

WRAL-FM, Raleigh, NC (101.5)
QUARTERLY LISTING OF COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS
THRID QUARTER 2023

The following is a list of issues and concerns for Third Quarter 2023 (July-September) and addressed in Public Affairs Programming, Public Service Announcements, and special programming on WRAL-FM.

1. **CRIME/GUN VIOLENCE**
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7. **HEALTHCARE/MENTAL HEALTH/WOMEN'S HEALTH**
8. **POLITICS/VOTING RIGHTS**
9. **POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY/HOMELESSNESS**
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This report was placed in the Public Inspection file on October 9, 2023

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

WRAL-FM aired 11 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.

NC NEWSLINE WITH ROB SCHOFIELD

55 seconds Monday-Thursday after the 6 p.m. Newscast and 2 minutes on Friday after the 6 p.m. Newscast

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS rotate throughout the broadcast day (Recorded PSAs are :15, :30, or :60 in length)

AMBER ALERTS

The NC Amber Alert System is a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information about abducted children. MIX 101.5 broadcasts Amber Alerts received from the NC Center for Missing Persons.

NC EDUCATION LOTTERY

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

NEWSBREAKS, Mon-Fri

60-Sec 6 AM, 6:30 AM, 7 AM, 7:30 AM, 8 AM, 8:30 AM, and 5 PM

NEWSCAST

6-6:30 PM Simulcast *of WRAL-TV News*

THIRD 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.

CRIME/GUN VIOLENCE

Continuing a trend from 2022, the United States surpassed 100 mass shootings for the year. The nation has the most school shootings in the world. Raleigh-Durham area schools and universities are constantly experiencing lockdowns. The beginning of the school year included two shootings on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus and a seven-year-old bringing a gun to a Nash County elementary school.

COMMUNITY/FAMILY/FAITH

The lack of access to affordable, quality childcare and elder care is affecting families, the workforce, and the economy as a whole. The childcare industry is in crisis. NC lawmakers are pushing for government subsidies. The pandemic precipitated closures of many facilities. Many quality caregivers opted to leave the profession.

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.

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 continues to raise interest rates to restore price stability and balance the labor market.

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

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

ENVIRONMENT/NATURAL DISASTERS

In 2022, Governor Roy Cooper rolled out a slate of new climate pledges, including a commitment to get 1.25 million plug-in electric vehicles on the road by 2030 and to eliminate most fossil fuel vehicles by 2050.

Climate change is an ongoing discussion as it affects NC farmers, healthcare, and the frequency of natural disasters.

Peak hurricane season on the east coast is August-October.

EQUALITY / HUMAN RIGHTS/IMMIGRATION

According to a 2022 study by the American Psychological Association, 70% of adults have pessimistic views on government and their civil liberties. Approximately 64% said they feel their rights are under attack. Over 45% said they do not feel protected by the laws in the United States. A century after a guarantee of gender equality was proposed in Congress, the United State Senate fell short of the votes needed to enshrine equal rights for women in the Constitution.

A lack of immigration reform has led to economic, security, and humanitarian challenges for border states and the American workforce.

HEALTHCARE/MENTAL HEALTH/WOMEN'S HEALTH

North Carolina politicians have attempted to pass comprehensive legislation for Medicaid expansion for 13 years. A bill was finally signed in March. However, implementation is tied to a budget bill that has yet to pass.

The debate continues on women's reproductive health with the 2022 Supreme Court decision to overturn *Rowe vs. Wade* and leave legislation to states. North Carolina's bill banning abortion after 12 weeks passed in June with concessions added.

In response to multiple suicides on UNC campuses, system leaders revealed \$7.7 million in funding for mental health initiatives.

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.

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 on March 1. 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.

North Carolina was one of a dwindling group of states yet to legalize medical marijuana, although polling showed broad public support for the idea. In March, North Carolina passed a bill to legalize medical marijuana.

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.

THIRD QUARTER PROGRAMS

CHILDCARE/ELDERCARE/FAMILY

NEWS & VIEWS 8-6-2023

Guest: NC Child Executive Director Erica Palmer Smith

Smith on our state's childcare crisis and how it's contributing to a long list of challenges for North Carolina families.

NC NEWSLINE: 8-21-23

State should pursue obvious remedy for foster care shortage: Like a lot of states, North Carolina has a shortage of foster care parents. As a local child abuse expert reported in a recent NC Newsline op-ed, the situation is so bad that in some places, kids have been sleeping on the floor of local social services offices.

And while more funding to support and incentivize more foster parents would certainly help, there's another even better solution that, tragically, state leaders are ignoring. You see, the official reason that's most often given for placing kids in foster care is quote "neglect." But as repeated studies have demonstrated, the main reason for this neglect is not that the children's parents are abusive or uncaring; it's simple poverty.

They love their kids, but they literally don't have the resources to provide the food, shelter, and healthcare necessary.

What's more, research also confirms that where states provide a more robust safety net – like access to food assistance, affordable childcare, housing, and healthcare – voila! – neglect cases decline sharply. The bottom line: funding more foster care slots is necessary, but spending to keep families together is an even better solution. For NC Newsline, I'm Rob Schofield.

LIVE PSA: Kingdom Come Adoption Services Benefit Banquet (September 17)

The Gospel is a story of adoption, our adoption by Christ and praise God for it. Well, Christian Adoption Services is answering God's call to adoption. The Ministry of Baptist Children's Homes of NC has an event coming up. Their benefit banquet is called Kingdom Come. It's going to be Tuesday, October 3 at Cross Assembly Church on Yonkers Road in Raleigh and you are invited. If you're curious about adoption and you're wondering how it works, there is going to be success stories and you can talk to the people who can sort of explain the process and answer all your questions. If you'd like more information about going to the Kingdom Come Adoption Services Benefit Banquet, you can head online, get your tickets, and all the details at [Christian Adopt dot org](http://ChristianAdopt.org).

