

Dr. Birnbaum is the oldest woman in America to give birth to twins, and she shared her perspective on how and why parenting has changed tremendously in recent years. She explained why she and her husband chose to have more kids later in life, and what the pluses and minuses are to older parenting.

Issues covered:

**Parenting
Aging**

Length: 5:10

Show # 2022-44

Date aired: Sunday, November 6, 2022

Laura D. Quinby, PhD, Senior Research Economist at the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College

Dr. Quinby was a co-author of a Boston College brief that asked, “After 50 Years of Progress, How Prepared Are Women for Retirement?” She said that in the 50 years since Title IX’s passage, women have made major economic progress in education, earnings, and wealth, and that today, women who spend most of their lives single are as well prepared for retirement as married couples.

Issues covered:

**Women’s Issues
Retirement Planning**

Length: 6:56

Carl “Chip” Lavie, MD, Medical Director of Ochsner Health Cardiac Rehabilitation and Prevention in New Orleans

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. across most races and ethnicities, and doctors routinely tell patients to change unhealthy lifestyles. However, Dr. Lavie’s research found that doctors shouldn’t take a one-size-fits-all approach to lifestyle counseling, especially for those within underserved or socioeconomically disadvantaged populations. He said customized counseling can achieve small but statistically meaningful improvements in blood pressure, cholesterol and body fat.

Issues covered:

**Personal Health
Minority Concerns**

Length: 10:08

Dana Thomson, PhD, Senior Research Scientist at Child Trends, a research organization focused on child poverty and public policy

With little public notice, child poverty in the U.S. fell by 59% between 1993 and 2019. She said lower unemployment rates, increases in single mothers’ labor force participation, and increases in state minimum wages accounted for about a third of the improvement, but that taxpayer dollars spent on social programs were also a major factor. However, disparities by race and ethnicity, natural origin and family structure persisted. She explained what other changes she believes are needed to continue the trend.

Issues covered:

**Child Poverty
Government
Minority Concerns**

Length: 5:10

Show # 2022-45

Date aired: Sunday, November 13, 2022

Annie Duke, co-founder of the non-profit student advocacy organization called The Alliance for Decision Education, author of "*Quit: The Power of Knowing When to Walk Away*"

Ms. Duke outlined behavioral science research that shows that we are psychologically biased to grit things out for too long, even when there are clear signs that we should quit. She offered examples of how a decision to quit is affected by whether someone is winning or losing, and why we tend to increase our commitment to a losing cause.

Issues covered:

Length: 9:29

Career

Personal Finance

Government Policies

Andrew King, Research Analyst for the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association Foundation

Federal regulators appear to be taking steps toward a speed limiter mandate for commercial motor vehicles in 2023. Mr. King discussed the potential safety concerns if trucks are forced to drive slower than other traffic, including a lack of passing speed, increased congestion, and being rear-ended. He said that a nationwide 60 or 65 mph limit for trucks would create even greater safety issues in the handful of states with speed limits as high as 85 mph for cars.

Issues covered:

Length: 7:52

Traffic Safety

Supply Chain

Annalise LaPlume Cognitive Neuroscience Postdoctoral fellow, Senior Research Scientist at Child Trends, a research organization focused on child poverty and public policy

Dr. LaPlume was the lead author of a study that found that lifestyle may be more important than age in determining dementia risk, no matter how old we are. She outlined the eight major lifestyle choices that influence brain health. She said just one of those factors could reduce cognition by the equivalent of up to three years of aging.

Issues covered:

Length: 5:10

Alzheimer's Disease

Personal Health

Show # 2022-46

Date aired: Sunday, November 20, 2022

Odin Johnson, Jr, PhD, Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of Social Policy and STEM Equity at Johns Hopkins University,

Dr. Johnson led a study that found that students at high schools with prominent security measures, such as metal detectors, contraband sweeps, drug testing and security cameras, have lower math scores, are less likely to attend college and are suspended more frequently compared to students in schools with less surveillance. He said the policies even affect the academic performance of students who haven't exhibited behavioral problems.

Issues covered:

Length: 9:41

Education

Minority Concerns

Government Policies

Nikita Shah, MD, Medical Oncology Team Leader for the Breast Care Center at the Orlando Health Cancer Institute

About 42,000 women die of breast cancer each year in the US. Dr. Shah shared the findings of a recent survey by her organization that found that 22% of women ages 35 to 44 have never gotten a mammogram and have no plans of getting one. She outlined the potential reasons behind this trend and why this is of such great concern. She also explained why African American women often face a more aggressive disease course when faced with a breast cancer diagnosis.

Issues covered:

Length: 7:42

**Personal Health
Women's Concerns
Minority Concerns**

Lewie Pugh, Executive Vice President of the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, an advocacy organization for 150,000 independent truck drivers

Mr. Pugh talked about private and governmental efforts to recruit military veterans into the trucking industry. He said a lack of training often results in high turnover in trucking jobs. He also discussed his organization's "Truckers for Troops" fundraising program, which raises funds for care packages sent to military members serving in combat zones, as well as the Veterans Community Project to assist homeless veterans.

