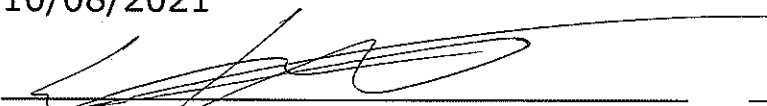


WRMR-FM, Wilmington, NC (98.7)  
QUARTERLY LISTING OF COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES  
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS  
**3rd QUARTER 2021**

The following is a list of issues and concerns for 3rd Quarter 2021, and addresses in Public Affairs Programming, Public Service Announcements, Community Involvement and special programming on WRMR-FM.

1. INDUSTRY
2. RECESSION
3. MEDICAL LAW
4. EQUALITY
5. STATE LEGISLATION
6. HEALTH
7. NCDOJ
8. RACISM
9. SOCIAL JUSTICE
10. CLIMATE CHANGE

This report was placed in the Public Inspection File on  
10/08/2021

  
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Signature

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Date

10-8-2021

## **PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS**

During July, August and September, WRMR-FM broadcast 13 hours of Public Affairs Programming on Sundays from 6:00AM-7:00AM.

**NEWS & VIEWS WITH CHRIS FITZSIMON** is a 30-minute program, focusing on state policy issues that air Sundays at 6:00AM.

**NC NEWSMAKERS** is a 30-minute program focusing on State and Local north Carolinians making the news

## **2021 3rd QUARTER ISSUES**

### **1. INDUSTRY**

It's been called one of North Carolina's best kept secrets, an industry that's not very visible to the average person but is all over the state and generates around \$60 million a year in revenue.

### **2. RECESSION**

North Carolina Justice Center General Counsel and Director of Advocacy  
Bill Rowe

Though the COVID-19 recession has eased significantly

### **3. MEDICAL LAW**

State senators took a small positive step recently when they advanced Senate Bill 711 – a proposal to legalize medical marijuana.

### **4. EQUALITY**

The Struggle for Racial Equality at the Nation's Oldest Public University,"

### **5. STATE LEGISLATION**

As the 2021 session of the North Carolina General Assembly drags on into the dog day of summer, no decision looms larger for state legislators than what to do about a new state budget and, in particular, how to fund the biggest part of that budget, our public schools.

### **6. HEALTH**

A new report from health policy researchers at the New York-based Commonwealth Fund confirms the unsurprising fact that the COVID-19 pandemic, and the recession it spawned, has had a big impact on health insurance coverage and medical bills.

### **7. NCDOJ**

North Carolina has recently prevailed in some high-profile, big dollar lawsuits and we'll get the details in a special two-part interview with North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein

## **8. RACISM**

The issues of race and racism and their place in American history have been much in the news of late. On the national level, voices on the political right have launched a concerted campaign to restrict how those subjects are taught in public schools and universities.

## **9. SOCIAL JUSTICE**

State lawmakers have commenced the process of drawing new legislative and congressional districts

## **10. CLIMATE CHANGE**

Scientists at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released their latest findings and predictions earlier this month and the news isn't good.

## **PROGRAMMING:**

### **1. INDUSTRY**

## **News & Views for 7-12-21**

Guest: Documentary producer Clay Johnson

It's been called one of North Carolina's best kept secrets, an industry that's not very visible to the average person but is all over the state and generates around \$60 million a year in revenue. The industry is called aquaculture, which simply put, is the farming of fish. From the mountains to the Piedmont to the coast farmers are raising finfish like trout, catfish, striped bass and even Russian sturgeon. In our state's coastal waters farmers are raising oysters and clams. What does this growing industry mean for the commercial fishing industry? How much is the industry growing and what is its future in North Carolina? "Fish Farms" goes inside the fascinating world of aquaculture to answer those questions and takes viewers inside an industry few ever see. WRAL-TV's latest documentary airs debuts on July 14th.

