



Issues and Programs List  
Quarterly Report  
4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly 2020

October\* November\* December

**Radio**

**Top 5 Issues Addressed:**

1. Politics
2. Health
3. Justice
4. Environment
5. Education

## Representative Programs That Addressed Issues:

### 1. Politics

#### **Political Rewind**

*GPB*

Weekdays, 9am and repeated at 2pm  
November 3, 2020, 7pm-Midnight

During an unprecedentedly contentious election year, *Political Rewind* stayed on top of the major issues being voted on both nationally and in Georgia with a group of experts on the political scene. Coverage culminated on election night with a live five-hour version of the program to focus on the early voting returns and instant analysis. A complete vote audit and an official recount kept political issues at the forefront post-election day as well as two Senate runoffs in Georgia that will determine which party controls the Senate. The program also tackled other topics, including the state's handling of the Coronavirus crisis and race relations.

#### **Political Rewind**

*GPB*

November 2-6, 2020, 9am and 2pm each day.

In a remarkable week of voting that saw record turnout in Georgia, the *Political Rewind* team presented nine hours of live shows analyzing results as the totals added up day-by-day. As late absentee returns shifted the Presidential race to Democrat Joe Biden toward the end of the week, it marked the first time that a Democrat had taken Georgia since 1992. Georgia's two Senate races also were both headed to a January runoff as no candidate achieved 50 percent of the vote.

#### **Political Rewind**

*GPB*

November 20, 2020, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

In the wake of a very close Presidential race in Georgia, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger ordered an unprecedented hand-counted audit of every vote in the state, which confirmed that Democrat Joe Biden was the first Democrat to win a Presidential race in Georgia since 1992. On the day that Raffensperger certified the vote audit, he joined today's

***Political Rewind*** panel to discuss the process and explain to Georgia voters why they should trust the results.

**Political Rewind**

*GPB*

November 23, 2020, 9am and repeated at 2pm

Today on *Political Rewind*: We spoke with a giant of Georgia politics — former United States Sen. Sam Nunn. During his 24-year tenure, Nunn became the Senate's most important voice on the U.S. military and a leader in debates on foreign affairs. In the years since he left the Senate, Nunn continued his groundbreaking work to rid the world of the threat of nuclear destruction.

Host Bill Nigut was joined by Atlanta Journal-Constitution political reporters Jim Galloway and Patricia Murphy to discuss Nunn's career and ask him about how the Senate has devolved from an important deliberative body into a toxic partisan stew. What are the statemen's thoughts on President Donald Trump and his efforts to forestall the outcome of the presidential election? Nunn finds Trump's refusal to transition President-elect Joe Biden into the White House "breathtaking." "You don't have to concede to have a transition. President Trump can keep on fighting, you can keep on going to court, that's fine," he said. "But for goodness sake, he needs to step up and put his county first."

## **2. Health**

**Political Rewind**

*GPB*

October 5, 2020. 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Several different COVID-19 vaccines are currently in trial, as companies try to quickly develop a safe, reliable and effective vaccine to be approved and distributed. But when a vaccine does become available, who gets first access — and why?

On today's special edition of ***Political Rewind***, host Bill Nigut and Atlanta Journal-Constitution lead political writer Jim Galloway spoke with Dr. Bill Foege. He is co-chair of a National Academy of Medicine panel of public health experts tasked with devising the logistical plan to distribute a future COVID-19 vaccine.

Foege served as the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from 1977 to 1983. In that role and others, he developed effective vaccination campaigns in countries across the world, including for one of the most devastating viruses in history: smallpox.

In 2012, Foege received the Medal of Freedom at the White House from President Barack Obama, who called the epidemiologist a leader in the world of vaccine distribution and public health.

For the past several months, Foege and the public health panel wrestled with complicated ethical and medical questions. Who will be the first to receive a limited vaccine supply? When will the vaccine be available to all, and who will pay for the protection? What does equitable allocation of a vaccine actually look like?

Now, the panel has released a plan that breaks down their recommendations into four phases.

