



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

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

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

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

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

Weekly program information can be found on the proceeding pages.



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

Time Aired: 5:00 AM WEEKLY

Weekly Public Affairs Program

QUARTERLY ISSUES REPORT, JANUARY-MARCH, 2023

Show # 2023-01

Date aired: Sunday, January 1, 2023

Jacquelyn C. Campbell, PHD, RN, FAAN, expert on domestic violence, violence against women and intimate partner violence, Professor and the Anna D. Wolf Chair at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, National Program Director for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Nurse Faculty Scholars Program

Dr. Campbell developed the Danger Assessment, a groundbreaking questionnaire designed to assess a woman's risk of being killed by an abusive partner. She talked about recent updates to the tool that address concerns for immigrant women and same-sex partners. She said it's helpful for an abused woman to document for herself how often abuse is happening, levels of abuse and other patterns.

Issues covered:

**Domestic Violence
Women's Concerns**

Length: 9:21

Bryan Caplan, PhD, Professor of Economics at George Mason University, blogger for EconLog, author of "*The Case against Education: Why the Education System Is a Waste of Time and Money*"

Although it is immensely popular--and immensely lucrative--Dr. Caplan believes that higher education is grossly overrated. He said that decades of growing access to education have not resulted in better jobs for the average worker, but instead in runaway credential inflation. He is in favor of serious cuts in government education funding to curb this wasteful rat race, along with a renewed emphasis on vocational education.

Issues covered:

**Education
Career
Government Spending**

Length: 8:01

Cyrus Farivar, Senior Business Editor at Ars Technica, author of "*Habeas Data: Privacy vs. the Rise of Surveillance Tech*"

Mr. Farivar discussed how judges and activists have thought about privacy and surveillance in America in recent decades. He believes that laws need to be updated to address advances in surveillance technology, such as the mass use of license plate readers and facial recognition software.

Issues covered:

**Constitutional Rights
Privacy**

Length: 5:04

Show # 2023-02

Date aired: Sunday, January 8, 2023

Todd Spencer, President of the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association

Trucking is critical to virtually every aspect of the US economy. Mr. Spencer talked about the biggest challenges faced by truck drivers. He said drivers often spend 30% of their work week being detained by inefficiencies in the supply chain, waiting for shippers and receivers. He discussed the lack of adequate training of new truckers. He also talked about road congestion and needed improvements in the nation's highway system to better accommodate trucks.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:39

Transportation

Supply Chain Issues

Employment

Natasha Slesnick, PhD, Professor of Human Development and Family Science in the Department of Human Sciences, and EHE Associate Dean for Research and Administration at Ohio State University

Prof. Slesnick led a study that suggests that giving some homeless mothers with young children a place to live may do little to help them if it is not combined with support services. She outlined the most significant challenges faced by homeless mothers and their children, and the most effective forms of support.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:45

Homelessness

Government Programs

Drug Abuse

Donna Thompson, PhD, MBA, retired college educator, an advocate for children's literacy and creator of The Adventures of Carly and Charly, a book series "written" by cats for kids

Ms. Thompson discussed the importance of encouraging reading in young children, and the major obstacles created by electronic screens. She talked about the long-lasting health and wellness benefits connected to reading, and why it is so important for parents to set a good example in reading habits.

Issues covered:

Length: 5:01

Literacy

Parenting

Show # 2023-03

Date aired: Sunday, January 15, 2023

Nora Volkow, MD, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, part of the National Institutes of Health

Fentanyl overdoses are the leading cause of death for Americans ages 18 to 49, more than car accidents or suicides. On average, one person dies of a fentanyl overdose in the United States every seven minutes, and the number of Americans killed by the drug has jumped 94 percent since 2019. Dr. Volkow discussed why the problem has skyrocketed and what steps the federal government is taking to address it. She said that, while the epidemic was worse in certain rural areas of the US in past years, the problem has now overwhelmed every city and state. She talked about the importance of education and treatment programs, and also explained why fentanyl is a particularly troubling issue for pregnant women.

Issues covered:
Substance Abuse and Treatment
Government Policies

Length: 17:52

Sam Quinones, author of *“The Least of Us: True Tales of America and Hope in the Time of Fentanyl and Meth”*

The opioid crisis’ damage to US communities cost the economy \$1.5 trillion in 2020 alone, according to a congressional analysis. Mr. Quinones talked about steps that cities and towns can take to try to repair community bonds, most effectively on the neighborhood, school and church level. He believes that stronger law enforcement is necessary to force drug abusers into treatment, whether they want it or not.

Issues covered:
Substance Abuse and Treatment
Community Rehabilitation
Law Enforcement
Homelessness

Length: 5:08

Show # 2023-04

Date aired: Sunday, January 22, 2023

Lauren Fleshman, one of the most decorated American distance runners of all time, winner of five NCAA championships at Stanford University and two national championships as a professional, author of *“Good for A Girl: A Woman Running in a Man’s World”*

Girls drop out of organized sports at twice the rate of boys at age 14, and half have quit by 17. Sixty-five percent develop disordered eating habits that compromise their ease around food, sometimes irreparably. Ms. Fleshman talked about emerging research on the physiology and psychology of young athletes, and what coaches and parents should know. She outlined changes in organized sports to empower and encourage young women to join and stay.

