



**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.



Weekly Public Affairs Program

QUARTERLY ISSUES REPORT, APRIL-JUNE, 2022

Show # 2022-14

Date aired: Sunday, April 3, 2022

Gary L. Freed, MD, MPH, pediatrician, co-director of the University of Michigan Health C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health

Dr. Freed led a nationwide poll that found that more than a quarter of parents say their adolescent-aged child has seen a mental health specialist, with nearly 60% of those reporting a visit within the past year. He said even before the pandemic, mental health disorders in adolescents, such as depression and anxiety, were prevalent. He added that lockdowns, school closings and isolation exacerbated these problems. He talked about common obstacles encountered by parents who seek mental health treatment for their children.

Issues covered:
Adolescent Mental Health
Parenting

Length: 8:09

Emma J. Hudgins, PhD, FRQNT Postdoctoral fellow, Bennett Lab in the Department of Biology at Carleton University

Dr. Hudgins was the lead author of a study that estimates that over the next 30 years, 1.4 million street trees on public land will be killed by invasive insects, primarily the emerald ash borer, costing over \$900 million to replace. She projects that an additional 87 million urban trees on private property will also die. She talked about potential strategies in urban planning to reduce the likelihood of such huge tree losses in the future.

Issues covered:
Emerald Ash Bore
Environment
Government Spending

Length: 8:55

Matthew Harding, PhD, Professor of Economics and Statistics, University of California, Irvine, UCI Faculty Innovation Fellow

Dr. Harding led research that found that a person's credit score can predict when they will die. He said having a low credit score doesn't mean someone is more likely to die young. He explained the two major connections between mortality and credit scores,

Issues covered:
Longevity
Personal Finance

Length: 5:10

Show # 2022-15

Date aired: Sunday, April 10, 2022

Tom McParland, car buying expert and consumer advocate, founder of the car buying service Auto Match Consulting

In recent months, prices for new and used cars have skyrocketed to historic levels. Mr. McParland explained the factors contributing to the inflation. He discussed unusual and creative fees that many dealers are adding to car prices, and how consumers can deal with them. He also offered money-saving suggestions for buyers in the used car market.

Issues covered:
Consumer Matters
Economy

Length: 8:09

Rebecca Knight, senior correspondent for Insider

Many job seekers are accepting offers, only to find that the job and work environment are vastly different than the recruiter portrayed them. Ms. Knight said a recent survey found that 72% of new hires felt immediate regret because they believed that they had been deceived by a recruiter. She outlined the questions that savvy job seekers should ask in the interview process.

Issues covered:
Employment
Career

Length: 8:55

Christina Abdel-Shaheed, PhD, Early Career Development Fellow at the School of Public Health at University of Sydney

Virtually every medicine is known to cause at least a few unintended side effects. Dr. Abdel-Shaheed led a study that examined immune responses linked to acetaminophen (Tylenol), non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen, and opioid analgesics. The results were mixed, and she explained the varying effects and the implications in combating various infectious conditions – including COVID-19.

Issues covered:
Personal Health

Length: 5:10

Show # 2022-16

Date aired: Sunday, April 17, 2022

Minda Harts, author of *“You Are More Than Magic: The Black and Brown Girls' Guide to Finding Your Voice”*

Ms. Harts offered advice to girls of color looking to find their voice and claim space as they prepare for high school, college, and the job market. She explained how young women can create boundaries as teenagers, why locating a mentor is critical to success, and how girls can find the courage to speak up in difficult conversations and negotiations.

Issues covered:
Minority Concerns
Women's Issues

Length: 8:09

Loretta L. Worters, Vice President of Media Relations, Insurance Information Institute

The cost of home construction is skyrocketing due to inflation, and this could spell trouble for homeowners. Ms. Worters said homeowners may discover they are underinsured if they need to rebuild in a covered insurance claim. She outlined what consumers need to know to assess whether they are appropriately covered for homeowners, car and umbrella policies in times of high inflation.

Issues covered:
Consumer Matters
Insurance

Length: 8:55

Whitney Goodman, licensed psychotherapist, owner of the Collaborative Counseling Center, a private therapy practice in Miami, author of *"Toxic Positivity: Keeping It Real in a World Obsessed With Being Happy"*

Ms. Goodman explained the concept of "toxic positivity," in which society constantly tells people that the key to happiness is silencing negativity. She outlined simple ways to experience and work through difficult emotions, leading to more authenticity, connection, and personal growth.

Issues covered:
Mental Health

Length: 5:10

Show # 2022-17

Date aired: Sunday, April 24, 2022

Annie Grace, author of *"This Naked Mind: Control Alcohol, Find Freedom, Discover Happiness & Change Your Life"*

Many people question whether drinking has become too big a part of their lives, and worry that it may even be affecting their health. Ms. Grace shared her personal struggles with alcohol addiction and how she quit. She debunked myths connected to social drinking. She also discussed societal pressures, psychological factors, and other reasons people drink.

Issues covered:
Substance Abuse
Mental Health

Length: 8:25

John Brown Miller, PhD, global expert on public infrastructure, former Professor of Construction Management and Civil And Environmental Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Dr. Brown discussed why government costs so much and why public infrastructure projects are frequently delayed or over budget. He offered examples to illustrate how other countries' public works projects are often completed in more cost-effective and efficient ways than in the U.S.

