

WDNC-AM, Raleigh, NC (620)
SIMULCAST ON WCLY-AM (1550)
QUARTERLY LISTING OF COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS
FIRST QUARTER 2024

The following is a list of issues and concerns for First Quarter 2024 (January-March) and addressed in Public Affairs Programming, Public Service Announcements, and special programming on WDNC-AM.

1. **CRIME/GUN VIOLENCE**
2. **CHILDCARE/ELDER CARE/FAMILY**
3. **ECONOMY/ECONOMIC SUPPORT**
4. **EDUCATION/SCHOOLS**
5. **ENVIRONMENT/NATURAL DISASTERS**
6. **EQUALITY / HUMAN RIGHTS/IMMIGRATION**
7. **HEALTHCARE/MENTAL HEALTH/WOMEN'S HEALTH**
8. **POLITICS/VOTING RIGHTS**
9. **POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY/HOMELESSNESS**
10. **SUBSTANCE ABUSE/ REGULATION**
11. **TERRORISM/HOMELAND SECURITY/MILITARY**

This report was placed in the Public Inspection file on April 9, 2024

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

WDNC-AM aired 12 hours of Public Affairs Programming:

ON THE RECORD: ON THE RECORD: Produced by WRAL-TV, ON THE RECORD is a 30-minute local interview program discussing issues of concern in the Triangle and State. It airs Sundays 6-6:30 AM.

NEWS & VIEWS: NEWS & VIEWS is a 30-minute program focusing on government policy issues. It airs Sundays 6:30-7:00 AM.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS rotate throughout the broadcast day (24 hours) at random times. Dates/times are noted by air staff when broadcast.

NC LOTTERY - WCMC-FM airs one Problem Gambling PSA for every NC Lottery commercial scheduled on the station.

FIRST QUARTER ISSUES

Issues are extrapolated from statements by local community leaders, including government, civic, church, and other organizations. Additionally, we monitor local news (TV, Radio, Newspaper, and the Internet) for comments/opinions of community leaders, in the effort to ascertain and prioritize community concerns.

COMMUNITY/FAMILY/FAITH

The lack of access to affordable, quality childcare and elder care is affecting families, the workforce, and thereby economic progress. The childcare industry is in crisis. North Carolina had a net loss of more than 50 childcare facilities in the second half of 2023. Extended pandemic-era federal funding, mostly used to pay staff, expires in June 2024.

More than 12,000 children are in North Carolina's foster care system and Children's Home Society of North Carolina receives about 300 requests from the state Department of Social Services each month to help children in immediate need. A shortage of licensed foster families makes the situation dire.

Non-profit and faith organizations play critical roles in the economy and public health by reaching the underserved and building healthy communities.

CRIME/GUN VIOLENCE

Continuing a trend from 2022, the United States surpassed 600 mass shootings in 2023. The nation has the most school shootings in the world. Raleigh-Durham area schools and universities are constantly experiencing lockdowns. Guns kill more kids in North Carolina than any other cause - They 51% more likely to die from guns compared with the national average, according to the North Carolina Department of Public Safety.

ECONOMY/ECONOMIC SUPPORT

Since 2021, the demand for workers has outpaced the supply. The increased costs to retain workers and cover lower production rates are passed to consumers. The Federal Reserve raised interest rates through Q3 to restore price stability and balance the labor market. In 2024, interest rates are slowly falling, and the labor market is tightening. However, the higher cost of consumer goods remains as the over-arching story of the year.

Sports betting went live in North Carolina in March. Despite the consumer drawbacks, it will generate revenue for the state.

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

On-going Issues: Retaining and recruiting high-quality teachers, addressing social and emotional learning needs of students, and adequately funding schools. The politicization of school curriculums divides state board of education members, educators, and parents.

ENVIRONMENT/NATURAL DISASTERS

Climate change is an ongoing discussion as it affects NC farmers, healthcare, and the frequency of natural disasters. A December 2023 headline from NC Newsline's Lisa Sorg sums up current public concerns: "PFAS, climate change, pipelines, and environmental justice are just a few of the state's top challenges."

EQUALITY / HUMAN RIGHTS/IMMIGRATION

Racism, antisemitism (heightened by the Israeli/Hamas war), anti-immigrant sentiments, and threats to democracy continue to be human rights problems in the United States. The immigration crisis at the southern border is causing more conflict without resolution.

HEALTHCARE/MENTAL HEALTH/WOMEN'S HEALTH

According to Governor Cooper, over 400,000 residents have taken advantage of Medicaid Expansion in North Carolina, which was finally passed in 2023 after years of political meandering.

With the 2022 Supreme Court decision to overturn *Rowe vs. Wade* and North Carolina's bill banning abortion after 12 weeks, the debates continue on women's reproductive health.

According to the American Cancer Society, while cancer deaths have declined, cancer diagnoses are on the rise. That rise is notable among younger people, particularly with colorectal cancer.

POLITICS/VOTING RIGHTS

Political gerrymandering is in the national news, with several state legislatures enacting maps designed to rig election outcomes and disenfranchise voters of color.

North Carolina is projected to be a battleground state for the presidential election. 2024 is also a gubernatorial election year.

POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY/HOMELESSNESS

Fewer people in North Carolina live below the poverty line now than a decade ago. However, as food prices rose due to inflation, almost 900,000 households across North Carolina lost additional Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in March 2023. Additional SNAP benefits were part of the reason for the drop in poverty.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE/ REGULATION

As with most states, North Carolina is in an opioid crisis. In 2023, the state attorney general proposed a new unit to combat the opioid crisis and the FDA approved an over-the-counter version of the opioid overdose antidote Narcan.

