

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

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

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 July 10, 2023

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

WRAL-FM aired 13 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*

SECOND 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 are constantly experiencing lockdowns. Despite the national gun violence problem, The North Carolina House voted 71-46 to enact a bill to eliminate the longstanding permit system requiring sheriffs to perform character evaluations and criminal history checks for pistol applicants.

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.

Hurricane season began on June 1. Earth Day was April 20

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 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.

SECOND QUARTER PROGRAMS

CRIME/GUN VIOLENCE

NEWS & VIEWS FOR 6-18-2023

Guest: William Lassiter, the head of NC Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency - North Carolina enacted a transformative change to the state's juvenile justice system a few years back when it became the last state in the union to raise the age from 16 to 18 at which a young person accused of a crime is treated as an adult. The change was a good one, but it's also caused more teens to enter a system that was already stretched thin. William Lassiter, has submitted a modestly priced plan to state lawmakers that would greatly ease the crisis. Lassiter discusses his agency's budgetary needs and a new two-year initiative intended to promote safe storage of firearms.

NC NEWSLINE 4-3-23

Legislature irresponsibly courts disaster by ending gun safety law: If there's a single most important – even sacred – duty that rests upon the men and women elected to serve in the North Carolina General Assembly, it's this: protecting the health and safety of the state's residents. Unless our leaders establish basic laws and structures to safeguard the citizenry, society descends into chaos. And it's in light of this simple truth that the legislature's action last week to repeal the state's longstanding and highly effective handgun background check law can only be characterized as the height of irresponsibility. Especially at a time in which gun violence and mental illness in our nation are at epidemic levels, the notion that North Carolina just made it even easier for disturbed and violent people with no business owning a gun to easily obtain one is beyond outrageous. The bottom line: Data make it clear that the lawmakers who voted to override Gov. Cooper's veto of this legislation have guaranteed that dozens of innocent people will suffer horrific and painful deaths in the years to come. And in so doing they've betrayed the citizens they've sworn to serve.

RECORDED PSA: Service Never Stops - Gun Safety (April-June)

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 – Joyce (April-June)

She was 27 years old. She took the gun that my grandfather had given her for self-defense. She never got to see her son grow up to be anything because she had easy access to a gun. I've been robbed of that relationship. 63 Americans a day die by gun suicide. With safe gun storage, we can give our loved ones a second chance at life. Learn more at End Family Fire dot org.

RECORDED PSA: Gun Safety – Dad (April-June)

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.

CHILDCARE/ELDERCARE/ FAMILY

RECORDED PSA: Adoption from Foster Care – Patience (April-June)

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: US Dept Caregiver Assistance/AARP -Roxanna's Story (April-June)

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 (April-June)

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](http://ALZ.org) or call 800-272-3900.

ECONOMY/ECONOMIC SUPPORT

NEWS & VIEWS FOR 6-4-2023

Guest: State Employees Association of North Carolina executive director Ardis Watkins - Among the many vexing challenges facing state government agencies in North Carolina these days is this: finding and keeping qualified workers. Across the state, job vacancies and turnover are extremely high. Even when agencies find good people, keeping them from departing for better paying jobs in the private sector is often impossible. Fortunately, the causes of (and solutions to) this problem are no particular mystery. As we learned in a conversation earlier this week with the executive director of the State Employees Association of North Carolina, Ardis Watkins, the need for better state employee pay is painfully obvious and the state has cash available to make a big dent in the problem. Unfortunately, as Watkins also noted, under the proposed budgets advanced thus far by the Republicans running the state House and Senate, no such relief is on the horizon.

NC NEWSLINE 6-9-23

Interest rate hike on small loans and used car sales is a bad idea: Making things better for low-income consumers who borrow money is rarely a top priority for politicians. The laws are complex and confusing and beyond the public's understanding. Meanwhile, the lending industry funds PACs that make big campaign contributions, while employing a fleet of lobbyists. All things considered; it's a wonder industry doesn't already have free rein to impose whatever terms it wants on borrowers. Ah, but they're working on it. The latest example: a bill moving through the state legislature that would raise the already exorbitant permissible interest rates on certain consumer credit purchases to as high as 24%, and up to 30% on used car sales. The industry says the caps need to go up because interest rates have risen lately, but this ignores the fact that the current rate caps were set in the early 1980's when interest rates were much, much higher. The bottom line: The legislation is yet another giveaway to an industry that makes its money charging exorbitant rates and fees to struggling low-income consumers. And sadly, for the current General Assembly, that's par for the course.