Issues covered:
Public Infrastructure
Government Spending

Length: 8:50

Jodie Plumert, PhD, Professor and Starch Faculty Fellow at the University of Iowa

For adults, crossing the street by foot seems easy. Dr. Plumert led a study that found that most kids' perceptual judgment and motor skills aren't developed enough to safely cross a street until age 14. She discussed the precautions that parents should take for younger children.

Issues covered:

**Traffic Safety
Child Safety**

Length: 4:54

Show # 2022-18

Date aired: Sunday, May 1, 2022

Sadé Lindsay, PhD, sociologist in the Cornell Brooks School of Public Policy at Cornell University

Many prisons offer vocational training and other educational opportunities for inmates. However, Dr. Lindsay led a study that found that the formerly incarcerated face a "prison credential dilemma" when deciding whether to use credentials from prison when seeking employment. Her study found that just 2 of 50 former inmates were successful in using their prison education credentials to find a job. She talked about the most common programs offered in prisons.

Issues covered:

**Criminal Justice
Education
Employment**

Length: 8:35

Heather Turgeon, MFT, co-author of "*Generation Sleepless: Why Tweens and Teens Aren't Sleeping Enough and How We Can Help Them*"

Ms. Turgeon said today's teenagers are caught in a perfect storm of omnipresent screens, academic overload, night owl biology and early school start times. She said today's teens are operating in a constant state of sleep debt while struggling to meet the demands of adolescence. She offered suggestions for parents who want to help their kids develop healthy sleep habits.

Issues covered:

Adolescent Health

Length: 8:43

Kritee Gujral, PhD, Research Health Economist in the Health Economics Resource Center of the Veterans Administration Palo Alto Health Care System

Dr. Gujral led a Veterans Administration study that found that rural veterans with mental-health issues were likelier to get online treatment after receiving iPads from the Department of Veteran Affairs, reducing their risk of suicide during the COVID-19 pandemic. She said the results were very promising, and the initiative will continue in the future.

Issues covered:

**Veterans' Concerns
Mental Health**

Length: 5:03

Show # 2022-19

Date aired: Sunday, May 8, 2022

Steven H. Woolf, MD, MPH, Director Emeritus and Senior Advisor in the Center on Society and Health, Professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Population Health at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Dr. Woolf found that average life expectancy in the United States is expected to drop by 2.26 years from 2019 to 2021, worse than any of the other 21 high-income nations in his study. He said the trend is related to both the pandemic and to deeply rooted problems such as drug overdoses, obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases that have been increasing for decades. He said the life expectancy declines were the worst among both Hispanic and African Americans.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:44

**Longevity
Personal Health
COVID 19**

Nick Maggiulli, personal finance blogger, Chief Operating Officer and Data Scientist at Ritholtz Wealth Management, author of *“Just Keep Buying: Proven Ways to Save Money and Build Your Wealth”*

Mr. Maggiulli talked about ways to accumulate wealth. He said there are many ways to get rich, including real estate, stock index funds or owning a business, but the overarching key is to buy income-producing assets. He offered suggestions for younger people to get a start in saving and investing.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:40

Personal Finance

Camilla Hodge, PhD, Professor in the Brigham Young University Marriott School of Business

Prof. Hodge led a recent study of a US National Parks program called “Every Kid Outdoors,” which gives families with fourth graders free access to national parks for one year. She found that the program has led to an increased frequency of hiking with children. She noted that the program was not very effective for lower income families, and offered recommendations to remedy that.

Issues covered:

Length: 4:52

**National Parks
Physical Fitness
Poverty**

Show # 2022-20

Date aired: Sunday, May 15, 2022

Matt Paxton, decluttering and downsizing expert, host of the Emmy-nominated PBS series “Legacy List with Matt Paxton,” author of *“Keep the Memories, Lose the Stuff: Declutter, Downsize, and Move Forward with Your Life”*

Mr. Paxton discussed the difficulties everyone faces when downsizing or trying to declutter their home or workplace. He said most of the emotional obstacles are connected to memories that are attached to physical objects. He offered suggestions on how to begin a reorganizing project and to persevere to the end.

Issues covered:
Personal Productivity
Workplace Matters
Mental Health

Length: 9:19

Michelle Johnson-Motoyama, PhD, Associate Professor at Ohio State University's College of Social Work

A first-of-its-kind national study at Ohio State University found that a special program designed to help some families at risk of child maltreatment has been surprisingly successful. Prof. Johnson-Motoyama was the lead author and she found the program resulted in a 17% reduction in foster care use. She said "differential response" was developed as an alternative pathway for CPS workers to help families who came to their attention but were at lower risk of child maltreatment.

Issues covered:
Foster Care
Child Abuse and Neglect

Length: 7:56

John Dattilo, PhD, Professor of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management at Penn State University

Prof. Dattilo authored a study that demonstrated that engaging in meaningful, challenging activities during free time can reduce people's loneliness and increase their positive feelings. He said the activity may vary from person to person, but it includes artistic endeavors like playing the piano or painting, physical activities like skiing or chopping wood, and mental tasks like writing or storytelling. He said the activities are effective in reducing loneliness even when done alone.

Issues covered:
Mental Health
Senior Citizens

Length: 5:05

Show # 2022-21

Date aired: Sunday, May 22, 2022

Leonie Segal, PhD, expert in child abuse and neglect, Foundation Chair of Health Economics and Social Policy at the School of Health Sciences at the University of South Australia

Prof. Segal led a study that found that reading aloud can triple a child's resilience at school, particularly for children who have suffered maltreatment or neglect. She noted that there is an acute need to support these children and their families, especially before the children start school, and that reading is a key factor for success. She also discussed her research into the inter-generational effects of child abuse.