Issues covered:

Length: 5:05

**Veterans' Concerns
Transportation**

Show # 2022-47

Date aired: _____ **Time Aired:** _____

Lizzy Pope, PhD, RDN, Associate Professor, Director - Didactic Program in Dietetics, University of Vermont

Prof. Pope led a recent study of the most viewed content on TikTok relating to food, nutrition and weight. She said the videos perpetuate a toxic diet culture among teens and young adults and that expert voices are largely missing from the conversation. She suggested resources for parents who are concerned about their child's weight and overall health.

Issues covered:

Length: 9:29

**Weight Loss
Social Media
Mental Health**

Patric Richardson, clothing and laundry expert, author of "*Laundry Love: Finding Joy in a Common Chore*," host of the Discovery+ Series "The Laundry Guy"

Mr. Richardson offered essential tips for getting laundry clean and making the experience more enjoyable. He talked about the environmental and health impacts of well-known laundry detergents and fabric softeners. He also offered suggestions of how to keep white clothes looking bright and how/when to remove stains.

Issues covered:

Length: 7:52

**Consumer Matters
Environment**

Karri Carlson, Vice President of Operations for Leadtail, a B2B social media services agency

LinkedIn scams and fake Instagram accounts targeting businesses and executives are growing rapidly. Ms. Carlson discussed the most common scams, how they can dramatically affect businesses and what managers and small business owners can do to protect their companies.

Issues covered:

**Online Scams
Business**

Length: 5:10

Disc # 2022-48

Date aired: Sunday, November 27, 2022

Philip Pauli, Policy and Practice Director of RespectAbility, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowerment and self-advocacy for individuals with disabilities

Mr. Pauli said nearly 1 in 5 Americans live with some form of disability. He discussed some of the challenges they face, and explained how the Americans with Disabilities Act has improved many aspects of their lives. He also talked about the role that the media plays in perceptions of the disabled, and how technology improvements have improved mobility for many disabled people.

Issues covered:

**Disabilities
Government Regulation**

Length: 7:42

Natasha Ravinand, author of *“Girls With Dreams: Inspiring Girls to Code and Create in the New Generation”*

Only 29% of all science and engineering workers are female, and far fewer are minorities. Natasha Ravinand is a high school junior with a passion for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), who is striving to close the gender gap in tech. She talked about the reasons that girls lose interest in STEM subjects, and why the inclusion of women and minorities in technical workplaces is so important.

Issues covered:

**Women’s Issues
Minority Concerns
Education/STEM**

Length: 9:23

John Schwartz, reporter at The New York Times, author of *“This is the Year I Put My Financial Life in Order”*

Mr. Schwartz talked about the reasons that Americans tend to procrastinate when it comes to their finances. He outlined simple changes consumers can make to simplify their financial accounts, particularly retirement savings. He also explained how to do a self-checkup of health insurance coverage.

Issues covered:

**Retirement Planning
Senior Citizens**

Length: 5:01

Show # 2022-49

Date aired: Sunday, December 4, 2022

Nate Brown, PhD, Professor of Mathematics, Penn State University

Prof. Brown led a study that found that that black and Hispanic students who earn low grades in introductory science, technology, engineering, and math classes are less likely to earn degrees in these subjects than similar white or Asian students. He talked about the changes that could improve the problem. He said professors who teach introductory STEM courses need much more training in better teaching methods, in order to reach minority students.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:39

**Equity
Minority Concerns
Higher Education**

Michael F. Roizen, MD, Chief Wellness Officer and Chair of the Wellness Institute at the Cleveland Clinic, Professor of Medicine at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine, author of "*The Great Age Reboot: Cracking the Longevity Code for a Younger Tomorrow*"

Dr. Roizen believes that living to age 110 or 120 is within reach. He discussed the future of longevity, and how new scientific and medical advances are unlocking the ability for us to live younger, longer, and better. He said, in addition to a healthy diet and exercise, having social relationships is one of the biggest keys to slowing the aging process.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:45

**Personal Health
Aging
Science**

Eric Dahlin, PhD, Associate Professor in the Sociology department at Brigham Young University

It's easy to believe that robots are stealing jobs from human workers and drastically disrupting the labor market. However, Prof. Dahlin led a recent study that found that robots aren't replacing humans at the rate most people think. He noted that workplaces are integrating both employees and robots in ways that generate more value for human labor.

Issues covered:

Length: 5:01

**Workplace Matters
Productivity
Technology**

Disc # 2022-50

Date aired: Sunday, December 11, 2022

Lorenzo Cohen, PhD, Richard E. Haynes Distinguished Professor in Clinical Cancer Prevention and Director of the Integrative Medicine Program at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, co-author of "*Anti Cancer Living*"

Cancer remains one of the leading causes of death worldwide, and within the next 20 years, the number of new cancer cases is expected to increase by 70 percent. Dr. Cohen believes that if Americans focused on social and emotional support, stress management, sleep, exercise, diet, and minimizing exposure to environmental toxins, 50 to 70 percent of cancers could be prevented.

