



## **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:** WREZ-FM, WZZL-FM, WGKY-FM,  
WRJJ-FM

**Weekly Time:** 5:00 AM

Weekly Public Affairs Program

## **QUARTERLY ISSUES REPORT, JANUARY-MARCH, 2020**

Show # 2020-01

**Date aired: Sunday, January 5, 2020**

**Michelle Mazurek, PhD**, Assistant Professor, Computer Science, University of Maryland College Park

Nearly everyone today struggles with a myriad of passwords for their online activities. Professor Mazurek was involved in research at Carnegie Mellon University that found that long passphrases are more effective and easier to remember than an incomprehensible string of letters, numbers and special characters.

**Issues covered:**

**Online Security**

**Crime**

**Consumer Matters**

**Length: 8:52**

**Chris Voss**, former FBI's lead international kidnapping negotiator, founder and principal of The Black Swan Group, author of *"Never Split the Difference: Negotiating As If Your Life Depended On It"*

Mr. Voss discussed the skills that helped him and his colleagues succeed where it mattered most: saving lives. He explained how of those same negotiating tactics and principles are critical in everyday life, in areas such as buying a car, negotiating a salary, buying a home, or parenting.

**Issues covered:**

**Career**

**Parenting**

**Length: 8:25**

**Christine Fahlund**, Senior Financial Planner and Vice President of Investment Services at T. Rowe Price Investment Services

Ms. Fahlund discussed the effect that today's economy has on retirement planning. She believes that many Baby Boomers have been naive when it comes to planning for retirement. She also explained why some employers are becoming more proactive in helping their workers save for their senior years.

**Issues covered:**

**Personal Finance**

**Retirement Planning**

**Senior Citizens**

**Length: 5:04**

Show # 2020-02

**Date aired: Sunday, January 12, 2020**

**Jordan W. Smoller, PhD**, psychiatric geneticist, Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, Professor in the Department of Epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health

Depression is one of the world's most common mental disorders, affecting more than 300 million people globally. Prof. Smoller led a study that found that walking, jogging, yoga or any type of exercise may help to ward off depression, even in those with a genetic susceptibility to it. He also talked about the importance of social engagement and relationships in preventing depression.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 8:41**

**Mental Health  
Physical Fitness**

**Wendy Wood, PhD**, Provost Professor of Psychology and Business at the University of Southern California, author of "*Good Habits, Bad Habits: The Science of Making Positive Changes That Stick*"

This is about the time in the calendar that New Year's resolutions fail. Prof. Wood explained how people form habits, and what can be done with this knowledge to make positive change. She said willpower is usually not enough when someone is striving make a change in behavior. She also outlined the differences between habits, self-control and addictions.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 8:35**

**Personal Growth  
Addictions**

**Sherry Pagoto, PhD**, Professor in the Department of Allied Health Sciences, Director of the University of Connecticut Center for mHealth and Social Media

Prof. Pagoto led a study that found that 78 percent of major fitness chains offer tanning beds to their customers. She said that while the public health community has been trying to communicate the message to the public that tanning beds are not safe or healthy, gyms are essentially putting a 'health halo' on them because people associate gyms with health. She explained why tanning beds create serious risks for the development of skin cancer.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 4:51**

**Personal Health  
Consumer Matters  
Government Regulations**

Show # 2020-03

**Date aired: Sunday, January 19, 2020**

**Erica Reischer, PhD**, psychologist, parent educator, author of "*What Great Parents Do: 75 Simple Strategies for Raising Kids Who Thrive*"

Children don't come with an owner's manual, but many parents wish they did. Dr. Reischer offered simple, action-oriented steps anyone can take to improve their parenting skills. She discussed the importance of empathy, how to distinguish between goals and methods, and why it's helpful for parents to view their kids as little explorers and scientists.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 7:51**

**Parenting**

**Andrew Scott**, Professor of Economics at the London Business School, Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford University and the Centre for Economic Policy Research, co-author of *"The 100-Year Life: Living and Working in an Age of Longevity"*

Many Americans have been raised on the traditional notion of a three-stage approach to life: education, followed by work and then retirement. However, Prof. Scott said this well-established pathway is already beginning to collapse: life expectancy is rising, pensions are vanishing, and increasing numbers of people are juggling multiple careers. He offered suggestions for how to better plan for a productive, longer life and retirement in today's rapidly-evolving economy.

**Issues covered:**  
**Retirement Planning**  
**Senior Citizens**

**Length: 9:23**

**Brian Fligor**, Chief Audiology Officer at Lantos Technologies, Inc., former Director of Diagnostic Audiology and Children's Hospital in Boston

An estimated 2 million students in the US play in middle- and high-school marching bands. Dr. Fligor believes that parents should be concerned protecting their kids' hearing when they are exposed to loud sounds for long periods. He talked about the warning signs of hearing damage and explained the ways to prevent it.

**Issues covered:**  
**Hearing Loss**  
**Health Issues**  
**Parenting Concerns**  
**Senior Citizens**

**Length: 4:58**

Show # 2020-04

**Date aired: Sunday, January 26, 2020**

**Donna Thomson**, author of *"The Unexpected Journey of Caring: The Transformation from Loved One to Caregiver"*

It's estimated that 45 million Americans are currently providing unpaid care for a loved one. Ms. Thomson shared her own story as a longtime caregiver, and talked about the unexpected rewards and challenges that caregivers often find. She also explained why being part of a community of caregivers is vital to navigate the unpredictable terrain of care.