Issues covered:
Child Abuse
Literacy & Education
Parenting

Length: 9:53

Abel E. Moreyra, MD, Professor of Medicine in the Division of Cardiovascular Disease and Hypertension at the Rutgers University-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Living in a noisy environment can be annoying, but it might also harm a person's health. Dr. Moreyra's research has found that people experiencing high levels of noise from cars, trains or planes were more likely to suffer a heart attack than people living in quieter areas. He said policy interventions like better enforcement of noise ordinances, infrastructure to block road noise, rules for air traffic, and low-noise tires for vehicles might help.

Issues covered:

Length: 7:20

**Personal Health
Government Policies**

Nancy Altman, co-director of Social Security Works and co-chair of the Strengthen Social Security coalition, co-author of "*Social Security Works for Everyone: Protecting and Expanding America's Most Popular Social Program*"

Although the Social Security trust fund is projected to run short of funds beginning in 2034, Ms. Altman is confident in the program's future. She said Congress will have no choice but to take significant action to save the program. She also explained why she believes Social Security should be expanded even more, with an increase in monthly benefits, national paid family leave, sick leave, and long-term care protections.

Issues covered:

Length: 5:07

**Social Security
Senior Citizens**

Show # 2022-22

Date aired: Sunday, May 29, 2022

Susan Robinson, Senior Public Affairs Director of Waste Management

Ms. Robinson outlined the biggest myths surrounding recycling. She talked about the most common items that consumers place in recycling bins that don't belong there, and what items should be recycled that often are not. She also discussed whether communities lose money on recycling programs.

Issues covered:

Length: 9:29

**Recycling
Environment
Government Programs**

Cheryl Richardson, motivational speaker and life coach, author of "*Waking Up in Winter: In Search of What Really Matters at Midlife*"

Ms. Richardson discussed thought-provoking questions about what matters at mid-life. She shared her personal story of being dissatisfied with a successful career once she reached her fifties. She talked about the value of journaling and how it helped her reexamine everything – her marriage, her work, her friendships, and her priorities.

Issues covered:

Length: 7:37

**Aging
Mental Health**

Maria Fitzpatrick, PhD, Associate Professor in the Department of Policy and Management at Cornell University, Research Associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research

About a third of all Americans retire and start claiming Social Security when they turn 62. Dr. Fitzpatrick co-authored a study that found that men who retire at 62 experience a 20 percent higher likelihood of early death, compared to those who delay retirement. She talked about the possible factors behind this phenomenon and what retirees can do to stay physically and mentally healthy.

Issues covered:
Retirement Planning
Senior Citizens
Personal Health

Length: 4:58

Show # 2022-23

Date aired: Sunday, June 5, 2022

Les Winston, expert in philanthropic financial planning, founder of SocialSecurity.org

Mr. Winston explained the important distinctions between giving, charity and philanthropy. He said philanthropy is not just for the ultra-rich. He believes that non-profit and non-governmental organizations should not be dependent on government funding, but should receive the bulk of their resources from middle-class Americans through charitable and philanthropic planning.

Issues covered:
Philanthropy
Volunteerism

Length: 8:11

Martha Khlopin, Medicare expert, nationally syndicated radio host, founder of Get2insurance.com

Medicare, the federally-funded health insurance program for people age 65 or older, is a complex program and it can be overwhelming for those approaching retirement age. Ms. Khlopin outlined the basics of what Americans need to know about the program, what it covers, when to enroll and how to enroll. She said the average person needs at least some guidance, but finding a knowledgeable and non-biased advisor is difficult.

Issues covered:
Medicare
Senior Citizens

Length: 9:10

Tessa West, Social Psychology Professor at New York University, author of *“Jerks at Work: Toxic Coworkers and What to Do About Them”*

From open floor plans and Zoom calls to Slack channels, the workplace has changed a lot over the years. But one thing that never changes is the existence of difficult co-workers at virtually every job. Prof. West offered practical suggestions to deal with jerks at work.

Issues covered:
Workplace Matters
Productivity

Length: 5:13

Show # 2022-24

Date aired: Sunday, June 12, 2022

Greg Brannon, Director of Automotive Engineering and Industry Relations at AAA National

Mr. Brannon discussed a recent AAA survey that asked consumers about their attitudes towards self-driving cars. Drivers overwhelmingly said they want automakers to improve the performance of existing driver support features rather than develop self-driving cars. He also discussed the latest round of AAA testing that revealed that inconsistent performance remains a problem with active driving assistance systems used in the newest cars, resulting in crashes. The failures occurred regardless of vehicle make and model.