The plan stipulates that among the first to receive doses of an approved vaccine should be medical workers and first responders, as well as people who may be at particular risk of contracting or suffering serious cases of COVID-19. This may include people who face additional risk either from medical comorbidities, or because of social factors, such as people who must leave their homes to work, use public transportation, or live in multi-generational homes.

“We make a distinction between race and racism,” Foege said. “I think people expected us to say, because this disease hurts the minorities more than the majorities, that we would put them first in line. And instead, what we said is, ‘This virus does not recognize skin color at all. But it sure does recognize vulnerabilities. And so, let vulnerabilities be the reason that we put people in line first.’”

Some elements of the recommendations seem straightforward, such as including school teachers and staff in Phase 2. Others may cause controversy, such as the fact that people who are incarcerated, such as prisoners, are also in Phase 2.

While Dr. Foege concedes that this may raise some eyebrows, he explains that it’s because these populations have no control over their environments and thus are unable to protect themselves from the virus.

“There may be some pushback from people who don’t want prisoners vaccinated before other people,” he said. "The fact is that prisoners do not have mitigating circumstances. They can’t stay six feet apart ... this situation puts them at high risk.”

The panel’s considerations specifically balanced questions regarding a population’s ability to mitigate exposure and harm versus a particular risk of infection, transmission, hospitalization and death.

The recommendations, now complete, head to the the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and to "state, tribal, local, and territorial (STLT) authorities" for review and consideration.

Still, Dr. Foege said the logistics of distribution — getting the vaccine out to the public to effectively combat the spread of the coronavirus — would be just as challenging as the development of the vaccine itself.

### **Political Rewind**

*GPB*

October 28, 2020. 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today on *Political Rewind*: The COVID-19 pandemic continues to challenge the nation’s public health efforts as infection rates spike in some counties. With the virus on the minds of voters, the government’s public health response is a top issue on the campaign trail just days before Election Day. Host Bill Nigut was joined today by Andy Miller, CEO and Editor of *Georgia Health News*, Ariel Hart, Health Reporter for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Harry Heiman, Professor at the Georgia State University School of Public Health, and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* Editor Kevin Riley.

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden hammered President Donald Trump during a campaign stop in Georgia on Tuesday, saying the president "surrendered" in the fight against the virus. Likewise, Trump warned voters of a severe shutdown and economic stagnation under a Biden presidency if the former vice president was elected.

Trump tweeted Wednesday morning that the pandemic will be the main topic among the media beyond Election Day.

Georgia State University School of Public Health's Harry Heiman said a clear distinction between the current Trump administration and how

Biden would address the pandemic is that Biden will collaborate with public health experts.

"I think the fact that we are in the middle of an unprecedented, historic, devastating pandemic, and we have politically undermined our federal public health agency down the street — the CDC — where we have the preeminent world experts that we should be turning to and relying on... is stunning," Heiman said.

According to the Georgia Department of Public Health, there are over 353,000 positive cases of COVID-19 in Georgia, and more than 7,800 people have died in the state.

*Georgia Health News* CEO and editor Andy Miller said Middle Georgia and southern Georgia are seeing a spike in COVID-19 deaths. The rural counties most affected — including Hancock County and Randolph County — have higher populations of people of color. "We're seeing the virus erupt all over the state," he said.

Our panel of insiders and experts broke down the latest on the pandemic, President Trump and Biden's health care policies, and how the U.S. Supreme Court will play a huge role in the future of health care in Georgia and across the U.S.

**Georgia Today**

*GPB*

October 9, 2020, 6:30pm.

The coronavirus pandemic has been especially deadly in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. On *Georgia Today*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* investigative reporter Carrie Teegardin discusses with host Steve Fennessy why facilities caring for the elderly have been so vulnerable to the virus, and how the pandemic has laid bare the state's inadequate oversight. Then, *Washington Post* contributor Sidnee King tells us how the virus decimated the staff and residents of one facility in the heart of historic Atlanta.