**Issues covered:**  
**Caregiving**  
**Mental Health**

**Length: 9:20**

**Molly Carmel**, licensed clinical social worker with a background in addiction and nutrition, Founder of The Beacon Program in New York City, co-author of *"Breaking Up with Sugar."*

Most health experts agree that sugar is bad for you. Ms. Carmel discussed the mental and physical dangers that come from an unhealthy relationship with sugar and flour, and why we can easily get hooked on them. She explained how processed food manufacturers design foods to be addictive.

**Issues covered:**  
**Nutrition**  
**Addiction**  
**Consumer Matters**

**Length: 7:48**

**Greg Masson**, Chief of the Branch of Environmental Contaminants at the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Prescription drugs are now being detected in many US rivers, lakes and streams. Mr. Masson expressed concern about the disposal of prescription medications and their impact on wildlife and the environment. He explained how these products affect the health of animals and fish. He also outlined guidelines issued by his agency on how to properly dispose of unused drugs.

**Issues covered:**  
Environment  
Personal Health

**Length: 4:53**

Show # 2020-05

**Date aired: Sunday, February 2, 2020**

**Rachel Alinsky, MD., MPH**, Pediatrician and Adolescent Medicine Fellow at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center

Dr. Alinsky led a recent study that found that less than a third of adolescents and young adults who experienced a nonfatal opioid overdose received appropriate follow-up addiction treatment to reduce the risk of a second overdose. She said youth are at a very high risk of another overdose in the first few months after the first one.

**Issues covered:**  
Drug Addiction  
Public Health

**Length: 9:20**

**Monique Morrissey**, Economist, Economic Policy Institute

Ms. Morrissey's organization is highly critical of the nation's policies for funding retirement. She led a study that found that only about 54% of Americans are saving for retirement. She explained why she believes that the shift from traditional pensions to 401(k)s has increased retirement inequality for U.S. families, based on their income, race, ethnicity, education, and marital status.

**Issues covered:**  
Retirement Planning  
Minority Concerns  
Government Policies

**Length: 7:48**

**Octavia H. Zahrt**, doctoral candidate in health psychology at the Stanford University Graduate School of Business

Physical inactivity is estimated to account for 1 in 10 deaths worldwide, and 79% of U.S. adults do not meet recommended exercise guidelines. Ms. Zahrt co-authored a study that found that people who think they are less active than others in a similar age bracket die younger than those who believe they are more active – even if their actual activity levels are similar. She talked about the possible reasons behind this finding, and how a person's mindset affects their overall health.

**Issues covered:**  
Physical Fitness  
Mental Health

**Length: 5:05**

Show # 2020-06

**Date aired: Sunday, February 9, 2020**

**Anthony O'Neal**, author of *"Debt-Free Degree: The Step-by-Step Guide to Getting Your Kid Through College Without Student Loans"*

Mr. O'Neal discussed the huge negative impact that student debt has on today's college graduates. He outlined three main ways to graduate debt free: saving money, finding money via grants and scholarships, and working for money. He recommended that students apply for lesser-known small-dollar scholarships, before going after the large ones.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 9:02**

**Education**

**Personal Finance**

**Ada Calhoun**, author of *"Why We Can't Sleep: Women's New Midlife Crisis"*

Ms. Calhoun talked about the new midlife crisis facing Gen X women, and how they arrived there. She said most women in their 40s and early 50s are exhausted, terrified about money, under-employed, and overwhelmed. She believes that instead of being heard, they have been told to lean in, take "me-time," or make a chore chart to get their lives and homes in order. She talked about some of the possible societal changes that may address the problem.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 8:03**

**Women's Issues**

**Mental Health**

**Gen X Concerns**

**Michael Englesbe, MD, FACS**, Cyrenus G. Darling Sr., MD and Cyrenus G. Darling Jr., MD Professor of Surgery at the University of Michigan in the Section of Transplantation Surgery

Dr. Englesbe led a study that examined inexpensive ways for surgery patients to get physically and mentally ready for their upcoming operation. He said the program may help reduce overall costs and get patients home faster. He said "prehabilitation," uses the weeks before surgery to encourage patients to move more, eat healthier, cut back on tobacco, breathe deeper, reduce their stress and focus on their post-operative goals.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 5:07**

**Personal Health**

**Healthcare Costs**

Show # 2020-07

**Date aired: Sunday, February 16, 2020**

**Anna S. Mueller, PhD**, Sociologist and Assistant Professor in Comparative Human Development, Research Associate at the Population Research Center at the University of Chicago

Teen suicide clusters are a recent discovery, and little is understood about their causes and how to prevent them. Prof. Mueller studied the phenomenon in a small town. She found that intense pressure to succeed academically and athletically, plus the ease with which private information became public, due to social connectedness, left teens and their parents unwilling to seek help for mental health problems. She said suicide prevention strategies need to be tailored to fit the unique dynamics of individual communities.