Issues covered:

**Traffic Safety
Consumer Matters**

Length: 8:11

Seth M. Noar, PhD, Professor in the University of North Carolina Hussman School of Journalism and Media, where he directs the Communicating for Health Impact Lab

Prof. Noar led a study that examined the most effective anti-vaping messages for teens. He found that anti-vaping advertisements geared to teens have the greatest impact when they emphasize the adverse consequences and harms of vaping e-cigarettes, use negative imagery, and avoid memes, hashtags and other “teen-centric” communication styles,

Issues covered:

**Personal Health
Youth at Risk**

Length: 9:10

Morgan Levine, PhD, Assistant Professor of Pathology and Director of the Laboratory for Aging in Living Systems at Yale University School of Medicine, author of “*True Age: Cutting-Edge Research to Help Turn Back the Clock*”

Experts have debated for many years why some people die young, while others live much longer lives. Prof. Levine said *biological* age, rather than chronological age, is the primary risk factor behind diseases like cancer, heart disease, diabetes, strokes, even Alzheimer’s. She said genetics only play about a 10% role in health outcomes, and that choices in lifestyle, behaviors and environment play a much greater role in how quickly people age.

Issues covered:

**Aging
Personal Health**

Length: 5:13

Show # 2022-25

Date aired: Sunday, June 19, 2022

Valter Longo, PhD, Director of the Longevity Institute at USC in Los Angeles, author of “*The Longevity Diet: Discover the New Science Behind Stem Cell Activation and Regeneration to Slow Aging, Fight Disease, and Optimize Weight*”

Dr. Vongo discussed his 25 years of research on aging, nutrition, disease and longevity. He believes, in addition to exercise and a healthy overall diet, that periodic fasting may be the key to a longer and healthier life. He outlined fasting-mimicking techniques that result in the same benefits as an absolute fast.

Issues covered:

**Personal Health
Aging
Nutrition**

Length: 9:19

Kathleen Martin Ginis, PhD, Professor in the School of Health and Exercise Sciences at the University of British Columbia

Dr. Ginis led a study that found that just a half-hour of exercise can have a profound effect on a woman's body image, making her feel both stronger and thinner. She noted that women, in general, have a tendency to feel negative about their bodies and, she explained how that poor body image can have negative implications for a woman's psychological and physical health.

Issues covered:

**Women's Issues
Mental Health
Physical Fitness**

Length: 7:48

Corinne Peek-Asa, PhD, Professor of Occupational and Environmental Health in the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa

The number of suicides among farmers and farm workers in the United States has remained stubbornly high since the end of the 1980s farm crisis, much higher than workers in many other industries, according to Dr. Peek-Asa's research. She outlined the cultural and occupational factors that may contribute to this issue. She believes the solution may lie in existing resources in farming and rural communities, empowering them to more actively respond to citizens who are struggling.

Issues covered:

**Suicide
Agriculture
Mental Health**

Length: 5:02

Show # 2022-26

Date aired: Sunday, June 26, 2022

Geoffrey Tofler, Professor of Preventative Cardiology, University of Sydney (Australia), Senior Staff Specialist in Cardiology, Royal North Shore Hospital

Prof. Tofler led a study that found that about one in five amateur athletes over age 35 had one or more possible cardiac symptom during a soccer game in the prior year, but only a quarter of them sought medical attention. He talked about the potential symptoms and risks, and explained why immediate treatment is vital.

Issues covered:

Personal Health

Length: 7:35

Sarah Foster, analyst at Bankrate.com

A recent Bankrate.com survey found that 46% of women say that money issues negatively affect their mental health, compared to 38% of men. Ms. Foster outlined the reasons for this trend. She advised women to track their saving progress over time and to find ways to earn more money via side gigs from existing hobbies.

Issues covered:

**Women's Issues
Personal Finance
Mental Health**

Length: 9:45

Bill Guerin, CEO of RoomRocket, 20-year travel industry executive

The cost of airfare and hotels have hit record highs this summer. Mr. Guerin offered advice on the most effective strategies to save money on hotel reservations and other travel, to help consumers to get the most bang out of their summer vacation buck.

Issues covered:

**Consumer Matters
Travel**

Length: 5:08

March 28, 2022

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

KY Lawmakers Move to Cut Unemployment Benefits

Nadia Ramlagan

The number of weeks Kentuckians can receive unemployment benefits will soon be cut by more than half.

Last week, state lawmakers overrode Gov. Andy Beshear's veto of [House Bill 4](#), which reduces the amount of time a person can get unemployment benefits from 26 weeks to 12.

Dustin Pugel, senior policy analyst at the Kentucky Center for Economic Policy, said the move will push more laid-off Kentuckians into [poverty and lower-paying jobs](#). He noted in eastern Kentucky and other regions seeing declines in coal and manufacturing, jobs are not easy to find.

"So, what we're going to have is a lot of folks losing work," Pugel projected. "Being pushed into lower-wage jobs, and then turning to programs like SNAP and Medicaid for help."

He added while the statewide unemployment rate has averaged 6% over the past decade, counties like Magoffin have seen unemployment rates 30% higher.

Supporters argued the law will spur more people into finding work amid a labor shortage and a strong economic bounce-back from COVID-19. Kentucky now joins fewer than a dozen states in providing fewer than 26 weeks of unemployment.

Pugel pointed out the increased requirements and the back-and-forth necessary between claimants and the state's outdated unemployment processing system realistically means many people could lose benefits after a little over a month.

"After having your benefits for six weeks, you have to accept the first job that's offered to you," Pugel explained. "So long as it pays a little over half of what your last job did, and so long as it's within 30 miles of where you live."

Pugel believes the cumulative effects of weakening Kentucky workers' safety net will hit underserved communities the hardest.

"Particularly for folks that the economy doesn't work for them," Pugel outlined. "Like, again, people in rural Kentucky, Black workers, workers with disabilities, folks who are leaving incarceration looking for a job."