RECORDED PSA: Adoption from Foster Care – Patience (July-September)

I learned patience from my adoptive dad. All he had to say was, "Hey, you got this. Just breathe"

Learn about adopting a teen from foster care. You can't imagine. The reward is visit, [adopt U.S. kids dot org](http://adopt.uskids.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 – Adoption from Foster Care – Courage (July-September)

Courage. I learned it from my adoptive mom. Learn about adopting a teen from foster care at [Adopt U.S. Kids dot org](http://AdoptU.S.Kids.org). You can't imagine the reward brought to you by Adopt U.S. Kids, the US Department of Health and Human Services and the Accountable You

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

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](http://AARP.org/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 (July-September)

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

CRIME/GUN VIOLENCE

NEWS & VIEWS 8-6-2023

Guest: North Carolina congresswoman Valerie Foushee : Her efforts to combat the continuing plague of gun violence and preserve and strengthen fair elections and the fundamentals of our democracy.

NEWS & VIEWS 9-17-2023

Guest: State Representative Marcia Morey: In Part Two of our conversation, we discussed the recent inspiring activism of UNC-Chapel Hill students in demanding action to combat gun violence in the aftermath of the recent tragic shooting on their campus as well as the continued onslaught of Republican legislation that would make voting more difficult and further consolidate GOP control over how state elections are conducted.

ON THE RECORD 7-23-23

Following the tragic shooting death of 5-year-old Khloe Fennell, Durham's police chief speaks one on one with Lena Tillett about the case, the challenges her department is facing and what can be done about the alarming number of young people being shot in the Bull City.

RECORDED PSA: Service Never Stops - Gun Safety (July-September)

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 (July-September)

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.

ECONOMY/ECONOMIC SUPPORT

NEWS & VIEWS 7-16-2023

Guest: Congresswoman Kathy Manning

There's a widespread perception in many circles that Washington has become a city completely paralyzed by political gridlock. As we were reminded, however, in a recent conversation with North Carolina Congresswoman Kathy Manning, in many areas, this is actually not the case. Indeed, as Manning shared, she's succeeded in recent months in bringing home a remarkably lengthy list of federal appropriations to the Triad and surrounding counties that are boosting the region's physical and human infrastructure. And while Manning remains deeply frustrated by the conservative culture wars that do so often promote gridlock, she remains optimistic that North Carolinians will get past the current tough times and see a rebirth of bipartisan problem solving in government. Issues discussed: the economy, workforce development, women's healthcare, contraception, LGBTQ rights, recent controversial decisions by the Supreme Court.

NEWS & VIEWS 7-23-2023

Guest: North Carolina Budget and Tax Center executive director Alexandra Sirota

Over the last 12-plus years of Republican rule at the General Assembly, North Carolina's state fiscal system has been almost completely overhauled. Thanks to a combination of big, repeated, and regressive tax and spending cuts, public

investments in core public services and structures like education have fallen dramatically while axes paid by wealthy individuals and corporations have plummeted. Now, state legislative leaders want to take things even further. As we learned in a recent conversation with NC Budget and Tax Center executive director Alexandra Sirota, Senate and House Republicans are debating budget proposals that would take public investments to new depths while inflicting massive new challenges on state and local agencies that are already struggling mightily to retain employees and serve the public.

NEWS & VIEWS 9-24-2023

Guest: North Carolina Budget & Tax Center executive director Alexandra Sirota

One of the very few silver linings to accompany the COVID-19 pandemic was a significant decline in American child poverty. Thanks to various relief initiatives and, most notably, the expansion of the federal child tax credit that the Biden administration championed, poverty numbers fell significantly for a time as the federal government provided what was, in effect, a big tax cut for millions of the nation's lowest income families. Unfortunately, congressional Republicans have rebuffed the administration's efforts to retain the expanded child tax credit and, as a result, poverty numbers have flattened or started to trend back upward. As analysts at the North Carolina Budget and Tax Center recently reported, this is the case in our state and recently we got a chance to review some of the numbers and the policy choices driving them in a conversation with the Center's executive director.

ON THE RECORD 8-30-23

The Department of State Treasurer mistakenly overpaid millions of dollars of retirement money to recipients for decades. Now the state wants that money back. After months of reporting on the issue, 5 On Your Side's Keely Arthur speaks with even more retirees impacted by the problem. Hear their stories, and from a candidate for state treasurer about what he would have done differently and what he believes needs to happen moving forward.

ON THE RECORD 8-13-23

The last year and a half has been a whirlwind of big economic development deals here in North Carolina, two of the biggest are coming to Chatham County. Vietnamese company VinFast plans to invest \$4 billion into an electric vehicle factory in the eastern part of the county at a mega site in Moncure, the automaker plans to hire 7,500 people there. On the west side of the county, semiconductor chip-maker Wolfspeed is building a \$5 billion factory near Siler City, which could add 1,800 jobs. WRAL goes On The Record to examine the future of the county, the companies behind the growth, and sits down with lifelong residents to ask how they are feeling about a changing Chatham County.

NC NEWSLINE: 7-13-23

Latest accolades for NC's business environment highlight the folly of new tax cuts: For the second straight year, North Carolina has been ranked the "Top State" for business by the CNBC cable network. Welcome as the recognition is, however, it's nothing particularly new. Multiple outlets have ranked the state's business climate highly for decades under Democratic and Republican legislatures and governors. Time and again, experts have pointed to the state's workforce, education system, deployment of technology and overall economy as key factors. The new rankings also contain some warning signs for state legislative leaders. CNBC ranked North Carolina only 34th in the category of "life, health and inclusion" – a ranking that's sure to even sink even lower and drag us down quickly if GOP lawmakers plow ahead with their controversial culture war agenda, while continuing to neglect public schools and environmental protection in favor of regressive tax cuts. The bottom line: Our state may be a great place to live and do business, but maintaining that status will require wise and sustained investments and a commitment to inclusive policies that look to the future rather than the past. For NC Newsline, I'm Rob Schofield.