**Issues covered:**

**Teen Suicide  
Mental Health  
Parenting**

**Length: 7:57**

**Shola Richards**, author of *“Making Work Work: The Positivity Solution for Any Work Environment”*

A surprising number of Americans have experienced bullying on the job. Mr. Richards discussed the reasons that some people become bullies, and offered suggestions for how to deal with bullying in an effective and positive way. He said documenting dates, times and details of incivility are crucial, and that approaching the HR department with an issue is the best place to start.

**Issues covered:**

**Bullying  
Workplace Matters**

**Length: 9:21**

**Rodger Alan Friedman**, chartered retirement planning counselor and financial advisor with more than 30 years' experience, author of *“Fire Your Retirement Planner: You! Concise Advice on How to Join the \$100,000 Retirement Club”*

More than half of all Americans are not confident or just slightly confident when it comes to making the right retirement investment decisions. Mr. Friedman believes retirement planning is not a do-it-yourself exercise, but that professional help is vital. He explained how to find a competent financial advisor. it.

**Issues covered:**

**Retirement Planning  
Senior Citizens**

**Length: 5:04**

Show # 2020-08

**Date aired: Sunday, February 23, 2020**

**Jillian Peterson, PhD**, Assistant Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Hamline University, Director of the Hamline Center for Justice and Law, co-founder of the Violence Project, a nonpartisan think tank dedicated to reducing violence in society

Prof. Peterson is the co-developer of a database that contains information about every mass shooter in the US since 1966. She said the database is the most comprehensive ever developed, designed to answer the “how” and “why” of mass shootings using data-driven research. She discussed the four most common characteristics of mass shooters. She also outlined the steps that she believes would be most effective to prevent mass shootings.

**Issues covered:**

**Mass Shootings  
Criminal Justice  
Mental Health**

**Length: 9:02**

**Peter H. Diamandis**, founder of more than 20 high-tech companies, Founder and Executive Chairman of the XPRIZE and Executive Founder of Singularity University, Co-Founder of Human Longevity, Inc, co-author of *"The Future Is Faster Than You Think: How Converging Technologies Are Transforming Business, Industries, and Our Lives"*

Technology is accelerating far more quickly than anyone could have imagined. Mr. Diamandis believes that over the next decade, the world will experience more upheaval and create more wealth than in the past hundred years. He cited examples of converging technologies which he expects to transform entertainment, education, healthcare, longevity, business and food.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 8:03**

**Consumer Matters  
Technology**

**Atara Twersky**, attorney, author of the *Curlee Girlee* book series

Amid today's pressures of the #MeToo movement, gender discrimination and the peer pressures of social media, Ms. Twersky explained why it is crucial for parents to encourage young girls to celebrate their differences and lift each other up. She offered suggestions to empower young girls and to teach them that it's okay to be different.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 5:07**

**Women's Issues  
Children's Issues**

Show # 2020-09

**Date aired: Sunday, March 1, 2020**

**Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D.**, Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice within Florida Atlantic University's College for Design and Social Inquiry, Co-Director of the Cyberbullying Research Center

Teenagers in dating relationships today are constantly in touch via texting, social media and video chat. Prof. Hinduja led a study that examined "digital dating abuse," in which technology is used to repetitively harass, control or threaten a romantic partner. He found that more than 28% of teens who had been in a romantic relationship at some point in the previous year said they had been the victim of at least one form of digital dating abuse, and surprisingly, boys were more likely to experience it than girls.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 8:37**

**Dating Violence and Abuse  
Teenager Concerns  
Technology**

**Michael J. Tewes, PhD**, Associate Professor of Hospitality Management at Penn State University

Prof. Tewes led a study that analyzed how a job candidate's social media posts affect decisions made by hiring managers. He said that 70% of employers reported looking at social media sites to help them evaluate potential employees, and 60% eliminated candidates on the basis of negative content. He found that posts that indicated self-absorption were the most damaging to a job hunter's prospects.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 8:40**

**Employment  
Career**



**Greg Keoleian**, Director of the Center for Sustainable Systems at the University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability

Environmentally-conscious consumers have probably heard that today's highly efficient dishwashers use less energy and water than traditional hand-washing techniques. However, Prof. Keoleian led a study that found that one manual washing technique--the two-basin method, in which dishes are soaked and scrubbed in hot water and then rinsed in cold water--that is associated with fewer greenhouse gas emissions than machine dishwashing. He offered numerous energy-saving tips related to the task of washing dishes.

**Issues covered:**

**Environment  
Energy  
Consumer Matters**

**Length: 5:03**

Show # 2020-10

**Date aired: Sunday, March 8, 2020**

**Kelly McGonigal, PhD**, health psychologist, lecturer at Stanford University, author of *"The Joy of Movement: How Exercise Helps Us Find Happiness, Hope, Connection, And Courage"*

People who are regularly active have a stronger sense of purpose, and they experience more gratitude, love, and hope. Dr. McGonigal shared stories of people who have found fulfillment and belonging through running, walking, dancing, swimming, weightlifting, and more. She said a gym workout or other intense exercise isn't necessary—it's just important to find an activity that is enjoyable.