[State data](#) showed Black Kentuckians made up around 16% of unemployment insurance claims in December 2021, despite comprising just 9% of the workforce.

Report: 67% of KY Streams, Rivers Impaired 50 Years After Clean Water Act

Nadia Ramlagan

A **recent report** found 67% of streams and rivers in the Commonwealth are designated as "impaired for any use."

An impaired waterway can contain unsafe levels of fecal pathogens posing health risks to swimmers, low oxygen levels making it harder for fish to survive, or harbor high levels of nitrates, bacteria or other contaminants causing local municipalities to deploy additional treatments in order to make it safe to drink.

Eric Schaeffer, executive director of the Environmental Integrity Project, said Kentucky has more than **90,000 miles** of rivers and streams, but only a portion of its waterways are assessed for drinking and recreational safety.

"You've got 8,484 miles in Kentucky, about two-thirds of the river and stream mileage that was studied, that are meeting water-quality standards," Schaeffer pointed out. "And more than 4,000 of those miles aren't safe for swimming, or what's called contact recreation."

Overall, based on state data submitted to the EPA, the report found more than 700,000 miles of rivers and streams nationwide -- half of those assessed -- were classified as impaired for at least one use.

Schaeffer noted a major problem is the EPA's lack of action on reviewing and updating limits for water pollution control by industries. According to the report, two-thirds of the EPA's industry-specific water pollution limits have not been updated in more than three decades, despite a **Clean Water Act** mandate for reviews every five years.

"Here on the 50th anniversary, we want to, of course, recognize that and remind people of how bad it was and remind them that we don't want them to slide back to those days," Schaeffer emphasized. "But also, the data and the evaluations of water quality that are required under the Clean Water Act show that we have a long, long way to go."

He added it is important for state-based agencies to do regular assessments of water quality.

"In recent years it's only been 14% of the total in the state," Schaeffer reported. "You look nationwide, it's more like 26-27% get assessed, of all the river and stream miles. Kentucky is about half of what's already really low baseline."

A report **released last year** from the Department of Environmental Quality found toxic compounds called **Perfluorinated and Polyfluorinated Substances** (PFAS) in 90% of the Commonwealth's surface waters.

KY Bill Would Expand Jobless Benefits to Those Fleeing Domestic Violence

Nadia Ramlagan

Kentucky lawmakers are considering a bill to expand eligibility for unemployment benefits to victims of domestic violence.

House Bill 83 would require claimants to provide documentation such as police records, court records or sworn statements by shelter workers, clergy or medical professionals. Supporters of the bill say expanding eligibility will keep more families safe.

Rep. Nima Kulkarni, D-Louisville, the bill's sponsor, said the measure is a good policy for investing in the state's workforce for individuals in urgent and desperate situations.

"I think it's important that people recognize that," Kulkarni asserted. "Because there's a lot of stigma and a lot of silence around the issue of interpersonal violence, that we don't as policymakers always focus on or take into consideration the needs of those individuals experiencing this."

According to data from the **National Institutes of Health**, domestic-violence offenses lead to the deaths of around 40 Kentuckians a year. The bill sits with the Kentucky Senate for final action today, the last day of the legislative session.

Tori Henninger, executive director of Barren River Area Safe Space in Bowling Green, explained **financial abuse** often occurs alongside physical, sexual and emotional and psychological abuse.

"And so frequently, and overwhelmingly, part of the power and control that abusers use to maintain the abusive relationship is through a lack of available resources to meet your basic needs," Henninger observed.

She added many women report missing days of work or losing jobs because of their abuser, and said being able to access transitional income through unemployment benefits could be a game changer for survivors.

Rep. Samara Heavrin, R-Leitchfield, a co-sponsor of the bill, said the safety and well-being of children are at risk when their parent is forced to remain in an abusive relationship for financial reasons.

"Stability is something that's important in all of our lives, no matter what age you're at," Heavrin contended. "And if you're in a bad situation, and you need help getting out, I think it's important that we recognize that as a community, and are able to help with that."

According to Kentucky Youth Advocates, in 2020, the state had nearly **17,000 child victims** of abuse or neglect and more than half the cases had family violence as a factor.

If you or someone you know needs help, call the **National Domestic Violence Hotline** 24/7 at 1-800-799-7233.

More KY Kids Could Go Hungry This Summer When Federal Waivers Expire

Nadia Ramlagan

Federal waivers put in place at the height of the pandemic allowed federal child nutrition programs more flexibility in delivering meals to households, because kids were not at school.

Those waivers are set to expire in a few months, and in Kentucky, groups working to fight hunger warn more children, especially in rural areas, will be at risk.

Tamara Sandberg, director of U.S. Food Security and Nutrition for Save the Children, said the waivers allowed parents to pick up multiple meals for their kids at a time, and in one convenient location.

"And the waivers allowed schools and other community partners to deliver meals right to their home, many, many more meals were distributed as a result," Sandberg recounted. "We're very concerned with the impact that is going to have on the rates of children receiving meals this summer."

One in six Kentucky children faces hunger, and more than 40% of households with children rely on SNAP benefits.

Sandberg noted leaders from across the country will gather at the Rural Child Hunger Summit April 28 to brainstorm ways to ensure rural kids don't go hungry as the nation shifts out of pandemic-era policies.

Chelsi Hinkle, assistant director of Kentucky programs for Save the Children, said despite the waning pandemic, rising inflation has kept demand for food assistance high across the state.

