Issues and Programs List
Quarterly Report
2nd Quarter

April – June 2021

RADIO

Top 5 Issues Addressed:

1. Politics
2. Health
3. Racism
4. Education
5. Crime/Law Enforcement

Representative Programs That Addressed Issues:

1. **Politics**

Political Rewind ***GPB***
Weekdays, 9am and repeated at 2pm

As the Biden administration got its footing and a global pandemic seemed to be on the wane, Political Rewind continued to address how political issues affect residents of Georgia. Not only did the program address attempts to limit voting in future elections and the scrambling already underway for the 2022 campaigns, but it also addressed other topics, particularly attempts to increase the number of COVID-19 vaccinations, gun violence and racial animosities.

Political Rewind ***GPB***
April 23, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Georgia House Speaker, Republican David Ralston, was the sole guest on this edition of the program, joining host Bill Nigut and political analyst Patricia Murphy of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. Ralston was first elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in 2002 and has held the position of Speaker since 2010. It is a position that puts him at the center of the discussion — and controversy — surrounding state legislative action.

No bill garnered more attention than the election measures passed this year. But during his tenure, Ralston also earned praise for rejecting bills some opponents have called extreme and anti-democratic. The speaker points to his efforts to overhaul Georgia's citizen's arrest law, and legislative action to increase funds for the state's mental health budget. He also squashed proposed expansions to Georgia's gun laws and rejected a Republican-led move to punish Delta Air Lines for the company's condemnation of the election law.

It is SB 202 that will likely be the legacy of the 2021 session, but the controversial election law was just one of the issues discussed with Ralston on today's program. Redistricting, the consequential process of redrawing Georgia's congressional districts, will take place this year. Ralston speculated redistricting will not begin until there is "frost on the pumpkin," meaning around November due to the delayed release of census data.

Political Rewind ***GPB***
May 20, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

A bipartisan vote in the U.S. House approved the establishment of a congressional commission to investigate the Jan. 6th insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. But while 35 House Republicans voted in favor

of the commission, the proposal was opposed by all of the Republican members of Georgia's congressional delegation. Every member of the GOP delegation also voted against a resolution condemning the violence that took the lives of eight people killed in the massage parlor shooting spree in Atlanta and Cherokee County.

Today's panel discussed the reasons Georgia Republicans may be opposing measures that many consider to be beyond partisanship.

Meanwhile, Gov. Brian Kemp launched his reelection campaign with a series of media interviews where he sought to establish his achievements.

He highlighted his efforts to limit abortions and his role behind changes to state election laws. But Kemp continues to face criticism from supporters of former President Donald Trump for not backing the false narrative that the state's presidential election was stolen for President Joe Biden.

Host Bill Nigut was joined by *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* editor Kevin Riley, Emory University Political Science Professor Dr. Andra Gillespie, former GOP state legislator Edward Lindsey, and current Democratic state representative Mary Margaret Oliver.

Political Rewind ***GPB***
June 14, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm

On today's program, Georgia's new election law could face federal scrutiny after Attorney General Merrick Garland announced plans for the Department of Justice to review state laws across the country that some say limit the right to vote.

Garland announced he would double the number of voter enfranchisement lawyers on staff in his department's Civil Rights Division. During his remarks on June 11th, Garland noted that at least 14 states have passed new laws this year to make it harder to vote, including Georgia, Florida, and Arizona. He said his staff will also look at post-election audits, such as those being proposed here.

Host Bill Nigut and panelists Dr. Charles Bullock, Professor of Political Science at the University of Georgia, Dr. Karen Owen, Political Science Professor at the University of West Georgia, and former *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* political columnist Jim Galloway also discussed Vice President Kamala Harris's visit to Atlanta later this week. Her visit is intended to encourage more Georgians to get their COVID-19 vaccinations. Georgia continues to hover near the bottom of states in numbers of fully vaccinated people. They also discussed the upcoming nation conference of the Southern Baptist Convention amid escalating tensions within the prominent organization. A number of Black leaders said they may leave the group over its reluctance to acknowledge systemic racism, among other concerns.

2. Health

Political Rewind ***GPB***
April 9, 2021. 9am and repeated at 2pm.