**Issues covered:**

**Mental Health  
Physical Fitness  
Aging**

**Length: 7:54**

**Mark McConville, PhD**, family clinical psychologist in private practice in Cleveland, author of *"Failure to Launch: Why Your Twentysomething Hasn't Grown Up...and What to Do About It"*

A recent study shows that a third of today's 25 to 29 year-olds live with their parents—three times as many as in 1970. Dr. McConville said that many are struggling with three critical skills that are necessary to make the transition from childhood to adulthood: finding a sense of purpose, developing administrative responsibility, and cultivating interdependence. He explained why things have changed for this generation, and how parents can help.

**Issues covered:**

**Parenting**

**Length: 9:22**

**Souvik Sen, MD, MS, MPH**, Chair of Neurology at Palmetto Health-USC Medical Group, Professor of Neurology at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine

Dr. Sen led a study that found that gum disease may be linked to higher rates of stroke caused by hardened and severely blocked arteries. He discussed the connection between gum disease and blood inflammation. He found that patients with gum disease had twice as many strokes and were twice as likely to have moderately severe narrowing of brain arteries.

**Issues covered:**  
**Stroke Prevention**  
**Personal Health**

**Length: 4:56**

Show # 2020-11

**Date aired: Sunday, March 15, 2020**

**Dan Heath**, Senior Fellow at the Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship at Duke University, author of "*Upstream: The Quest to Solve Problems Before They Happen*"

Mr. Heath said far too many people stay "downstream," handling one problem after another, but they never make their way "upstream" to fix the systems that caused the problems. He cited several examples to illustrate why he believes that many crimes, chronic illnesses and customer complaints are often preventable.

**Issues covered:**  
**Workplace Matters**  
**Education**  
**Government**

**Length: 9:35**

**Hessam Sadatsafavi, PhD**, Data Action Team Leader in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the University of Virginia Health System

Dr. Sadatsafavi led a recent study that found that properly designed and maintained outdoor green space has the potential to reduce violent crime and gun violence. He discussed the possible reasons that a community garden or small community park may keep people safe, decrease crime and promote better quality of life. He said the green space improvements are fairly inexpensive, particularly when done in the large scale of a major city.

**Issues covered:**  
**Crime**  
**City Planning**  
**Environment**

**Length: 7:39**

**Nancy Lan Guo, PhD**, Associate Professor of Community Medicine and Cancer Center at West Virginia University, Program Assistant Director of West Virginia Clinical and Translational Science Institute for Biomedical Informatics

Dr. Gou led a study that found that microscopic toner nanoparticles that waft from laser printers may change our genetic and metabolic profiles in ways that make disease more likely. She said the primary concerns are for workers who work near printers that are in frequent use, those who are pregnant, and those who work in print shops. She said the study discovered dramatic genetic changes linked to cardiovascular, neurological and metabolic disorders.

**Issues covered:**  
**Personal Health**  
**Workplace Matters**

**Length: 4:55**

Show # 2020-12

**Date aired: Sunday, March 22, 2020**

**Susan Tillery, CPA/PFS**, Chair of the American Institute of CPA's Personal Financial Planning Executive Committee

A recent survey from the American Institute of CPAs found that, for older Americans, falling victim to fraud is more devastating emotionally than financially. Ms. Tillery discussed the most common forms of fraud targeting the elderly, and how friends and family members can help to protect them.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 9:27**

**Crime**  
**Elder Abuse**  
**Retirement Planning**  
**Aging**

**Kasey Wallis**, personal coach, co-author of "*Who You Are Being*"

A recent poll found that 22 percent of Americans feel angry a lot, up from 17 percent the previous year. Ms. Wallis talked about the reasons behind this trend, and why different people react differently to anger. She outlined several ways to diffuse the problem, including focused breathing. She also discussed ways that parents can teach their children how to deal with anger in a healthy way.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 7:48**

**Mental Health**  
**Media**  
**Parenting**

**Justin D. Kreuter, MD**, Instructor of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, Transfusion Medicine Specialist with the Mayo Clinic Blood Donor Center

With recommendations to stay home during the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. now has a critical blood shortage. Dr. Keuter said nearly half of US blood collectors are reporting that they only have a two-day supply or less of blood products. He outlined the reasons that collections have plummeted and explained why potential donors should not be fearful to go to donation centers.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 5:09**

**Blood Donation**  
**Coronavirus**

Show # 2020-13

**Date aired: Sunday, March 29, 2020**

**Dani Babb, PhD, MBA**, online education expert, founder and CEO of the Babb Group, which specializes in curriculum development and faculty training and services

Ms. Babb discussed what is working well for schools, what is not working, and how education delivery will be forever changed by Covid-19. She talked about the specific technical issues and other unexpected changes facing many schools that have scrambled to move classes online. She said the graduating class of 2020 will likely end up having "virtual" graduation ceremonies.

**Issues covered:**

**Education  
Coronavirus  
Technology**

**Length: 9:18**

**Gail Heyman, PhD**, Professor of Psychology, University of California, San Diego

Dr. Heyman led a study that sought to find ways to reduce racial bias in children. She noted that racial bias can be measured in children as young as age 3. She said the key to her research was in repetitively teaching kids to identify people of another race as individuals. She hopes to develop a consumer-friendly version of her findings for eventual use in schools and at home.