Issues covered:
Women’s Concerns
Youth Sports

Length: 9:21

Chris Bailey, productivity expert, author of *“How to Calm Your Mind: Finding Presence and Productivity in Anxious Times”*

Mr. Bailey shared the inspiration to write his book--a panic attack he had onstage in front of an audience of over 100. He outlined simple steps he took in the moment and in the long-term to conquer burnout, and explained how he gradually restored calm and tranquility to his life. He talked about sources of hidden stress buried within our days, often activities and people that we voluntarily subject ourselves to.

Issues covered:
Mental Health
Personal Productivity
Career

Length: 8:01

Tim Lohrentz, Program Manager of the Insight Center for Community Economic Development, a non-profit organization that focuses on policies to build economic health in lower income communities

Mr. Lohrentz conducted a study of payday loans and their net impact on the US economy. He found that the burden of repaying the high-interest loans results in \$774 million in lost consumer spending and 14,000 job losses annually. He outlined the alternatives to payday loans that are available to low-income borrowers.

Issues covered:

Payday Loans

Poverty

Government Regulations

Length: 5:10

Show # 2023-05

Date aired: Sunday, January 29, 2023

Alvin E. Roth, PhD, Craig and Susan McCaw Professor of Economics at Stanford University, Gund Professor of Economics and Business Administration Emeritus at Harvard University, author of *“Who Gets What — and Why: The New Economics of Matchmaking and Market Design”*

Dr. Roth is one of the world’s leading experts on matching markets, where “sellers” and “buyers” must choose each other, and price isn’t the only factor that determines who gets what. He explained how market designs affect many less obvious aspects of life, such as the chances of getting a job or whether a university accepts a prospective student.

Issues covered:

Economics

Career

Education

Length: 9:17

Joel Kahn, MD, Clinical Professor of Medicine at Wayne State University School of Medicine and Director of Cardiac Wellness, Michigan Healthcare Professionals PC, author of *“The Whole Heart Solution”*

According to Dr. Kahn, more than 75 percent of cases of heart attacks, strokes and other cardiovascular disease events are preventable. He explained how lifestyle choices can make a huge difference in the development of heart disease and he said changes in diet and exercise can often reverse the disease.

Issues covered:

Personal Health

Length: 8:01

Paul Tough, former editor at the New York Times Magazine, nationally recognized writer on poverty, education and the achievement gap

Mr. Tough discussed a groundbreaking anti-poverty initiative called the Harlem Children’s Zone. The creator of the program theorized that in order for poor kids to compete with their middle-class peers, everything in their lives—their schools, neighborhoods, parenting practices—all must be changed at once.

Issues covered:

Poverty

Education

Minority Concerns

Parenting

Length: 5:00

Show # 2023-06

Date aired: Sunday, February 5, 2023

Ismail Karabas, PhD, Marketing Professor at Murray State University

Tipping for food at the end of a dining experience has traditionally been the norm at full-service restaurants. Prof. Karabas shared his research into a new trend: tip requests at businesses where customers order at the counter, pay for their items before getting their food, and receive minimal-to-no service. He explained the reasons behind the change. He found that some consumers are so annoyed by the requests that they take their business elsewhere.

Issues covered:
Consumer Matters
Employment
Economy

Length: 8:58

Dan Martell, entrepreneur, productivity expert, author of "*Buy Back Your Time: Get Unstuck, Reclaim Your Freedom, and Build Your Empire*"

Mr. Martell shared his story of a traumatic childhood and arrest as a teenager, which amazingly led to an interest in software coding and entrepreneurship. He offered suggestions for entrepreneurs to value and use time more productively. He also offered advice to avoid burnout.

Issues covered:
Entrepreneurism
Personal Productivity
Career

Length: 8:18

Les Bernal, Executive Director of Stop Predatory Gambling, a national grassroots citizen's movement

Americans in dozens of states can now buy lottery tickets in a growing number of ways. Mr. Bernal talked about the increasingly aggressive ways that governments are marketing new lottery products, and how the targets are typically lower income citizens. He believes that governments have created a mindset that discourages saving and personal responsibility and promotes state-sponsored wagering.

Issues covered:
Gambling Addiction
Government Policies

Length: 5:07

Show # 2023-07

Date aired: Sunday, February 12, 2023

Andrew Smith, PhD, cognitive psychologist and Assistant Professor at Iowa State University

Some studies claim that 4-6% of those in US prisons are not guilty of the crime for which they were convicted. Prof. Smith and his team of researchers developed a new procedure to capture more information from eyewitnesses during police investigations and better detect a suspect's guilt or innocence. He explained how the innovation improves the reliability of police lineups.

Issues covered:
Criminal Justice
Legal Reform

Length: 9:12

Andrew McDiarmid, Senior Fellow at the Discovery Institute, a non-profit, non-partisan organization focused on research, education, action, and cultural renewal

A recent study reported in the Journal of Experimental Psychology suggests that the act of “just thinking” can be more rewarding than we might realize. Mr. McDiarmid outlined the study’s findings and explained why Americans should resist the urge to pull out their phones so frequently and spent some time just thinking, instead.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:10

Mental Health

Personal Productivity

Tom Appel, Publisher of Consumer Guide Automotive

Mr. Appel talked about the affordability of electric vehicles and how the EV marketplace has been changing, partly as a result of revised federal laws and rebates. He also explained who is the best candidate to own an EV and whether now is a wise time to buy.