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

NEWS AND VIEWS FOR 5-07-2023

Guest: North Carolina education policy expert Kris Nordstrom - As we heard in the previous segment, one of the top priorities for the conservative majorities at the General Assembly this year is a bill that would dramatically expand the state's controversial private school voucher program. Under the legislation, all North Carolina households with kids – even wealthy families who already send their children to exclusive and expensive private schools – would be eligible for large taxpayer-funded subsidies. What's more, as we learned in a conversation with one of the state's most knowledgeable education policy experts – the North Carolina Justice Center's Kris Nordstrom – it's a plan that has the potential to fundamentally remake k-12 education in our state in some deeply troubling ways.

NEWS & VIEWS FOR 5-28-2023

Guest: Rev. Suzanne Parker Miller of the group Pastors for North Carolina Children - As those following the goings on at the state legislature are aware, some big and controversial changes are afoot in public education. Under legislation advanced by Republican lawmakers, North Carolina will soon enact a massive expansion of its hotly debated school voucher program that will, for the first time, subsidize the tuition paid by wealthy families to private and parochial

schools. What's more, this change comes at the same moment that lawmakers are refusing to abide by a judicial order to adequately fund the state's public schools. We got a chance to learn more about this unprecedented situation from an expert and critic who brings the unique, three-way perspective as an advocate, an ordained minister, and a mom – the executive director of the group Pastors for North Carolina Children, the Rev. Suzanne Parker Miller.

NEWS & VIEWS FOR 6-11-2023

Guest: Veteran public school teacher and education policy analyst Justin Parmenter - Under legislation making its way through the General Assembly this session, North Carolina will soon dramatically expand its controversial private school vouchers program so that households of all incomes will be eligible to receive a state subsidy to send their kids to private school. The multi-million-dollar expansion comes at the same moment that the state's traditional public schools are struggling mightily with inadequate resources and a host of problems, including acute teacher shortages. We caught up with the veteran educator and education policy analyst.

ON THE RECORD 6-26-23

Community colleges have started several new programs and collaborations across North Carolina this year and they have a new leader -- For the eight-time in eight years. WRAL's Lena Tillett goes 'On The Record' with the new system president -- Jeff Cox -- whom both state Democrats and Republicans support.

ON THE RECORD 5-7-23

NC lawmakers consider proposal to expand private school vouchers: The landscape of K-12 education in North Carolina could soon change considerably. House and senate Republican leaders in North Carolina are on track to expand the school voucher program -- or opportunity scholarships.

NC NEWSLINE 4-17-23

New evidence that North Carolina's charter schools experiment is deeply flawed - When North Carolina introduced charter schools a couple of decades back, proponents promised that charters would serve as "incubators of innovation" that would develop all sorts of exciting new ways to educate our kids – techniques that would spread rapidly and lift up all public schools. Today, we know that that sales pitch was bogus. While lawmakers continue to pass legislation expanding charters, the record of the existing schools has been decidedly unimpressive. Some – mostly the ones that target smart, wealthy kids with involved parents – do very well. Elsewhere, however, the charter experiment has been plagued by poor performance, a lack of accountability, and corruption. What's more, as NC Newsline's Greg Childress reported last week in the case of a proposed Greenville charter, the system is rife with half-baked schemes led by absentee school leaders possessed of little real education experience. The bottom line: running a truly successful school is about more than having a leader with charisma and marketing skills. Unfortunately, this is a lesson that state education leaders seem unwilling to learn.

