



## **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: WZZL, WREZ, WRJJ, WGKY  
Time Aired: Sundays at 5:00 am

**Weekly Public Affairs Program**

## **QUARTERLY ISSUES REPORT, JANUARY-MARCH, 2021**

Show # 2021-01

**Date aired: January 3, 2021**

**Kevin Davis**, journalist, author of *"The Brain Defense: Murder in Manhattan and the Dawn of Neuroscience in America's Courtrooms"*

In the past 25 years, neuroscience has become a prominent factor in many court cases. Defense attorneys are successfully arguing that a defendant may not be responsible for a crime or should receive a lesser punishment because of brain abnormalities or injuries. Mr. Davis discussed how this is changing how judges and juries define responsibility and assign punishment.

**Issues covered:**  
**Criminal Justice**  
**Mental Health**

**Length: 7:22**

**Richard Horowitz, MD**, Lyme disease expert, founder of the Hudson Valley Healing Arts Center in Hyde Park, NY, author of *"How Can I Get Better?: An Action Plan For Treating Resistant Lyme And Chronic Disease"*

Dr. Horowitz said victims of Lyme disease are often misdiagnosed with other illnesses such as chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, multiple sclerosis, or rheumatoid arthritis. He added that the number of Lyme cases is growing at an alarming rate each year, reaching epidemic proportions. He explained how to identify symptoms and work with a qualified specialist for the best possible treatment outcome.

**Issues covered:**  
**Lyme disease**  
**Personal Health**

**Length: 9:55**

**Robert Hyldahl, PhD**, Assistant Professor of Exercise Sciences, Brigham Young University

Dr. Hyldahl co-authored a study that found that running appears to reduce inflammation in the knee joint—not increase it, as commonly believed. He said his research suggests that running may actually protect knees during the aging process, and safeguard against degenerative diseases like osteoarthritis.

**Issues covered:**  
**Personal Health**  
**Aging**

**Length: 5:01**

Show # 2021-02

**Date aired: January 10, 2021**

**Peter Vincent Pry, PhD**, Executive Director of the Task Force on National and Homeland Security, Director of the United States Nuclear Strategy Forum, both of which are Congressional Advisory Boards, former chief of staff of the Congressional EMP Commission, author of "*EMP Manhattan Project: Organizing for Survival Against an Electromagnetic Pulse Catastrophe*"

Dr. Pry explained the serious threat posed by an electromagnetic pulse (EMP), either naturally-occurring or from a manmade source. He discussed the potential sources of an attack. He said up to 90% of the US population would be dead within a year after such an event. He also outlined the basic steps that could protect the national electrical grid and explained why the US government has failed to act.

**Issues covered:**

**Electromagnetic Pulse  
Disaster Preparedness  
Government**

**Length: 10:07**

**Heather Schwartz**, Director of the Pre-K to 12 Educational Systems Program at RAND, a nonprofit research organization

About two in 10 U.S. school districts have already adopted or are considering adopting virtual schools after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new RAND Corporation study. Ms. Schwartz explained the reasons behind this, particularly as parents question the effectiveness of online learning.

**Issues covered:**

**Education  
Government  
Technology**

**Length: 7:11**

**Tyler Oesterle, MD, MPH**, Psychiatrist, expert in chemical dependency treatment at Mayo Clinic

While COVID-19 has been the focus of so much attention this year, the opioid crisis has continued unabated and has even worsened, as more than 40 states have reported increases in opioid-related deaths. Dr. Osterle discussed the factors driving the increasing rates of substance abuse, and how to recognize when a loved one is struggling with addiction.

**Issues covered:**

**Substance Abuse**

**Length: 5:06**

Show # 2021-03

**Date aired: January 17, 2021**

**Ric Edelman**, personal finance expert, Chairman/CEO of Edelman Financial Services, LLC

Mr. Edelman has devised a plan he calls "baby bonds," targeting retirement security. The plan would act as a supplement to Social Security, but it could eventually replace it. The plan would not be at the expense of taxpayers or government borrowing. He said at birth, children would receive an account with \$7,500 via money from investors in government bonds, similar to Series EE bonds. He said an investment at birth in this type of proposal would grow to become the equivalent of an average person's Social Security benefit.

**Issues covered:**  
**Personal Finance**  
**Retirement Planning**  
**Parenting**

**Length: 8:44**

**Harrison Fell, PhD**, Associate Professor of Energy Economics at North Carolina State University

Prof. Fell shared the results of his recent study that found that the environmental benefits of renewable power generation vary significantly, depending on what type of conventional power generation that the renewable energy is replacing. He explained why environmental benefits often cross regional lines. He said he hopes that his findings will help target future renewable energy investments in places where they can have the greatest impact.

**Issues covered:**  
**Renewable Energy**  
**Environment**  
**Government**

**Length: 8:20**

**Mical Raz, M.D., Ph.D., M.Sc.**, Associate Professor of History at the University of Rochester, physician at the University of Rochester 's Strong Memorial Hospital, author of *"Abusive Policies: How the American Child Welfare System Lost its Way"*

Black children are removed from their families at much greater rates than any other ethnic group. Dr. Raz discussed the role of race, poverty and substance abuse in the issue. She said most custody investigations relate to neglect, rather than sexual or severe physical abuse. She believes parents accused of neglect should retain custody of their children while receiving additional government support and assistance.

**Issues covered:**  
**Child Abuse/Neglect**  
**Minority Concerns**  
**Poverty**

**Length: 5:01**

Show # 2021-04

**Date aired: January 24, 2021**

**Jason Nagata, MD, MSc**, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the University of California, San Francisco

Dr. Nagata led a recent study that found a 25% increase in food insufficiency during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Food insufficiency, the most extreme form of food insecurity, occurs when families do not have enough food to eat. He found that black and Latino Americans had over twice the risk of food insufficiency compared to whites. He said hunger, exhaustion, and worrying about not getting enough food to eat may worsen depression and anxiety symptoms, but that free groceries from food banks and similar sources alleviated the mental health burden of food insufficiency.