Issues covered:

Length: 4:53

Electric Vehicles

Consumer Matters

Environment

Show # 2023-08

Date aired: Sunday, February 19, 2023

Shevaun Neupert, PhD, Professor of Psychology at North Carolina State University

Prof. Neupert wrote a report that analyzed two new studies that found that young adults who utilize preemptive stress-reduction steps that focus on the future are better able to avoid negative health outcomes. She talked about the most effective proactive techniques, and where young adults should be taught how to deal with stress.

Issues covered:

Length: 9:12

Mental Health

Stress

Angie Morgan Witkowski, Leadership and Career Coach, author of “*Bet on You: How to Win with Risk*”

Ms. Witkowski outlined the most common misconceptions about risk and why people should be much more comfortable making decisions in the face of uncertainty. She talked about the reasons that fear and failure are such important components in taking risks in business, career and life.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:10

Career

Personal Productivity

Mental Health

Lindsey Parnarouskis, MS, doctoral candidate, Department of Psychology, University of Michigan

Ms. Parnarouskis was the first author of a study that examined the connection between food insecurity and the overconsumption of processed foods. She found that that women experiencing food insecurity more frequently report symptoms of food addiction, such as compulsive eating of certain types of food, unsuccessful attempts to cut down and withdrawal symptoms.

Issues covered:

**Nutrition
Hunger
Women's Issues**

Length: 4:53

Show # 2023-09

Date aired: Sunday, February 26, 2023

Lauryn Williams, Certified Financial Planner, founder of Worth Winning, a company that helps young professionals organize their finances

A recent Fidelity survey found that half of Gen Zers say they don't see a point in saving money until things return to 'normal.' Ms. Williams said young people may be seeking some sort of control, in the face of runaway inflation and economic uncertainty. She said many Gen Zers are choosing to invest in themselves and their professional growth, such as starting their own businesses or furthering their education. She explained why it is critical to start early to build retirement savings.

Issues covered:

**Consumer Matters
Economy
Employment**

Length: 9:12

Elisa Villanueva Beard, CEO of Teach For America, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving educational outcomes for low-income students

Ms. Villanueva Beard outlined the mission of her organization, and explained why it is so important to recruit college graduates from top universities around the United States to serve as teachers in urban and rural schools. She talked about the biggest obstacles in recruiting quality teachers and how interested students can apply to be a part of Teach For America.

Issues covered:

**Education
Poverty**

Length: 8:10

Matthew A. Miller, PhD, MPH, Executive Director for VA Suicide Prevention for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Dr. Miller shared VA's latest data that showed meaningful downward trends in veteran suicide counts and rates. He discussed the growing use of the Veterans Crisis Line (dial 988 then press 1) and other resources available to veterans in crisis. He also outlined the potential warning signs and what family members or friends can do to help.

Issues covered:

**Veterans' Concerns
Suicide
Mental Health**

Length: 4:53

Show # 2023-10

Date aired: Sunday, March 5, 2023

Yvette M. Miller, MD, Executive Medical Officer for the American Red Cross Donor and Client Support Center, helping to lead the Red Cross' national Sickle Cell Initiative

Sickle cell disease is the most common genetic blood disorder in the US, and regular blood transfusions are critical to manage extreme pain and life-threatening complications. Dr. Miller discussed Red Cross efforts to promote diversity in the blood supply, increase donor recruitment and retention in the black community to support the transfusion needs of patients with sickle cell disease.

Issues covered:
Sickle Cell Disease
Blood Donations
Diversity

Length: 8:32

Candy Valentino, finance and wealth advisor, author of *“Wealth Habits: Six Ordinary Steps to Achieve Extraordinary Financial Freedom”*

Ms. Valentino believes that turbulent financial times are often historic opportunities to invest more in real estate and the financial markets. She outlined six steps to grow wealth. She explained why owning real estate or a small business are her favorite investment vehicles. She conducted a study that found 75% of wealthy people had one thing in common: either they or their family owned a business.

Issues covered:
Personal Finance
Entrepreneurism

Length: 8:51

Samuel West, PhD, Assistant Professor of Psychology at Virginia State University

Dr. West led an analysis of psychological crises exhibited by 177 mass shooters. He found that social isolation was the most important external indicator leading up to the attacks. He believes that social isolation is an ideal target for intervention because it can be addressed both at the individual level and the societal level.

Issues covered:
Mass Shootings
Mental Health

Length: 5:07

Disc # 2023-11

Date aired: Sunday, March 12, 2023

Pamela Gockley, Certified Bullying Prevention Specialist, Founder and Executive Director of The Camel Project, a non-profit organization focused on deconstructing the culture of bullying in America

1 in 5 students report being bullied at school. However, Ms. Gockley said the CDC believes 50 to 75% of bullying incidents are never reported. She discussed the culture of bullying in America, how to parents can protect their children from it, and how parents of bullies can recognize the behavior in their own child and address it.