Issues covered:
Cancer Prevention
Personal Health

Length: 8:51

András Tilcsik, PhD, Canada Research Chair in Strategy, Organizations, and Society, and Associate Professor of Strategic Management at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management, author of *"Meltdown: Why Our Systems Fail and What We Can Do About It"*

From train derailments and massive oil spills to bankruptcies and medical errors, system failures are all too common -- and they're becoming more frequent. Dr. Tilzscik explained the common denominator in these system meltdowns. He believes that the increasing complexity and lack of slack in our systems create conditions ripe for failure and corruption. He also explained why diversity in design teams is crucial in preventing serious failures.

Issues covered:
Disaster Preparedness
Diversity
Government Regulation
Transportation

Length: 8:17

Jas Booth, veteran, Founder of Final Salute, Inc, a non-profit organization that assists female veterans and their children who are struggling with homelessness

Ms. Booth shared her personal story of struggling with homelessness after her military career ended. She said her experience caused her to start Final Salute to help other women vets, especially those with children. She said her organization has helped more than 5,000 women veterans who are homeless or in domestic violence situations.

Issues covered:
Homelessness
Veterans' Concerns
Domestic Violence

Length: 5:02

Disc # 2022-51

Date aired: Sunday, December 18, 2022

Daniel Romer, PhD, Research Director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, part of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Romer discussed annual media claims that the nation's suicide rate rises during the year-end holiday season. He has studied suicide trends for more than 20 years and has found that the average daily suicide rate during the holiday months is among the lowest of the year. He said slightly more than half of news stories that directly discussed the holidays and the suicide rate supported the myth. He explained why it is important to dispel the misinformation.

Issues covered:
Suicide
Media
Mental Health

Length: 8:35

Shawn P. McElmurry, PhD, PE, Professor and CEE Graduate Program Director in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Wayne State University in Detroit

About 30% of community water systems have some service lines that contain lead. Prof. McElmurry recently co-authored a study intended to assist state and local water authorities in making decisions

about where to prioritize funding for infrastructure improvements on drinking water lead service line replacement programs. He outlined other environmental risks related to the lead exposure issue, and steps consumers can take to protect themselves.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:48

**Water Quality
Infrastructure
Public Health**

Elise Allen, graduate student in educational studies at Ohio State University

Ms. Allen led a study of extracurricular activities for kindergarten students. She found that children of highly educated mothers were about twice as likely to take part in sports or other after-school activities as those of less educated moms. She also found that white kindergarteners were 2.6 times more likely to participate than children of other races. She explained the learning, achievement and social development benefits of these activities.

Issues covered:

Length: 5:09

**Early Childhood Education
Parenting
Minority Concerns**

Disc # 2022-52

Date aired: Sunday, December 25, 2022

Erin E. Murphy, expert on DNA and forensic evidence, Professor of Law at New York University

Prof. Murphy discussed the privacy and legal concerns raised by the Golden State Killer case, in which a notorious serial killer was captured 30 years after the crimes via DNA submitted to a publicly available genealogy website. She noted that the type of DNA testing used by genealogy sites is a much broader and more powerful tool than the version permitted in criminal justice databases. She also discussed recent advances that will make DNA testing much faster and even more useful to law enforcement.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:31

**Privacy Concerns
Criminal Justice
Legal**

David Ballard, PhD, Director of the American Psychological Association's Center for Organizational Excellence

The #MeToo movement gripped the nation and toppled major figures throughout society, but a study from the American Psychological Association found that in its aftermath, corporations took weak steps, at best, to prevent sexual harassment and inappropriate conduct. Mr. Ballard said most policy and training changes were aimed at limiting the liability of the company, rather than to effect real change. He found that organizations with women in senior leadership roles were much more likely to have taken new steps to prevent harassment and to encourage employees to report it.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:46

**Sexual Harassment
Women's Concerns
Workplace Matters**

Julie Jason, award-winning financial columnist, author of “*Retire Securely*”

Ms. Jason talked about the best ways to start to save for retirement, even for those struggling with student debt. She said it is critical to start young, because of the power of compounding. She also discussed common financial scams that consumers should be alert to.

Issues covered:

Retirement Planning
Personal Finance

Length: 5:04

Some KY Schools Offering Mental-Health Services Amid Youth Crisis

Nadia Ramlagan

A pilot program launched by the Todd County School District and the county's local health department offers free mental-health case-management services to all public-school students.

Abby Dill, Axis program supervisor for the Todd County Health Department, said anxiety, depression and self-harm are on the rise among Kentucky youths. She explained there are not enough therapists and counselors in rural communities to meet the growing need, and said in the aftermath of the pandemic, students are struggling with emotional well-being.

"Doing a case-management model allowed us to do a needs assessment," Dill pointed out. "And really provide wraparound services and work with people in our rural community to tap into services that existed and see where service gaps existed, so we could build on those within our program."

Research from the Annie E. Casey Foundation shows the state saw a **28% increase** in children's anxiety or depression between 2016 and 2020. And recent data shows more than one in seven Kentucky high school students reported having seriously considered suicide. If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental-health crisis, contact the national **Suicide and Crisis hotline** by calling or texting 988 to get help from a trained crisis counselor.

Mark Thomas, superintendent of the Todd County Public School District, said the Axis program also helps students access food, clothing, housing and transportation, and substance-abuse treatment.