On today's program: the COVID-19 pandemic enters a new stage as vaccinations become increasingly available. But even as more people become fully vaccinated, enduring obstacles remain. How should public health officials promote outreach to communities hesitant to receive the vaccines? How is lack

of access to health care and Internet hampering vaccination efforts? And how quickly should our work offices and schools reopen?

Dr. Valerie Montgomery Rice, president of the Morehouse School of Medicine, joined today's panel. Rice and her colleagues have been on the front lines of a campaign to encourage African Americans communities to embrace the vaccine. Polls now show many Black communities are no longer skeptical about the shots. Instead, a significant percentage of white men, partitioned by political ideology, now resist vaccination. Joining Dr. Rice and host Bill Nigut were Georgia Tech professor Dr. Joshua Weitz and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* political reporter Patricia Murphy.

Georgia Today ***GPB***
April 23, 2021, 6:30pm.

Today's program told the story of 65-year-old Gloria Hammond, who had brought her husband, Cason, home to the family place in Juliette, Georgia, just through the tree line from the coal ash pond at Georgia Power's Plant Scherer. Cason had just been diagnosed with terminal cancer when officials from the utility came to ask to buy the home from them as they had done for many of their neighbors who had gotten sick over the years. The Hammonds told them to leave. Cason Hammond has since died. His widow says, "They haven't offered me nothing." The man from Georgia Power replied, "You know, I will be back."

Stories of unexplained illnesses, cancers and death have been the talk of Juliette, Georgia, for years. The town outside Macon is home to Georgia Power's Plant Scherer, one of the largest coal-fired power plants in the country. Juliette residents say coal ash from the plant is poisoning their water supply. Now, they are calling for policymakers to help.

This week on *Georgia Today*: GPB reporter Grant Blankenship and photojournalist Evey Wilson, an assistant professor at the Mercer University's Center for Collaborative Journalism, the filmmakers behind the documentary *Saving Juliette,* discussed the issue with host Steve Fennessy.

Political Rewind ***GPB***
May 18, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

On today's *Political Rewind*: following the latest CDC guidance, nearly two dozen states are giving their approval for vaccinated residents to go maskless. In Georgia, how are cities, counties and businesses responding to the announcement? Host Bill Nigut spoke to several local leaders about what is happening in their communities. Guests included Rusty Paul, mayor of Sandy Springs, Ga. and Deana Holiday Ingraham, mayor of East Point, Ga. They were joined by *Savannah Morning News* Editorial Page editor Adam Van Brimmer and Atlanta Journal-Constitution senior reporter Tamar Hallerman.

3. **Racism**

Political Rewind ***GPB***
April 8, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today on *Political Rewind*: a look at the tremendous toll of racism across society. Systemic racism targets people of color but harms us all. As author Heather McGhee writes in her book, *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*, racism is often the

common denominator behind our most pressing public problems, and a gnarled root leading to the core dysfunctions of our democracy. So, what is the way forward?

McGhee, board chair of racial justice organization Color of Change, challenges our shared assumptions of the history behind systemic racism and how it divides our world. *The Sum of Us* is a *New York Times* bestseller and one of *Oprah Magazine*'s "20 of the Best Books of February 2021 to Fall in Love With." She joined host Bill Nigut and Emory University Political Science Professor, Dr. Andra Gillespie, to discuss her work and its implications in today's environment.

Political Rewind ***GPB***

May 25, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today on *Political Rewind*: It has been one year since the murder of George Floyd. His death sent millions of Americans into the streets to demand racial justice and police accountability. Host Bill Nigut and our panel looked back at this year of reckoning. Panelists included *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* senior reporter Tamar Hallerman, former Atlanta City Council President Caesar Mitchell, University of Georgia Political Science Professor Dr. Audrey Haynes, and Republican strategist Eric Tanenblatt.

The group also discussed the changes coming to Stone Mountain Park after its governing board approved a series of plans that begin reframing the park's glorification of the Lost Cause. Part of the plans include a history exhibit that will tell the truth about the dark history of the mountain's past — as a gathering place for the Klan and a symbol of white supremacy.

Political Rewind ***GPB***

June 15, 2021. 9am and repeated at 2pm.

On today's program: It has been more than a year since many Americans were shaken into action by the police shootings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks, and other Black Americans. In response, millions took to the streets to demand an end to systemic racism, police brutality and injustice in American society. Meanwhile, corporations, universities and other institutions began evaluating internal practices that perpetuate discrimination against people of color in hiring and promotion. But as the summer of 2021 begins, it is time to ask whether there has been real progress in achieving the promises made by big businesses and other institutions?