Child fentanyl deaths in North Carolina hit a record high in 2023 – many accidental due to packaging or storage method.

The popularity of weight loss drugs not intended for weight loss continues to impact the health care system. The NC state plan had to stop coverage due to the rising costs.

TERRORISM/HOMELAND SECURITY/MILITARY

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has had wide-ranging consequences. They include a financial impact, a humanitarian crisis, threats of nuclear strikes, and cyberattacks on financial institutions and power grids.

The U.S. Army is working to recruit more young people to join the military as the pool of eligible Americans dwindles. The U.S. Department of Defense reports that only 2% of Americans ages 17 to 21 are eligible to serve in the military.

FIRST QUARTER PROGRAMS

CRIME/GUN VIOLENCE

NEWS & VIEWS 3-24-24

Guest: WRAL documentary producer Cristin Severance

It's a remarkable and deeply sobering fact that the leading cause of death when it comes to kids in our state is not an illness or disease. No, the statistics confirm that the Number One killer of children in North Carolina is gunshot wounds. In examining one especially tragic story, a brand-new WRAL documentary looks at why this is so. It's called "Unsafe: North Carolina kids dying from gun violence" and recently we caught up with the WRAL investigative documentary reporter who produced and hosts the program, Cristin Severance. "UnSafe" will also explore a proven solution to stopping these types of tragedies with bi-partisan support among lawmakers and North Carolinians in general.

RECORDED PSA: Service Never Stops - Gun Safety (Jan-March)

I was in the United States Navy and I served overseas in the Middle East and Africa. Early on in my career, I had a commander that taught her suicide prevention training, and the very next day, he took his own life. 90% of suicide attempts involving a gun are fatal. My way of continuing my service is to help protect my community by being a responsible gun owner and by storing firearms safely. Store all your guns securely. Help stop suicide. Brought to you by End Family Fire.

RECORDED PSA: Gun Safety – Dad (Jan-March)

It was a normal day. He was in some minor accident, a fender bender. And I had this impulse to call him that. I didn't because I thought I could call him. Later that week, he abandoned the car. He came home and he shot himself without ever talking to anyone. When I came home that night and I found her, they told me that she had shot herself and I couldn't believe it. I asked if he was OK. Shooting is unfortunately effective. There are not a lot of second chances. Once you pull that trigger, that's it. There is no coming back. 63 Americans a day die by gun suicide. By storing our guns safely locked, loaded, and away from ammo, we can give our loved ones a second chance at life. Learn more at End Family Fire dot org.

PSA RECORDED - National Crime Prevention Council (Jan-March)

I'm a wife and the mother of two kids and I've got a good job - A pretty important job. Because of my family and my job, I really care about this neighborhood. It's a good neighborhood. Yes, there's no crime. And when I drive to work like now, I realized that some people here don't trust the police. So, the police should be reaching out to this community and this community should reach out to the police. That's the way to make this a safer place. And when I get to work in the precinct house and put on my uniform, I can tell you as a police officer that this department is reaching out to the community and the community is doing its part. We're building partnerships. This should be happening everywhere. This is how we can all be safer. Get involved, start the conversation. Start the conversation and help stop crime. To learn the five things you can do, go to NCPAC.PreventViolent Crime.

CHILDCARE/ELDER CARE/FAMILY

NEWS & VIEWS 3-24-24

Guest: The executive director nonprofit advocacy group NC Child, Erica Palmer Smith

Finding affordable childcare: it's a huge challenge in North Carolina. While our state has one of the nation's highest rates of working parents with young children, 44% of the state's families live in a "childcare desert" where there are more than three times as many children as licensed childcare slots. What's more things could get much worse very soon. Thanks to actions of Republicans in Congress, federal subsidies that helped keep childcare facilities afloat during the pandemic have ended, and while the state legislature came up with a temporary fix last year, those funds will run out in June, and unless action is taken before then, thousands of facilities could be in grave jeopardy. Thankfully, children's advocates are lobbying lawmakers for a permanent fix and recently we caught up with one of the leaders of that effort, the executive director of the group NC Child, Erica Palmer Smith.

RECORDED PSA: Adopt US Kids – Patience (Jan-March)

I learned patience from my adoptive dad. All he had to say was, "Hey, you got this. Just breathe" And, "Hey, we're pretty good. Yeah, we have to start a band." I got it. Learn about adopting a teen from foster care. You can't imagine. The reward is visit, adopt U.S. kids dot org to find out more. This message is brought to you by Adopt U.S. Kids and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

RECORDED PSA: Adopt US Kids – Courage (Jan-March)

What I know about courage I learned from my adoptive mom, she said. Sometimes you just got to hold on and know we'll get through this. *"Mom, we are so high up! Hold my hand. No, you hold my hand...Here we go."* Learn about adopting a teen from foster care. You can't imagine the reward. Visit Adopt US Kids dot org to find out more. This

RECORDED PSA: US Dept Caregiver Assistance/AARP -Roxanna's Story (Jan-March)

Afghanistan in 2003, four in the morning, my phone rang. They said, I regret to inform you that your husband was wounded in action, later sustained a moderate traumatic brain injury. I was doing school full time and I was also then caring for Victor. One of the most important elements of caregiving is taking care of yourself. I just didn't want to forget that I also had goals and that I also had a life. What I did is I challenged Victor to meet me halfway. There are almost 6 million military veteran caregivers across the nation. We have our own journey, and we can fulfill that journey at the same time that we are helping our loved ones. Visit AARP dot org slash caregiving for a free military veterans guide to navigate your caregiving journey and better care for your loved one and yourself. Brought to you by AARP.