**Issues covered:**  
**Food Insufficiency**  
**Mental Health**  
**Minority Concerns**  
**Charitable Contributions**

**Length: 7:36**



**Justin Ezekowitz, MBBCh, MSc**, Co-Director, Canadian VIGOUR Centre, Director of Cardiovascular Research and Professor in the Division of Cardiology at the University of Alberta

Prof. Ezekowitz led a study that found that women face a 20% higher risk than men of death or heart failure during the five years following a heart attack. He outlined the potential reasons for this trend and how it may be addressed. He said the increasing availability of new procedures to diagnose and treat heart attacks at smaller hospitals has improved survival rates for all patients.

**Issues covered:**  
**Heart Disease**  
**Women's Concerns**

**Length: 9:38**

**Rachel Cruze**, personal finance expert, author of *"Know Yourself, Know Your Money: Discover WHY You Handle Money the Way You Do, and WHAT to Do About It!"*

40% of Americans during the pandemic could not cover a \$400 emergency in cash. Ms. Cruze explained the psychology that influences how we spend and save money, and how to change those ingrained habits.

**Issues covered:**  
**Personal Finance**

**Length: 5:10**

Show # 2021-05

**Date aired: January 31, 2021**

**Henry A. Spiller, MS, D.ABAT.**, Director of the Central Ohio Poison Center at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, OH

Each day In the United States, Poison Control Centers receive an average of 32 calls about children exposed to prescription opioids. Dr. Spiller explained what child is most at risk, how adults can prevent children and adolescents from gaining access to these drugs, and how to properly dispose of unused prescriptions.

**Issues covered:**  
**Poisoning Prevention**  
**Drug Abuse**

**Length: 8:22**

**Mark K. Claypool**, founder and Chief Executive Officer of ChanceLight Behavioral Health, Therapy and Education, a provider of therapy and special education programs, author of *"How Autism is Reshaping Special Education: The Unbundling of IDEA"*

Autism diagnoses have skyrocketed in recent years. Mr. Claypool discussed some of the underlying reasons for the increase. He also explained why it is important for children with autism to receive special intervention at an early age. He said support systems for parents have improved dramatically in recent years.

**Issues covered:**  
**Autism**  
**Government Policies**  
**Education**

**Length: 8:56**

**Susanna Janssen**, language expert, newspaper columnist and the author of “*Wordstruck!: The Fun and Fascination of Language*”

Roughly 20% of American citizens are fluent in a second language. Ms. Janssen talked about the less obvious benefits of learning a second language, including enhanced abilities in focus and concentration, memory, interpersonal skills and problem-solving. She also noted that several recent studies have suggested that bilingualism may be a buffer against the development of Alzheimer's disease. She said bilinguals earn on average about 20% more than those who speak a single language.

**Issues covered:**  
**Bilingualism**  
**Career**  
**Mental Health**

**Length: 5:00**

Show # 2021-06

**Date aired: February 7, 2021**

**Michelle Macy, MD**, Pediatric Emergency Care Specialist at Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

Dr. Macy surveyed parents in Chicago during the early months of the pandemic and found that 23 percent of families were hesitant to seek emergency care for their child. She said the greatest reluctance was found in families of color. She offered examples of the most common ER visits that were left untreated and why this is such a great concern. She said that even nine months into the pandemic, ERs are still seeing far fewer patients than normal.

**Issues covered:**  
**Children's Health**  
**Parenting**  
**Minority Concerns**  
**COVID-19**

**Length: 8:39**

**Carsten Prasse, PhD**, Professor of Environmental Health and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University

Most consumers are aware that chemicals are used in the process of water treatment to ensure that it is safe to drink. But they might not know that the use of some of these chemicals, such as chlorine, can also lead to the formation of hundreds of unregulated toxic byproducts. Prof. Prasse developed a method to find toxic chemicals in drinking water that could result in cleaner, safer taps.

**Issues covered:**  
**Water Quality**  
**Environment**  
**Personal Health**

**Length: 8:44**

**Eline van den Broek-Altenburg, PhD**, Assistant Professor and Vice Chair for Population Health Science in the Department of Radiology at the University of Vermont's Larner College of Medicine

Prof. van den Broek-Altenburg believes that government orders to wear face masks may lead to more infections, if not accompanied by proper public education. She said mask mandates often cause people to increase the number of daily contacts they have with other humans, which is a key risk factor driving transmission of the disease.

**Issues covered:**  
COVID-19  
Government

**Length: 4:54**

Show # 2021-07

**Date aired: February 14, 2021**

**Ted Rossman**, Industry Analyst at CreditCards.com

51% of U.S. adults with credit card debt, or about 51 million people, added to their credit card debt since March 2020. Mr. Rossman outlined that and other findings from his organization's survey of the economic effects of the pandemic lockdowns. He said millennial credit card debtors (ages 24-39) continue to be hit the hardest.

**Issues covered:**  
Personal Finance  
Economy  
Government Policies

**Length: 9:42**

**Casey B. Mulligan, PhD**, Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago

Prof. Mulligan discussed the rising number what he calls of "deaths of despair," lives lost to suicides, alcohol-related deaths and especially drug overdoses. He explained how the deaths of elderly people diagnosed with COVID-19 differs from the loss of younger Americans to "deaths of despair" in 2020, particularly males between the ages of 15 and 55. He said it will take about a year to get additional data that will better explain possible causes.

**Issues covered:**  
Drug Abuse  
Suicides  
COVID-19

**Length: 7:32**

**Phil Chilibeck, PhD**, Kinesiology Professor at the University of Saskatchewan

Walking has long been the prescription of choice for physicians trying to help their patients bring down their blood pressure. Prof. Chilibeck led a study that found that stretching is superior to brisk walking for reducing blood pressure. He said that stretching muscles also stretches all the blood vessels that feed into the muscle, leading to less resistance to blood flow. He noted that stretching should not replace aerobic activities, but would be a helpful addition to it.