NC NEWSLINE: 7-26-23

More casinos are a bad idea for North Carolina: The people of North Carolina need a lot of things right now from their elected leaders – an adequately funded public education system, access to affordable healthcare, funding to fill thousands of vacancies in state jobs, and strong action to protect them from the spread of toxic chemicals just to name a few. One thing, however, that's not on the list is this: casino gambling. Unfortunately, word from the endless 2023 state legislative session indicates this is precisely what Republican leaders have in mind. Multiple news outlets report that GOP leaders could soon unveil legislation that would authorize the construction of four casinos, as well as slot-machine-style video lottery terminals in bars, restaurants, and convenience stores. And it's hard to overstate what a terrible idea this is. The bottom line: For decades now, giant and predatory gambling corporations have promised U.S.

states that casinos would provide a magical lift to their economies and tax bases and repeatedly, the promises have turned out to be a lie. North Carolina should say a forceful “no” to this sucker bet. For NC Newslines, I’m Rob Schofield.

NC NEWSLINE: 8-8-23

August 8 – More regressive tax cuts are the last thing North Carolina needs: Imagine yourself in the following situation. Your children lack decent clothing, your house and car are both falling apart, and the power company just turned off your electricity. Now imagine also that you have a million dollars in the bank and a good new job offer at a healthy salary. What would you do? If you answered leave the money sitting there, turn down the job and quit the one you have, you’d be following the crazy and confounding lead of state legislative leaders. You see, right now several core state agencies, structures and services are struggling mightily, and as with our fictional family, the state has plenty of money and the ability to raise all that’s needed in a fair and efficient manner. Unfortunately, rather than do what’s rational and obvious, lawmakers are leaving billions in the bank unspent and doubling down on a new round of regressive tax cuts.

And you really can’t make this up. The bottom line: For a group of lawmakers who love to preach about self-discipline and personal responsibility, their present action is the definition of selfish hypocrisy. For NC Newslines, I’m Rob Schofield.

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

NEWS & VIEWS 7-23-2023

Guest: North Carolina Association of Educators president Tamika Walker Kelly

It’s hard to believe, but year-round schools are back in session and traditional calendar schools are opening in just a few short weeks. Over at the General Assembly, however, lawmakers have yet to turn in their homework – a state budget. The result: great uncertainty for administrators seeking to gear up for the new year – particularly in addressing the state’s chronic teacher shortage. Meanwhile, the lack of budget action hasn’t stopped lawmakers from advancing a raft of bills to micromanage the day-to-day school operations, and recently, in order to gauge how all of these developments are impacting out beleaguered state teaching corps, we caught up with the president of the North Carolina Association of Educators, Tamika Walker Kelly. And as Walker Kelly told us, while they wish lawmakers would do more to support them, educators continue to rise to the occasion.

NEWS & VIEWS 7-30-2023

Guest: State Rep. Julie von Haefen

Things have suddenly gone quiet at the North Carolina General Assembly. The 2023 session isn’t over – far from it – but, as we learned recently in special two-part conversation with state Rep. Julie von Haefen, the decisions about when the House and Senate will actually gather and vote are shrouded in mystery – even for many lawmakers themselves. Republican leaders are at loggerheads over the state budget bill and what it will include – amazingly, items like expanded casino gambling and a new spate of regressive tax cuts appear to be priorities. In Part One of our interview, von Haefen discusses efforts that she and some of her colleagues have been pursuing to secure adequate funding for K-12 and early childhood education – a quest that’s even taken her to the White House. In Part Two of our chat, we continued our discussion of the challenges facing our public schools – both with respect to basic issues like adequate funding for teacher pay and facilities – as well as the spate of culture war initiatives that GOP leaders have advanced this year that target LGBTQ kids, book banning and further privatization of public education.

NEWS & VIEWS 8-13-2023

Guest: NC Newslines education reporter Greg Childress

We’re now six weeks into North Carolina’s new state fiscal year and across the state, public school students and teachers are preparing to return to class. Indeed, in some schools, they’re already back. Unfortunately, as we learned in a recent conversation with NC Newslines education reporter Greg Childress, neither of these facts has served to spur Republican state legislative leaders to come to an agreement on a new state budget and, as a result, basic items like teacher salaries remain in limbo. One education subject on which lawmakers seem intent on moving forward soon however is schoolbook censorship. As Childress explained, legislation that would make it easier for disgruntled parents to have books banned is close to final passage and this is something that has many veteran educators deeply concerned.

NEWS & VIEWS 9-3-2023

Guest: State Representative Cynthia Ball

We're now two months into North Carolina's new state fiscal year and across the state, public school students and teachers are already back at work for the fall semester. Unfortunately, as was made clear yet again in a recent conversation with Wake County State Representative Cynthia Ball, neither of these facts has served to spur Republican state legislative leaders to come to an agreement on a new state budget and, as a result, basic items like teacher pay remain in limbo. What's more, education isn't the only area in which legislative inaction has Rep. Ball frustrated and working to effect change in Raleigh. As she told us, she's more determined than ever to help enact gun safety laws in the aftermath of the recent tragic shooting at UNC-Chapel Hill, and to at long last make Medicaid expansion a reality. She's also working to oppose a pair of election law bills that will make voting more difficult and locate all election oversight authority in the hands of a select handful of Republican legislators.

NEWS & VIEWS 9-10-2023

Guest: Public School Forum of North Carolina policy director Lauren Fox

It's been ten years since North Carolina's experiment with private school vouchers commenced and, as multiple reports have made clear, when it comes to student achievement, widely shared opportunity, and the wise use of public resources, the program has been a dramatic failure. Given that state lawmakers have no intention of scaling back the program and, indeed, are committed to expanding it, researchers at the Public School Forum of North Carolina recently prepared a new report that details six commonsense steps that could at least make the program more effective and accountable. Recently we got a chance to learn more about the details from the report's author, the Forum's Senior Director of Policy Research, Lauren Fox.

ON THE RECORD 8-20-23

With students getting ready to head back to class for this school year, WRAL goes 'On The Record' with a local superintendent, an elementary school principal, and a teacher about what parents can expect to see.