RECORDED PSA: Alzheimer's Association - Patient Support ((Jan-March)

If you are among the 6 million Americans living with Alzheimer's or care for someone with Alzheimer's or dementia, there is free help and support available 24/7. Visit ALZ dot org or call 800-272-3900

ECONOMY/ECONOMIC SUPPORT

NEWS & VIEWS 1-21-24

Guest: Carl Davis, director of research at the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy

Ever since Republicans took control of the North Carolina legislature in 2011, they've passed income tax cut after income tax cut and bragged repeatedly of the supposed enormous benefits this has afforded to average North Carolinians. A new report from the nonpartisan Institute on Taxations and Economic Policy, however, debunks such claims. As it turns out, not only have the tax cuts hollowed out a host of core public structures and services – most notably our K-12 schools – they've left the tax code unfairer than ever. Today, in fact, rich North Carolina households now pay 50-75% less of their incomes in state and local taxes than do folks in the middle and at the bottom.

RECORDED PSA: North Carolina Department of Adult Correction – Jobs (January)

North Carolina Department of Adult Correction is hiring with sign on bonuses from 7 to 10 thousand dollars. We're hiring statewide for correctional officers, probation officers, nurses, plumbers, electricians, food service officers, maintenance, HVAC counselors, and more. Visit NCDAC slash careers for details. That's NCDAC slash careers. Find your career today with North Carolina Department of Adult Correction, sponsored by North Carolina, Department of Adult Correction.

RECORDED PSA: NC Department of Revenue - Free File (March)

Filing your taxes online is secure and you can do it safely from home. Without a trip to the post office, most of you can file online for free through NC Free File available only at the NCDOR.gov website. You'll also get confirmation when your return is submitted. Just go to NCDOR.GOV.

RECORDED PSA – AARP - Saving for Retirement (Jan-March)

We stand on the shoulders of women who came before us, women who fought for their own financial futures. And now, it's our turn. Join us. Visit WeSaySavelt.org and take control of your financial future by saving for retirement.

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

NEWS & VIEWS 1-14-24

Guest: Representative Ashton Wheeler Clemmons

In Part Two of our chat, we shifted our gaze back home to domestic matters and, among other things, Clemmons' deep concern about the threats to democratic government lurking on the state and national political scenes and her fervent hope that North Carolina Republican legislative leaders and budget writers will abandon their war on public schools and recognize the need to dramatically enhance education funding.

NEWS & VIEWS 1-21-24

Guest: State Board of Elections executive director Karen Brinson Bell

It's hard to believe, but another election year is well underway and voting-by-mail ballots are already available for the upcoming March 5 North Carolina primary. And in case you hadn't heard. Some new law changes will make voting – both by mail and in-person

-- a little different this year. Not only will voters need a photo ID – both to vote by mail and in person – but other changes will impact the due date for getting mail-in ballots returned, the access to polling places that partisan observers enjoy, and in some counties, whether your signature will be reviewed.

NEWS & VIEWS 1-28-24

Guest: Durham Tech Community College President JB Buxton

Despite the myriad challenges they face as a result of inadequate funding and the interference of meddling politicians and self-appointed culture warriors, North Carolina's public and higher education systems continue to generate a steady stream of new and exciting innovations. And earlier this week, we got a chance to learn about one that's being launched in the Triangle. Thanks to a new multi-million-dollar grant, the Durham Public Schools are partnering with Durham Tech Community College to start a new high school program for students interested in pursuing healthcare careers after graduation. The program will enable students to attend an early college in which they'll be prepared upon graduation to enter any number of several high demand healthcare careers. And earlier this week, we sat down with the President of Durham Tech, JB Buxton, to find out more.

NEWS & VIEWS 2-11-24

Guest: David Rice, executive director of the group Public Ed Works

As has long been the case, no other function of state government in North Carolina consumes a larger share of the state budget or more attention from state leaders than K-12 and higher education. Unfortunately, in recent years, those appropriations have steadily withered even as the attention lawmakers devote to our schools and universities has related more and more to the micromanagement of hiring and curriculum decisions and enforcing an ideological agenda than giving educators the funding and support they need. One expert who keeps tabs on these trends and frequently critiques the performance of state legislators when it comes to public and higher education is the executive director of the nonprofit research and advocacy group Public Ed Works, David Rice. And recently he was kind enough to join us to review some of the top education issues currently facing the state.

NEWS & VIEWS 2-18-24

Guest: Rev. Suzanne Parker Miller, director of Pastors for North Carolina Children

Thirty years ago, in its landmark Leandro ruling, the North Carolina Supreme Court declared that all North Carolina schoolchildren have a right under the state constitution, to a "sound basic education." At the time, it was expected that the decision would spur a rapid upgrade in the state's public schools – particularly in the struggling low wealth counties who were the plaintiffs in the case. Unfortunately, the hoped-for upgrade never really materialized as political leaders of both parties did precious little to implement the court's ruling. Now, it seems the matter is coming to a head. On February 22, the court will revisit the case and likely decide whether lawmakers can be ordered to allocate the necessary funding. And with conservative Republicans who generally defer to the legislature now controlling the court, this development has many education advocates concerned that three decades of advocacy for the state's kids could be cast aside. We sat down with one of those advocates – the Rev. Suzanne Parker Miller of the nonpartisan group Pastors for North Carolina Children.