**Issues covered:**

**Racial Bias  
Diversity  
Parenting**

**Length: 7:48**

**Beth K. Rush, PhD**, Neuropsychologist from the Dept. of Psychiatry and Psychology at the Mayo Clinic

Stay at home orders and non-stop news coverage about the Coronavirus pandemic is creating worry and anxiety for people across the globe. Dr. Rush suggested ways to cope with the crisis. She said it is important to establish daily routines. She also said limiting exposure to the constant media reports and Facebook comments can also help.

**Issues covered:**

**Mental Health  
Coronavirus  
Media**

**Length: 4:56**

## Black Lung Trust Fund Gets One-Year Boost from Higher Excise Tax

Nadia Ramlagan

WHITESBURG, Ky. - Congress has voted to increase the excise tax levied on coal companies that provides cash flow for the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund. But advocates for miners who need the money say the one-year increase isn't enough to keep the fund from drying up.

The higher excise tax expires December 31, 2020. Rebecca Shelton, coordinator of policy and organizing at the Appalachian Citizens Law Center, explains the fund pays coal miners with black-lung disease and their families when the miner's employer is bankrupt or hasn't been found responsible for their illness.

"The excise tax itself funds the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund," says Shelton, "which is a trust fund managed by the federal government to pay out healthcare and monthly benefits for miners who are disabled by black lung disease and also, their families."

According to federal data, more than 25,000 people currently receive benefits from the trust fund.

For more than three decades, the excise-tax rate was around \$1.10 for underground coal - then last year, the rate was slashed in half. Shelton believes the temporary increase back to the original amount isn't enough to keep pace with rising rates of black lung disease.

"One year isn't enough, as we fight to keep it from increased debt," says Shelton.

According to a study in the American Journal of Public Health, the number of coal miners diagnosed with progressive massive fibrosis - the most severe form of black lung - has been steadily increasing since 1970. The disease is caused by breathing in coal dust.

Shelton says more work is needed to ensure the fund's security for the future.

"So, we've been fighting for many months to ask Congress to reinstate that historic rate," says Shelton. "Particularly, we've been asking them to reinstate it for 10 more years."

She adds around 75% of all black-lung benefit claims are paid for through the disability trust fund.

1-12-20

January 9, 2020

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

## KY Lawmakers Pre-file Bill Aimed at Addressing Maternal Deaths

Nadia Ramlagan

FRANKFORT, Ky. -- State legislators have pre-filed a bill aimed at addressing racial bias in health care that contributes to Kentucky women dying during or following childbirth.

Co-sponsored by Reps. Attica Scott of Louisville and Rob Wiederstein of Henderson, both Democrats, **Bill Request 88** would create local maternal fatality review teams, require implicit bias training for perinatal health care providers, and offer Medicaid reimbursement for the services of a qualified doula.

Scott says communities are only as healthy as their mothers and babies.

"The maternal mortality rate in Kentucky is 22.9 deaths per 100,000 births," she points out. "Those kind of statistics drove me to want to do something to improve maternal health outcomes and reduce the infant mortality rate here in the Commonwealth."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says it estimates more than 60% of pregnancy-related deaths are preventable.

Scott says maternal mortality rates are three times higher for pregnant women of color and nearly four times higher for pregnant African-Americans, compared with white women.

She adds that beginning evidence-based implicit bias trainings could help close that gap.

"And mandating implicit bias training is a way for us to say, 'Let's make sure that we're focusing on health equity for everyone across Kentucky, rather than allowing ourselves to get trapped in the disparities that exist in our commonwealth,'" she states.

The legislation also would call for the state Department for Public Health to closely track data on maternal deaths by implementing child and maternal fatality review teams.

"So that health care providers and those of us as legislators, can really focus on what are the pieces of policy that we can create that address health inequities," Scott states.

The World Health Organization defines maternal mortality as the death of a woman while pregnant or within roughly 40 days of giving birth.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has expanded this definition to include deaths occurring within one year of pregnancy.

1-19-20

January 15, 2020

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

## Governor Supports Helping KY Farmers Get Produce to Food Banks

Nadia Ramlagan

FRANKFORT, Ky. - Gov. Andy Beshear and groups that work to end hunger rally today in Frankfort, highlighting the fact that one in seven Kentuckians is considered "food insecure."

Scottie Lee is a third-generation Western Kentucky farmer who participates in the "Farms to Food Banks" program, run by the group Feeding Kentucky. He's paid to haul his leftover fruits and vegetables to regional food banks.

Since the program began in 2011, more than 21 million pounds of local produce has been distributed to Commonwealth residents. Lee says its a win-win solution for reducing hunger.

"You know, the average person might not realize that this produce that we're salvaging and putting in this Farms to Food Banks program, this is probably some of the most nutrient-dense food that those people that are in need are going to be able to get hold of," says Lee.

Farms to Food Banks is funded by a state budget appropriation of a \$500,000 annually, private donors - such as Farm Credit Mid-America and the Novak Family Foundation - and by Kentuckians who choose to donate a portion of their state tax refund to the program.

Lee is one of 336 farmers who participated last year. He says the extra cash he makes from packaging and delivering leftover or slightly blemished produce is funneled back into the farm's operation.

"And it adds to our farm's efficiency, by being able to have a market for that extra that we might have," says Lee. "That all goes into the pot that helps us pay expenses and labor."