NC NEWSLINE: 7-3-23

Proposed legislation will make charter schools more exclusive, less accountable: The relentless push from state lawmakers to treat charter schools as the prodigal children of North Carolina's education system continues apace. For years, legislators have expanded charters, showered more money on them and loosened state oversight – even as their performance has remained, at best, spotty and multiple charters have literally collapsed under allegations of malfeasance and corruption. In a rational world, 2023 would be a year for slowing down, tightening oversight, and taking action to boost traditional public schools. Unfortunately, that's not what's on the agenda in the General Assembly. Instead, lawmakers are advancing bills that would make charters even more exclusive and akin to private schools by allowing them to give enrollment preferences to certain preschoolers, further limiting the ability of local districts to consider the impact of approving new charters, and creating a new rubber stamp oversight board. The bottom line: Charter schools are supposed to be public schools that benefit the entire public education system – not exclusive and unaccountable private academies. Tragically, this is a commitment state lawmakers abandoned long ago. For NC Newsline, I'm Rob Schofield.

NC NEWSLINE: 7-17-23

Late-session education bill hits a new low: In a legislative session chockful of extreme proposals that ignore common sense, the constitution, basic human rights and simple compassion, some state lawmakers are now attempting to take things to a disturbing new low. Under a proposal unveiled out of the blue last week – a point in the annual legislative session at which lawmakers were already supposed to have adjourned – fundamental components of the state's public education system would be casually discarded like an old newspaper. The proposal – which was slapped onto a bill about regulating searches of students for contraband – would, among other things, allow county school superintendents to be fired if five parents complained about their performance. As one veteran education observer noted, such a provision would allow a few hundred trained individuals with an extreme political agenda to, in effect, hold the state's entire public school system hostage. And this is simply outrageous. The bottom line: To advance such an extreme proposal would be absurd at any time. To unveil it in the waning weeks of the legislative session is simply preposterous. For NC Newsline, I'm Rob Schofield.

NC NEWSLINE: 7-21-23

NC officials dabble with teacher shortage, ignore the elephant in the room: North Carolina has a massive teacher shortage. The figure reached more than 5,000 last year – a 58% increase over the previous year – and recently, state education officials announced a new initiative to address it. Under the program, which is mandated under a new law signed by President Biden, military personnel and their spouses will be allowed to temporarily transfer professional licenses when making a military move. With more than 95,000 active-duty personnel in the state and more than 40,000 spouses – some of whom are licensed educators -- it's expected the change will help. But as welcome as the change may be, state leaders shouldn't kid themselves that it will solve the problem. As numerous advocates and experts have noted repeatedly, the chief culprits for the teacher shortage are the state's low pay and uncompetitive benefits and working conditions. At a time in which even states like Alabama and Mississippi are taking strong action to raise educator pay, veteran North Carolina teachers aren't even keeping up with inflation. And until lawmakers get serious about addressing that issue, they're ignoring the elephant in the room. For NC Newsline, I'm Rob Schofield.

NC NEWSLINE: 8-30-23

Legislature's handiwork evident in hot and understaffed schools: The new school year is underway in North Carolina and as had been predicted and feared, the destructive impacts of our legislature's irresponsible cheapskate budgeting are already being felt by kids and educators. Thanks to the lousy and uncompetitive pay scales lawmakers have enacted, school districts across the state are plagued by big and hugely problematic shortages of teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians, counselors, and administrators. Meanwhile, because of the chronic refusal to invest in basic public school infrastructure including things like roof repairs, windows, flooring and HVAC systems, countless schools are hot, moldy, and unsafe. In Wake County alone, more than 50 schools reported malfunctioning air conditioning units last week as teachers tried to get ready during another wave of record summer heat. The bottom line: There is no single function of state government that's more important than providing all our state's children access to a sound basic education. And the fact that state lawmakers continue to permit schools to operate in such inadequate and dangerous conditions is simply inexcusable. For NC Newsline, I'm Rob Schofield.

RECORDED PSA: Sound It Out - sound it out together.org (July-September)

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. It sounded out together.

RECORDED PSA: Talking is Teaching (July-September)

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 (July-September)

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

ENVIRONMENT/NATURAL DISASTERS

NEWS & VIEWS 7-9-2023

Guest: Guilford County state Representative Pricey Harrison

Between a recent Supreme Court ruling that undermined the federal Clean Water Act and some hugely destructive language included in the new state Farm Act recently approved by the General Assembly, roughly 2.5 million acres of our state's wetlands – that's the shrinking, endangered, and vitally important regions that insulate and protect areas inhabited by humans, while providing a home for countless vulnerable species -- could soon lose environmental

protection. Amazingly, that's about seven percent of North Carolina's land mass. We caught up with one of our state's best-informed lawmakers and a genuine expert on environmental policy.

NEWS & VIEWS 7-16-2023

Guest: States Newsroom reporter Jacob Fischler

Wetlands. To some they may seem like unsightly swamps but as we've come to understand in recent decades, wetlands are an absolutely essential part of global ecosystems and something that we plow over and develop at our own peril. Worrisomely, a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling promises to invite the destruction of vast swaths of wetlands across the country, and in order to get a better grasp on the ruling – as well as some other current high-profile environmental policy debates, we caught up with a journalist who covers them closely.

NEWS & VIEWS 9-3-2023

Guest: WRAL-TV documentary producer Cristin Severance

Forever chemicals. Just hearing those two words is enough to let you know that a dangerous environmental hazard is afoot. And sadly, as more and more people are becoming aware, forever chemicals like PFAS have contaminated drinking water in several corners of our state and are causing negative health effects in thousands of people. It's a problem about which all North Carolinians need and deserve to know more and to that end, a new WRAL-TV documentary is a "must see" for those looking to help protect themselves and their loved ones. The program is called "Forever Chemicals: North Carolina's Toxic Tap Water," and recently we caught up with the journalist who, along with her colleague WRAL reporter Liz McLaughlin, produced and co-reported it.

NEWS & VIEWS 8-6-2023

Guest: Senator Graig Meyer

The controversy surrounding an on again off again natural gas pipeline could be impacting some North Carolina counties and why it's urgent that we move rapidly to usher in a sustainable energy future.