Issues covered:
Bullying
Parenting
Youth at Risk

Length: 8:44

Brock L. Eide M.D., M.A., learning disabilities expert, co-author of *“The Dyslexic Advantage: Unlocking the Hidden Potential of the Dyslexic Brain”*

Dyslexia has traditionally been defined as a reading and spelling disorder. But Dr. Eide said recent research has proven that these challenges are not dyslexia’s main features. He explained how these

characteristics are actually trade-offs resulting from an entirely different pattern of brain organization and information processing and that it has powerful advantages.

Issues covered:
Learning Disabilities

Length: 8:41

Samuel Zahinoor Ismail, MD FRCPC, Professor of Psychiatry, Neurology, Epidemiology, and Pathology at the Hotchkiss Brain Institute and O'Brien Institute for Public Health at the University of Calgary

Dr. Ismail was the lead author of a large 10-year study that found 40 percent fewer dementia diagnoses in people who took vitamin D supplements. The study also found that those who take vitamin D are more likely to have more years of dementia-free life. In addition, he found that vitamin D had a significantly greater effect on women, than men.

Issues covered:
Alzheimer's disease
Nutrition
Aging

Length: 5:05

Show # 2023-12

Date aired: Sunday, March 19, 2023

Juliet B. Schor, PhD, Professor of Sociology, Boston College

The four-day week is becoming more of a reality in the contemporary workplace, and Prof. Schor co-authored a landmark international study of the trend. She said the vast majority of companies that tried the shorter workweek for the study stuck with it afterwards. She talked about the benefits that result from a 32-hour workweek, both for employees and companies.

Issues covered:
Workplace Matters
Mental Health
Productivity

Length: 8:40

Deepa L. Sekhar, MD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the Penn State College of Medicine, Executive Director of Penn State PRO Wellness

Suicide death rates have increased significantly among adolescents in the U.S. in recent years. Dr. Sekhar said while children are typically screened for health, vision and hearing problems in school, mental health screening has not been standardized in school settings. She led a study that evaluated the effectiveness of a school-based, adolescent suicide risk screening and found that it successfully identified at-risk adolescents and increased initiation of mental health services. She explained how the screening works and the reasons some schools or parents may be reluctant to give it a chance.

Issues covered:
Youth Suicide
Mental Health Services
Parenting

Length: 8:43

John P. Thyfault, PhD, Professor of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology, Director of the Health Activity Center at the University of Missouri

Statins, the most widely prescribed type of cholesterol-lowering drugs, have prevented millions of heart attacks and saved countless lives. But Dr. Thyfault conducted a study that found that statins may

also counteract the benefits of exercise, the other tried-and-true way to boost cardiac health. He explained why doctors usually prescribe drugs, rather than recommending exercise or dietary change. He also talked about how much exercise can be effective for people dealing with high cholesterol.

Issues covered:
Personal Health

Length: 5:09

Show # 2023-13

Date aired: Sunday, March 26, 2023

Elizabeth Wallace, co-author of *"The Ambition Decisions: What Women Know About Work, Family, and the Path to Building a Life"*

Over the last sixty years, women's roles at home and on the job have radically changed, and the question of whether they can really "have it all" is still debated. Ms. Wallace outlined three distinct paths where a woman's life and career choices may lead. She talked about the importance of the support of husbands when ambitious women move into high-level corporate positions. She offered advice for women who are facing today's complex career choices.

Issues covered:
Women's Concerns
Career
Marriage

Length: 9:22

Thomas Lickona, PhD, Developmental Psychologist, Professor of Education Emeritus at the State University of New York at Cortland, author of *"How to Raise Kind Kids: And Get Respect, Gratitude, and a Happier Family in the Bargain"*

Dr. Lickona has led the character education movement in schools for forty years. He outlined the tools that parents need to foster peace and cooperation at home. He explained how changes in our culture have made it harder than ever to raise kind kids. He offered suggestions for parents to deal with technology and the use of media by kids.

Issues covered:
Parenting
Children's Issues

Length: 7:52

Irwin Reyes, Researcher in the Usable Security and Privacy Group at the International Computer Science Institute, a laboratory affiliated with the University of California at Berkeley

Mr. Reyes led a study that found that more than 3300 Android apps from the Google Play Store are improperly tracking kids and are potentially violating federal law. He outlined the types of data that is being collected and what is being done with it. He believes similar results are likely with iPhones, but Apple's closed system prevents a similar study of its users. He offered advice to parents who are concerned about their children's privacy.

Issues covered:
Privacy
Children's Issues
Parenting

Length: 4:56



Eastern KY Communities Aim to 'Get Recovery Right' After Floods

Nadia Ramlagan

Infrastructure problems continue to plague eastern Kentucky months after severe flooding left thousand of residents without housing. According to FEMA, missed inspections or no response to contact attempts have left more than 2,000 thousand people ineligible for assistance.

Scott McReynolds, executive director, Housing Development Alliance, explained at a recent press conference that because so many homes were built in the floodplain, it has been a challenge to find available land to rebuild, and what land remains sits much higher up on mountaintops.