"It's one of those ideas of 'it takes a village to raise a child.' We incorporate that," Thomas emphasized. "And then we also think of ourselves as a family. We're all one big family looking out for the best interests of each other, not just our children, but also with our staff."

Allison Adams, vice president for policy at the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, said Thomas was recently recognized for his efforts with a Kentucky **Healthy Champions** Award. She added across the state, individuals are coming up with solutions to improve their communities.

"There's opportunities to lift up people in your communities who are working to influence health," Adams stressed. "Think about who that person is in your community and consider nominating them for the Healthy Kentucky champion class of 2023."

Trust Your Gut, Know the Signs to Spot, Prevent Child Abuse

Nadia Ramlagan

Child abuse cases in the state dropped between 2019 and 2020, but Kentucky still **ranks fifth** among states for incidents of child maltreatment, according to the latest federal data.

Dr. Kelsey Gregory, a pediatrician specializing in child-abuse cases in the Division of Forensic Medicine at the University of Kentucky, said the medical community uses what's known as the "TEN-4" rule, which is identifying bruising on the 'torso, ears and neck' on children under age four, and bruising anywhere on an infant, as a red flag. She added in Kentucky, state law requires all adults to report suspected cases of abuse.

"Anyone has the ability to intervene on behalf of a child by making a report to either DCBS or law enforcement," Gregory stressed. "Identifying those children early and intervening with those agencies really has the potential of preventing serious harm and death."

In addition to the TEN-4 rule, experts have developed "FACESp," which stands for 'frenulum,' the tissue connecting the mouth to gums, the 'angle' of the jaw, 'cheek,' 'eyelid,' and 'sclera' or whites of the eyes, and 'p' for patterned injuries on a child's skin, as other warning signs.

This week, Kosair Charities and the Face It Movement are hosting free virtual and in-person training on the TEN-4 FACESp bruising rule. For more information, visit faceitmovement.org.

Liz Renner, a Madison County resident and parent of a now seven-year-old son who survived pediatric abusive head trauma as an infant at the hands of a caregiver, said while her son is now happy and thriving, he faces a lifetime of disability. She emphasized she hopes to raise awareness of the rules signaling warning signs.

"Always trust your gut," Renner urged. "I had a gut feeling, not directed towards abuse, but I had a gut feeling something wasn't correct. So parents, caregivers, always trust your gut instinct. My second advice would be to always reach out to your pediatrician."

Lynn Hulsey, associate director of the Family Enrichment Center in Bowling Green, said her organization works to support families in the region through programming and home visitation. She explained while data show child abuse numbers across the state have not increased significantly, the cases are more severe.

"Babies don't come with instructions," Hulsey remarked. "Those first five years are critical. And if we can intervene in those first five years, child abuse is 100% preventable."

If you suspect child abuse, she advised making a report to [Child Protective Services](#) at 1-877-KYSAFE1.

White House 'Food As Medicine' Strategy Will Help Expand Local Efforts in KY

Nadia Ramlagan

The White House is recommending "food as medicine" as part of a new **nationwide strategy** to increase healthy eating and reduce the number of Americans struggling with diet-related conditions such as obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure.

Michelle Howell, owner of the Need More Acres Farm in Scottsville, said U. S. Department of Agriculture funding has helped expand a state pilot program called Grocery RX, which began in 2017. The program allows Medicaid, WIC and SNAP participants with dietary recommendations from their doctor to receive fresh food boxes through farmers markets, farm pickup or home delivery.

"What that means is that we're able to work with public health providers, health departments, hospitals, doctors, resource providers," Howell outlined. "Now we're working alongside what they're being told, changes they need to be making for their health, and then combining that with the access to the food."

She added the program is now available in almost every Kentucky county. Howell is a recent recipient of the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky's 2022 **Healthy Kentucky Champions** award. The awards recognize individuals dedicated to improving the health of Kentuckians at a community or state level.

Howell noted for the past decade, the **Double Dollars** program has allowed SNAP participants to double the amount of food they purchase at local farmers markets. She added she is grateful public awareness on the food-disease connection has increased, and pointed out folks need community support to help change eating habits.

"I think the reason why farmers and consumers can make this kind of work happen is because we know each other's name, we recognize one another, we get to build a relationship," Howell emphasized. "That helps meet that emotional need, that then makes it easier to make some of these dietary changes."

Chloe Atwater, policy associate at the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, explained the White House strategy also includes a plan to address food waste.

"We have a large resistance to eating fruits and vegetables that are bruised or imperfect," Atwater pointed out. "And diverting those foods from the landfill into the charitable food system could go a long way in addressing food and nutrition and security."

According to Feeding America, each year in the U.S. more than **100 billion pounds of food** -- equivalent to 130 billion meals -- end up in the dumpster.

Push to Pardon KY Residents Convicted of Marijuana Possession

Nadia Ramlagan

Criminal justice reform advocates in the Commonwealth are asking Gov. Andy Beshear to decriminalize marijuana possession. The request follows President Joe Biden's announcement of [mass pardons](#) at the federal level for people who were convicted of carrying marijuana.