**Issues covered:**  
High Blood Pressure  
Personal Health

**Length: 4:59**

Show # 2021-08

**Date aired: February 21, 2021**

**Jeff Arnold**, consumer advocate, President of Rightsure Insurance Group, author of *"How to Beat Your Insurance Company"*

Mr. Arnold offered advice on how to negotiate the best deal possible on insurance, without sacrificing coverage. He explained that many insurance companies are now offering discounts, as drivers rack up fewer miles on the road. He also outlined the factors that consumers should consider when deciding whether they need life insurance or when to buy it.

**Issues covered:**  
**Consumer Matters**  
**Insurance**

**Length: 8:03**

**Tova Sherman**, CEO, TED Speaker, with more than 25 years of experience in diversity and inclusion, author of *"Win, Win, Win!: The 18 Inclusion-isms You Need to Become a Disability Confident Employer"*

Ms. Sherman discussed the biggest mistakes made by managers in leading teams of employees with disabilities. She said while most employers are comfortable with employees who have physical disabilities, there are numerous other forms of disabilities that deserve support and accommodation. She said the software that employers use to screen resumes often utilizes traditional keywords that result in less diversity in the workplace.

**Issues covered:**  
**Disabilities**  
**Employment**  
**Diversity**

**Length: 8:58**

**Martin Bergee, PhD**, Professor of Music Education and Music Therapy at the University of Kansas

Prof. Bergee led study expecting to disprove the notion of a link between students' musical and mathematical achievement. Instead, he found a very strong association between the two at both the individual and the school-district levels. He said it's important that school boards and administrators recognize music is much more interrelated to other academic subjects.

**Issues covered:**  
**Education**  
**Arts**

**Length: 4:51**

Show # 2021-09

**Date aired: February 28, 2021**

**Gregory Koufacos**, Licensed Clinical Alcohol and Drug Counselor who specializes in working with young men, Nationally Certified Recovery Coach, Founder & CEO of Velocity Mentoring, author of *"The Primal Method: A Book for Emerging Men"*

Social isolation related to the pandemic lockdowns has had a severe impact on teens and young adults, as research has detected more stress, anxiety and depression than other groups. Mr. Koufacos talked about the critical importance of providing support for young people. He also discussed the problems caused by limited schooling, and the surprising value of video gaming, outdoor activities and jobs for young men who are struggling.

**Issues covered:**

**Youth at Risk  
Mental Health  
Education  
Substance Abuse  
Suicide**

**Length: 9:06**

**Akito Y. Kawahara, PhD**, Associate Professor at the University of Florida, Curator of the Florida Museum of Natural History's McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity, research associate at the Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History

Prof. Kawahara shared a straightforward message: We can't live without insects. They're in trouble. And there's something all of us can do to help. He explained why everyone should be concerned by studies that sound the alarm about plummeting insect numbers and diversity. He offered simple steps that anyone can take to contribute to insect conservation.

**Issues covered:**

**Environment  
Climate Change**

**Length: 8:08**

**Ed Hirs, PhD**, Lecturer and Energy Fellow at the University of Houston Department of Economics

Prof. Hirs discussed the reasons behind the recent failure of the Texas electrical grid, and whether other areas of the country are at risk of similar outages. He said regulatory incentives should be put in place for private companies to stand ready to fill gaps during periods of peak demand, and to add infrastructure capacity as electricity demand rapidly increases from electric cars and other demands.

**Issues covered:**

**Energy  
Government Regulations**

**Length: 5:03**

Show # 2021-10

**Date aired: March 7, 2021**

**Jeremy Bailenson, PhD**, founding director of Stanford University's Virtual Human Interaction Lab, Thomas More Storke Professor in the Department of Communication

The use of virtual meetings has skyrocketed in the past year, with hundreds of millions of Zoom calls occurring daily. Prof. Bailenson discussed the feeling commonly known as "Zoom fatigue." He explained why current implementations of videoconferencing technologies are exhausting, and he explained how employees and companies can optimize their settings in videoconferences to decrease fatigue.

**Issues covered:**

**Workplace Matters  
Technology  
Mental Health**

**Length: 9:32**

**Laura Argys, PhD**, Professor of Economics, University of Colorado, Denver

Prof. Argys led a study that found that light pollution can increase the likelihood of a preterm birth by almost 13%. She explained why skyglow, the brightness of the night sky caused by light from sources like streetlamps, outdoor advertising, and buildings, can result in a higher chance of delivering a baby with a reduced birth weight, a shortened gestational length, and an increase in preterm births.

**Issues covered:**

**Personal Health  
Women's Issues**

**Length: 7:43**

**Kim Dulic**, spokesperson and Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Every 30 minutes, a child in the U.S. is injured from a TV or furniture tip-over incident. Ms. Dulic encouraged consumers to consider how to secure televisions in homes where young children live or visit. She said inexpensive and easy-to-install products are available in order to prevent tip-over tragedies.

**Issues covered:**

**Child Safety  
Consumer Matters**

**Length: 4:50**

Show # 2021-11

**Date aired: March 14, 2021**

**Sheryl Ryan, M.D., FAAP**, Professor of Pediatrics at the Yale University School of Medicine, Chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics' National Committee on Substance Abuse

33 states and Washington, D.C. now allow the use of marijuana for medical purposes, recreational use or both. Dr. Ryan was one of the authors of a report titled "Counseling Parents and Teens About Marijuana Use in the Era of Legalization of Marijuana," which outlines why a relaxed attitude about the drug is dangerous and how parents should address the topic. She said marijuana is an addictive drug that can cause abnormal changes as teens' brains develop.

**Issues covered:**

**Drug Abuse  
Parenting  
Government Policies**

**Length: 9:48**

**James Noble, MD, MS**, Assistant Professor of Neurology at Columbia University Medical Center in New York City

Dr. Noble was the co-author of a recent study that found that female athletes appear to be significantly more likely than men to suffer concussions. He noted that once concussions occur, men and women experience them in very similar ways. He also discussed why most media attention on concussions seems to focus on men, despite the greater risk to women.