He emphasized community leaders are taking steps to ensure residents can rebuild sustainably.

"We want to get this recovery, right, we do not want to settle for just a box, which is what somebody said, we just need boxes, people in boxes. We want them to have high quality, long lasting energy efficient homes," he said.

State officials said the number of residents temporarily living in Kentucky State Parks' shelters is down from more than 300 to 84. More than 200 households are living in travel trailers at different locations through the state, and families continue to transition from temporary living spaces into long-term housing.

Dee Davis, president of the Center for Rural Strategies pointed to lessons learned from the Gulf Coast region after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to glean insight into the journey ahead.

"As we begin to look at what's next for Eastern Kentucky, there's some lessons out there and a lot of communities have face, and a lot more are going to be facing, as these climate problems get more dramatic," Davis said.

Governor Andy Beshear said last week the state has raised more than \$12-million through the Team Eastern Kentucky Flood Relief Fund - a small portion of hundreds of millions of dollars funneled into the region over the past five months.

"\$408-million has come into this region or is available to it over just the past five months. And that doesn't include dollars raised and provided by amazing local and national charities," he said. "We're grateful for all of that work."

He also announced the planned development of a 75-acre site in Knott County that will be used to jumpstart the building of mixed family and senior housing, a community center, recreational space, and potentially a new elementary school.

KY Governor Touts Teacher Pay, Remains Silent on Tax Cuts in State-of-State

Nadia Ramlagan

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear announced a 5% pay raise for teachers in his [State of the Commonwealth address](#) Wednesday night.

His Education First Plan aims to fill the 11,000 public-school teacher vacancies across the state and fully fund universal Pre-K.

Alan Smith, co-chair of Kentuckians for the Commonwealth and a registered nurse in Bowling Green, said he believes more support for education is a gain for Kentucky communities.

"My wife happens to be a teacher, and I've got two kids in public schools," Smith pointed out. "That would be incredible. Anything would be appreciated."

Kentucky now ranks 44th among states in teacher pay. Smith said inflation continues to strain household budgets and noted small paycheck increases are not enough to ease the financial burden on families.

Smith is disappointed the governor did not mention tax cuts which went into effect at the beginning of this month, dropping the income tax from 5% to 4.5%. Lawmakers have expressed an interest in passing legislation to further reduce the state's income tax. Smith believes communities in need of public services will be most affected by the cuts, while the wealthiest in the state receive a hefty tax break.

"I think if they keep dropping this basically by 2025, it's going to cost us something like \$1.2 billion for our state budget," Smith explained. "That's not something that he really touched on. "

Smith added infrastructure projects the governor spoke about in his address, including the I-69 Ohio River crossing in Henderson, state Highway 30, and the Mountain Parkway Expansion, require tax revenue to build and maintain.

OTC Birth Control Urged as CVS, Walgreens Plan to Sell Abortion Pill

Nadia Ramlagan

CVS and Walgreens have announced they will sell abortion medication at pharmacies, after the FDA **announced** it is allowing mifepristone to be bought over the counter with a prescription. Advocates are applauding the move, and said over-the-counter birth control access would help more women take control of their reproductive health.

Victoria Nichols, project director with a group called **Free the Pill**, said women often have to take time off from work or school or find transportation or child care to get into a doctor's office to get a prescription.

"Bringing a birth-control pill over the counter would really address some of the unnecessary hoops that folks have to jump through to get to a clinic visit to get a provider to give them a prescription," Nichols said.

Research from KFF finds that overall, contraceptive care is currently falling short nationwide when it comes to access, cost, and patients' needs and preferences.

Nichols added the FDA is currently considering proposals for over-the-counter or "OTC" birth-control pills.

"Right now we know of two companies that are pursuing an RX-to-OTC switch. One is focused on a progestin-only pill, and the other is focused on a combined oral contraceptive," she said.

Last fall, Kentucky voters rejected anti-abortion ballot measure Amendment 2.

Joseph Hammer, a Lexington resident and volunteer for Showing up for Racial Justice, said he talked with Kentuckians from across the political aisle about the right to an abortion, and recounts the story of speaking at length on the phone with one pro-life resident.

"I say, 'So, can you commit to voting no on constitutional Amendment 2 in November?' And he said he would vote no. And so this is a self-identified conservative pro-life guy voting no. And that's why this amendment was defeated," Hammer said.

Volunteers headquartered in Jefferson and Boyd counties made more than 100,000 calls to Kentuckians, and held more than 20,000 thousand conversations with voters.

KY Lawmaker Says Graduated Income Tax Offers “Some Relief to Function as a State”

Nadia Ramlagan

An **Oxfam report** released this week shows the richest 1% of individuals have gotten richer since the pandemic, capturing almost two-thirds of all new wealth.

The report calls for a 5% tax on the world's multimillionaires and billionaires. The finding comes as one state lawmaker pushes for reinstating the state's graduated income tax on Kentucky's highest earners.

Rep. Lisa Willner, D-Louisville, introduced **legislation** to restore a graduated income tax rate for those earning \$100,000 or more annually, starting in 2024.

Willner explained 80% of workers in the Commonwealth would see no change under the proposal.