NEWS & VIEWS 3-3-24

Guest: Dr. Lauren Fox, director of policy and research for the Public School Forum on NC

A top challenge facing public schools in North Carolina right now is a chronic teacher shortage – a shortage attributable to pitifully low salaries and several other shortsighted policies. Fortunately, there are some obvious and doable actions that state leaders can take to address this problem – actions detailed in a recent report from experts at the Public School Forum of North Carolina. And as we learned in a recent conversation with the Forum's senior director of policy and research, Dr. Lauren Fox, many of these solutions – as well as solutions to the massive funding problem that afflicts several low wealth counties – can be addressed if state lawmakers simply get serious providing the necessary dollars to get the job done. Fox discusses improving North Carolina's teacher pipeline and local supplement finance funds.

ON THE RECORD 2-18-24

Durham Public Schools overpayment problems: WRAL anchor Lena Tillett digs into the salary dispute causing protests and school closures in Durham. WRAL Durham reporter Monica Casey joins UNC's School of Education assistant professor Eric Houck, and DPS employees like Heidi Jo Hetland help shed light on the situation.

RECORDED PSA: Talking is Teaching (Jan-March)

Did you know that when you make time to talk, read or sing with your child, you're helping to shape and strengthen their brains for the years to come? As a father, helping my child thrive is the most important thing to me. Each of us has the power to create a strong start for our children and to help them enter school, ready to learn and succeed in life starting from the day they are born. Visit Talking is Teaching dot org for free tips, resources, and ideas on how to transform everyday moments into magical moments for learning.

RECORDED PSA –U.S. Air Force - Education Kelly Clackson (Jan-March)

Hey, what's up, y'all? I'm Kelly Clarkson. And as the daughter of a schoolteacher, I know just how important education is. No matter how old you are or your situation, continuing to learn will enrich your life and help remove barriers you didn't even know were there. So much opportunity, y'all. Whether it's a foreign language, history, or a different way to look at things, take some time each day to learn something new. This message is courtesy of the United States Air Force

RECORDED PSA: Future Depends on Teachers (Jan-March)

The future depends on teachers. Every day, teachers are shaping our tomorrows, starting their students on journeys that will change the course of history. Right now, in a classroom somewhere in the United States, there's a teacher inspiring a future scientist who will make preventing pandemics their life's work, sharpening the mind of an aspiring environmentalist who will help combat climate change, and generating possibilities for a student who will be the first in their family to graduate college. It all starts with teachers who meet challenges with creativity, who reinvent education for the future, who work towards a school system that lifts up every child, regardless of race, income, or zip code, and to enable the full potential of our students, our communities, and our country. Explore a career that leaves a legacy you can be proud of. Shape the future. Teach. Learn more and receive free support at Teach.org.

PSA RECORDED - Dollar General Literacy Foundation- High School Equivalency (Jan-March)

Those messages were for Shanna, my mom, who just finished her high school diploma. I want to say I'm so proud of you for finishing school. Your time is never too late to achieve your dreams. I hope to make you as proud as you've made me. When you graduate, they graduate. Finish your high school diploma for you and for them. Finish your high school diploma for you and your family visit, finish your diploma dot com to find free adult education centers near you. Brought to you by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation.

ENVIRONMENT/NATURAL DISASTERS

NEWS & VIEWS 1-7-24

Guest: Environmental investigative reporter Lisa Sorg: You don't have to be a newshound to have understood that 2023 was yet another big year for stories related to the environment – and the seemingly countless ways in which human wellbeing was (and continues to be) endangered by pollution. Here in North Carolina, NC Newsline environmental investigative reporter Lisa Sorg filed scores of stories documenting this hard reality, and recently, we sat down to discuss some of them – including the recent decision of the federal EPA to limit imports of the toxic forever chemical GenX, continued concerns about a new natural gas pipeline that's proposed for parts of central North Carolina, the advances and setbacks of the environmental justice movement, and how the 2024 elections will likely impact state environmental policy.

RECORDED PSA: NC Clean Energy Technology Center – Budget Brenda (Jan-March)

Bravo, Brenda. You've always been a saver. Price matching your price matches the self-proclaimed queen of extreme couponing. But this time you truly outdone yourself by saving for this electric vehicle. You're locking in up to 1,000 dollars a year in fuel and maintenance savings, which will leave you saying, “cha ching” every time you unplug. Good for your wallet

RECORDED PSA: NC Clean Energy Technology – Countdown Carl (Jan-March)

Kudos, Carl. You've always had a need for speed. Racing anything with wheels yelling out “3-2-1” at every traffic light. But this time you've taken your power obsession to the next level. By purchasing this electric vehicle, you've given yourself an instant torch that blows your old launch times away, which will keep you saying “Oh weee,” every time you punch the pedal. Good for your adrenaline. Great for the planet. That's the power of EV sponsored by the RNC Clean Energy Technology Center.

RECORDED PSA: NC Clean Energy Technology – Upcyclers (Jan-March)

Congrats Cristina and Carmen. You've always been the green family composting to cut waste. You've even washed and reused the same straw for the past ten years. But this time you've taken it up another notch by purchasing this electric vehicle. You're putting gas, oil, and harmful emissions in the rearview for good, which will leave you thinking peacefully every time you plug in. Good for your conscience. Great for the planet. That's the power of EV.