NC NEWSLINE 4-21-23

Latest school voucher expansion proposal would be a disaster: North Carolina has long gussied up its deeply flawed school voucher program -- a scheme that funnels tax dollars to unaccountable and frequently segregated religious schools -- with the misleading name "opportunity scholarships," and now lawmakers are preparing to take things to a new and destructive level. In addition to increasing funding for vouchers by hundreds of millions of dollars per year, a bill recently filed by Republican lawmakers eliminates income eligibility requirements so that any student in the state--regardless of financial need--may use public money to attend private schools. The almost certain result if the bill becomes law: less money for traditional schools and more money for wealthy families and schools that are under no obligation to meet any particular standards. Now add the fact that numerous voucher schools officially and proudly discriminate against children of disfavored religions and those who are reared in families headed by same sex couples, and the whole thing smells that much worse. One can only hope that Gov. Cooper will veto the proposal and that some courageous Republicans who know better, will back him up.

NC NEWSLINE 6-29-23

News report indicates possibility of big corruption in school voucher system: Critics have long pointed to an array of serious problems with North Carolina's private school voucher scheme. The schools that receive the funds are unaccountable and under no obligation to meet meaningful standards. The schools frequently discriminate against children and families because of things like their religious beliefs and sexual orientation. To make matters worse, state

lawmakers are preparing to dramatically expand the program so that even the wealthiest families are eligible. But a recent news report by Public Radio's Ann Doss Helms may be the most troubling development yet. In building on research conducted by veteran education policy analyst Kris Nordstrom, Helms reported that there are multiple voucher schools where the number of voucher recipients appears to exceed total enrollment. Helms couldn't even find one such school in Charlotte which received 22 vouchers but only reported having 13 students. The bottom line: Helms's report is just the latest evidence that North Carolina's school voucher system is fraught with problems – maybe even fraud – and it requires a thorough cleanup and overhaul before any expansion is even considered.

RECORDED PSA: Sound It Out - sound it out together.org (April-June)

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 (April-June)

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 Clarkson (April-June)

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 FOR 5-28-2023

Guest: Professor Rob Young, head of the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines at Western Carolina

University - Sea-level rise driven by climate change: What once was a controversial topic in some circles is now an indisputable and deeply problematic reality for coastal communities across the globe – including dozens on the North Carolina Outer Banks, where beaches are disappearing at a frightening clip. The hard reality of this situation is quickly presenting policymakers with some extremely tough decisions, but as is made clear in a new report on the situation in the Outer Banks town of Rodanthe, there's little doubt about what makes the most sense from both a scientific and financial perspective. We got a chance to learn more about both in a conversation with one of the nation's top experts, the head of the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines at Western Carolina University, Professor Rob Young.

NEWS & VIEWS FOR 6-4-2023

Guest: NC Newsline environmental - No matter how you slice it, there's something just plain outrageous and wrong about the way North Carolina has allowed Robeson County on its southeastern border to be treated as a dumping ground for all manner dangerous industrial pollutants. As NC Newsline investigative reporter Lisa Sorg has been detailing in a new series of special reports, the county of 100,000-plus residents – most of whom are poor and/or people of color – is literally inundated with mindboggling quantities of toxic chemicals and animal waste. What's more, as we learned in a conversation with Lisa earlier this week, even when local residents fight back in an effort to stop the siting of new pollution sources, state environmental regulators have been doing precious little to help

NC NEWSLINE 4-18-23

DEQ Wolfsped documents highlight the need for state to up its commitment environmental justice As the world's population and consumption of resources continues to mushroom, government faces huge challenges when it comes to managing growth and preserving our natural environment. When everyone wants comfort and convenience and to be spared from pollution, locating new developments – even coveted ones – can be complex and fraught with problems.

Take, for instance, the giant new factory planned for a site in Chatham County. The developer, Wolfspeed, makes components for electric vehicles, which is obviously a good and necessary thing for ending our addiction to fossil fuels. But as documents released by the Department of Environmental Quality reveal, the factory will also emit 203 tons of unhealthful air pollutants per year. And, not surprisingly, the census data show that the area surrounding the factory is populated disproportionately by low-income people of color. The bottom line: We obviously need new factories like this, but the DEQ documents show that we also need stronger rules to curb pollution. And one suspects that if Wolfspeed's neighbors were mostly white and affluent, that's something that would have been taken care of long ago.