"We are seeing that is even carrying over as the pandemic is starting to end," Hinkle observed. "Families are having a hard time with getting access to fresh fruits and vegetables due to supply-chain issues and labor shortages. "

Hinkle pointed out the organization's focus this summer will be on flexible and even unconventional access to meals for kids, so families don't have to travel long distances to food pantries.

"We have created new partnerships with God's Food Pantry, Red Bird Mission and other mission services that provide food vouchers to families," Hinkle outlined. "We've also provided funding to school districts to increase backpack programs to make sure that we're getting foods into the hands of children that need it most."

She added throughout the pandemic, Save the Children has provided nearly 10 million meals to Kentucky kids and their families.

Abortion Rights Remain for KY Women, For Now

Nadia Ramlagan

The ACLU of Kentucky said it **remains unclear** whether women seeking abortions after 15 weeks are protected from penalties, after a federal judge issued an **emergency order** last week blocking a new state law from going into effect.

House Bill 3 temporarily went on the books after state Republican lawmakers overrode Gov. Andy Beshear's veto, which meant people who needed abortions could not obtain them for eight days.

Tamara Weider, Kentucky state director for Planned Parenthood, said patients with appointments suddenly had to make plans to travel out of state.

"Kentuckians were put in an unspeakable situation," Weider asserted. "Those who had abortions scheduled were not able to have them in Kentucky, and they had to seek care outside of the state."

House Bill 3 virtually eliminates abortion access by including a deluge of requirements with which providers are currently unable to comply, including obtaining registration to supply medication abortion. The bill also includes a ban on abortion after 15 weeks, before many women even realize they are pregnant.

Weider added while she welcomes the restraining order, the legal tactics deployed in House Bill 3 are a serious legal blow to reproductive rights in the Commonwealth.

"And so in the last eight days we saw Kentucky without abortion access, which was the first state in 49 years to see the loss of access to abortion care," Weider contended.

She also pointed out the myriad restrictions outlined in the bill would impact low-income and Black and brown communities the most.

"Those who have means will always be able to find a way to get an abortion," Weider explained. "And those with lesser means in rural parts of the state without transportation are going to be disproportionately impacted by these types of bans."

According to the Guttmacher Institute, so far nationwide lawmakers in 41 states have introduced more than **500 abortion restrictions**.

May 6, 2022

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

New KY Law Aims to Improve Domestic-Violence Homicide Tracking

Nadia Ramlagan

Kentucky will soon begin developing a coordinated, statewide system for reporting crimes related to intimate-partner violence. Gov. Andy Beshear's signature on [Senate Bill 271](#) mandates data collection on domestic violence.

Advocacy groups say they have struggled for years to verify state records of these types of cases, and have relied primarily on media reports and information from local shelters.

Andrea Robinson, executive director of Oasis Women's Shelter in the Owensboro area, said homicides involving an intimate partner are likely underreported.

"By us collecting this data, it's going to potentially help shape laws that will better protect victims," Robinson stated.

The new law requires Kentucky State Police, Administrative Office of the Courts, State Medical Examiner's Office, and coroner's office to gather and report annual domestic violence-related data to the state's Criminal Justice Analysis Center.

According to the University of Kentucky's Violent Death Reporting system, between 2005 and 2017, Kentucky saw [462 documented deaths](#) related to intimate partner violence.

Meg Savage, chief legal officer for the Kentucky Coalition Against Domestic Violence, said like any other public health issue, communities, advocacy groups and social-service agencies need accurate reporting in order to develop best practices and prevention strategies.

"Even to start looking at, you know, domestic violence homicides and what might be the underlying causes and trends and red flags, etc.," Savage outlined. "That could help us improve our systems."

Robinson believes inaccurate data is masking the prevalence of household violence in the Commonwealth.

"I think it's important for us to be able to recognize how many victims are murdered and losing their lives," Robinson emphasized. "Because it brings awareness to how real and serious domestic violence is."

If you or someone you know is experiencing abuse, call the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) at 800-799-7233 for help, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Post-Pandemic, KY Returns to World-High Incarceration Rate

Chance Dorland

After a drop due to the COVID pandemic, **new research** found Kentucky is once again crowding more people into jails and prisons.

The Bluegrass State has one of the highest incarceration rates in the world, and some experts believe it is a direct result of state legislation keeping men and women locked up.

Carmen Mitchell, criminal justice policy analyst at the Kentucky Center for Economic Policy, which produced the report, said the state's elected officials are not doing enough to solve the problem.

"If Kentucky were a country, it would rank seventh-highest in the world for the rate of incarceration," Mitchell reported. "We have right under 22,000 people in jails; about another 9,800 people in state prisons. This legislative session that just concluded didn't make any meaningful steps to address that."

Mitchell pointed out over the past decade, several factors are driving the state's incarceration levels, including locking people up for low-level drug felonies and property crime. High rates of pretrial detention are another factor. The report noted Kentuckians remain in custody when they cannot afford bail.

Mitchell explained, like many states and countries around the world, Kentucky's incarceration levels were reduced due to pandemic health concerns, but the decrease did not last.

"We saw a major drop in the jail population, especially in pretrial capacity," Mitchell recounted. "And unfortunately though, we've been climbing back up ever since then. So, we've once again gotten back to the point where our incarcerated population in jails is exceeding even the capacity and number of beds."