**Issues covered:**

**Concussions  
Personal Health  
Women**

**Length: 7:27**

**Heather Schafer**, CEO for the National Volunteer Fire Council

Ms. Schafer said volunteers make up 80% of all fire services across the United States. She said the call volume in recent years has tripled, but volunteer fire departments are struggling to find younger recruits. She said younger people have less spare time to volunteer than previous generations. She outlined the many benefits of volunteering.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 4:53**

**Volunteerism**

**Fire Safety**

**Disaster Preparedness**

Show # 2021-12

**Date aired: March 21, 2021**

**Bonnie Marcus**, Forbes Women, Global Gurus-honored executive, author of *"Not Done Yet! How Women Over 50 Regain Their Confidence and Claim Workplace Power"*

Ms. Marcus believes that age discrimination causes many professional women to pull back from performing any activities in the workplace that may draw attention to them. She said many older women believe that if they remain off the radar, they'll save themselves from hurtful and demeaning remarks about their age, along with scrutiny from colleagues and managers questioning if perhaps they've lost their relevance. She outlined ways that women can identify how they are holding themselves back.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 9:12**

**Age Discrimination**

**Women's Issues**

**Career**

**Kui Xie**, Professor of Educational Studies at Ohio State University

Parents often fear that if their high school student isn't motivated to do well in classes, there's nothing that will change that. Prof. Xie led a study that found that students' academic motivation often does change - and usually for the better. He said that increasing students' sense of "belongingness" in school was one key way of increasing academic motivation.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 9:05**

**Education**

**Parenting**

**Mark Eichorn**, Assistant Director in the Federal Trade Commission's Division of Privacy and Identity Protection

Across the country, states are reporting massive amounts of unemployment fraud. He said the problem was the result of a perfect storm of millions of unemployed people in need after lockdowns shuttered many businesses, the huge amount of federal money thrown into the system, and state agencies overwhelmed by legitimate and fraudulent claims. He explained what a consumer can do if they receive an unemployment claim in the mail that they do not recognize.

**Issues covered:**

**Length: 4:56**

**Unemployment**

**Crime**

**Identity Theft**

Show # 2021-13

**Date aired: March 28, 2021**

**Ed Slott**, nationally recognized IRA and retirement planning expert, founder of IRAHelp.com, author of *"The New Retirement Savings Time Bomb: How to Take Financial Control, Avoid Unnecessary Taxes, and Combat the Latest Threats to Your Retirement Savings"*

Mr. Slott said that the typical retirement saver should mentally reduce their retirement savings by half, because taxes will take such a large bite from conventional IRAs and 401ks. He recommended utilizing Roth IRAs and 401ks whenever possible. He outlined the most common mistakes made when saving for retirement, and why he recommends having a life insurance policy as part of retirement planning strategies.

**Issues covered:**  
**Retirement Planning**  
**Taxes**

**Length: 8:36**

**Achea Redd**, author of *"Authentic You: A Girl's Guide to Growing Up Fearless and True"*

Rates of suicide, bullying, eating disorders and other mental health challenges are rising dramatically among teenagers. Ms. Redd outlined the character traits that are critical to thrive as an adolescent, and what parents can do to help. She shared her personal story of how her physical health impacted her mental health, and how she is taking proactive steps to prevent her own daughter from developing eating disorders.

**Issues covered:**  
**Youth Mental Health**  
**Bullying**  
**Eating Disorders**  
**Parenting**

**Length: 8:36**

**Elvis Genbo Xu, PhD**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Biology at the University of Southern Denmark

Recent studies estimate that we use an astounding 129 billion face masks globally every month, roughly 3 million each minute. Prof. Xu said little effort has been made so far to address the massive environmental impact of these disposable masks, most of which are not biodegradable. He explained why plastic microfibers contained in the masks are so bad for oceans and the overall environment, and outlined steps necessary to address the problem.

**Issues covered:**  
**Environment**  
**Recycling**

**Length: 5:04**



# Kentucky News Connection

*A statewide news service for Kentucky*

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December 31, 2020

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

## KY Lawmakers Push for Statewide Ban on No-Knock Search Warrants

Louisville, KY – Kentucky lawmakers are pushing for a statewide ban on no-knock search warrants, after the death of Louisville resident Breonna Taylor sparked a movement to end no-knock raids nationwide. Comments from state Rep. Attica Scott, D-Louisville; and Keturah (keh-TOUR-ah) Herron, policy strategist, ACLU of Kentucky.

**Intro:** After the killing of Breonna Taylor by Louisville police, some states have moved to ban no-knock search warrants, and Kentucky could soon do the same. This month, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam signed Breonna's Law into effect; Pennsylvania and Tennessee are considering similar moves. Florida and Oregon have already banned no-knock search warrants. Keturah Herron with the A-C-L-U of Kentucky says no-knock warrants often conflict with existing laws that allow for self-defense in a home intrusion. She adds law-enforcement protocols for obtaining a no-knock search warrant are murky and can, in some cases, be unconstitutional.

*:20 "I think that one of the biggest things that people haven't really been talking about is the actual warrant process, and what it takes to get a warrant. We know that the warrant in Breonna Taylor's case was over 30 days old. Then we also know on the warrant application, it's hard or difficult, and sometimes, you can't even read the signature of the judges."*

**Tag:** Democratic State Representative Attica Scott of Louisville is the primary sponsor of Breonna's Law, a bill that would end no-knock search warrants in the Commonwealth. It's already a city ordinance in Louisville, as of earlier this year.

**Second Cut:** No-knock search warrants started in the 1980s' "War on Drugs," when police nationwide launched a campaign of drug busts and raids. It's estimated between 20-thousand and 50-thousand no-knock raids occur each year in the U-S. Representative Scott says many communities see unannounced raids as dangerous.

*:15 "And since I filed the bill back in August, I've been contacted from folks in Appalachia, to rural western Kentucky, saying, 'Thank you. We need more people to pay attention to what sheriffs in this part of Kentucky are doing to residents.'"*

**Third Cut:** Scott points to a recent survey of Republicans across the country, which found 52-percent support ending no-knock warrants.