Rep. Nima Kulkarni, D-Louisville, explained state decriminalization policies would ensure Kentuckians with minor drug possession and paraphernalia charges would have the option for record expungement.

"And what Biden recommended is that governors look into what those possible pardon powers are," Kulkarni noted. "And to use them, to make sure that his focus on the decriminalization aspect of cannabis use is done on a state level."

She added mounting evidence indicates simply legalizing marijuana does not significantly affect the number of people facing barriers in employment, housing and reduced income as consequences of drug-possession charges, particularly Black and brown people.

Kungu Njuguna, policy strategist for the ACLU of Kentucky, pointed out marijuana possession is a major driver of incarceration nationwide.

"What we know in Kentucky is we know that in 2020, there were over 7,000 Kentuckians who had a conviction for possession of marijuana," Njuguna reported. "That's one year. So, the governor could do a great many things by doing this pardon."

Earlier this year, Kulkarni [introduced legislation](#) which would have decriminalized cannabis possession, of an ounce or less, for adults 21 and older, and also provide funding for clearing their records.

"In Kentucky, it's \$500 per application," Kulkarni emphasized. "Which is pretty prohibitive, when you think about how difficult it is for people with convictions on their record to get jobs."

Gov. Andy Beshear has created a [Team Kentucky Medical Cannabis Advisory Committee](#) to provide feedback on how legalizing medical cannabis could help Kentuckians with chronic pain and other medical conditions.

Experts: Boost SNAP Purchasing Power in Next Farm Bill

Nadia Ramlagan

Families are being forced to stretch their SNAP dollars due to inflation, and advocates say they want Congress to tackle the issue in the 2023 farm bill. Lawmakers are expected to begin working soon on the legislation, which focuses primarily on food-and-farming.

It is set to expire at the end of this year, and stands to be reauthorized every 5 years. According to the [Kentucky Center for Economic Policy](#), more than 12% of the state's residents rely on SNAP.

Cassidy Wheeler, advocacy coordinator for Feeding Kentucky, said it will be critical to expand federal funding for the program as food and gas prices continue to soar. "We're looking at increasing SNAP purchasing power because, obviously, cost is rising, inflation is very high," Wheeler said. "That is putting an increased pressure on food banks to meet those needs."

She added that advocates also want Congress to boost resources for the Farm to Food Bank Program, to ensure residents in need have access to local, fresh produce, while supporting the agricultural economy.

Wheeler says the SNAP application process is cumbersome, and often prevents eligible individuals from signing up. She is hoping lawmakers make changes in the next farm bill that simplify and streamline the enrollment process.

"Part of that is our state requirements," Wheeler said. "Here in Kentucky, we have more restrictions than the federal program requires."

She said modifying the legislation is part of a larger effort to eliminate stigma around the program.

"SNAP is feeding our most vulnerable populations, and it's doing a great job of it because for every one meal a food bank serves, SNAP serves nine," Wheeler said.

SNAP enrollment jumped by 16% statewide because of layoffs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, but participation has fallen since last summer, according to federal data.

Abortion Measures on Ballots the 'Most on Record'

Nadia Ramlagan

By Carrie Baker for Ms. Magazine.

Broadcast version by Nadia Ramlagan for Kentucky News Connection reporting for the Ms. Magazine-Public News Service Collaboration

Overturning Roe v. Wade in June, the Supreme Court declared that "the authority to regulate abortion is returned to the people and their elected representatives." But with rampant voter suppression and gerrymandering on the rise-**greenlit** by the Supreme Court-these "elected representatives" often do not fairly represent the people. This makes ballot initiatives an increasingly important avenue for ensuring women's rights against the extremism of ruby red legislatures. Just **look at Kansas**.

On Aug. 2, Kansas primary voters overwhelmingly rejected a proposed constitutional amendment that would have allowed the Republican-dominated state Legislature to severely restrict access to abortion. The amendment was a response to a 2019 state Supreme Court decision in *Hodes & Nauser v. Schmidt*, which established that the Kansas Bill of Rights includes a right to abortion. The amendment would have overturned this decision and declared that "the constitution of the state of Kansas ... does not create or secure a right to abortion."

Some 59 percent of voters cast ballots against the proposed amendment in an election with a strong turnout-especially among Democrats and Independents-compared to the 2018 midterm primary. This despite the fact that there were no heavily contested Democratic primary races that would have pulled in their votes, and Independents in Kansas are not allowed to vote in partisan candidate races.

In the November elections, there will be five more ballot measures on abortion across the U.S.-the most on record for any single year.

Constitutional Amendment 2 would amend Kentucky's Bill of Rights to declare that there is no state constitutional right to abortion. Supporters backed the measure to forestall Kentucky courts from making a ruling similar to the Kansas Supreme Court's *Hodes* decision.

Protect Kentucky Access is leading the campaign against the amendment. "Healthcare and the right to bodily autonomy are basic human rights," said Tamarra Wieder, Kentucky state director of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Indiana and Kentucky. "This constitutional amendment puts tens of thousands of Kentuckians' access to safe, legal abortion at risk, and inserts the government into our individual, personal healthcare decisions. Abortion is healthcare and is a core component of social and economic equality for individuals, their families and their communities."