In 2021, bills were passed to limit no-knock warrants and raise the dollar amounts for making some crimes felonies, but Mitchell argued the 2022 session appears to have reversed the trend.

"We pass punitive legislation at a rate of about six-to-one, with respect to legislation that might redress, address, incarceration or justice involvement," Mitchell emphasized. "That's what we normally do, and 2021 was a good outlier, and we were hoping to build on that. But unfortunately, we kind of returned to 'business as usual.' "

She added she is convinced changes would be more likely if Kentuckians let their lawmakers know they feel criminal-justice reform should be a top priority.

KY Mothers-to-Be Urged to Get Vaccinated Against COVID

Chance Dorland

While many Americans have resumed normal lives after the past two years, the COVID pandemic has not gone away, especially if you have a pre-existing condition or are pregnant.

The nonprofit and nonpartisan Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky is reminding mothers-to-be in the Bluegrass State that **being vaccinated against COVID-19 is one of many ways to better ensure a safe and healthy pregnancy.**

Vice president for communications Ashley Brauer said all available data shows vaccination is safe for pregnant women and their children, and the goal of the campaign is to give mothers the facts they need to make an informed decision.

"The Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and the Kentucky Association of Health Plans have partnered on this educational campaign with a goal to really increase knowledge," said Brauer, "and really encourage pregnant women to have a conversation with their doctors so that they can learn more and decide what's right for them."

Brauer says science-based information, including a series of video testimonials from medical professionals and mothers who were vaccinated while pregnant, are available online at Healthy-KY.org.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now - or might become pregnant in the future.

In a testimonial video, vaccinated mother Chelsea (from Lexington) said she chose to be part of the campaign to encourage expectant mothers to make the same decision she did.

"Getting pregnant during a pandemic is one thing I will never forget," said Chelsea. "My decision to get the COVID-19 vaccine was about the safety and protection of my child. My advice to you would be to go and talk to your doctor to see if the shot is the right thing for you."

Katherine Kington North - director of external affairs for the Kentucky Association of Health Plans - said while the decision is ultimately up to each mother-to-be, the benefits of vaccination are clear.

"It is so important because only 31% of pregnant women in the U.S. are vaccinated for COVID," said Kington North. "And unvaccinated pregnant women are 40% more likely to develop serious complications from COVID. So empowering pregnant women to have a deeper conversation about the vaccine."

When given to a pregnant woman, the COVID-19 vaccine works in the muscle where the vaccine is injected, and does not cross to the baby directly. But antibodies are received through the placenta or through breast milk after birth, providing some protection to the baby against the novel coronavirus during the first six months of life.

Demand for After-School, Summer Learning Programs Soars Across KY

Nadia Ramlagan

A **new survey** finds 8 in 10 Kentucky parents say afterschool programs could help their child combat social and mental-health struggles by reducing unproductive screen time.

Experts say demand for these types of programs has increased in the Commonwealth.

Executive Director of the Afterschool Alliance Jodi Grant said after-school programs often are understaffed partnerships between schools and community-based organizations. She said local districts currently can't keep up with demand.

"In Kentucky," said Grant, "for every child that's in a program, the parents of four more want their kids to be in a program - and these parents and these kids are choosing to be there."

She also pointed out that Black and Latino children are among those most likely to lack access.

According to the survey, more than 60% of parents of color, and those with low incomes, said they want after-school programs that help their child build life skills and reduce risky behaviors.

Director of the Kentucky Out-of-School Alliance Tom Haggard said he believes state leaders haven't prioritized after-school programming.

"We really haven't put in the state dollars toward after-school or summer learning at a really impactful level," said Haggard. "Many of the other states have made investments in after-school, and that just isn't something that we've been able to do yet in Kentucky."

Grant pointed to federal COVID dollars as a resource to help support and expand after-school and summer learning programs for kids.

"We absolutely need to be doing more to tap into more dollars for the families that can't afford these programs," said Grant, "because they are creating opportunities for the kids for the working parents and for our long-term economy."

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, around a dozen states nationwide currently are providing funding dedicated to after-school programs.

Experts: Texts Could Help Shrink Post-COVID Health-Coverage Gap

Nadia Ramlagan

The COVID-19 public health emergency mandating continuous coverage for Medicaid enrollees is expected to expire later this year, and experts say states such as Kentucky could **ramp up communication**, including text messages and emails to beneficiaries, to ensure residents don't slip through the cracks when the policy ends.

Since the start of the pandemic, many Kentuckians have moved, and changed their address and possibly their phone number.

Farah Erzouki, senior policy analyst for the Center on Budget Policy and Priorities, said state agencies likely do not have updated information for a significant number of their Medicaid population.

"And this will present a significant challenge if it goes unaddressed because many people won't get notices in the mail when it's time for them to renew," Erzouki explained. "And won't know what they need to do to keep their Medicaid coverage."

She noted people often lose coverage for procedural reasons during the renewal process, such as not submitting required forms even if they're still eligible. Erzouki also pointed out long call-center wait times can make navigating the process even more challenging for households.

Erzouki added state Medicaid agencies should use methods such as texting and email to reach as many people as possible with upcoming reminders about policy changes, and clear instructions to help them take steps to either stay enrolled or apply for marketplace coverage.

"We know that about 97% of people with incomes less than \$30,000 per year have a cellphone, and text messaging is quickly becoming the norm for how individuals want and expect to receive updates," Erzouki emphasized. "States should be responsive to this by adopting text messaging as a way to reach enrollees."