"The next 15% would get about a \$42 a year increase in their taxes," Willner pointed out. "It would really be the top 5% who would be paying more into the system."

She added the state cannot function without sufficient revenue for schools, hospitals and public services. Republican lawmakers argued reducing, and even completely eliminating, income taxes puts more money back into the paychecks of working Kentuckians.

Willner countered retirees and others living on fixed incomes do not see any benefit from income tax reductions, but do pay a price when budgets for local infrastructure and health care are slashed.

"Because their earnings are low, they receive absolutely no benefit from the so-called tax cut on the income tax," Willner stressed. "But they're paying out of pocket could be on a daily basis from some of the new sales taxes that have been imposed."

Beginning this year, the state's income tax dropped from 5% to 4.5% under **House Bill 8**, and the rate will shrink by another half percent next year.

According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the nation's lowest-income earners **pay 50% higher** local and state taxes than top earners nationwide.

1/29

KY's Housing Shortage Worsened by Natural Disasters

Nadia Ramlagan

Kentucky is facing a serious housing shortage, and the past few years of deadly floods and tornadoes have worsened the situation.

Advocates want lawmakers to commit to more than \$300 million [Affordable Housing Emergency Action Recovery Trust Fund](#) or "AHEART."

More than 800 eastern Kentucky residents remain temporarily housed in state parks and travel trailers after last summer's flooding.

Maggie Riden - Director of Advocacy for the group FAHE, which provides lending services in the Appalachian region - said the state has reached a housing tipping point.

"Kentucky, like many states in the Appalachian region, has an aging housing stock," said Riden. "Many homes were built well before the 1970s. So we're talking about homes that need substantial repair and upkeep."

She added that AHEART funding would be used to construct or rehab 1,500 new homes.

[A report released last year by the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation](#) - commonly known as Freddie Mac - found that nationwide, communities are short more than 3 million housing units, up from 2.5 million in 2018.

Riden pointed out that the state is sitting on a substantial budget surplus and rainy day fund - and said using that money to build homes will lessen the pressure of future disasters, keeping more Kentucky families in safe, quality housing.

"So," said Riden, "how are we getting resources, state resources on the ground that are flexible, and are able to get folks out of temporary housing or shelter into at least intermediate housing and shelter, while we rebuild?"

Adrienne Bush - executive director of the Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky - said climate change continues to put more communities on the frontlines of weather disasters, and says states need to boost local resources in order to respond immediately, noting the federal government's grant funding for disaster recovery isn't permanently authorized.

She added that emergency outside relief from FEMA only goes so far.

"FEMA is not designed to make people whole," said Bush. "It's not designed to completely replace everything that people lost in terms of their housing or their livelihood or any of their other needs. It is designed to produce the bare minimum in financial assistance."

[Research shows a lack of affordable housing is bad for business.](#) In the nation's top 100 metro areas, housing shortages are stalling economic growth.

Kroger-Albertson's Merger Could Reduce KY Food Access

Nadia Ramlagan

Kentucky food banks say the **proposed merger** of Kroger and Albertsons, currently under review by the Federal Trade Commission, could trigger an increased demand for services at a time when inflation, gas prices and the end of pandemic-era supports are squeezing household budgets.

Vincent James, president and CEO of the Dare to Care Food Bank in Louisville, said a merged Kroger and Albertsons, along with Walmart, the nation's largest grocer, could force more farmers out of the market and raise consumer prices, which send more folks to their local food bank.

"All of these things have created this sort of perfect storm for folks that were caught in the middle," James explained. "Where they are actually on the benefits cliff where they make too much to get SNAP benefits, but they're not making enough to purchase food."

In a news release, Kroger said its acquisition of the Idaho-based chain will expand customer reach and improve access to affordable food to approximately 85-million households. The Federal Trade Commission is expected to make a decision on the sale sometime next year.

James added a merger could impact both companies' levels of community engagement, noting retailers are a major player in the food-distribution ecosystem.

"Whether through programming or providing food, I think Kroger is really uniquely positioned to make a huge impact by continuing to support food banks in more innovative ways and equitable ways," James emphasized.

Rural Americans increasingly lack an affordable and nearby store to buy fresh foods. Between 1994 and 2019, the overall number of grocery operations nationwide **declined by 30%**, according to Food and Water Watch.

Report: Limits on 'Sustainable Investing' Hurt KY Taxpayers

Nadia Ramlagan

Kentucky lawmakers are clamping down on corporations advocating environmentally and socially responsible investing.

A **new report** said the decision comes at a cost. The report by EcoConsult Solutions finds limiting investments will likely cost taxpayers at least \$26 million, and perhaps as much as \$70 million annually.

Senate Bill 205, signed into law by Gov. Andy Beshear last year, restricts companies deemed by legislators to be "energy boycotters" from doing business with the Commonwealth.

Mark Ritter, a Franklin County resident and retiree from the Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection, believes his freedom to invest and make the best financial decisions has been curtailed.

"The fact that was signed into law hijacks my options as an investor," Ritter contended. "Investment decisions in the marketplace should be made by me, in consultation with my financial adviser."