Sarah Vaughn, a program coordinator Feeding Kentucky, says state food banks are struggling to keep pace with the demand. But she points out the issue isn't always on the public radar.

"We say a lot of times that food insecurity is a hidden problem, because a lot of the people that are hungry, they're not homeless. And so, you don't see 'em," says Vaughn. "They're not going to be sitting out on the street corner or anything like that, because they have housing, but they just have to make tough decisions."

According to a 2019 "Map the Meal Gap" report, 187,000 children in the Commonwealth struggle with hunger.

## Hundreds to Rally for KY Kids at State Capitol

Nadia Ramlagan

FRANKFORT, Ky. -- Advocates for children will gather in Frankfort this week to push for policies that benefit children and families. On Thursday, hundreds will rally to urge legislators to consider boosting child-care assistance and enact a state-level refundable Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income families, among other reforms.

Whitley County High School senior Nellie Ellis plans to attend the rally. She said young people are paying attention to lawmakers' actions.

"I think it's also impactful for legislators to see people my age being so passionate about these issues," Ellis said. "We share stories that we've experienced or those that come from other kids that we know. And that really speaks to the legislators."

Children's Advocacy Day begins at 10 a.m. Thursday in the State Capitol rotunda. More information is available at [kyyouth.org](http://kyyouth.org).

Patricia Tennen, chief operating officer at Kentucky Youth Advocates, said she hopes state legislators will expand successful programs such as Hands Home Visiting, which provides guidance to new parents and has been proven to reduce child abuse and neglect.

"Kids can't vote. They can't choose their elected leaders. They can't pass laws," Tennen said. "So, it's up to adults to make wise choices on their behalf and to uplift their voices in Frankfort."

Tennen said Kentucky has one of the nation's highest rates of children raised by grandparents and other relatives. And she said the state needs policies, including respite care and financial support, to help kinship families raise healthy and happy children.

"We think that these kind of smart investments and using those resources for our kids is going to then save us money down the road," she said.

She said legislators also could close a gap in state law related to how agencies report suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect. In 2018, more than 24,000 Kentucky children were victims of abuse.





## Gov. Beshear Announces Plan to Hire 350 Additional Social Workers

Nadia Ramlagan

FRANKFORT, Ky. - Gov. Andy Beshear says Kentucky will hire 350 new social workers for the Department of Child Protective Services, among other state budget reforms aimed at reducing and preventing child abuse and neglect.

Dr. Terry Brooks - executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates - says the move is encouraging, but can be seen as a first step in a career field with a high turnover rate. He points out the state loses an estimated \$13,000 each time a caseworker leaves and their replacement is hired and trained.

"And so, we think hiring more front-line workers is a critical step forward," says Brooks. "By the same token, simply hiring new workers is not enough, because we know the turnover rate is over 100%. We hope that this administration will do some creative, thoughtful approaches to retention."

Brooks believes funding should also be allocated for a refundable State Earned Income Tax Credit to help working families make ends meet. State lawmakers are now working on their version of the two-year budget, which will likely be finalized in early spring.

Gov. Beshear also announced more than \$18 million for school security upgrades mandated under legislation that passed last year. But Brooks points out the funding doesn't support onsite therapists or counselors.

He says more conversations are needed to ensure that schools have the behavioral and mental health resources they need.

"On the other hand, we were surprised and disappointed at a rather tepid response to the critical issue of school safety," says Brooks. "We have already heard from leaders in the General Assembly that they intend to bolster that particular arena for kids. And we're really glad that we have a legislative commitment on that."

The governor's budget proposal also aims to close remaining gaps in children's health coverage, and funnel \$87.5 million to local school districts.

2-9-20

## Proposed Bill Would Ban Death Penalty for Severely Mentally Ill Persons

Nadia Ramlagan

FRANKFORT, Ky. -- Kentucky lawmakers are considering a bill that would prevent seriously mentally ill defendants from receiving the death penalty.

A handful of other states, including Ohio, Virginia and Indiana, recently have pushed similar legislation.

Patrick Delahanty, director of advocacy for the Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, says the bill does not exclude everyone with some form of mental illness from capital punishment -- only those with severe disorders such as schizophrenia.

"And so, it doesn't seem fair in a system of justice that seeks to punish someone and also show people the difference between good and bad," he states.

Delahanty says the bill is similar to a Kentucky law passed in the early 1990s that bars people deemed to be mentally disabled from being executed.

**House Bill 237** is co-sponsored by Rep. Chad McCoy, a Republican from Bardstown, and nearly 30 other legislators.

Critics say the mentally ill are disproportionately given the death penalty. **One analysis** found more than 40% of people executed between 2000 and 2015 in the U.S. had been diagnosed with some form of mental illness.

Delahanty says mentally ill defendants still would be eligible for life sentences.

"They do need to be in a place where they are not able to harm people," he states. "And so, they would be eligible for prison terms, and lengthy prisons terms, including up to life without parole."

The **National Alliance on Mental Illness** and other groups have publicly stated their opposition to executing people with serious mental health issues.