NEWS & VIEWS 8-13-2023

Guests: A trio of Duke University experts: Ashley Ward, directs the Heat Policy Innovation Hub; Jordan Clark is a postdoctoral-associate for the Duke Heat Policy Innovation Hub; Dr. J.J. Hoff, emergency medicine specialist

Heat, humidity and the quest for air conditioning are a part of every summer in most places. But a trio of researchers from Duke University believe this summer should also be a wake-up call for many Americans. Ashley Ward directs the Heat Policy Innovation Hub at Duke University's Nicholas Institute for Energy, Environment & Sustainability. Her work focuses on the health impacts of climate extremes and community resilience. Ward is advocating for a national cooling standard. One strategy that Jordan Clark would like to see implemented is better forms of measurement beyond the standard heat index that most are familiar with. The changes will be especially useful for high school and college athletics. Dr. J.J. Hoff discusses the rise in cases of heat exhaustion and heat stroke this summer, and how North Carolinians can be better prepared for extreme heat.

ON THE RECORD 7-16-23

In the last several months people across our state have seen smoke in our air. Could more be on the way? What does pollution mean for our health? WRAL goes beyond the headlines to explain what the smoke does to our bodies and what groups are doing to try to keep our air clean. Find out the impact on your health and where our air stands as it compares to previous years.

ON THE RECORD 8-6-23

Weeks after an EF-3 tornado tore through Nash County the community WRAL goes 'On The Record' with key members of the WRAL News team of reporters that day to hear about the stories they told. Then, hear from the president of the Rocky Mount Chamber of Commerce about how you can help and how the community is looking to bounce back.

NC NEWSLINE: 8-29-23

Permissive rules on wetlands development are a potential disaster: It's not surprising that many businesses and individuals are blind to the critical role that wetlands play for our environment and economy. Most wetlands – often derisively referred to as swampland – can be unpleasant for humans and of little direct use for industry or agriculture.

But as NC State scientist Marcelo Ardon told NC Newsline last week, wetlands are vitally important to overall societal wellbeing – not just because of the countless species of plants and animals they host -- but also because of the hugely important role they play as natural filters that control floods, support the seafood industry, and store carbon that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere and worsen climate change. Tragically, however, thanks to a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling and a law passed by the North Carolina legislature, millions of acres of our state’s wetlands are now open for development. And we simply can’t allow this to occur. The bottom line: It’s urgent that elected officials and regulators at all levels do whatever’s possible to protect this precious and endangered resource, before it’s lost forever. For NC Newsline, I’m Rob Schofield.

RECORDED PSA: NC Clean Energy Technology Center – Budget Brenda (July-September)

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 (July-September)

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 weeee,” 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 (July-September)

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: FEMA - Disaster at Doorstep (July-September)

If a natural disaster comes knocking, how prepared is your family? You can't just close the door on earthquakes, floods, or hurricanes and hope they go away. That's why it's important to make a plan. Now, ready.gov slash plan has the tools and tips you need to prepare your family for an emergency. So, if disaster shows up at your doorstep, you'll be ready. Visit ready dot gov slash plan and make a plan.

EQUALITY / HUMAN RIGHTS/IMMIGRATION

NEWS & VIEWS 7-2-23

Guest: Buncombe County state Senator Julie Mayfield

In Part Two of our conversation, we delved into some of the other high-profile controversies that have been front and center at the Legislative Building in recent months, including the state’s new abortion ban, efforts to limit the rights of transgender people, and a bill that would establish a new and worrisome precedent by forcing a private nonprofit to report on its activities to state lawmakers.

NEWS & VIEWS 9-17-2023

Guest: Workers’ rights advocate/researcher Ana Pardo of the North Carolina Justice Center

For the past two years, unemployment in North Carolina has done more than return to pre-pandemic levels; it’s actually dropped to the lowest level in more than 20 years. A closer look, however, reveals a more complicated picture — especially for the state’s women. Indeed, in Oxfam America’s recently released ranking of the Best and Worst States to Work in America, North Carolina came in last in wages, worker protections and organizing rights. The state was also ranked worst in the nation for working women. Earlier this month, in an effort build on the OxFam findings, researchers at the North Carolina Justice Center’s Workers’ Rights Project released a report that provides more details on the state of working women in North Carolina and recently we discussed the report with the project’s co-director.

NC NEWSLINE: 7-4-23

School uniform ruling is a victory for the Constitution: The calendar says that it's 2023, but sometimes when it comes to the attitudes and policies with which some North Carolinians must contend, it feels more like 1923. Consider, for example, a lawsuit out of North Carolina that was the subject of a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling. At issue was the policy of a publicly funded charter school in the town of Leland that sought to force all girls to wear skirts. As the parents who sued argued persuasively, the policy was blatantly discriminatory and, as a practical matter, imposed all sorts of extra and problematic burdens on the impacted girls by preventing them from being active during recess and causing problems during emergency tornado and fire drills when they were forced to crouch in tight spaces. Happily, the federal courts agreed. Last summer the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down the requirement and last week, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed by declining to hear the appeal of the school's leader and founder – conservative activist Baker Mitchell. Let's hope this decision puts an end to such archaic and discriminatory policies once and for all. For NC Newsline, I'm Rob Schofield.

NC NEWSLINE: 7-5-23

July 5 – Supreme Court's affirmative action ruling is another setback for the nation: No one's ever said that there aren't challenges in fashioning fair and effective systems of affirmative action. But it's also undeniably true that America is not a colorblind society – not even close – and the notion that we can simply declare an end to centuries of racism and all its malignant accumulated impacts and proclaim that we're all henceforth members of a race-neutral meritocracy is absurd. This is especially true in higher education where family wealth and connections have always played a huge role. And it's in light of these hard truths that last week's U.S. Supreme Court ruling striking down affirmative action programs for admissions at Harvard and UNC were so disastrous for the nation. The bottom line: All people of goodwill can agree that building a nation in which all are judged not by the color of their skin, but the content of their character is a heroic goal. Unfortunately, by ignoring the reality and needs of the nation as it currently exists, the Supreme Court just assured that building such a nation will be a more difficult and time-consuming task. For NC Newsline, I'm Rob Schofield.