### **3. Justice**

**Political Rewind**

*GPB*

October 21, 2020, 11am. 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today on *Political Rewind*: As the Senate Judiciary committee prepares to vote on the confirmation of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the U.S. Supreme Court, our panel of experts takes a look at how she could help shape rulings that may have a big impact here in Georgia.

Will she vote to overturn the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act — a case in which Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr is a litigant?

And if *Roe v. Wade* comes before the court, will a ban on abortions in Georgia be one of a number of anti-abortion state laws the court may uphold with the support of a Justice Barrett?

Our panel of legal experts weighed in on these key questions, as well as the intention and meaning behind some of our country's democratic institutions. Host Bill Nigut was joined by Fred Smith, Professor of Constitutional Law at Emory University, Immigration attorney Charles Kuck, Dr. Amy Steigerwalt, Professor of Political Science at Georgia State University and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* politics reporter Greg Bluestein.

**Georgia Today**

*GPB*

October 22, 2020, 6:30pm.

A series of raids across metro Atlanta and Macon stoked fears that child sex trafficking is more prevalent than we thought. Johnny Edwards, an investigative reporter with the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, joined host Steve Fennessy to describe how the operation perpetuated a narrative of sex trafficking that doesn't always square with the evidence. He mentioned that he spoke with Jean Bruggerman of Freedom Network USA who said the Trump administration's efforts to combat sex trafficking has actually made it more difficult for sex trafficking victims to come forward, such as maligning immigrants, maligning people who cross the border. And that's a lot of the people that end up in this situation through poverty and desperation and — or people of color. You know, with these, you know, “rioters and looters need to be stopped” rhetoric. It's made people like that afraid to come forward to law enforcement. And I asked her at one point, you know, what does sex trafficking really look like and what does it look like in the South and in America? And she said what it really looks like is people who are pushed into positions of vulnerability by policies that leave people unprotected and

unsupported. She said, primarily, it's poor people. It's LGBTQI kids who are running away from home. It's immigrants who don't have access to legal status, and so employers are able to abuse and exploit them. She said that's what it is. It's people who are desperate for housing, desperate for medical care, who will take on any job or try anything to be able to feed their families. And in her opinion, the way to combat this problem is to — is to — is to create lifelines for people like that. The heavy hand of law enforcement, while important, is not the biggest tool in the toolbox.

#### **4. Environment**

**Georgia Today**

*GPB*

October 1, 2020. 6:30pm.

It's been over a year since the cargo ship, Golden Ray, capsized off the coast of St. Simons Island. Crews recently resumed work to dismantle the giant vessel. On *Georgia Today* this week, *Brunswick News* reporter Larry Hobbs discussed with host Steve Fennessy how the Golden Ray came to capsize in the first place, the tense hours as rescuers tried to free trapped crew members, and what emerged from hearings into the possible causes of the disaster.

**GPB News**

*GPB*

December 28, 2020, 6 and 8am.

The avalanche of mailers and TV ads about Georgia's U.S. Senate runoff would have you believe we're headed for utopia or apocalypse, depending on who controls the Senate. But while the stakes are high, the reality is a lot more complicated. "A Democratic sweep in the Georgia runoff election is not going to lead to a major new progressive environmental legislation like the Green New Deal," Mercer law professor Steve Johnson told GPB Reporter Emily Jones.

He believes a Democratic-controlled Senate would be more likely to pass legislation on climate change, but that it would probably be more moderate.

But control of the Senate is still important for President-elect Biden's environmental agenda, because Congress controls funding for key agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency. Also, the Senate



must approve Biden's appointments to positions including EPA administrator.

A lot of the Trump administration's actions on the environment didn't go through Congress, however. Instead, Trump reinterpreted old laws, just as Obama did before him. Johnson said Biden could re-interpret those laws. Again.

"He can undo a lot of the regulatory actions that the Trump administration has put into effect through new rulemaking," Johnson said. But changing rules and regulations takes time, often years.