Subha Barry, CEO of Seramount, joined host Bill Nigut to discuss her organization's recent report tracking employee perception and corporate action on social justice issues. She said a new generation of white-collar workers are looking for a reflection of their values in their workplace.

"Young people are doing something that the generation before them did not do, and they are voting with their feet," Barry said. "They walk out of companies, and they go seek other organizations whose values are aligned with theirs."

Kyle Stapleton is a co-founder and board member of The A Pledge, a commitment by Atlanta marketing and advertising agencies to match the makeup of their teams to the diversity of Atlanta by 2030. He said the leaders of corporate America, in Atlanta and elsewhere, have an obligation to address workplace inequity.

"Frankly, any good leader worth their stripes should see a moment, meet the moment and do the right thing to be a leader in the moment," Stapleton said.

How has the country progressed in the search for equality and justice in the workplace? What role does moral leadership play in creating a more just society?

Barry and Stapleton were joined by Emory University Professor of Social Ethics, Dr. Robert Franklin, and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* senior reporter Matt Kempner.

4. **Education**

Political Rewind ***GPB***
April 28, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today on *Political Rewind*: The governing body behind Georgia's public universities and colleges is on the search for a new chancellor. But appointed members of the Board of Regents are facing criticism after former Gov. Sonny Perdue was reported to be among the final candidates for the role.

A college accrediting agency warned the board to keep politics out of the search. *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reports that a letter to Regent chair Sachin Shailendra from The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges advised the board to pick a candidate based on their skills and abilities to avoid "politicizing" the search. Perdue has no experience in education administration.

Host Bill Nigut was joined by *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* political reporter Greg Bluestein to discuss this and other education topics.

Political Rewind ***GPB***
June 11, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

On today's program: The Cobb County School Board waded into the contentious effort to ban the teaching of so-called critical race theory. A divided board yesterday outlawed the concept, an academic framework that analyzes racism as not just individual bias but as embedded in legal systems and policies.

One Republican board member called the theory a divisive concept. A board member opposed to the ban said he was wary of approving a resolution on a topic the board could not define.

Joining host Bill Nigut to discuss this issue and others were retired political columnist Jim Galloway, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reporter Maya Prabhu*, Marietta Daily Journal* Reporter Chart Riggall, and Georgia State University Political Science Professor Amy Steigerwalt.

5. **Crime/Law Enforcement**

Political Rewind ***GPB***
April 14, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today on *Political Rewind*: Last summer, police violence in communities across the country acted as rallying points for discussions over the role of law enforcement in our society. The killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Atlanta's Rayshard Brooks at the hands of police served as stark examples of a concerning trend of violence.

Now, the killing of Daunte Wright amid the ongoing trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin spurs renewed demands for structural change.

In Washington D.C., President Joe Biden declared he wants a federal investigation of Wright's shooting. Meanwhile, Democrats in the U.S. House continued their push for a bill establishing national standards for police conduct.

Mayor Hardie Davis Jr. of Augusta, Ga. said police brutality and racial discrimination have long challenged the nation's democratic ideals. "We have to lean in," Davis said. "Now is the penultimate moment of where we have to do it collectively. We cannot retreat to our spheres of influence or the places of comfort."

Davis joined host Bill Nigut along with Tiffany Williams Roberts of the Southern Center for Human Rights, Republican strategist Leo Smith and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* politics reporter Greg Bluestein.

Political Rewind *GPB*

June 8, 2021, 9am and repeated at 2pm.

Today: Incidents of gun violence are gripping communities across the country. Georgia officials are struggling to address the issue. In DeKalb County, CEO Michael Thurmond unveiled a sweeping proposal to use federal COVID relief funds to reform his county's approach to criminal justice.

Also, Atlanta's new police chief says he is restructuring his department to address the alarming increase in violent gun crime in the city.

Meanwhile, the family of Secoriea Turner has now filed lawsuits against Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms and other Atlanta city leaders. The Turner family accuses the officials of failing to protect the life of the 8-year-old girl who was struck down last summer.

Joining host Bill Nigut to discuss the issue were DeKalb County CEO Michael Thurmond, former Georgia Attorney General Sam Olens, and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* senior reporter Tamar Hallerman.