NC NEWSLINE 4-27-23

If it's such a good idea, why is hog industry biogas proposal shrouded in secrecy? The idea of converting some of the astounding quantities of methane that North Carolina hog farms produce into biogas for use in generating electricity has some obvious appeal. Unfortunately, capturing even some of the gas, processing it into usable form, and transporting it to Duke Energy is no easy task. And given this reality, it's past time for state regulators to do a much better job of making the details of proposed biogas pipeline projects public. As NC Newsline's Lisa Sorg reported this week, a plan to collect and transport gas from several Robeson County hog operations to a Duke subsidiary remains shrouded in secrecy. Not only are the targeted farms unknown, but regulatory standards that were supposed to have been developed from existing biogas projects remain incomplete. No public hearings have been held. The bottom line: Robeson residents – most of whom are low-income people of color – have a right to know details of the plan and how it will impact their lives. State officials should ensure that they're fully informed and have their say before things proceed further.

NC NEWSLINE 5-16-23

North Carolina pork industry loses, but animals and simple decency win: The U.S. Supreme Court issued an important ruling last week that's likely to have a major impact on a big North Carolina industry: hog farming. Under a California law, all pork sold in the nation's largest state must come from farms that abide by some very minimal animal cruelty standards for the treatment of breeding pigs. The law requires the animals to have enough room to turn around freely, lie down, stand up, and fully extend their limbs – at least a four- by-six-foot space. And given the size of the California market and the logistics of the pork industry, this all but assures that all industrial hog farms must comply with the rule – including thousands in North Carolina that raise nine million hogs per year. The bottom line: the Court ruling will likely cause new expense and price hikes and it raises some interesting questions about the regulation of interstate commerce. But the ruling will also address the inherent immorality in causing intelligent animals to suffer greatly while they are alive. And it's hard to see that as anything other than real progress.

NC NEWSLINE 5-23-23

State Senate's budget cuts for environmental protection: criminally irresponsible: You don't have to be a scientist or an engineer to grasp that we live in a moment of profound environmental crisis. Indeed, anyone who pays even the slightest attention to their surroundings or the constant drumbeat of reports and warnings from experts across the globe understands this harsh reality. Tragically, however, North Carolina Republican legislators continue to keep their heads buried firmly in the sand. Not only are they not taking the urgent action that's desperately needed, they're working affirmatively to block it. As NC Newsline's Lisa Sorg reported last week, the budget approved by the state Senate last week would actually cut the already woefully inadequate appropriation for the Department of Environmental Quality approved last month by the House by thirty positions and eight million dollars. The Senate would even establish new rules to make it harder for DEQ to slow or stop new sources of pollution. The bottom line: wish as we might, North Carolina is in no way immune from the ongoing global environmental crisis. And to pretend that we are, as the Senate does, is criminally irresponsible.

NC NEWSLINE 6-1-23

June 1 – Frightening environmental injustice in Robeson County: The idea that humans are much more likely to dispose of their waste in closer proximity to poor neighborhoods than wealthy ones is, of course, not surprising news. Sadly, that's just how things too often work in a world in which money and wealth play such an outsized role. All that said, there's still something just plain outrageous and wrong about the way North Carolina has allowed Robeson County on its southeastern border to be treated as a dumping ground for all manner dangerous industrial pollutants. As NC Newsline reporter Lisa Sorg detailed in a recent special report, the county of 100,000-plus residents – most of whom are poor

and/or people of color – is literally inundated with mindboggling quantities of toxic chemicals and animal waste. Now add the fact that the state Department of Environmental Quality has regularly approved new pollution permits over the objections of residents, and the injustice of the situation is rendered that much more outrageous. The bottom line: Robeson residents have enough challenges without having their county serve as the state’s waste dump. State environmental regulators must do better.