RECORDED PSA -Visit NC – More for Less (Feb-March)

There's so much to love about North Carolina, but we all want more - More balanced views, more pristine scenery, more wildlife, more adventures, and more clean roads to get there. But to get more, we have to do less...Less littering, that is. Properly disposing of waste is never a waste of time. It leads to a more enjoyable environment for much longer. So, when traveling in North Carolina, make it your nature to trash your trash. Leave it more beautiful than when you found it and you will all have more reason to love NC. Litter less. Get more.

EQUALITY / HUMAN RIGHTS/IMMIGRATION

NEWS & VIEWS 1-7-24

Guest: Courts and justice reporter Kelan Lyons: Most Americans are aware of the outsized impact that rulings from the U.S. Supreme Court can have on our society, but as a steady drumbeat of stories from NC Newline investigative reporter Kelan Lyons made clear in 2023, the state civil and criminal justice systems can also be hugely impactful and deserving of our close attention. Recently, we sat down for a two-part conversation in which we looked back at some of the top North Carolina courts and justice stories from 2023. In Part One of our chat, we discussed a state Court of Appeals decision in which a panel of judges ruled that quote “life begins at conception” (and how Kel’s reporting likely led to it being withdrawn). We also discussed an end-of-year campaign launched by opponents of the death penalty, and the tragic story of a man who, effectively, got lost in the state prison system. In Part Two of our conversation, we discussed Kel’s reporting on some other troubling news from the state’s prison system and a pair of important court actions with implications for the First Amendment and freedom of the press.

NEWS & VIEWS 2-4-24

Guest: States Newsroom Washington, DC Bureau reporter Ariana Figueroa

If you’ve paid any attention to the news from Washington of late you know that Congress is seriously discussing legislation that would both address problems at the southern border and provide a package of desperately needed foreign aid to Ukraine and other global hot spots. And while the package enjoys support from the White House and members of both parties, it’s also drawing heat from immigrant advocates who think it will cause great harm to migrants fleeing violence and persecution and Donald Trump who’s campaigning on an anti-immigration platform and wants to deny any policy victories to President Biden. And earlier this week while the matter was still very much up in the air, we caught up with a journalist who follows it on a daily basis, States newsroom Washington, DC bureau reporter, Ariana Figueroa.

NEWS & VIEWS 2-4-24

Guest: Congresswoman Deborah Ross (NC-02)

A great starting point for North Carolinians looking to identify the chief source of dysfunction in their state’s electoral politics in 2024, is the egregious partisan gerrymandering in which lawmakers have engaged. Indeed, under the latest rigged electoral maps enacted by Republican majorities in Raleigh, the victors in almost all elections to Congress and the General Assembly in the state this year will be known as soon as the party primaries conclude next month. The November contest outcomes are foreordained and mostly just for show. And this is obviously no way to run a democracy. Indeed, the situation has grown so absurd that members of Congress – including a group from North Carolina -- have started introducing bills that would force states to employ fairer redistricting processes, and earlier this week I caught up with one such lawmaker, Triangle-area congresswoman Deborah Ross. And as Ross told us, not only have legislative leaders rigged our elections, but they’ve also closed off the map-drawing process so that it now occurs almost completely out of the public eye. In Part Two of our conversation, we discussed a raft of other current front burner topics in Washington, including the negotiations over immigration reform and aid to Ukraine, the growing threats of violence in our politics, worries about artificial intelligence and how it can be used to deceive voters and, on a more hopeful note, the possibility that Congress will soon revive and anti-poverty tax credit.

NEWS & VIEWS 2-25-24

Guest: Ricky Hurtado, former state representative and chair of the Governor’s Advisory Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs

If you’re paying any attention to the national political debate these days, you know that the political right has made immigration and a campaign to demonize immigrants its top talking point for the 2024 election cycle. Republicans in the U.S. House have even sought to condition passage of a critical foreign aid package for Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan, on a Democratic agreement to, effectively, close the southern border. Here in North Carolina – a place thousands of miles from the border in which immigrants are an essential and hugely beneficial part of the economy and society generally – we’re hearing similar hateful rhetoric and proposals, and recently we caught up with a leader who’s working hard to counter them with facts and common sense, the chair of the Governor’s Advisory Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs, former State Representative Ricky Hurtado.

ON THE RECORD 3-24-24

One man's appeal could affect more than 100 death row inmates in NC: This month a crucial hearing with implications for hundreds of inmates statewide happened in a Johnston County courtroom. The case explores an aspect of the criminal justice system that gets to the heart of equal justice under the law.

RECORDED PSA: National Fair Housing Alliance (Jan-March)

What’s the asking price on this house? You’d probably be more comfortable living somewhere else. How long a lease is the landlord looking for? I’m sure you can afford to live here, but what are the schools like in this district? Yeah, we have twins in the fifth grade. This neighborhood isn’t really for your kids... Know what I mean? If you’re black, Latino, Asian American or Middle Eastern and a real

estate agent or rental agencies, anything like this, you know what it means? You're being discriminated against. Housing discrimination because of race, color, or national origin is against the law. If you believe you've experienced housing discrimination, contact HUD, go to [HUD.gov/Fair Housing](https://www.hud.gov/FairHousing). That's [HUD.gov/Fair Housing](https://www.hud.gov/FairHousing). The law is on your side.

RECORDED PSA: Obesity Action Coalition (Jan-March)

"We don't want you on our team. You're too slow and fat." Those with the serious disease called obesity face weight bias every day. And blame themselves. Weight bias hurts. Let's stop. Weight bias. Be part of the solution. Go to [stop weight bias dot com](https://www.stopweightbias.com).