Meanwhile, projects and permits affected by those federal rules — along with issues such as the proposed mine near the Okefenokee swamp — don't wait for a new president to make new rules.

So environmental advocates such as Rena Peck of the Georgia River Network are focused on state regulators.

## **5. Education**

**GPB News**

*GPB*

December 4, 2020, 6 and 8am.

Since 2008, more than a half billion dollars has been diverted from state tax coffers to private schools through a tax credit program designed by lawmakers to promote school choice. Unlike many other states with similar programs, Georgia does little to regulate the performance or practices of schools that receive tax-credit scholarships. Moreover, the schools are free from many of the restrictions imposed on public schools to prevent them from excluding gay and trans students, *The Current* has found. *The Current* is a non-profit newsroom covering coastal Georgia that has a reporting partnership with GPB.

More than 40 Savannah area schools receive funding under Georgia's Qualified Education Tax Credit. The program allows Georgia parents to earmark some of their state income tax for scholarships at private schools. As much as \$100 million a year is distributed through 22 private, nonprofit Student Scholarship Organizations, or SSOs.

Many, if not most, of these schools are religious, and some teach curriculums that would not be allowed in public schools. A few, for

instance, teach the Book of Genesis as literal history. One requires students to swear allegiance to the Bible and the Christian flag.

*The Current* reviewed the websites of 100 SSO scholarship schools in Georgia, including 46 in Savannah, and found 15 with explicitly anti-gay policies. Many others assert religious stances but do not specifically mention homosexuality.

Kurtis Purtee, Savannah's first openly gay city councilmember, said he personally disagrees with these practices but that a governmental approach needs to take the law into account. "Everyone's got the right to practice religion, but when you start excluding people from practices, to me, that's not right," he said.

This summer, Purtee joined Proud Savannah, the City Council's LGBTQ+ task force. The task force recently wrote a city ordinance banning LGBT discrimination in employment, but the ordinance allows for religious exemptions.

Purtee said the task force plans to discuss whether schools receiving these tax credit scholarships are discriminating in their hiring practices.

"We want to make sure we honor the schools' rights... and at the same time honor the rights of those individuals," Purtee said. "We want to make sure that we get the court's interpretation before we say, 'Hey, this isn't right.'"

Recently, GOAL submitted a court document supporting religious school choice in a U.S. Supreme Court case. In June, the Court ruled that Montana could not prohibit religious schools from receiving a tax credit scholarship similar to the one in Georgia.

GOAL President Lisa Kelly said the scholarships in Georgia's tax credit program provides families with more access to educational opportunities

**GPB News**  
November 9, 2020, 4:45 and 5:45pm.

*GPB*

Principal Danielle Howard has not seen her students in nine months.

It was March when the Bibb County School District tried to land the COVID-19-shortened school year as gently as possible and when a six-month long break from any school for Macon students kicked in.

Every student in the district, with the exception of some special education students, has been in school online since the school year started late, in September.

But Monday, Howard, who is the principal of Ingram Pye Elementary School in Macon, welcomed students back to the building. The same thing happened across the district as some grades began easing back to in-person instruction, making the district one of the last in the state to scale back online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

GPB Reporter Grant Blankenship says at Ingram-Pye, students queued up on royal blue paw prints painted on the sidewalk outside the school, meant to invoke their mascot, the Wildcat, before heading in.

Kids ranging from pre-K to second grade were the first through the door. Masks were mandatory, as were computer tablets provided by the school district. And greeting every child at the door was Principal Howard.

"I'm glad to see you! I have missed you so much!" Howard told a student before sending them in for a temperature scan and then on to class.

Other students were praised for their growth in height since she'd last seen them or for the designs on their masks. But each time, Howard pointed down the hall and made sure the students saw their teachers waving for them at the entrance to the classroom which, before Monday, they had only seen on a screen.

"Do you know who I am?" Howard asked one child. They shook their head no, to which Howard could only laugh. "They haven't been here since March," she said. "I was glad to basically lay my eyes on them. Just to see their faces. And for the most part, once they recognized us, then their anxiety went down."