*:16 "So, this is an issue about taking care of people and keeping people safe. I look forward to the session beginning in January 2021, and my Republican colleagues stepping up and signing on as co-sponsors to Breonna's Law, so that we can keep all of our neighbors safe."*

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January 6, 2021

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

## Environmental, Economic Factors Drive KY Racial Health Disparities

**Frankfort, KY –** The drivers of health inequity in Kentucky's Black and Brown communities were in place long before COVID-19, and medical experts say the state can take steps to address them. Comments from Dr. Wayne Tuckson, colorectal surgical specialist, University of Louisville Physicians.

**Intro:** C-D-C data show Black Americans are more than twice as likely to die from COVID-19 as whites. Medical experts in the Commonwealth say longstanding health disparities contribute to the disproportionate number of deaths, and will require major policy changes to reverse. According to Dr. Wayne Tuckson of University of Louisville Physicians, chronic diseases like asthma, found at higher rates in Black communities, are closely linked to socioeconomic status. He says Black families are more likely to live in industrial areas or near highways, breathing in greater concentrations of pollution less than two-point-five microns in size.

:14 *"These are the particles than can penetrate deep into our lung tissue, establish inflammatory responses and not only give rise to problems like COPD, but also increase one's susceptibility if somebody does get COVID-19."*

**Tag:** State data from 2017 show Black Kentuckians are more likely to die from asthma than any other racial or ethnic group. Tuckson adds even before the pandemic, lack of health insurance meant families didn't receive regular preventive care. He says community groups can help propel policy changes to combat these inequities.

**Second Cut:** A-A-R-P Kentucky's "Disrupt Disparities 2-point-0" is a campaign to lower the cost of prescription drugs. The group says Black Americans are more likely to forgo trips to the pharmacy due to cost. The campaign also aims to enact a tax credit for family caregivers and boost access to outdoor recreation spaces in disadvantaged areas. Tuckson notes poor physical health has ripple effects on people's lives that further worsen health inequities.

:10 *"People who are not well can't go to work. People don't go to work, they don't have revenue. Because they don't have revenue, family wealth is decreased. People who don't have family wealth, poverty."*

**Tag:** In 2019, the median Black household earned just 61-cents for every dollar of income for the median white household, according to the Economic Policy Institute. Tuckson notes the pandemic's devastating economic effects will likely widen the wage gap for Black workers for years to come and magnify health inequities.

### OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEDE: C-D-C data show Black Americans are more than twice as likely to die from COVID-19 as whites. Medical experts in the Commonwealth say longstanding health disparities contribute to the



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January 11, 2021

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

## Governor: KY Budget Ready to Tackle Pandemic Losses

**Frankfort, KY – Gov. Andy Beshear has announced his “A Better Kentucky” budget, focused on delivering fast financial relief to Kentucky families and businesses harmed by the pandemic. Comments from state Rep. Joni Jenkins, D-Shively, Kentucky House minority leader.**

**Intro:** In a State of the Commonwealth address delayed by last week’s insurrection at the U-S Capitol, Governor Andy Beshear pledged to provide relief to the state’s struggling small businesses and to those who’ve lost jobs amid the pandemic. Democratic State Representative and House Minority Leader Joni Jenkins of Jefferson County says there are brighter days ahead for Kentuckians in 2021, with the governor’s proposal of 220-million dollars in direct aid to small businesses, 20-million for small nonprofits, and around 100-million to repay the federal loan to Kentucky’s unemployment insurance trust fund.

:09 *"The funding in the budget and the way he is spending that funding brings me lots of hope for bringing individuals and businesses back."*

**Tag:** The governor said he’s also authorizing 48 million dollars in CARES Act funding to individuals who waited too long to receive unemployment benefits and to help those who missed out on the federal government’s Lost Wages Assistance Program because they made too little.

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**Second Cut:** Jenkins also praised Beshear’s proposed 50-million dollars toward expanding broadband access in the Commonwealth — the first time state dollars would go toward boosting household internet connectivity. She points out in the COVID-19 era, high-speed internet has become essential.

:14 *"We used to think of that as a business issue, but we’ve known it’s a health issue, because telehealth has been used much this last year, and we also know that it’s an educational issue, as well as hope for our businesses."*

**Tag:** Additionally, Beshear announced a one thousand dollar salary increase for teachers in fiscal year 2022 and a 100-million dollar cash infusion to school facilities. He also called for the legalization of medical marijuana, passing online sports betting and preserving historic horse racing.

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**OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)**

1/24

# Kentucky News Connection

*A statewide news service for Kentucky*

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January 22, 2021

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

## Kentucky Expands Suicide-Prevention Resources Amid Pandemic

Frankfort, KY – As mental-health distress continues to increase from the COVID-19 crisis, Kentucky now has an additional accredited agency serving the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline call centers within the state. Comments from Eric Friedlander ('free-lander'), secretary, Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

**Intro:** To keep pace with the growing demand for mental-health resources, the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services has added another accredited agency to serve as National Suicide Prevention Lifeline call centers in the state. Calls to the Lifeline jumped by more than three percent last year, compared to the same period in 2019, as Kentuckians struggle with economic stress, personal loss and other consequences of COVID-19. Cabinet Secretary Eric Friedlander says Pathways, Inc. – a community mental-health center – has completed the accreditation process and is now providing call-center services to Kentuckians.

:11 *"Kentucky residents call these suicide-prevention lines 350 times a week. So, when someone's in crisis, they need assistance now – it can't wait."*

**Tag:** According to the C-D-C, mental health among U-S adults is worsening as the pandemic drags on. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a network of crisis centers with free and confidential support to people considering suicide or in emotional distress. It's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The number is 1-800-273-8255.

\*\*\*

**Second Cut:** Friedlander adds certain populations, such as people who are elderly and isolated, are at higher risk during the pandemic – but most experts expect the need for mental-health resources to remain high well after the crisis ends, especially in regions of the state that already saw high suicide rates before the coronavirus.