RECORDED PSA: Autism Speaks – Workplace Inclusion (Jan-March)

Only one in five people with autism are employed, despite many having the skill set and desire to work. Maybe it's because employers don't know what kind of jobs they can do. Like what about a programmer? That's a job for someone with autism. How about a healthcare worker? Yep. That is too. People with autism can do a lot of different jobs, but often get overlooked due to outdated stigmas. Introducing WIN by Autism Speaks. We help businesses lead the way in inclusive hiring. What about a ranch hand? To learn more, go to [Autism Speaks dot org slash WIN](https://www.autismspeaks.org/WIN).

PSA RECORDED: Easter Seals - My Easter Seals (Jan-March)

One in four Americans today are living with a disability. I'm one of them. People with disabilities are extremely talented, resilient, problem solvers that have so much to offer. And we've got a trusted ally on our side, an organization we can rely on - Easter Seals. Easter Seals is leading the way to full equity, inclusion, and access to healthcare, employment, and education for people with disabilities, families, and communities. That's my Easter Seals. Make it yours. Learn more and get involved at [Easter Seals dot org](https://www.easterseals.com).

HEALTHCARE/MENTAL HEALTH/WOMEN'S HEALTH

NEWS & VIEWS 1-7-24

Guest: Courts and justice reporter Kelan Lyons: Most Americans are aware of the outsized impact that rulings from the U.S. Supreme Court can have on our society, but as a steady drumbeat of stories from NC Newsline investigative reporter Kelan Lyons made clear in 2023, the state civil and criminal justice systems can also be hugely impactful and deserving of our close attention. Recently, we sat down for a two-part conversation in which we looked back at some of the top North Carolina courts and justice stories from 2023. In Part One of our chat, we discussed a state Court of Appeals decision in which a panel of judges ruled that quote "life begins at conception" (and how Kel's reporting likely led to it being withdrawn). We also discussed an end-of-year campaign launched by opponents of the death penalty, and the tragic story of a man who, effectively, got lost in the state prison system

NEWS & VIEWS 3-24-24

Guest: States Newsroom national reproductive rights reporter Sofia Resnick

It's been almost two years now since the U.S. Supreme Court reversed a half century of precedent by overturning the Roe v. Wade decision and ending the constitutional right to abortion care. And as had been expected, the ruling has produced a convoluted patchwork of laws that's left women in many states – particularly women of low-income – in incredibly difficult straits. What's more a new case that will come before the court in the coming days involving the abortion pill mifepristone could make the situation even more dire. Recently, in order to get a better understanding of the state of reproductive rights in 2024 and what the future might hold if the Court were to side once again with abortion opponents, we caught up with States Newsroom national reproductive rights reporter, Sofia Resnick.

RECORDED PSA - American College of Radiology– Colonoscopy (Jan-March)

African Americans are the most likely to die from colorectal cancer. The most important thing you can do is get screened. Starting at age 45, insurance companies are required to cover not only colonoscopy, but also virtual colonoscopy and other less invasive exams. Talk to your doctor about your options. For more information on virtual colonoscopy, visit [radiology info dot org slash virtual city](https://www.radiologyinfo.org/virtual-city).

RECORDED PSA - Women's Heart HealthAlliance – We Can Have It All (Jan-March)

Women can have it all. Including heart attacks. But symptoms like jaw pain, nausea, unusual fatigue, dizziness, and backache are often different and more subtle than for a man. The fact is heart disease is the number one killer of women. Know the signs. Learn more at [Get Heart Checked](https://www.getheartchecked.com). Bought from Women's Heart Alliance in partnership with Women Heart.

RECORDED PSA – Stand Up to Cancer – Colorectal Screenings (Jan-March)

What's up? This is Will I Am. I'm joining Stand up to Cancer and Providence Health System to let you know if you're 45 and older, go get a colon cancer screening right now. Ask your doctor or go to Providence Northgate colon cancer to determine which screening option is right for you.

RECORDED PSA: American Cancer Society- Get Screened (Jan-March)

Cancer can feel like something we can't do anything about, but you can. There are screening tests that can catch cancer early when it may be easier to treat. Begins cervical screening at age 25. At 45, start colorectal, and breast screening at 50. Discuss lung screening with the doctor. Find resources for free and low-cost screening at [cancer dawgs get screened](#).

RECORDED PSA – National Pest Management Association – Sick Day (Jan-March)

Amanda had another asthma attack. She's really sad to miss school again. Asthma can be triggered by allergens from common pests. Just can't shake this fever. Mosquito bites can cause West Nile and Zika virus infections. Sorry, boss. I'm gonna be out of work for a while. The CDC estimates that more than 300,000 Lyme disease cases spread by ticks occur in the U.S. each year. Don't let pests force you to take a sick day. Learn how to protect your family. A pest world dot org. A public service message from the National Pest Management Association and the CDC.

RECORDED PSA: People You Know - Type 2 Diabetes (Jan-March)

One in three adults has prediabetes. One in three. That means it could be you, your football buddy, your futbol buddy, or you your best man, your worst man, you, your dog walker, your cat jogger... While one in three adults has prediabetes with early diagnosis, prediabetes can be reversed. Take the risk test at [Do I Have Prediabetes Dot Org](#). Brought to you by the Ad Council and its prediabetes awareness partners.

RECORDED PSA: Pivotal Ventures – Middle School Mental Health (Jan-March)

Hey, son. How are you feeling? I'm fine, Pops. What's on your mind? I just. I can't explain it now. My dad's retired a cop. His eyes really started to wander. And obviously, loss of who you talk to. When your kid can't find the language, you help them find the lyrics, listen to the sound it out album, and get tips and tools to start a conversation. Sound it out together.