NC NEWSLINE: 7-14-23

Ban on affirmative action means colleges and universities must get more creative: As numerous constitutional scholars have argued persuasively, the U.S. Supreme Court's recent ruling outlawing affirmative action in college admissions will have a hugely negative impact. By turning a blind eye to the historical and present-day realities and impacts of race and racism in America, the Court hindered (rather than advanced) its supposed goal – creation of a truly colorblind society. All that said, colleges and universities retain several important tools under the ruling to advance the causes of integration and diversity. While much more information needs to be made available, UNC-Chapel Hill's recent announcement that it will slash the cost of college attendance could help. And another example that deserves much more attention is increasing faculty and staff diversity through affirmative action. Researchers consistently find that when schools diversify their faculties and staff, they attract more students of diverse backgrounds and keep more of those they enroll. The bottom line: The Court's ruling is a big setback for the nation, but it doesn't have to be the end of the story. Higher education leaders still have many options for doing the right thing. For NC Newsline, I'm Rob Schofield.

NC NEWSLINE: 8-3-23

August 3 – UNC trustees should read the Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action: In a case involving UNC-Chapel Hill, a divided U.S. Supreme Court ruled in late June that it's no longer lawful for American colleges and universities to use affirmative action in their admissions policies. This is now the law of the land. As is almost always true, however, it's important for public officials to thoroughly read and discuss such judicial rulings – ideally with the assistance of counsel – before trying to grasp the specifics. See for example the UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Trustees. As NC Newsline's Joe Killian reported last week, conservative members of the board recently advanced a resolution that runs counter to the majority opinion of Chief Justice John Roberts by seeking to ban not just affirmative action in admissions, but any discussion of an applicant's experience with race. And this is simply wrong. Roberts' ruling stated specifically that such information is both relevant and entirely proper for schools to use in assessing applicants. The bottom line: Tempting as it may be to take shortcuts, the trustees should take a breath and actually read the Court's ruling before trying to enforce it. For NC Newsline, I'm Rob Schofield.

RECORDED PSA: Department of Housing and Urban Development – National Fair Housing Alliance (July-September)

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. That's HUD.gov/Fair Housing. The law is on your side.

RECORDED PSA: Department of Housing and Urban Development – Let Himself In (July-September)

I lived alone in this apartment, and I had trouble with my landlord. Basically, he was a creep. He kept coming on to me and I kept saying no. Then one night, I'm sitting on my couch watching TV. My door, of course, is locked. But then I hear it's my landlord letting himself in. *Hey, get out. You can't keep coming in. What's wrong? I hear your refrigerator needs fixing, and I figure, well, I'm here. Maybe you can do something for me. Get out! I'm offering you a good deal. Get out, and I'm reporting you. Alright I'm leaving. Don't make a federal case.* In a federal case, yes, sexual harassment in housing is against federal law. It's called the Fair Housing Act. If you are harassed, file a complaint with HUD. Go to [HUD dot gov slash fair housing](http://HUD.gov/fair housing). That's HUD dot gov slash fair housing. And if you fear for your safety, call 911. Fair housing. The law is on your side

RECORDED PSA: Obesity Action Coalition (July-September)

"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.

HEALTHCARE/MENTAL HEALTH/WOMEN'S HEALTH

NEWS & VIEWS 7-2-23

Guest: Sara Collins, Commonwealth Fund Senior Scholar and VP for Health Care Coverage and Access

Every year, researchers at the national nonprofit research organization, the Commonwealth Fund, produce a report that uses the most recent data to assess how well the healthcare system is working in every U.S. State. The report – which is called the "Scorecard on State Health System Performance" – looks at an array of interrelated issues – including the percentage of people with health insurance coverage, the availability of mental health services, maternal and infant mortality, access to reproductive healthcare, and an especially sobering statistic – avoidable deaths. We caught up with one of the report's co-authors, Commonwealth Fund Senior Scholar and Vice President for Health Care Coverage and Access, Sara Collins. And as Collins told us, in most categories, North Carolina has a lot of work to do.

NEWS & VIEWS 7-23-2023

Guest: Pro Choice North Carolina executive director, Tara Romano

As most listeners are well-aware, North Carolina has a new and restrictive abortion law. The new law (known as Senate Bill 20) took effect July first, and it bans almost all abortions after 12 weeks' gestation and imposes enormous new burdens on women and healthcare providers from the moment of conception. Earlier this week in an effort to further understand what the new law does, what its impact has been, and what we're likely to see going forward, we sat down with one of the state's top advocates for reproductive healthcare freedom.

NEWS & VIEWS 8-20-2023

Guest: North Carolina state health Director Dr. Betsey Tilson

It's hard to believe, but it's now been three and a half years since the COVID-19 virus began its deadly sweep across the United States. And while the passage of time and the deployment of vaccines and medicines have thankfully allowed life to return to something akin to normal, COVID remains a dangerous and potentially deadly health threat that demands our attention. What's more, it's not the only respiratory virus of which we need to be wary these days. As we learned in a recent conversation with Dr. Betsey Tilson, North Carolina's State Health Director and the Department of Health and Human Services' chief medical officer, the knowledge and tools at our disposal to protect ourselves and our loved ones

in the late summer of 2023 are formidable and there are some easy, effective and affordable steps we all can and should take in the coming weeks.

NEWS & VIEWS 8-27-2023

Guest: North Carolina's Secretary of Health and Human Services Kody Kinsley

When veteran public administrator Kody Kinsley knew he was taking on one of the toughest and most important jobs in state government. DHHS is a big agency with a raft of responsibilities and, thanks to the state legislature's actions and inactions, enormous staffing and funding shortages make fulfilling its mission incredibly difficult. Despite these daunting roadblocks, Kinsley has persevered and in several areas done a remarkable job of sustaining morale and keeping the department moving forward. Recently, he was kind enough to join NC Newsline for an extended and wide-ranging conversation. In Part One of our chat, we learned about the enormous employee vacancy rate with which he's contending and how and why Medicaid expansion remains by far the most urgent priority for improving the health and wellbeing of North Carolinians. In Part Two of our chat, we explored several other important subjects, including the need to modernize the state's system of services for people with disabilities and an important measure of national progress that he recently helped engineer for the nation's blood supply.