2/16/20

February 13, 2020

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

## **Report: Kentucky Lost Nearly 47,000 Jobs from U.S.-China Trade Deficit**

Nadia Ramlagan

FRANKFORT, Ky. -- Kentucky lost nearly 47,000 jobs between 2001 and 2018 because of the ongoing trade deficit with China, according to a new report from the Economic Policy Institute.

Over the past two decades, the United States has steadily imported more goods from China than it exports -- and that trade deficit has topped more than \$150 billion since the Great Recession.

Economist Rob Scott with the institute says that's a major reason manufacturing employment hasn't fully recovered along with the rest of the economy.

"China trade is responsible for most of the loss of manufacturing jobs in the economy in the last 20 years," he states. "We've lost about a little less than 5 million jobs overall in that period.

"It's devastated manufacturing communities around the country. And I think China trade is responsible for a large portion of those losses."

The report found 3.7 million U.S. jobs have disappeared in the past two decades, and says job losses continued to grow during the first two years of the Trump administration.

Last month, President Donald Trump signed a new trade deal with China. But Scott says it remains to be seen whether China will hold up its end of the bargain.

"China has promised to spend \$200 billion overall, including \$40 billion for ag products over the next two years, on U.S. exports," he relates. "China has a history of failing to follow through on those promises. And I think that's the biggest concern about this phase one trade deal."

Amid the ongoing trade battle, China has reduced its purchases of U.S. soybeans. Despite the lost income, Scott doesn't think Trump's new trade deal will significantly affect demand for U.S. farm products.

"It has increased purchases from elsewhere in the world," he points out. "In the same way, the U.S. has started to export more soybeans to other countries. So, I think what's going on in part is that China has simply been buying its U.S. soybeans through other ports."

Kentucky farmers grow soybeans on around 1.3 million acres of land, generating nearly \$300 million in annual income.

## Louisville 160th City to Pass 100% Renewable-Energy Resolution

Nadia Ramlagan

LOUISVILLE, Ky. -- The Louisville Metro Council has voted to commit to reaching 100% renewable energy use for city operations within the next two decades.

According to **the resolution**, the city will work to shift public transit and other operations to run on cleaner forms of energy, such as electricity and solar power.

The Metro Council vote was 15-4 in support of the resolution.

Gretchen Milliken, director of advanced planning and sustainability for Louisville Metro, said the city already has been focused on reducing its carbon-emissions footprint.

"We have done an emissions-reduction plan. We're in the last phases of pulling together our climate adaptation plan," Milliken explained. "And these lay out strategies for our city, of how we are going to be reducing our emissions -- but also, strategies of how we're going to be dealing with the climate change that is inevitably coming our way."

She added that Louisville's summer temperatures are projected to rise between seven and 12 degrees in the next half-century.

Drew Foley, group chair of the Sierra Club's Greater Louisville Group, described the move as a step in the right direction, but pointed out that a handful of U.S. cities already are generating all or most of the energy for city operations from clean and renewable sources.

"Louisville was the 160th city in the United States that has made that commitment," Foley noted. "So, we're pretty late to the game, actually."

According to a 2016 Environmental Protection Agency report, Kentucky is likely to experience more extreme flooding, as well as longer periods of drought from climate change in the coming decades.



## Proposed Changes Could Reduce KY Families' Access to Food

Nadia Ramlagan

FRANKFORT, Ky. -- Last week, Kentucky House lawmakers advanced legislation that would reform how the state provides cash and food assistance and certain Medicaid benefits to low-income Kentuckians.

The bill, which now heads to the Senate for consideration, would require beneficiaries to use one single electronic benefit transfer, or EBT, card for all programs, and would include penalties for selling or otherwise misusing the card, among other reforms. Kristen Arant, peer support coordination liaison with Mental Health America in Northern Kentucky, said the legislation could cut off families who need cash to pay for rent, transportation or a babysitter.

"What we know about families is that any time they are punished and cut off from access to vital resources, they stay in perpetual poverty," Arant said.

The bill's primary co-sponsors, Republican Reps. David Meade of Stanford and David Osborne of Prospect, have said the measure is needed to prevent fraudulent use of public-assistance dollars.

Policy analyst with Kentucky Voices for Health Jason Dunn said while there might be a tiny portion of residents who commit benefits fraud, most people relying on public assistance are simply trying to stay afloat and care for their families.

"Families are using this to feed their children, to support them the best that they can," Dunn said. "And I think it's important to note that the workforce participation rate among the Medicaid population is actually higher, it's in the 60% range, than the work participation rate for the entire state as a whole. "

He also pointed out the data on benefits fraud in the Commonwealth remains murky.

"We don't really know the source of their data that shows a higher level of fraud, as understood by the state or by the USDA, and they won't reveal the source of that data, unfortunately," he said. "So it's hard to refute that."

House Bill 1 includes several reforms recommended last year by the state's Public Assistance Reform Task Force.

Kentucky News Connection

March 5, 2020

3/8

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

## **KY Physicians Expecting COVID-19 Cases**

Nadia Ramlagan

FRANKFORT, Ky. -- Kentucky public health officials are preparing for the possibility that COVID-19 could spread within the Commonwealth.

No cases in the state have been reported so far. However, Dr. Brent Wright, president of the Kentucky Medical Association, says COVID-19, like any other infectious disease, already is spreading within local communities.