POLITICS/VOTING RIGHTS

NEWS & VIEWS 1-14-24

Guest: Tom Jensen, Public Policy Polling's director of polling

In just over a month, early voting will commence in the North Carolina primary election. So, what are voters thinking? Are North Carolina Republicans seriously considering any other presidential candidate besides Donald Trump? What can we expect if November brings us a Trump-Biden rematch? Is a gubernatorial contest between Attorney General Josh Stein and Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson a foregone conclusion? Earlier this week, I got some pretty definitive answers to all these questions -- as well some insights as to why voter unrest seems to remain so high at a time during which the economy is humming along -- when I sat down with one of the country's best and most accurate pollsters.

NEWS & VIEWS 2-11-24

Guest: Common Cause of North Carolina Associate Director Sailor Jones

The state's March 5th primary election is right around the corner. Early in-person voting starts this Thursday and it's already possible to obtain a ballot to vote by mail. Unfortunately, as we've discussed previously on *News & Views*, this year's election will be accompanied by a raft of new laws that state legislators have clearly enacted to make voting much more of a chore -- especially for people of low income, those with less free time on their hands, and those less likely to have a current photo ID. All that said, the election is on, and voters have to make the best of the new rules and fortunately some smart advocates are doing their best to educate and motivate voters. And recently we caught up with one of our state's best, Common Cause of North Carolina associate director, Sailor Jones. Jones details what voters need to know about casting their vote and making sure it counts in 2024.

NEWS & VIEWS 3-3-24

Guest: Catawba College political scientist Michael Bitzer

Super Tuesday 2024 is upon us and that means it's primary election week in North Carolina and several other states as voters go to the polls to choose major party nominees for president and a host of other important offices. And while the primary season has been rather subdued here, with few of the top contests looking especially close or competitive, this week's primary will be enormously impactful -- especially in congressional districts where gerrymandering has already assured which party's candidate will win in November. And earlier this week we got a chance to discuss where things stand in the presidential race, some of the controversies that have arisen, and some of the issues that will likely be front and center in the months to come with Catawba College Political Science professor, Michael Bitzer.

NEWS & VIEWS 3-31-2024

Guest: Dr. Scott Brennen of UNC-Chapel Hill's Center on Technology Policy

Artificial intelligence of AI. It's a topic that generates a lot of talk, a lot of hope, and a lot of concerns these days. On the positive side, AI has the potential to aid in solving an array of vexing societal problems and to help average people work better and faster in

numerous ways. On the other hand, of course, AI also raises real concerns – both with respect to the ability of humans to control and manage it and the possibility that it will be abused by bad actors in order to mislead people with false or phony communications. This latter concern is of particular relevance as Americans prepare to vote in the 2024 election. Fortunately, a lot of smart people are paying close attention to these kinds of issues and recently News & Views caught up with one of them for a special extended conversation on the topic, the head of online expression policy at the UNC-Chapel Hill Center on Technology Policy – Dr. Scott Brennen. In Part One of our conversation, we delved into the subject of artificial intelligence (or AI) and some of the good and bad things it can do when it comes to communication. In Part Two of our chat, we continued this discussion with a special focus on political communication – both with respect to the 2024 election and more generally. And as Brennen told us, while he remains optimistic that phony AI messaging poses only a limited risk to the national election, there are risks and some important steps that elected officials can and should consider taking to help preserve the health of our democracy.

ON THE RECORD 1-28-24

The race for Raleigh Mayor: Lena Tillett meets one-on-one with the three candidates vying to replace Mary-Ann Baldwin as mayor of Raleigh.

ON THE RECORD 1-21-24

2024 race for governor: We are 45 days away from the March 5 primary election in North Carolina, and some big statewide races are on the primary ballot. WRAL's Lena Tillett takes a look at the race for governor.

ON THE RECORD 3-3-24

Decision 2024 races to watch for and why they matter: WRAL's Capitol Bureau Chief Laura Leslie takes a deep dive into the 2024 election, talking to experts about predictions for the primaries, which election races to watch for and how this election could impact the future of our government.

ON THE RECORD 3-10-24

Decision 2024, takeaways from Super Tuesday: North Carolina voters now know who will be on their ballots in November. While many races did not have surprises, some did - with several incumbents losing their jobs. WRAL goes 'On the Record' with a panel of experts to examine the deciding factors in some races, and what voters can expect to see over the coming months.

POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY/HOMELESSNESS

RECORDED PSA: Feeding America – Ending Hunger (Jan-March)

The impact of a meal goes well beyond feeding our bodies. Because when people are fed, futures are nourished. And with your help, together, we can end hunger. Join the movement at Feeding America Dawgs Act now brought to you by Feeding America

PSA RECORDED: Communities in Schools (Jan-March)

For the safety of students, families, and teachers, schools across our country are closing. School closures can have significant and lasting consequences, particularly for vulnerable students, students who may face hunger, homelessness and even trauma. That's where our organization, Communities in Schools can help. For years, we've had caring adults inside schools helping these students stay in school. Now we are taking our work beyond the school walls. Our caring adults are delivering meals, providing household supplies, connecting kids with online classrooms, and using technology to maintain the one-on-one relationships we know can transform the lives of students and their families, communities and schools going wherever we are needed, doing whatever it takes to empower students to succeed in school and in life. To see how you can help kids succeed, visit [CommunitiesInSchools Dot Org](https://www.communitiesschools.org).