NEWS & VIEWS 9-24-2023

Guest: State Senator Natasha Marcus

After an extended period of inactivity that's left the state without a new budget for the first quarter of the new fiscal year, the state legislature finally got back to work last week as Republican leaders unveiled a series of lengthy, momentous, and controversial proposals. The sudden deluge of contentious ideas -- most notably a scheme to link Medicaid expansion to the introduction of widespread casino gambling -- helped make for an extremely fluid and topsy turvy week. Ultimately, the proponents of the casino plan appeared to fold their cards for the year and one reason for this was the united opposition of Democratic lawmakers. We chatted with one of the most articulate critics of the casino scheme about it and several other issues: Mecklenburg County Senator Natasha Marcus.

ON THE RECORD 7-2-23

With a new ruling from a federal judge North Carolina's abortion ban will go into effect, but one provision was blocked. WRAL goes 'On The Record' with our NC Capitol team to find out what ended up passing and what did not. Plus, he was there when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled affirmative action constitutional, now we're speaking with him about a new decision from the high court ruling it unconstitutional. Hear from Theodore Shaw, Director of the Center for Civil Rights at UNC about the landmark ruling.

NC NEWSLINE: 8-22-23

Rural hospital closure is the latest reminder about failure to expand Medicaid: It's getting to the point of genuine absurdity. It's been several months now since GOP lawmakers announced their supposed support for expanding the state's Medicaid program to cover hundreds of thousands of low-income, uninsured working people. But with the third month of the new fiscal year fast approaching, and Republicans still not having passed the new state budget they say must be in place before they'll permit expansion to occur, the whole thing is starting to smell like a cruel political hoax. As Gov. Cooper rightfully pointed out last week, the recent closure of the only hospital in rural Martin County is the latest evidence that the failure to expand Medicaid is inflicting big and devastating impacts on rural healthcare. And this is just the latest maddening reminder of why thousands of North Carolinians are suffering unnecessarily and dying prematurely because of the legislature's cynical obstruction. The bottom line: Martin General Hospital is the seventh rural hospital to close in our state during the decade-long Medicaid expansion blockade. In the name of simple human decency, this can't go on. For NC Newsline, I'm Rob Schofield.

NC NEWSLINE: 8-25-23

All should heed state health director's latest vaccine advice: It's now been three and a half years since COVID-19 began its deadly sweep across the United States. And while the passage of time and the deployment of vaccines and medicines have thankfully allowed life to return to something akin to normal, COVID remains a dangerous and potentially deadly health threat that demands our attention. What's more, it's not the only respiratory virus of which we need to be wary these days. Fortunately, the knowledge and tools at our disposal to protect ourselves and our fellow North Carolinians at this point are formidable and there are some easy, effective, and affordable steps we all can and should take in the

coming weeks. As Dr. Betsey Tilson, North Carolina's State Health Director recently explained in an interview with NC Newsline, a new COVID booster designed to fight the latest variant will soon be available, along with vaccines to combat the RSV and influenza viruses as well. It's an opportunity of which we all should take advantage. For more information on how and where you can get vaccinated, visit myspot.nc.gov. For NC Newsline, I'm Rob Schofield.

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

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. Bought from Women's Heart Alliance in partnership with Women Heart.

RECORDED PSA – Stand Up to Cancer – Colorectal Screenings (July-September)

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 (July-September)

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.getscreened.com.

RECORDED PSA – National Pest Management Association – Sick Day (July-September)

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 (July-September)

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](https://DoIHavePrediabetes.org). Brought to you by the Ad Council and its prediabetes awareness partners.

POLITICS/VOTING RIGHTS

NEWS & VIEWS 7-2-23

Guest: Buncombe County state Senator Julie Mayfield

It's been a year of sustained controversy at the NC General Assembly. Having reestablished narrow supermajorities in both houses, Republicans have revived a bevy of bills previously vetoed by Gov. Roy Cooper on an array of divisive subjects – from abortion rights and LGBTQ equality to public education and the rules that govern voting and elections. And while their diminished numbers have left Democrats with little ability to influence the debate – even when their positions are backed by large majorities in the public at-large – they've had some success in slightly moderating the most extreme legislation, We got a chance to talk with a lawmaker who's played an important role in this work (and in serving as a powerful voice of dissent on other issues) – State Senator Julie Mayfield. In Part One of our conversation, we dove into the subject of elections and what North Carolinians should know about the changes coming to their democracy.

NEWS & VIEWS 7-16-2023

Guest: Durham County State Senator Mike Woodard

If there's been a dominant story during the 2023 state legislative session it's been Gov. Roy Cooper's vetoes and the revived ability that Republican lawmakers enjoy to override them -- after having obtained supermajorities in both legislative houses as a result of the party switch of a longtime Democratic lawmaker, Rep. Tricia Cotham of Mecklenburg County. Daunting as this situation is for Democrats in the minority, however, their members continue to put up a

spirited resistance on an array of key issues and recently we caught up with one of the members who regularly leads that charge, State Senator Mike Woodard. And as Woodard (who announced right after our chat that he's running for mayor of Durham this fall) told us, the debates he and his colleagues are having remain hugely important to our state's future. Issues discussed: voting rights, the state budget, veto overrides.

NEWS & VIEWS 8-27-2023

Guest: Common Cause of North Carolina Associate Director Sailor Jones

One of the most notable and important positive developments in modern American democracy in recent years has been the trend in most places to make voting easier. With the growth of things like early voting, voting by mail and automatic voter registration, excuses are down, and voter participation is up. Unfortunately, while North Carolina has had much success in this realm, state legislators are now pulling back. A bill sent to Gov. Cooper recently would make voting by mail harder, make it easier for self-appointed partisan observers to intimidate voters and poll workers, and introduce a voter signature verification system that's fraught with potential problems. Thankfully, a growing movement operating under the banner UniteNC is pushing back against these and other regressive proposals.

NC NEWSLINE: 8-3-23

August 4 – If voter ID is the law, lawmakers must fund it:: For years, when confronted with the critique that the true objective of laws requiring voters to show a photo ID was to discourage participation by poor people, people of color, and younger voters, voter ID defenders loudly denied it, saying their only goal was to stop would-be illegal voters. Now that voter ID is officially the law, they have a chance to prove this claim. This is because implementing voter ID effectively is complicated. Millions of voters need to be informed and thousands of election officials and poll workers need to be trained on how to implement the requirement without disenfranchising properly registered voters. And this takes money. Money for mailers and publicity. Money for equipment and training. Money to allow polling places to handle longer and slower lines. Unfortunately, the money hasn't been forthcoming. Despite having billions in reserves, GOP legislators have thus far rejected requests from election officials to fund implementation of the new law. And unless something changes soon, it's hard to see this refusal as anything other than confirmation that voter ID critics were right all along. For NC Newsline, I'm Rob Schofield.