Last month, more than a dozen Kentucky lawmakers introduced a bill to restrict companies they said boycott firearms. **House Bill 123** would block governmental bodies from entering into contracts valued at or above \$100,000 with companies legislators claimed "discriminate against" gun manufacturers or firearm trade associations.

Ritter thinks most Kentuckians want state investment funds to consider environmental and social factors, especially as the western and eastern parts of the state continue to rebuild from extreme flooding and tornadoes.

"This law to protect the fossil fuel industry by punishing financial institutions and their customers is an outrageous abuse of power," Ritter argued.

According to the report, more than a dozen states so far have either passed or have bills pending to pull state funds from investments deemed to be adverse to the oil and gas industry.

KY Utility Bills Have Jumped, Along with Shutoffs

Nadia Ramlagan

Residential utility shutoffs are up by 228%, and electric bills by 17%, a **recent report** by the Energy and Policy Institute and Center for Biological Diversity said. Legislation introduced earlier this year by state Democratic Representative Lisa Willner and Republican representative Jason Nemes, both of Louisville, aims to rein in disconnections.

Chris Woolery, residential energy coordinator with the nonprofit Mountain Association, said **House Bill 66** would create a 30 day grace period protecting Kentuckians from shutoffs if a health provider certifies a disconnection would threaten a resident's health. In addition to making other reforms, the legislation would also prevent utilities from disconnecting customers who pay at least 10% of their bill or make a \$200 payment.

"Standards for temperatures, of which you can't disconnect in the winter or in the summer, certificates of needs for person who are at risk, that have medical needs and can't be disconnected," Woolery said.

Last year, one in five American households struggled to pay for an energy bill. That rate was 50% higher for households of color. According to the report, the companies most responsible for utility disconnections are the ones spending lavishly on executive pay - around \$6-million per executive annually.

Woolery pointed out monthly energy costs are burdening communities already dealing with unprecedented extreme weather events.

"We need to be pushing for the solutions that Kentuckians need, and also thinking ahead to how we can mitigate the extreme weather events that we're already facing," Woolery added.

Woolery said policies that help more households invest in energy efficient and clean energy upgrades are one way to keep costs down for families.

"That will bring jobs and cost savings to Kentucky at a much higher rate than other investments. It's a little harder to do. But the opportunity is tremendous," Woolery said.

In the first quarter of 2022, more than half of households nationwide earning less than \$25,000 a year reported **cutting back on basic necessities** such as food or medicine in order to pay an energy bill, according to Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies.

Louisville Mayor Calls KY Tap Water Safe to Drink; Residents Skeptical

Nadia Ramlagan

A chemical plume that has so far killed more than 3,500 fish in streams around East Palestine, Ohio, has seeped into the Ohio River, leaving Louisville residents concerned about the safety of their drinking water and triggering shortages of bottled water.

According to the Louisville Water Company, the city draws drinking water from both the Ohio River and groundwater. In nearby Cincinnati, water officials said while **no detectable levels** of the chemicals have been found, they will shut off Ohio River intake and rely on water reserves for a few days as the plume travels downstream. In Louisville, officials maintain **no preventive action** is needed.

Craig Greenberg, mayor of Louisville, recently appeared alongside Spencer Bruce, Louisville Water's CEO, in a social media video to quash fears, and said the city tests its water quality more than 200 times a day.

"We're aware of online rumors that are circulating, and we wanted to set the record straight, to let you know that your water is safe to drink," Greenberg stated.

The volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds involved in the disaster are commonly used in the production of lacquers, adhesives, paint thinners and industrial cleaners. Over the weekend, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine **announced FEMA** is deploying a senior response official, along with a regional incident management assistance team to the region.

Andrew Whelton, professor of civil, environmental and ecological engineering at Purdue University, has dealt with chemical spills for more than two decades. He explained when government officials show up and do testing, they do not always test for the right chemicals.

He believes the lack of scientific data available in the aftermath of the Feb. 3 disaster leave many questions unanswered regarding immediate and long-term health risks.

"For this disaster, agencies have been slow to share their testing data," Whelton observed. "For example, none of the drinking-water-well testing data is posted online. So it's unclear what officials are testing for."

So far more than 3,100 cubic yards of contaminated soil have been **removed from the area** of the derailment, and a total of 942,000 gallons of contaminants and contaminated liquid have been removed from the immediate site.

KY House Education Committee Approves Bill to Address Teacher Shortage

Nadia Ramlagan

Lawmakers in the Kentucky House Education Committee have greenlighted a bill aimed at addressing the state's widespread teacher shortage. It is estimated there are thousands of teacher vacancies in school districts across the state.

House Bill 319 would allow someone with at least a bachelor's degree and at least four years of experience in their field to teach, under the supervision of a certified teacher. The bill would also streamline the pathway to state certification for military spouses who are certified to teach in other states.

Sara Green, a Fayette County Middle School teacher and member of the American Federation of Teachers-Kentucky 120 United, said the bill is a good start.

"However, the bigger problem, that our legislature refuses to deal with, is the issue of making sure that we retain our teachers that we already have in the profession," Green contended.