:13 *"We're starting to roll out the vaccine, which is fantastic – but once we get through this, sometimes folks react later to that stress. So we really have to be on guard, across all our communities."*

**Tag:** One study by researchers at Ohio State University found suicide rates in the Commonwealth have surpassed the national average over the past two decades. Beginning next summer, Friedlander says a new national three-digit number will go live, with the goal of even easier access to mental health and suicide prevention resources – much like calling 9-1-1.

**OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)**

**LEDE:** To keep pace with the growing demand for mental-health resources, the Kentucky Cabinet for



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January 28, 2021

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

## Critics Say KY Voucher Plan Would Siphon Funds from Public Schools

Frankfort, KY – Critics of legislation to create a statewide private-school tax credit program argue it would primarily benefit wealthier families, and drain much-needed funding for public schools. But House Bill 149 has more than 20 co-sponsors. Comments from Jeni Bolander, teacher, Fayette County Public Schools; and Anna Baumann, deputy director, Kentucky Center for Economic Policy.

**Intro:** Some Kentucky lawmakers are proposing a statewide voucher program based on tax credits, so families can send their kids to private schools. House Bill 149 would give donors like major corporations a special-interest tax break for giving money to privately controlled organizations that use the funds to pay kids' private-school tuition. Critics say that would drain 25-million dollars from the state budget in its first year alone. Fayette County Public Schools teacher Jeni Bolander says she understands why some families chose private schools – but thinks public tax money shouldn't be used to pay for them.

:12 *"You know, outside of schools, we need roads and hospitals. And yet, inside of schools, we're seeing that we've had textbooks cut for the past two years, we've had no professional development funds, I think Title I got reduced. It's just a lot."*

**Tag:** The funding gap between students in wealthy and poor districts in the Commonwealth is now almost three-thousand dollars per student, largely driven by shrinking state investments in education along with an increasing reliance on local tax dollars.

**Second Cut:** Anna Baumann of the Kentucky Center for Economic Policy explains the bill includes a provision that would allow the size of the tax credit to grow by 25-percent, each year that 90-percent of the money is used.

:14 *"When you do the math on that and kind of look out a few years, we can see that, for instance, in just three years, we'll be spending more on the program than the state budgeted for education technology across the Commonwealth this year."*

**Tag:** Baumann points out within 10 years, the program could divert one-billion dollars from the state budget into private schools.

**Third Cut:** States like Florida have passed similar laws. Baumann notes last year, private-school tax credits cost Floridians nearly 900-million dollars. Meanwhile, districts are struggling to meet basic needs, maintain after-school services and staffing levels.

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# Kentucky News Connection

2/14

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February 8, 2021

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## Farms to Food Banks Program Seen as “Lifeline” During Pandemic

Frankfort, KY — Last year more than 300 Kentucky farmers participated in the state’s Farms to Food Banks program, and advocates say a funding boost could help feed more families at a time when many are facing financial hardship, while also financially compensating growers. Comments from Feeding Kentucky officials Karena (Kare-N-AH) Cash, advocacy director, and Katrina Thompson, executive director.

**Intro:** As the food-insecurity crisis continues, Kentucky growers are stepping in to fill the void. Last year 371 farmers participated in the state’s Farms to Food Banks program, and advocates say a funding boost could help feed more families at a time when many are facing financial hardship, while also financially compensating growers. Advocacy Director at Feeding Kentucky Karena Cash says during the pandemic more families are relying on food assistance than ever. She says providing nutrient-dense, locally grown produce to households is a top priority.

:08 *"We have enough food in this country to feed every single person. It's just about finding creative solutions to make sure that families are actually getting the food."*

**Tag:** In 2020, Farms to Food Banks provided 4-point-5 million meals to families in the Commonwealth while paying farmers around two thousand dollars on average to cover the costs of harvesting, packaging, and transporting donated agricultural products to a food bank or pantry. Last month, Governor Andy Beshear signed a proclamation declaring January 28th Hunger Free Day.

**Second Cut:** Feeding Kentucky's Executive Director Katrina Thompson says the program is funded by a state budget appropriation of 500-thousand dollars annually, along with help from private donors and residents who choose to donate a portion of their state tax refund. But she says more resources are needed given the unprecedented level of demand driven by the COVID-19 crisis.

:11 *"Our dollars are spread among seven food banks across Kentucky, and those provide fresh Kentucky-grown produce that would otherwise go to waste."*

**Third Cut:** Cash says Feeding Kentucky hopes state lawmakers will boost the program's budget appropriation to 600 thousand annually so more families can access local produce.

:09 *"All the money that we get goes directly toward feeding families. One hundred extra thousand dollars is one hundred extra thousand dollars worth of produce that we can put into the hands of Kentucky families."*

**Tag:** More than a half million Kentuckians get groceries or meals from food banks, and one in six households with children experiences food insecurity. The state also has the highest rate of food insecurity in the nation among adults ages 50 to 59.

# Kentucky News Connection

2/21

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February 19, 2021

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## Farmers Voice Support for Bill Tackling Monopoly Power

Lexington, KY – Legislation proposed by U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., would provide more federal resources to stop anticompetitive business mergers and conduct. Rural advocacy groups say many farmers, squeezed by decades of unchecked consolidation among equipment and seed suppliers, support the bill. Comments from Tyler Whitley, program manager, Challenging Corporate Power program, Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI)-USA.

**Intro:** Decades of unchecked mergers in the agricultural industry have left many farmers struggling, and rural advocacy groups says a proposal in Congress aims to change that. The "Competition and Antitrust Law Enforcement Reform Act" would give agencies like the Federal Trade Commission more funding and resources to put a stop to unfair consolidation, and strengthen the rules against monopolies. Tyler Whitley of RAFI-U-S-A says current antitrust law has left many farmers at the whim of a handful of major corporations. He says there's not a lot of room for them to select a different supplier or manufacturer to get the best deal.