Another anti-abortion measure will appear on the midterm ballot in Montana, declaring that "infants born alive at any stage of development are legal persons" and punishing healthcare providers with civil penalties and up to 20 years of jail time if they do not provide medical care. Currently, Montana law requires medical care only if an infant is viable.

By contrast, three states have ballot measures that would add explicit protections for abortion to state constitutions.

While courts in nine states have ruled that provisions related to privacy or personal autonomy secure the right to abortion, and other states have guaranteed this right through statute, no state currently provides an explicit constitutional protection for abortion. Voters in Vermont, California and Michigan have the opportunity to change that.

In Vermont, voters will decide on Proposal 5, the Right to Personal Reproductive Autonomy Amendment to the Vermont Constitution, which states that "an individual's right to personal reproductive autonomy is central to the liberty and dignity to determine one's own life course." The amendment would prohibit this constitutional right from being "denied or infringed unless justified by a compelling State interest achieved by the least restrictive means."

In California, voters will weigh in on Proposition 1, the Right to Reproductive Freedom Amendment, which would revise the California Constitution to forbid the state from interfering with or denying "an individual's reproductive freedom ... which includes their fundamental right to ... have an abortion and ... contraceptives."

Advocates in Michigan submitted 753,759 signatures to place a measure on the November ballot that would create a state constitutional right to reproductive freedom, defined as "the right to make and effectuate decisions about all matters relating to pregnancy, including but not limited to prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, contraception, sterilization, abortion care, miscarriage management, and infertility care." The ballot initiative would allow the state to regulate abortion after fetal viability; however, the state could not ban the use of abortion to "protect the life or physical or mental health of the pregnant individual," as determined by an attending healthcare professional.

In addition to these abortion-related measures, the general election ballot in Nevada includes an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) that would add language to the Nevada Constitution that "prohibits the denial or abridgment of rights on account of an individual's race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, ancestry or national origin." State Sen. Pat Spearman (D), a sponsor of the amendment, said, "We've waited long enough for equal rights to be incorporated into our state constitution. ... We must be brave in protecting the weak, the downtrodden, the oppressed. We must be brave in lifting our fellow Nevadans to a place of justice and equality." If the amendment passes, Nevada will become the 27th state to have an ERA in its constitution.

Other noteworthy ballot initiatives include minimum wage amendments in Nevada and Nebraska, a collective bargaining measure in Illinois, a right to healthcare amendment in Oregon, a Medicaid expansion initiative in South Dakota and a New Mexico amendment to direct public money to early childhood programs.

Voters in five states—Alabama, Louisiana, Oregon, Tennessee and Vermont—will decide on ballot measures to repeal language from their state constitutions that allows for enslavement or servitude as punishments for crimes or, in Vermont, for the payment of debts, damages or fines.

If the Kansas primary vote is a sign, these ballot measures could expand women's rights significantly in a number of key states.

Carrie Baker wrote this article for Ms. Magazine.

11/13

After Voters Reject Amendment 2, KY Supreme Court to Hear Oral Arguments on Abortion Ban

Nadia Ramlagan

Kentucky voters rejected a ballot measure that would have changed language in the state's constitution to permanently deny the right to an abortion.

Reproductive-health advocates say the election results could pave the way for striking down the state's trigger law, which banned the procedure in the state immediately after the overturning of Roe v. Wade earlier this year.

Kentucky State Director for Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates Tamarra Wieder explained that the state's Supreme Court will hear **oral arguments on November 15 in a case that considers if the ban violates the privacy, bodily autonomy and self-determination rights guaranteed by the Kentucky Constitution.**

"And it's no coincidence that we're in the courts next week," said Wieder. "The Supreme Court said they wanted to see what Kentuckians wanted from this vote."

Kentucky's official voter turnout report will be available on the State Board of Elections website in the coming days, but Secretary of State Michael Adam has **said more than 50% of registered voters cast their ballot on Tuesday** - possibly the highest voter turnout in a midterm election in decades.

On Twitter, **Adams thanked candidates of both parties** who lost "and graciously conceded rather than falsely alleging voter suppression or election fraud."

Wieder said reaction from residents on the "No" vote on Amendment 2 has been strong.

"When I'm out in the community, all I hear is that people want more access to health care, not less," said Wieder. "And this win transcended political ideology, religious identity, and really shows that Kentuckians come together to support people seeking health care, and they believe abortion is health care."

Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron **said in a statement released Wednesday** his office has filed a motion with the Kentucky Supreme Court arguing that voters' decision should have, quote, "no bearing on whether the court should consider creating a Kentucky version of Roe versus Wade."

More Kentuckians Behind on Utility Bills as Rates Soar

Nadia Ramlagan

One out of six American families is behind on their **utility bills**, according to the National Energy Assistance Directors Association.

Part of the reason for higher utility costs is additional fuel surcharges, based on the energy customers use in kilowatt-hours.

Joshua Bills, commercial energy specialist for the Mountain Association, said charges fluctuate in response to the price of fuel, noting utility companies use the surcharge to pass the buck onto ratepayers.