"The information is moving rapidly," he stresses. "I would not be surprised to hear that coronavirus was diagnosed in Kentucky."

Wright notes that having the seasonal flu, which continues to circulate across Kentucky, weakens the immune system, leaving individuals more susceptible to contracting other illnesses such as coronavirus.

And he says frequent hand washing for 20 seconds using hot, soapy water is the most powerful way to prevent the spread of both novel coronavirus and the flu.

Wright says Kentuckians should rely on their local health departments, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other reputable organizations for updates.

"Find a trusted news source," he urges. "Have a good relationship with your healthcare experts and professionals in your community. Try to avoid hearsay. Try to avoid panic."

Residents can visit [kycovid19.ky.gov](http://kycovid19.ky.gov) for updates and information on the emerging public health threat.

3-15-20

Kentucky News Connection

March 13, 2020

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

## Advocates Say Bills Could Determine Future of KY Voting Access

Nadia Ramlagan

FRANKFORT, Ky. - Voting-rights advocates are calling for action on legislation that would make it easier and more convenient for Kentuckians to vote, including bills that would allow same-day voter registration at the polls and automatic voter registration when applying for a driver's license.

Additionally, Senate Bill 62 would amend the Kentucky Constitution to restore voting rights to people with certain types of felonies after serving their time, probation and parole.

Alaina Combs is a Jefferson County resident with a felony conviction, who voted for the first time last November after petitioning the governor. She says the process gave her a voice.

"So when we look at voting rights, and we look at the population of people who are excluded, you're mostly looking at poor and black and brown communities," says Combs.

SB 62 recently passed in the House Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee. Kentucky has the third highest voter disenfranchisement rate in the country, according to data from The Sentencing Project.

Combs adds that even without a criminal record, many Commonwealth residents still face numerous hurdles getting to the polls.

"If you want people to do something, you make it easier for them to do," says Combs. "If you don't want people to do something, you make it harder for them to do. And so, the easier that we make it for people, the more people are going to be able to contribute."

Combs believes legislation such as SB 2, which would require voters to show a photo form of identification at the polls, will make voting more difficult for many Kentucky residents. The bill recently passed in the House.

## Coping with Anxiety, Stress Over New Coronavirus

Nadia Ramlagan

LEXINGTON, Ky. -- As the number of COVID-19 cases continues to rise, so does anxiety. Health professionals say social distancing, frequent hand washing for 20 seconds with hot, soapy water, and staying at home if you feel sick are especially critical to protecting the state's vulnerable populations.

But Marcie Timmerman, executive director at Mental Health America of Kentucky, said it's also important to find healthy ways to cope with stress and anxiety, including deep breathing and meditation.

"There's also a cognitive behavioral therapy trick that I use personally, whenever my mind starts to get wrapped up in all the what-ifs, what could happen, I visualize a stop sign in my head," Timmerman said.

Gov. Andy Beshear has announced more positive cases of the new coronavirus, bringing the state's total number of cases to 21. He has also urged child-care centers to begin planning for potential emergency closures, and recommended that hospitals cease all elective procedures.

The state's Cabinet for Health and Family Services is urging anyone who believes they might have the disease to isolate themselves at home and call the state's COVID-19 hotline at 1-800-722-5725 for further guidance.

Timmerman pointed out that social media can feed hysteria, worry and misinformation.

"Make sure you're limiting your time on social media if it's starting to stress you out," he said. "Also, make sure you're following places of good sources of information."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, older adults and people with serious medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and lung disease seem to be at higher risk for COVID-19 illness.



## Diabetes Prevention in the Era of COVID-19

Nadia Ramlagan

PAINTSVILLE, Ky. -- It's estimated that 1 in 4 Kentuckians has undiagnosed Type 2 diabetes. Local prevention programs across the state are working to help residents control their blood sugar and decrease their risk for diabetes-related complications - especially amid the growing coronavirus pandemic.

According to the CDC, people with diabetes may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Mary Beth Castle, health educator with the Johnson County Health Department, teaches a weekly CDC-recognized diabetes-prevention class.

She said the biggest issue her clients struggle with is increasing their physical activity.

"I have a lady that's on a cane; I've had individuals that have been on oxygen. So we talk about things that they can do," Castle said. "One of the things that I do recommend to them is if they are sitting at home watching TV, that every time a commercial comes on, I suggest to them to get up and walk around in the house."

Castle added while her class has stopped meeting in person as the state continues social distancing measures, she's checked in with her clients by phone. Residents interested in participating in a diabetes-prevention program near them can find a statewide map by county on the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services website.

In 2016, Kentucky had the fourth highest death rate due to diabetes in the nation. Castle said many people may not realize chronic stress can hinder the body's ability to control blood sugar, which can lead to pre-diabetes.

"I think that COVID-19 has really kind of brought to the forefront the issue of underlying or pre-existing illness that people have, and those people seem to be the most vulnerable," she said.

Pre-diabetes occurs when blood sugar levels are higher than normal. Castle said eating fruits and vegetables, and implementing stress-reduction and weight-loss techniques can help reduce risk.

"A lot of my participants have found that counting their fat grams has been a big help for them as well," she said. "Some count carbs, some count calories."

According to state data, nearly 290,000 Kentucky adults have been told they have pre-diabetes.