NC NEWSLINE: 8-9-23

Get your free photo ID cards: There are a lot of good reasons to be skeptical of the motives of those who enacted North Carolina's new voter ID law. The evidence of voter fraud that would justify such a law was scant at best, and there are hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians – most of them elderly, poor and of color – who don't have a driver's license. All that said, the requirement that voters show a photo ID in order to cast their ballot is now the law and, as such, the only good response is to make it work. Thankfully, it can be done. In addition to visiting DMV offices, which will provide free photo IDs for non-drivers, it was announced last week that all 100 county election board offices will also now provide free and fully valid photo ID cards. Registered voters who come to their county election office must provide their name, date of birth, and the last four digits of their Social Security number to obtain an ID, which can be used for 10 years. All caring and thinking North Carolinians should spread the word. For NC Newsline, I'm Rob Schofield.

POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY/HOMELESSNESS

NEWS & VIEWS 9-10-2023

Guest: Ron Pringle of Inter-Faith Food Shuttle and Ashley McCumber of the Food Bank of NC

When it comes to the current economic wellbeing of average Americans, it's clear that the nation has made great progress in recent years. Unemployment and poverty are down, wages are up and recently, even inflation has started to cool. Despite this encouraging progress, however, the number of people struggling to stay afloat and avoid hunger in our community remains frustratingly large – a situation made worse by the demise of several pandemic relief programs. Recently, to get a gauge on where things stand and what policymakers and average citizens can do to help, we caught up with two nonprofit leaders whose organizations are on the anti-poverty frontlines: Ron Pringle of the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle and Ashley McCumber of the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE/ REGULATION

NEWS & VIEWS 8-20-2023

Guest: Barb Walsh, the founder and executive director of the Fentanyl Victims Network of NC

In the list of horrors that a parent might ever experience, losing one's child because she unknowingly grabbed and drank a bottle of water laced with fentanyl has to be among the worst imaginable. Tragically, that's what happened to a North Carolina woman named Barb Walsh in 2021 when her 21-year-old daughter Sophia died almost instantly from fentanyl poisoning. Of course, the pain of this disaster will always be with Walsh and her husband, but to their enormous credit that hasn't stopped them from founding a nonprofit dedicated to combating the fentanyl crisis that's taken the lives of more than 13,000 North Carolinians in recent years and that's currently killing eight North Carolinians a day. The group is called Fentanyl Victims Network of North Carolina and recently Walsh was kind enough to join NC Newsline for an extended conversation, in which she shared her story, described the organization she leads, and shared some of the policy changes it's asking from state leaders.

NC NEWSLINE: 8-14-23

Fentanyl crisis needs everyone's attention: Most North Carolinians have heard about the public health problem that surrounds fentanyl, but it needs lots more attention. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that's up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. It can be a huge help to physicians treating severe pain and advanced-stage cancer, but where illegally made fentanyl finds its way into various street drugs in imprecise and deadly amounts, it's often consumed by people unknowingly and is a frequent killer. An average of at least eight North Carolinians die every day from fentanyl – some like Barb Walsh's daughter Sophia, who died almost instantly a year ago after drinking a bottle of water that she had no idea was laced with the drug. The bottom line: Fentanyl abuse is a crisis that deserves everyone's urgent attention. Let's hope advocates like Walsh, who's been working hard with other victims to inform the public and press state leaders for better funding and policies meet with great success. For more information on her efforts, visit fentvic.org that's f-e-n-t-v-i-c.org. For NC Newsline, I'm Rob Schofield.

RECORDED PSA: American Lung Association – Youth Vaping (July-September)

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](http://talkaboutvaping.org). That's talk about vaping dot org.

RECORDED PSA: CDC – Drug Overdose Campaign -Naloxone (July-September)

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](http://CDC.gov/Stopoverdose).

RECORDED PSA: CDC Drug Overdose - Fentanyl (July-September)

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](http://CDC.gov/Stopoverdose).

RECORDED PSA: National Association Boards of Pharmacy (July-September)

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](http://www.fda.gov/drugdisposal) for more information.

RECORDED PSA – CDC Drug Overdose - Polysubstance (July-September)

Yo, sorry, man. I took an upper to stay awake. My heart started pounding, so I took a downer to take the edge off. Honestly, I feel worse now. One of my friends overdosed after mixing drugs like that. I don't want that to happen to you. Yeah, I definitely won't be doing that again. Well, let's stay online for a bit so I know you're okay. Yeah, man. Let's go. There is no safe way to mix drugs. Learn more at CDC dot gov slash stop overdose.

RECORDED PSA: CDC RX Awareness – Brenda (July-September)

Prescription opioids can be addictive and dangerous. We were driving to the supermarket and as we entered the parking lot a car ran a stop sign and completely t-boned us. When I was first prescribed my prescription pain meds, there was nobody to tell me these have a really high potential for addiction. How could I be addicted and get these from my doctor? Prescription opioids - it only takes a little to lose a lot. Visit [CDC dot gov slash RX awareness](http://CDC.gov/RXawareness).

RECORDED PSA: CDC RX Awareness – Mike (July-September)

Prescription opioids can be addictive and dangerous. I was given a prescription opioid pain medication, and within only a few months I was completely addicted. I lost everything. I had to leave school and stopped playing sports, and college. And I sat and watched my life slip away. I want people to know that these drugs are addictive. One prescription can be all it takes to lose everything. Prescription opioids - it only takes a little to lose a lot. Visit [CDC dot gov slash RX awareness](http://CDC.gov/RXawareness).

TERRORISM/HOMELAND SECURITY/MILITARY**RECORDED PSA – Homes for Our Troops (July-September)**

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](http://HFTUSA.org).

RECORDED PSA: Department of Homeland Security – See Something, Say Something (July-September)

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.