The legislation would also create an online statewide job-posting system, loosen requirements for teacher scholarships, and -- if funding is available -- expand the "GoTeachKY" ambassador program. The House Education Committee approved the measure by an 18-0 vote. It now heads to the full House for consideration.

Green pointed out schools are also grappling with shortages of bus drivers, care professionals and cafeteria employees, and said educators are taking on more responsibilities every day because schools are not fully staffed. Green believes the problem will be fixed if Kentucky fails to address teacher pay and benefits, noting there is little incentive for college graduates to enter the field.

"I feel like because we've become political pawns, our ideas -- and just our objective story about what's going on right now -- has been completely dismissed," Green asserted.

A 2021 Rand Corporation Survey found almost half of experienced teachers who voluntarily **stopped teaching** in public schools after March 2020 left because of the pandemic, citing stress and insufficient pay as the main factors driving their early retirement.

March 9, 2023

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DOJ Report: Louisville Police Repeatedly Violated Kentuckians' Civil Rights

Nadia Ramlagan

The Louisville Metro Police Department engaged in patterns of conduct which violated people's civil rights, said a [U.S. Department of Justice report](#) released Wednesday.

The result of a nearly two-year long investigation, the document outlines repeated excessive use of force and unlawful search warrants.

Corey Shapiro, legal director for the ACLU of Kentucky, said for years officers have targeted Black people for minor offenses such as wide turns and broken taillights, while serious crimes such as sexual assault and homicide went unsolved. He pointed out officers videotaped themselves throwing drinks at pedestrians from their cars, insulted people with disabilities, and called Black people "monkeys," "animal" and "boy."

"The style of policing that LMPD engaged in was very aggressive, very targeted against Black people, and also against vulnerable people like those with disabilities," Shapiro stated.

The report also highlighted the city's flawed accountability system for addressing misconduct by its officers. Since the 2020 shooting death of [Breonna Taylor](#) by police, the city has implemented some reforms, including banning no-knock search warrants.

Shapiro note it is likely the city will enter into a consent decree with the Justice Department, requiring the police department to make legally enforceable changes. He believes city officials also need to reckon with the affected communities and involve them directly in the solution-building process.

"The Black community, which has been harmed and essentially terrorized for years, the city needs to look to them and find out what are the solutions that they want," Shapiro urged.

The Louisville Metro Police Department report is one of eight investigations into law enforcement agencies opened by the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, including the Minneapolis Police Department, the Phoenix Police Department, and the Louisiana State Police.

3/19

March 14, 2023

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Report: Fewer Kentucky Kids Receiving School Meals

Nadia Ramlagan

Preliminary data shows schools are serving fewer meals than they did last year, largely due to the end of nationwide pandemic-era waivers which allowed schools to serve meals at no cost to all children. According to a [recent report](#), Kentucky saw a 34% increase in lunch participation and a nearly 3% increase in the number of kids who ate breakfast at school over the past few years.

Clarissa Hayes, Deputy Director for School and Out-of-School Time Programs at the Food Research & Action Center, said the gap between Kentucky kids receiving breakfast and lunch now appears to be widening as kids and families go back to the tiered eligibility system used to determine who qualifies for free school meals.

"For Kentucky, what we saw is that for the breakfast-to-lunch comparison, for every 100 children receiving a lunch, about 65 are receiving a breakfast," Hayes said. "So, that's a little bit lower than the year before where, for every 100 children receiving lunch, 85 are receiving a breakfast."

Research shows [regular school meals](#) improve kids' academic performance, mental health and nutritional intake. Federal data from 2019 shows nearly 15-million students ate a school breakfast and nearly 30-million students ate school lunch on a typical day.

There are pathways to ensuring that consistent access to healthy school meals is a reality for all kids, Hayes said.

"Ideally, that would be expanded, expanded on the federal level, but we are seeing many states that are taking it upon themselves to pass legislation to make sure that all kids are getting those meals at no cost," she said.

Some states are stepping up to fill the gap to cover the cost of school meals regardless of kids' eligibility, including California, Maine and Colorado.

Black Lung Benefits Not Keeping Up with Miners' Health Needs Amid Inflation

Nadia Ramlagan

As the cost of food, medicine and rent continues to climb, **new data** shows the benefits miners receive are now 40% less than what they received in 1969, when adjusted for inflation.

Vonda Robinson, Vice President of the National Black Lung Association, said she is grateful for the benefits her husband receives, but points out the high cost of gas and grocery bills are a constant challenge.

"My husband worked in the coal mines for 30 years," Robinson said. "He had to come out of the coal mines when he was 47 years old due to complications with his breathing. We had no idea he had black lung."

According to a report from the Appalachian Citizens Law Center, the black lung benefit rate for a miner with no dependents is now \$738 a month, while the current cost of living in Kentucky and other coal states is around three-and-a-half times that amount.

Chelsea Barnes, director of government affairs and strategy with Appalachian Voices, said the federal government could move to untangle miner benefits from the federal pay scale and instead tie them to inflation.

"This isn't a change that will break the bank," Barnes said. "Instead, it will ensure that coal miners and their families have the basic safety net they deserve to survive. "

According to the Department of Labor in 2018, the **average yearly cost** for medical treatment was slightly under \$10,000 per miner.