"They just pass those costs directly to customers, as they receive them," Bills explained. "It sort of reduces the risk to the utility of the volatility, and places all of that volatility on customers."

He pointed out switching to energy-efficient light bulbs, upgrading heating and cooling systems, and running home appliances during "off-peak" hours each month are all ways to decrease consumption and reduce the monthly surcharge.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration predicts electricity prices will **continue to rise**, with global instability and the continued increase in demand for power, through the winter.

Cara Cooper, coordinator for the group Kentuckians for Energy Democracy, said public comment periods are some of the best tools people have to help direct how energy rates are determined, and what kinds of energy sources companies should prioritize.

"Every day, the Public Service Commission in Kentucky is making really important decisions related to regulating our electric utilities," Cooper noted.

Research shows states with solar and wind infrastructure in place saw lower rate increases between June 2021 and July 2022, compared to states without renewable-power options. Bills stressed counties in the Commonwealth are beginning to take steps toward clean energy, but progress has been slow.

"Kentucky has a long ways to go compared to other states," Bills acknowledged. "We do have quite an influx of proposals for merchant solar. But there's very little groundbreaking happening yet with all those proposals."

Merchant solar is solar power financed by investors and sold to utility companies. Bills noted the **Inflation Reduction Act** has incentives for boosting energy efficiency and clean energy.

Next year, Kentucky small businesses and households may be eligible for federal assistance to help reduce their power usage.

Mental Health, Gun Prevalence Top Concerns for Kentucky Kids

Nadia Ramlagan

Across the state, kids say they want more resources for mental health - according to [the recently released 2022 Kentucky Kids Count County data book](#).

More than 15% of Kentucky's children and teens struggled with anxiety and depression in 2020.

Kirsten Yancy is a senior at Maryfield High School in Graves County. She said students are struggling to keep pace with rapidly changing technology and face greater academic and social pressure.

"It just puts a lot of pressure," said Yancy, "because you need to live up to certain standards while also maintaining your own life."

Students also cite concerns over school safety, whether that's being prepared to act quickly and effectively in the case of a school shooting or improving their school climate.

Kentucky kids also say they feel threatened by too many guns in their community. The new data shows firearm deaths among children in the Commonwealth have significantly increased since 2013.

Kentucky Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman said lawmakers understand that schools, especially those in rural areas, are strained for resources to tackle mental health. She said she expects the issue will be a top priority when the state Legislature convenes in January.

"We know that our schools are now taking on so much of the challenges that kids bring with them from home," said Coleman. "And so this was a core piece of that agenda that we are going to continue to work through and work with legislators on through the upcoming session."

Patricia Tennen, chief operating officer of Kentucky Youth Advocates, added that that county-level data provides a snapshot of community resiliency in the face of an unprecedented pandemic and numerous natural disasters.

"When local leaders have that local data on how they're doing," said Tennen, "they can really target and know how kids are faring in their community and what targeted efforts they can do to improve well-being."

Detailed information on more than a dozen measures of child well-being in every Kentucky county can be found at ['kyyouth.org/kentucky-kids-count'](https://kyyouth.org/kentucky-kids-count).

RSV, Flu, COVID: KY Faces "Triple Threat" This Winter

Nadia Ramlagan

The flu, COVID and RSV are rapidly spreading in Kentucky, and health experts say that's a problem for hospitals, schools and the state's vulnerable residents.

So far, more than 20 school districts have temporarily halted classes due to RSV. At Norton Children's Hospital, pediatrician Dr. Robert Blair said respiratory viruses spread primarily by airborne droplets from coughing and sneezing. He explained that premature babies and young children with congenital heart disease, reactive airway disease or asthma are particular susceptible to RSV. They can wind up in the hospital on a ventilator, so he encouraged families to do everything they can to stop the spread of the virus.

"We need to pay attention to people who are sick, and isolate them and support them, and encourage them to mask and take care of themselves, and get medical care," he said. "And these little babies that are very, very high risk need to not be exposed to people with colds."

The American Academy of Pediatrics and Children's Hospital Association have asked President Joe Biden to declare a federal emergency to provide more support to combat the nationwide surge in pediatric hospitalizations driven by RSV and the flu.

Blair said normally, newborns' immune systems come into contact with RSV, but he pointed out that babies born during pandemic lockdowns didn't have that exposure.

"And so here they are, two or two-and-a-half or three years old, and they're catching these virus infections for the very first time," he said, "and their immune systems have not really been primed well."

Kelly Taulbee, director of communications and development with Kentucky Voices for Health, added that COVID precautions can help stop the spread of all viruses.

"Emphasis on hand washing, social distancing, covering your cough. Staying home when you're sick, even if it just seems like mild cold-like symptoms," she said. "As we've seen a lot of those precautions lapsing - those public health policies that were in place during the pandemic, early on - we've seen a resurgence of all of these diseases, and RSV is among them."

There currently is no Food and Drug Administration-approved vaccine for RSV, although clinical trials are ongoing. However, Taulbee said flu shots are easily accessible in every county and are effective at preventing illness, especially among young children, people 65 and older or those at risk for serious complications.