She stressed residents whose income has increased above the eligibility threshold and are no longer eligible for Medicaid are especially at risk for losing coverage. Advocates have called on Congress to extend the enhanced subsidies making marketplace coverage more affordable for millions.

Kentuckians Under “Crippling” Financial Stress from Student Loan Debt

Nadia Ramlagan

Kentuckians collectively owe more than \$20 billion in student loan debt, and a new informal survey sheds light on how hefty student-loan payments affect the lives of borrowers in the Commonwealth.

Research from the Kentucky Center for Economic Policy found nearly **one in five residents** owe student debt, including 20,000 people at or near retirement age.

Ashley Spalding, research director at the Center, said the situation is preventing many individuals from purchasing a home, starting a business, or accessing health care.

"Wages aren't going up that much, and the cost of college is skyrocketing, and interest rates have been high on these loans," Spalding explained.

The U.S. Department of Education estimates within the past year it has canceled more than \$17 billion in debt for more than 700,000 borrowers. The Biden administration's pause on student-loan repayment is set to expire August 31. Experts said it remains unclear whether the pause will be extended into the fall.

Celine Mutuyemaria, a Louisville resident, said she currently has more than \$100,000 in student loan debt, and said her financial situation is affecting her mental health.

"It affects me in a number of ways," Mutuyemaria pointed out. "I actually have a lot of anxiety about if and when student loan repayments are going to restart."

She added her student loans negatively affect her credit score, which is a barrier to her dream of owning a home.

"I think that homeownership feels really out of sight for me right now because of the burden of my student loans," Mutuyemaria lamented.

The White House also **recently announced** it would **cancel the student loans** of all former Corinthian Colleges students, after investigations revealed the for-profit colleges defrauded students, the most significant loan discharge by the federal government to date.

Law Enforcement Groups Voice Support for Gun Safety Measures

Nadia Ramlagan

National law enforcement groups are joining the chorus of Kentuckians calling on the U.S. Senate to pass meaningful gun-safety measures. A bipartisan group of senators is working on specific legislation after announcing an agreement to support "red flag" laws, boost background checks and increase mental health resources.

Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., the Minority Leader, said Tuesday he would support a bill which follows the agreement.

Kym Craven, executive director of the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives, said her group has been advocating for measures to prevent people with a history of violence or domestic abuse from getting firearms.

"We have a lot of research at our fingertips that we can reflect on and come together," Craven contended. "And create programs and strategies to reduce the number of gun deaths that are occurring across our nation."

Last week, U.S. House lawmakers passed the [Protecting Our Kids Act](#), to raise the age to buy semi-automatic rifles from 18 to 21, and create federal laws against gun trafficking, amid other reforms. Only one Kentucky member of the chamber, Rep. John Yarmuth, D-Louisville, voted to approve the bill. In 2020, the Commonwealth had the [13th-highest](#) gun-death rate in the country, according to the Giffords Law Center.

Craven pointed out several states have struck a balance between responsible gun ownership and policies like implementing universal background checks and closing private-sale loopholes.

"If we look at some of the states that have the strictest gun laws, and when they combine that with programming, they are among the lowest states that are having gun violence," Craven reported.

Fredrick Thomas, president of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, said for those who chose to serve their communities by becoming a police officer, it is a moral issue.

"I can't ignore the underserved communities, who see loved ones transform into victims in the blink of an eye," Thomas emphasized. "I can't ignore the fact that federal inactions have led us to this horrific inflection point."

[Mass shootings](#) have occurred every day in June except one, across Kentucky and more than a dozen other states, according to the Gun Violence Archive.

KY Food Bank Demand Rises Amid Inflation, Fuel Costs

Nadia Ramlagan

Food banks are struggling to keep up operations as they contend with rising fuel costs, inflation and an uptick in demand driven by the end of pandemic-era food assistance.

Supply-chain issues have tightened the flow of donations at **God's Pantry Food Bank** in Lexington, said chief executive Mike Halligan, and getting a variety of food products has been a challenge. He said expiration of the Commonwealth's Emergency Health Declaration in the pandemic has stopped supplemental SNAP benefits to households already pinched by cost-of-living increases.

"So their economic impacts are tighter," he said, "and they have to cope with the inflation and the tightening supply chain when they have less benefits to spend."

Nationwide, **federal figures show**, food insecurity is on the rise, especially among children. In 2020, more than 6 million kids experienced hunger. Kentucky families who need help can text the word "FOOD" or "COMIDA" to 304-304 to find a nearby site to pick up free meals. The food sites are operated by **No Kid Hungry Kentucky** and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's summer meals program.

Halligan said the cost for fuel for Food Bank trucks to deliver food to communities across central and eastern Kentucky also has risen significantly.

"Our fuel costs are increasing 15.2%, to almost a quarter of a million dollars," he said. "That's up \$32,000 from what it was a year ago."

Along with donations, Halligan said food banks are seeking volunteers to help with food distribution during the summer months.

"It's because those with families who are not in school over the summer don't have access to the National School Lunch Program," he said, "and so the food bill for households with kids goes up in the summertime."

Federally funded **child nutrition COVID-19 waivers** are set to expire on June 30. Most Americans say they support expanding SNAP benefits permanently, according to **a survey earlier this year by the Purdue University Center for Food Demand**.