:12 *"So for a farmer, there may be limited options on where you can buy your seeds from, where you can buy your fertilizer from – and I don't mean the individual point-of-sale; what I mean is the producer."*

**Tag:** One 2016 study estimated that the mergers of Dow with DuPont, and Bayer with Monsanto, would mean an initial jump of more than one thousand dollars in corn-seed costs for the average U-S farmer, in the first year alone. But opponents of stricter antitrust laws say allowing free-market competition benefits consumers.

**Second Cut:** Whitley points out big-ag mergers trickle down to most Americans at the grocery store.

:21 *"The number of manufacturers has gotten smaller and smaller, especially as some of these companies buy up other ones. (:05) You know, if you're walking down the aisle of your grocery store, and you're looking at frozen poultry, for example, you look down the aisle and you see 20-some-odd brands, but what you probably don't realize is that, of those 20 brands, they're probably owned by four individual companies."*

**Third Cut:** Whitley believes the bill is the foundation needed to help growers get the best prices for their products, and continue to innovate in the face of the climate crisis and other challenges.

:12 *"This bill will go a long way toward policing some of these mergers that have led to so few options for either buying products or selling products, especially in rural economies."*

**Tag:** The same bill would have implications beyond the ag industry, including for tech monopolies like Facebook, which is currently being sued by the Federal Trade Commission and several states for what they claim are antitrust practices.

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# Kentucky News Connection

J/Hs

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February 22, 2021

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## COVID Crisis Puts Spotlight on Home-Based Child Care

Frankfort, KY – Legislators are considering Senate Bill 148, which would amend local planning and zoning laws to allow more residents to open a regulated home-based family child-care business. Comments from Becky Stacy, administration and advocacy director, Appalachian Early Childhood Network; and Dawn Thompson, assistant director, Community Coordinated Child Care, Inc.

**Intro:** Community advocates say home-based family child care could play a major role in closing gaps in access across Kentucky during the pandemic and beyond, but current zoning creates obstacles for individuals interested in opening licensed and regulated home child-care centers. In a recent survey conducted by Kentucky Youth Advocates, one in four current family child-care providers said local zoning protocols were a major barrier. Dawn Thompson of Community Coordinated Child Care in Louisville says a web of regulations, fees, and local politics often deters passionate individuals who could help fill the child-care void.

:08 *"In some communities, it's about a sign, or parking, or the traffic, where they are in a neighborhood, or lighting."*

**Tag:** The Kentucky Senate recently passed a bill that would amend local planning and zoning laws to make it easier to start home child-care businesses. The legislation is sponsored by Republican state Senator Danny Carroll of Benton. It's estimated more than half of communities in the Commonwealth are child-care deserts. According to Kentucky Youth Advocates, at least 14 percent of parents quit or changed their job due to problems with child care for children younger than six.

**Second Cut:** Thompson says amid widespread household income loss, more parents are seeking affordable alternatives. She believes home child-care centers can provide the critical economic infrastructure needed to support parents and the businesses that employ them.

:10 *"During the pandemic, people are looking for child-care options, they're looking for smaller group sizes, they're looking for that home setting, and family child care offers both of those."*

**Third Cut:** Since the start of the pandemic, more than two million women have left the workforce. Becky Stacy of the Appalachian Early Childhood Network in Hazard says since January, an additional 275-thousand women have left the workforce, compared with around 71-thousand men.

:12 *"We believe that opening family home child cares as businesses would be just perfect for working women who have lost their jobs or have had to quit because of child care or other issues."*

# Kentucky News Connection

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March 5, 2021

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## KY Community Groups Push Back on Energy Rate Hikes

Frankfort, KY – A slew of proposed rate changes by utilities during the pandemic last year has advocacy groups working to increase community input in rate cases heard by the state's Public Service Commission. Comments from Josh Bills, commercial energy specialist with the Mountain Association.

**Intro:** Community groups are banding together to push back against increasingly frequent rate hikes proposed by Kentucky utility companies. Each year, the Kentucky Public Service Commission receives hundreds of applications to change rates and services. And according to Josh Bills, a Commercial Energy Specialist with the Mountain Association, most of these cases go unchallenged. He says last fall, Kentucky Power asked for a 25-percent rate increase, its third in five years, saying the change was needed to help pay for new meters.

:15 *"They are also setting aside particular costs and passing those directly to customers as surcharges. So, it's getting to be more and more complicated for a customer to look at their bill and understand what their rates are and how much they're being charged."*

**Tag:** The Mountain Association and Kentuckians for the Commonwealth intervened in the case and brought ratepayers to the table to voice their concerns, with more than 250 people filing public comments. The commission reduced the rate hike amount, but eastern Kentuckians' energy bills will still increase by about 12-and-a-half percent. Now, the Kentucky Solar Energy Society, Metropolitan Housing Coalition and other groups are intervening in rate cases filed by Louisville G-and-E and Kentucky Utilities, with hearings expected next month.

**Second Cut:** Bills says it's critical to bring more community voices to these rate cases, which largely go unnoticed by the public. He notes Kentucky Power wants to overhaul its solar net-metering rates, an arrangement that allows customers to offset their electricity costs by investing in rooftop solar.

:15 *"It makes for a much more complicated system, on top of the complicated system that we have, but it could also bring just a world of benefits. And so, we need to be open to the trend and direction that we're going, toward renewables – and renewables, you know, not centrally located."*

**Tag:** He adds for now, the commission has deferred weighing in on changes to solar net-metering, but a final decision is expected in May.

**Third Cut:** Bills adds he supports the Public Service Commission's work to ensure reasonable rates for residents, noting that puts Kentucky in a different boat than Texas, whose wholesale energy shifted to a competitive marketplace — with massive consequences after a historic storm that left millions without power.