## **2. RECESSION**

### **News & Views for 7-17-21**

Guest: North Carolina Justice Center General Counsel and Director of Advocacy Bill Rowe

Though the COVID-19 recession has eased significantly, census data show that as many as 400,000 North Carolina households are still behind on their rent.

And while the state has close to a billion dollars in federal funds available through what's known as the HOPE program to help struggling households catch up on their rent and make landlords whole, that program is only now getting fully up to speed just as the federal moratorium on evictions is scheduled to expire on July 31.

Recently, in an effort to get a grasp on this incongruous and worrisome situation and to learn more about how struggling households and their landlords can tap into the HOPE rental assistance program, we sat down with one of our state's top experts on housing policy and landlord-tenant law, North Carolina Justice Center General Counsel and Director of Advocacy, Bill Rowe. Issues covered: affordable housing, rental rates, the federal eviction moratorium.

## **3. MEDICAL LAW**

## **News & Views for 7-27-21**

Guest: Senator Wiley Nickel

State senators took a small positive step recently when they advanced Senate Bill 711 – a proposal to legalize medical marijuana. As numerous witnesses – some of them military veterans struggling with PTSD, and others battling the ravages of cancer and chemotherapy – made clear in often emotional testimony, it's absurd that North Carolinians are denied an effective therapy that's legal in most states.

Earlier this week in an effort to get the latest on this long overdue proposal, as well as some other important matters pending in the General Assembly like the debate over budget and tax issues and the future of political gerrymandering in the state, we sat down with one of the sharpest and most outspoken members of the Senate, Wake County Democrat Wiley Nickel.

## **4. EQUALITY**

### **News & Views for 8-2-21**

Guest: Durham civil rights attorney Geeta Kapur

In her new and soon-to-be-released book "To Drink from the Well: The Struggle for Racial Equality at the Nation's Oldest Public University," author, civil rights attorney, and adjunct law school instructor Geeta Kapur chronicles the racism that's afflicted the University of North Carolina since its founding nearly 230 years ago and traces its insidious effects on students, faculty, and even the venerable Tar Heel sports programs.

Earlier this week we caught up with Kapur to get a preview of the book, and as she made clear to me during our conversation, the struggle to overcome racism and its destructive legacy at UNC is a battle in which there are still many rounds left to fight.

Issues discussed: Higher education, racism, diversity, and racial equity.

## **5. NC COLLEGE SYSTEM**

### **News & Views for 8-16-21**

Guest: Mary Ann Wolf, CEO of the Public School Forum of North Carolina

As the 2021 session of the North Carolina General Assembly drags on into the dog day of summer, no decision looms larger for state legislators than what to do about a new state budget and, in particular, how to fund the biggest part of that budget, our public schools. At present, the state is under a court order to make a number of new investments in public education and, happily, thanks to stronger-than-expected tax revenue picture, those investments are something we can readily afford.

Unfortunately, as the Public School Forum of North Carolina recently documented in a new report, the most recent budget proposal from the state Senate comes up woefully short in addressing the challenge. Earlier this week, we caught up with the Forum's president and Executive Director, Mary Ann Wolf, to get the details.

## **6. HEALTH**

### **News and Views for 8-23-2021**

Guest: Researcher Sara Collins of the New York-based Commonwealth Fund

A new report from health policy researchers at the New York-based Commonwealth Fund confirms the unsurprising fact that the COVID-19 pandemic, and the recession it spawned, has had a big impact on health insurance coverage and medical bills. Researchers found that just under half of people surveyed reported they'd been directly affected by the pandemic in at least one of three ways: getting COVID-19, losing income, or losing employer coverage. What's more, more than a third of insured adults and half of uninsured adults reported they had problems paying medical bills or were paying off medical debt during the prior year. Earlier this week, we got a chance to discuss the report and some of its implications for policymakers with one of the lead authors, Commonwealth Fund Vice President for Health Care Coverage and Access, Sara Collins.