SUBSTANCE ABUSE/ REGULATION

ON THE RECORD 2-4-24

Experts share the facts regarding medications that treat obesity: A new class of medications to treat obesity is surging in popularity in the U.S. WRAL's Lena Tillett speaks with a full panel of experts to bring the facts and hear first-hand accounts from people familiar with drugs such as Wegovy and Ozempic

RECORDED PSA: American Lung Association – Youth Vaping (Jan-March)

I think it's just vapor. Vaping is safer than smoking, isn't it? There's really not even that much nicotine in them, right? One big pot has as much nicotine as one pack of cigarettes. I kid my kid knows it's dangerous. Five point four million American kids vape and most think it's harmless. Get your head out of the cloud. Talk to your kid about vaping. Visit, [talk about vaping dot org](https://www.vapingdot.org). That's talk about vaping dot org. Brought to you by the American Lung Association and the Ad Council

RECORDED PSA: CDC – Drug Overdose Campaign -Naloxone (Jan-March)

Hey, you got any gum? Yeah. Check my backpack. What's this? Oh, that's Naloxone. It can reverse an opioid overdose. I decided to always keep it on me after my friend almost died. It saved his life. Oh, wow. I'm so sorry. That makes me want to have it with me too. You totally should. Check the pharmacy. It was actually really easy to get and it's easy to use. I definitely will. Thanks. Naloxone saves lives. Learn more at [CDC.gov/Stop overdose](https://www.cdc.gov/StopOverdose/).

RECORDED PSA: CDC Drug Overdose - Fentanyl (Jan-March)

Only a fraction of a raindrop, three grains of salt, and up to 100 times more potent than morphine. The tiniest amount of illegal fentanyl is all it takes to cause an overdose. Fentanyl can be mixed into heroin, cocaine, press pills, meth, and other drugs. It could be in your drugs and you wouldn't be able to see it, taste it or smell it. Learn more at [CDC.gov/Stop overdose](https://www.cdc.gov/StopOverdose/).

RECORDED PSA: National Association Boards of Pharmacy (Jan-March)

Unused prescription opioid pain medicines can spell trouble. They can spell risk if taken by someone they weren't prescribed for, harm if accidentally taken by a child or pet, or overdose if they're not used as directed. Safely dispose of opioids before they can hurt your family. Find a drug takeback option such as medicine drop boxes. You may find these in your community at local pharmacies or police stations. Visit [www.fda.gov\drug disposal](https://www.fda.gov/drug-disposal) for more information.

TERRORISM/HOMELAND SECURITY**NEWS & VIEWS 2-25-24****Guest: Duke University Sanford School of Public Policy Professor David Schanzer**

In the eyes of a growing number of observers, the future of democracy itself will be at stake in the 2024 U.S. elections and this sobering fact has enormous implications – not just for Americans but for the populations of dozens of allies around the world. One expert who's watching this matter closely and expressing deep concern on a regular basis is Duke University Sanford School of Public Policy Professor David Schanzer. Schanzer who heads the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security and holds forth regularly on the substack website, Perilous Times, says the current pro-Russia, pro-authoritarian turn of many U.S. Republicans is an extremely troubling development.

RECORDED PSA – Homes for Our Troops (Jan-March)

Serving my country required sacrifice. Sacrifice that changed my life forever. I remember the day I came home because of my injuries. This house wasn't right for me anymore. I remember the narrow doorways, the small bathrooms, the shelves out of reach when in my wheelchair...Every day was full of obstacles. I felt trapped. I remember a better day - The day my family received a specially adapted custom home from Homes for Our Troops. That day changed everything. Now we have a safe and accessible home to enjoy the freedom I fought for. This place. Our home is exactly what we needed to rebuild our lives. Homes for Our Troops builds and donates specially adapted custom homes nationwide for severely injured post-9-11 veterans and enables them to rebuild their lives. Join our mission [HFT USA dot org](https://www.hftusa.org).

RECORDED PSA: Department of Homeland Security – See Something, Say Something (Jan-March)

Why? Why do we ignore the things that give us pause that seem out of place, that don't feel right? The answer to why defines who we are. So, if you see something, why do you say something? I see. Save for my friends, for my community, for my family, for each other. Because all of this matters. We all have something worth protecting. So why is the U.S. saying report suspicious activity to local authorities? If you see something, say something.

RECORDED PSA: Department of Defense – Today's Military (Jan-March)

As a young adult, at this point in your life, you probably have a lot of questions. Like what's next? What does my future hold? The thing is, there's no right answer, only your answer, your friendships, experiences and purpose. It's all your choice. So, what will you choose as you make choices about the future? The military can be a resource for information to help bring a fulfilling path and to focus a public service message from the Department of Defense. To learn more, visit [today's Military.com](https://today.military.com).

PSA RECORDED: Wounded Warrior Project (Jan-March)

I was on the verge of giving up. That chapter, that season of my life was over. Now what? "Who was I?" I kept asking myself. The pressure to have it all together...to heal... I tried to quiet down the monsters inside head. It was too much. I lost it. I had heard about the Wounded Warrior Project. I had seen a logo and that visual of a warrior carrying another warrior. The programs that the Wounded Warrior Project offers to not just the veteran themselves. It's their whole family who brings it all together. We have scars that we carry, and just because the scars are there doesn't mean that we're any less than what we were. Right now, I am the best version that I ever have been of myself. I can embrace the brokenness. You wouldn't go into battle alone. You don't have to fight this alone. Visit [Wounded Warrior Project dot org slash not alone](https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org).