:17 *"We don't have that competitive wholesale going on where retail customers can chose the least-cost*



# Kentucky News Connection

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March 12, 2021

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## Louisville Leads in Preparing Adults, Students for 21st-Century Workforce

**A COLLABORATION WITH WORKINGNATION – Louisville, KY –** As the pandemic passes its one-year mark, local governments are tackling high levels of unemployment by partnering with local schools and businesses. In Louisville, job-training academies prepare high school students with the skills needed to forge careers before they graduate. Comments from Michael Gritton, executive director, KentuckianaWorks.

**Intro:** Nearly twice as many people are unemployed than before the coronavirus hit, but in Louisville, leaders say the demand for software engineers, coders and I-T support is strong – and they're working to get people connected to these opportunities. Michael Gritton heads KentuckianaWorks, the workforce development board for Louisville and surrounding counties. He says boards like his oversee career centers for people who've been laid off or want a new career path, and they can get job-training scholarships for careers in growing fields. But Gritton notes federal spending on local workforce training has shrunk by 40-percent in the past 15 years.

:15 *"And so, many workforce boards like KentuckianaWorks are still required to run those career centers, still required to try to provide services to people, but it means in reality that we oftentimes don't have the kind of job training scholarship that a person wants."*

**Tag:** He believes doubling or tripling the funds to help people get back to work in technology and other growing sectors will speed economic recovery. There are about 100 unfilled junior software-development jobs open in the greater Louisville area every three months. He notes groups like Code Louisville train people for these positions through online learning and in-person mentoring.

**Second Cut:** Gritton says another initiative that partners Jefferson County Public School students with local industries gives students access to learning beyond the traditional high-school curriculum, and equips them with industry certifications, work experience and college credits.

:17 *"Fifteen of the schools in Jefferson County Public Schools are now organized around academies, things like healthcare or manufacturing, or information technology. And we oftentimes now are recruiting businesses to become partners with those academies."*

**Third Cut:** While the economy is showing signs of improvement, Gritton acknowledges many of the jobs lost during the pandemic may not be coming back.

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March 15, 2021

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## Report Highlights Deepening Crises for Many KY Kids

**Pikeville, KY –** As the state hits the one-year mark of school closures and stay-at-home orders, a new report by the nonprofit group Save the Children examines how the unprecedented events of 2020 affected Kentucky families. Comments from Alissa Taylor, state director for Kentucky Rural Education Programs, Save the Children.

**Intro:** Kentucky families are facing greater levels of food insecurity and economic instability one year into the coronavirus pandemic, says a new report from the nonprofit group Save the Children. In the report, the Commonwealth ranks in the top three states where food scarcity is highest for kids, along with Arkansas and Louisiana. Save the Children's State Director for Kentucky Rural Education Programs Alissa Taylor says kids have been hard-hit by multiple crises, including this winter's ice storm and historic levels of flooding.

:14 *"What we're doing is working with the districts to get flood relief out. Some of them have lost their homes completely. We received photos from Breathitt County and Perry County where, you know, the homes slide off the mountain due to a mudslide, because of the floods."*

**Tag:** Taylor says she's concerned kids will slide further in terms of learning, noting the extended disruption from school has been devastating for families without the tools needed for effective remote learning. She says 60-percent of low-income students regularly logged in for online instruction, compared to 90-percent of higher-income students.

**Second Cut:** Taylor believes districts should begin implementing programs to help keep kids engaged and help them catch up on their school now that many are returning to classrooms.

:12 *"A lot of them have burnout from being online for so long. So, what are some exciting opportunities that can be offered now that kids are returning to school, to have fun and get excited about education again?"*

**Third Cut:** Taylor also points to innovative approaches like Save the Children's cash-card project, funded by private donors. She says the cards allowed families flexibility to use funds based on their own needs.

:11 *"So, to purchase internet services, to buy a data plan from their cell phone provider, to pay some utility bills, to buy clothing for their children – things that other relief efforts weren't covering."*

**Tag:** Nationwide, 69-percent of households with children have reported recent difficulty paying for usual household expenses, while 45-percent say it's been "somewhat or very" difficult to keep up with expenses for food, supplies and bills. The report notes Black families are six times more likely to struggle paying bills than white families.

**OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP:** uses first soundbite(s)



# Kentucky News Connection

3/18

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March 22, 2021

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## Critics Say Austerity Budget Boosts Big Businesses, Sidelines KY Families

Frankfort, KY – Critics of the Kentucky Legislature's austere budget, soon to be passed, point out that it does not include using surplus funds from federal aid to make necessary public investments, and instead makes additional deposits into the state's rainy-day fund. Comments from Pam Thomas, senior fellow, Kentucky Center for Economic Policy.

**Intro:** As state lawmakers consider a slew of major last-minute tax breaks, their critics say the moves may benefit large industries and businesses, but would do little for Kentucky families. Pam Thomas of the Kentucky Center for Economic Policy says tax relief moving through the Legislature includes breaks for the film industry, telecommunications and insurance companies, and for private school or educational vouchers, among others. She explains the proliferation of tax breaks reduces the money the Commonwealth has for schools, healthcare, infrastructure and other vital public investments.

:07 *"There's no new money for education, there's no new money for school social workers, there's no new money really for anything."*

**Tag:** Lawmakers have already passed House Bill 278, which would give an income-tax deduction to the more than 50-thousand Kentucky businesses that received Paycheck Protection Program loans. Thomas points out the break will likely only be helpful to businesses that were profitable in the crisis – not those that struggled to stay afloat and need the most assistance. It's estimated the legislation could cost the state 240-million dollars.

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**Second Cut:** Thomas says Kentucky's economy has sustained the pandemic better than economists thought it would, and notes the state budget has revenue above initial estimates. But rather than taking that revenue and using it to invest in communities, she says lawmakers are focused on shrinking government spending.

:09 *"So, it seems that in part, the focus has been more on supporting, sustaining and helping businesses, less on supporting sustaining and helping individuals."*

**Third Cut:** Thomas adds more tax cuts will likely force Kentucky to give back the COVID-relief money it receives from the federal government.

:11 *"We don't have guidance yet from Treasury on exactly how that's going to be implemented, but right now is a very risky time for states to be passing tax credits, since we don't have that guidance."*