## **7. NCDOJ**

### **News and Views for 9-03-2021**

Guest: NCDOJ JOSH STEIN

In Part One of my special extended interview with North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein, we discussed his office's encouraging success in winning some big dollar settlements from corporations that manufacture and distribute some addictive and potentially dangerous substances: opioids and nicotine.

In Part Two of our chat, we discussed some other important work consumer protection work in which Stein's office is going after scammers who target vulnerable citizens, as well as the ongoing task force Stein is helping to lead that seeks to address some of the many racial inequities that continue to plague our state's systems of law enforcement and criminal justice.

## **8. RACISM**

### **News and Views for 9-13-2021**

Guest: UNC-Chapel Hill historian Prof. William Sturkey

The issues of race and racism and their place in American history have been much in the news of late. On the national level, voices on the political right have launched a concerted campaign to restrict how those subjects are taught in public schools and universities.

Meanwhile, here in North Carolina, state lawmakers and their appointees who oversee the UNC system waded into the issue recently when they sought to prevent Nikole Hannah-Jones – an acclaimed Black journalist who has written extensively on the subject -- from being awarded a tenured professorship at the UNC-Chapel Hill journalism school.

Earlier this week, I got a chance to discuss these matters with an especially knowledgeable expert, historian William Sturkey. Sturkey is an associate professor at UNC-Chapel Hill who specializes in the history of race in the American South and as he told me, the latest developments do not portend well for academic freedom or the honest study of U.S. history.

## **9. SOCIAL JUSTICE**

### **News and Views for 9-07-2021**

Guest: Mitchell Brown of the Southern Coalition for Social Justice



State lawmakers have commenced the process of drawing new legislative and congressional districts and we'll get an update on where things stand and what ought to happen next from attorney Mitchell Brown of the Southern Coalition for Social Justice.

## **10. CLIMATE CHANGE**

### **News and Views for 09-20-2021**

Guest: North Carolina Conservation Network's Energy Policy Manager Will Scott

Scientists at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released their latest findings and predictions earlier this month and the news isn't good. The data show that if warming continues to increase at the current rate, the earth's average temperature is on track to rise by 1.5 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial times by 2030 -- a decade faster than previously estimated.

Earlier this week in an effort to get a better handle on these troubling findings and to learn more about a major and controversial energy policy bill that's been under consideration in the General Assembly, we caught up with the North Carolina Conservation Network's Energy Policy Manager, Will Scott. And as Scott made clear, there's no time to waste in tackling what's now properly referred to as the global climate emergency.

## **OTHER GUEST**

Guest: Muffy Grant, executive director of the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused all manner of new challenges for children and parents as they struggle to cope with the disruptions caused by school closures and remote learning. And as is always the case, the challenge has been that much greater for the children in low income and minority families who tend to include a lot more frontline workers and a lot less housing stability.

Fortunately, as we learned in a recent conversation with Muffy Grant, executive director of the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation, not all the news is bad and there are some obvious

policy choices out there – many of which, like fully funding public schools and closing the state's health insurance gap -- predate the pandemic and remain eminently affordable.

Guest: David Schanzer, Duke University Sanford School of Public Policy professor and director of the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security

For more two decades North Carolina soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division and Fort Bragg have routinely been called upon to serve in Afghanistan. But the U.S. withdrawal from the region was met this week by a swift and stunning takeover by Taliban insurgents leaving many to worry that, without the U.S. presence there, the country again become a safe-haven for terror networks.

The failure of the Western-backed government was a stunning conclusion to what many have called the 'forever war' launched after 9-11.

With the events on the ground in Afghanistan taking a sudden and deeply worrisome turn we turned to Duke University counter-terrorism expert David Schanzer this week for his assessment of the chaos, and what may come next for the region and Afghans who are now seeking asylum in the United States.

Guest: North Carolina Association of Educators president Tamika Walker Kelly

North Carolina public school students and teachers returned to the classroom this past week and the new school year has clearly arrived at a supremely challenging moment. Between the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing failure of state legislators to craft a new education budget, teachers and administrators are facing an even more daunting situation than usual.