12/11

KY Foster Kids Say They Want Stability and Better Care

Nadia Ramlagan

According to a [new report](#), a significant number of the state's youths are institutionalized, not because of a need for intensive supervision but because kinship or foster families are not available.

The pandemic pushed Kentucky's child welfare agencies and workforce to its limits, and after the recent deaths of children in the state's residential facilities, advocates are calling for reforms. In 2020, more than 8,000 children in the Commonwealth were placed in foster care.

Tamara Vest, a University of Kentucky graduate student and intern for Kentucky Youth Advocates, said prevention is the best strategy.

"Catching things upstream so that you don't have to remove children from their homes, but you're able to help families get the resources that they need so that separation doesn't occur," Vest explained.

Roughly 10% of Kentucky's foster care kids live in a group home or institution.

Elutan Dawson, a youth development specialist and former foster youth, said it is critical for young people to spend time with volunteers and mentors, to strengthen their network of support, help them gain skills and teach them life lessons.

"Mentorship and just the opportunities to engage with volunteers were very helpful for me," Dawson recounted. "I've been able to learn some skills, went hiking and Boy Scouts when I was in residential, and I learned how to camp. I can go camp now."

Cynthia Scheppers, peer coach coordinator for Kentucky Youth Advocates, said communities have a collective responsibility to support youths without kinship ties, especially during the holiday season.

"Whether that be in the form of getting presents or opening your home for the youths for the holidays," Scheppers suggested.

The state's network of social workers plays a critical role in ensuring foster youths have opportunities to forge healthy relationships. According to the report, the pandemic worsened staffing issues, and retaining direct-care workers in residential facilities is an ongoing challenge.

Poll: COVID Not Stopping Kentuckians' Holiday Plans

Nadia Ramlagan

The majority of Kentucky families say they'll be gathering as usual for the holidays, according to a [new poll](#).

More than eight in 10 Kentuckians responded it is "not too likely" or "not likely at all" COVID-19 would keep them from the festivities.

Ben Chandler, CEO of the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, explained choosing to get vaccinated against both COVID and the flu can help protect loved ones. He added the new survey results showed most Kentuckians see getting vaccinated as a personal choice.

"Nearly three-quarters of vaccinated Kentuckians were either 'very likely' or 'somewhat likely' to receive a COVID-19 booster shot if it's recommended to be taken annually, similar to the flu shot," Chandler reported.

More than 75% of people who have not yet received a COVID vaccine said they will definitely not get one. The Kentucky Department for Public Health reported 58% of the population is [fully vaccinated](#) and 37% is boosted.

Chandler added frequent hand-washing and other simple but critical strategies for not spreading germs and viruses can help ensure people spend more quality time with family and friends.

"In cases where you feel particularly vulnerable, wear masks and make sure that you are not sick or symptomatic in any way when you do go to holiday functions."

Dr. Christopher Jones, executive medical director of the Trager Transplant Center at University of Louisville Health, pointed out while some may think the pandemic is over, COVID-19 is still around, and RSV and influenza cases are on the rise. He emphasized the elderly, the very young, and immunocompromised patients can become extremely ill from any one of the viruses.

"People are sicker than what they used to be when they would come in with RSV, or with the flu," Jones observed. "Everything is a little more heightened now, and we are seeing more people fill up our hospitals."

Jones emphasized receiving a flu shot and COVID booster are ways to avoid ending up in the emergency room. He also advised Kentuckians to be conscious about spending time indoors in crowded spaces unmasked, especially right before traveling.

12/25

In 2022, KY Became 2nd State to Pass Death-Penalty Mental-Illness Exemption

Nadia Ramlagan

Kentucky became the second state in the nation this year to pass an exemption to the death penalty for people with a serious mental illness. Signed into law by Governor Andy Beshear in April, [House Bill 269](#) requires that a defendant must have had a documented diagnosis and active symptoms of mental illness at the time of his or her offense.

Research suggests 43% of prisoners executed between 2000 and 2015 were medically diagnosed as mentally ill at some point in their lives.

Robert Dunham, Executive Director of the Death Penalty Information Center, said there has been a slow shift toward considering a different approach in sentencing people who are severely mentally ill.

"I think there's a growing awareness around the world that it is not appropriate to subject people who are seriously mentally ill to capital punishment," Dunham said. "And that's a view that's been growing within the United States as well."

According to the [report](#), with the exception of the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021, the eighteen executions carried out in 2022 are the fewest on record since 1991. As of this year, 27 people remain on death row in the Commonwealth.

Dunham noted while the number of executions are down, the number in which there have been significant problems is up. He explained there were problems this year in seven executions stemming from executioner incompetence, failures to follow protocols, or defects in the protocols themselves that resulted in hours-long deaths.

"There have been botched executions in the United States, as long as executions have been carried out. But we have now reached the point where they seem to be happening over and over and over," Dunham said.

He added the issues raise serious concerns about the applications of the death penalty and the methods used to carry it out.

"All of these things provide evidence that states are not taking this responsive ability sufficiently seriously. And that is the kind of thing that continues to undermine public confidence in letting states actually have this punishment at all," he said.

A [Gallup poll](#) released in May found 55% of Americans say they believe the death penalty is morally acceptable.