Now add to this the decision of Republican lawmakers to pile on our already stressed out and overworked educators with a new and cynical campaign to micromanage and censor how American history is taught, and you've got quite a worrisome mix.

Fortunately, there are still some important voices of reason speaking out on these issues, and earlier this week we caught up with one of them, North Carolina Association of Educators president Tamika Walker Kelly.

Guest: Disability Rights North Carolina attorney Luke Woolard  
A new report from experts at the advocacy group Disability Rights North Carolina offers a damning assessment of a program our state uses to house prisoners in county jails.

At issue is a \$22 million initiative administered by the North Carolina Sheriffs' Association known as the Statewide Misdemeanant Confinement Program.

After an extensive review of public records, the report authors found that some counties have abused the program by unlawfully overcrowding their jails – something that's caused injuries and even deaths – and then reaping thousands and even hundreds of thousands of dollars of, in effect, profit.

Earlier this week, we got a chance to explore some of the sobering details of the report with the one of the authors, attorney Luke Woolard.

Guest: Former FDA commissioner and current Duke University scholar, Dr. Mark McClellan

The federal Food and Drug Administration's full approval this past Monday of the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine has raised hopes for a swift increase in the number of vaccinated Americans.

Former FDA commissioner Dr. Mark McClellan, who now directs the Margolis Center for Health Policy at Duke University, spoke to reporters about the approval and its ramifications during a virtual briefing this week.

He says Pfizer's full approval should be a confidence boost for those who have held off in getting vaccinated. Dr. McClellan also believes full FDA approval of the Pfizer vaccine may prompt more businesses and institutions to require proof of full vaccination moving forward.

A surge in COVID hospitalizations prompted hospitals in the Triangle to warn the public this week about the strain those cases are putting on health care workers, and express renewed worries they could run out of beds.

Guest: State Rep. Graig Meyer

It's September – the third month of the state fiscal year – but the North Carolina General Assembly remains in session and not

even close to sending a proposed budget over to Gov. Roy Cooper. Indeed, at this point, it looks increasingly likely that our supposedly part-time legislature will stay in session right on into the fall holidays.

Despite its extended stay in Raleigh, however, the legislature's accomplishments remain scarce. Indeed, Republican legislative leaders seem largely disinterested in addressing many of the massive and unprecedented challenges -- the pandemic, lack of access to healthcare, the massive needs in public education -- that face our state.

Earlier this week we got an update on this frustrating state of affairs in an extended conversation with veteran State representative Graig Meyer of Orange County. In part one of our chat, Meyer made clear that the inaction at the Legislative Building is doing great damage to our state.

Meyer also discusses the enormous ongoing needs in K-12 education, the debate over whether the courts can order lawmakers to fulfill their constitutional duty to fund public schools, Republican plans to once again bring a partisan lens to legislative and congressional redistricting, Medicaid expansion, the threat to our water supplies posed by toxic chemicals and the prospects for marijuana legalization.

Guest: Dr. Ronda Taylor Bullock, Executive Director of the Durham-based nonprofit WeAre

Few public policy discussions have generated more heat and less light in 2021 than the debate over America's troubled racial past. Indeed, just this past week, state lawmakers sent a controversial bill to Gov. Roy Cooper that would seek to micromanage how the subject is taught in public schools, with an eye toward sheltering white students from hearing or learning uncomfortable truths. Happily, the political right's concerted effort in this area has also sparked a great deal of pushback from historians and other experts who've patiently explained the vital importance of engaging our children in honest discussions on race. One of those experts, is Ronda Taylor Bullock, the executive director of the Durham-based education nonprofit, WeAre -- which stands for Working to Extend Anti-Racist Education. And as Taylor Bullock

told us earlier this week, colorblindness with respect to race is not only impossible, it's not even helpful or desirable.

Guest: North Carolina Congresswoman Deborah Ross

The recent procedural decision of the U.S. Supreme Court to allow a Texas anti-abortion law to remain in effect – at least in the near term – sent a new and troubling signal that reproductive freedom in our nation is hanging by a thread. The news also spurred new calls for Congress to act to assure that all American women have access to basic reproductive health care.

Earlier this week, we got a chance to get an update on where things stand in this debate in a conversation with Wake County Congresswoman, Deborah Ross. Other issues discussed: Covid-19, vaccines, pressure on area hospitals, voting rights, and the massive infrastructure bill now before the U.S. House.

Guest: NC Policy Watch Investigative reporter Lisa Sorg

A new and special investigation by my colleague, NC Policy Watch environmental investigative reporter Lisa Sorg, tells the remarkable and at times mind boggling story of an abandoned missile factory in the Alamance County city of Burlington that continues to emit toxic chemicals into an adjacent neighborhood (and serve as a dangerous, all-purpose public nuisance) years after it closed.

What's more, as Sorg reports, despite the longstanding involvement of federal and state officials, the prospects for stopping the emissions and cleaning up the site – much less converting it to a safe and useful space – remain stalled under mountains of red tape and neglect.

Guests: Ron Pringle of the Interfaith Food Shuttle and Peter Werbicki of the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina

Despite the maddening and deadly persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the American and North Carolina economies are in vastly better shape than they were this time last year.

Unfortunately, one facet of modern life that has not enjoyed such an encouraging turnaround is the problem of hunger.

According to the latest statistics, for a huge share of North Carolinians – even here in the mostly prosperous Triangle region – food insecurity and hunger remain constant companions. Recently, in an effort to get a better handle on the scope of the problem and how all of us can help, we sat down with a pair of service providers and advocates from the frontlines in the fight against hunger, Ron Pringle of the Inter-faith Food Shuttle and Peter Werbicki of the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina. Fifteen percent of North Carolina households are currently receiving SNAP (food stamp) benefits.

Guest: State Representative Ricky Hurtado

A recent special investigation by NC Policy Watch investigative reporter Lisa Sorg, tells the remarkable and maddening story of an abandoned missile factory in the city of Burlington that continues to emit toxic chemicals into an adjacent neighborhood (and serve as a dangerous, all-purpose public nuisance) years after it closed.

What's more, federal, state, and local officials – as well the property's private investors – have done next-to-nothing. In the aftermath of Sorg's report, however, there is some hope that the situation could start to change and earlier this week, we caught up with a public official who wants to make that happen – the newly elected state legislator whose district includes the affected neighborhood, State Rep. Ricky Hurtado. Hurtado discusses the negative environmental impact of the abandoned missile plant and what should be done next. Also discussed: state budget negotiations, education funding, and the battle to combat the COVID pandemic.

Guest: Global reproductive health policy expert Dr. Anu Kumar

The recent procedural decision of the U.S. Supreme Court to allow a Texas anti-abortion law to remain in effect – at least for the near term – sent a new and troubling signal that reproductive freedom in our nation is hanging by a thread. The news also spurred new calls for Congress to act to assure that all American women have access to basic reproductive health care.

Earlier this week, we caught up with a top expert on the subject of women's access to reproductive health care around the globe,

Dr. Anu Kumar of the Triangle-based nonprofit, IPAS. And as Kumar told me, the new Texas law has hugely worrisome implications – not just for abortion rights, but for civil rights more generally and, ultimately, whether the U.S. will remain a nation of laws or one in which vigilante justice rules the day.

Guest: Veteran consumer advocate Les Bernal

The North Carolina Senate recently took action to advance legislation that would bring legalized sports betting to our state. And while the bill has yet to move in the state House, many experts and consumer advocates are deeply worried that the state could be on the verge of a big and dangerous sea change. One of those advocates is Les Bernal, the veteran executive director of the national advocacy group Stop Predatory Gambling. As Bernal told us in a recent conversation, while most of the opposition to expanded corporate gambling has come from the religious right, this should also be a fight for progressives who care about tax fairness, racial justice, consumer protection and preventing the exploitation of children.