NC NEWSLINE 6-19-23

So called “regulatory reform” bill is a dangerous threat to public health: You don’t have to be a scientist to understand the state of crisis that afflicts our fragile natural environment these days. Between our rapidly changing climate, the alarming rates at which open space is being developed and species are becoming extinct, and the growing list of human illnesses attributable to pollution, the massive scope of the problem is painfully obvious. If ever there was time for strong public oversight of how and where we build and pollute, this is it. Unfortunately, this realization continues to elude state Republican legislative leaders. A new so-called “regulatory reform” bill they’re advancing would gut some of the state’s most basic and important environmental protection laws and place impossible time burdens to issue new pollution permits on state regulators (a group that’s already badly understaffed). Bizarrely, the bill would even bar regulators from considering the impacts of a new development beyond its immediate surrounding area – even if it’s going to, for instance, pollute a stream or lake miles away. The bottom line: In a legislative session full of destructive legislation, this disastrous proposal may well top the list.

RECORDED PSA: NC Clean Energy Technology Center – Budget Brenda

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

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

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

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 FOR 4-16-2023

Guests: Attorney Susan Pollitt with Disability Rights North Carolina and NC Newsline investigative reporter Kelan Lyons : It’s a hard truth that North Carolina’s criminal justice system regularly metes out wrongful and inequitable sentences, and recently, NC Newsline investigative reporter Kelan Lyons detailed one such deeply disturbing case. Bobby Norfleet was convicted of a crime in 1979 as a young man – trying unsuccessfully to set a fire to a house – and because of the way the law read then (and because Norfleet was poor, Black and represented by a new and inexperienced attorney) he got sentenced to life. Forty-three years later, a social worker discovered him as a feeble and

much-abused inmate and thanks to attorney Susan Pollitt of the group Disability Rights North Carolina, Norfleet was released. Earlier this week, we caught up with Lyons and Pollitt to discuss the disturbing details of Norfleet's story and how it's far from the only one of its kind in our state prisons. Issues discussed: systemic injustices, crime and sentencing, mental health, disability rights.

NEWS & VIEWS FOR 6-25-2023

Guest: State Senator Jay Chaudhuri - It's a tough time right now for Democratic lawmakers who serve in the North Carolina General Assembly. With Republican supermajorities running the show, Democrats have to work incredibly hard to have any impact at all on state policy decisions, and often even that's not enough. From voting rights to public education to LGBTQ equality, GOP leaders continue to evidence little interest in discussion, compromise or finding common ground. And yet, despite these difficult circumstances, some tough and smart Democratic lawmakers are still working tirelessly to bear witness, to make a record and, despite the odds, in many instances to make a real impact. And earlier this week, we caught up with one such lawmaker – Wake County State Senator Jay Chaudhuri.

NEWS & VIEWS FOR 6-25-2023

Guest: Equality NC executive director Kendra Johnson - It's Pride Month – the time of year in which people across the globe celebrate the LGBTQ+ community and its history, culture, and rights. While much encouraging progress continues to be made in this realm, this year's celebration comes at a troubling time for those who support human rights. As we were reminded in a conversation with Kendra Johnson, the executive director of Equality North Carolina, a concerted national right-wing campaign has given rise to hundreds of legislative proposals across the country that seek to deny the humanity of LGBTQ+ people, promote hatred and exclusion, and limit everyone's freedom.

ON THE RECORD 4-23-23

Issues of gender dominate the legislature - New abortion restrictions - bans on transgender athletes - limits on how race and gender is talked about in public schools were all part of new legislation moving forward this week.

ON THE RECORD 4-9-23

Business, political and community leaders are coming together to address systemic racism in Wake Co.: WRAL goes On the Record to define terms, challenges, and solutions with A Better Wake, and what they are asking of neighbors.

NC NEWSLINE 4-4-23

Disparities in student discipline numbers reveal a damning truth: All societies are attached to and influenced by myths – many of them benign, or even in some cases, beneficial. Just as often, however, myths can be hugely problematic, and for a classic example, consider the myth that modern America has put racism behind it. While it's true that the country has made great progress in this realm, hard data confirm that we still have miles to travel. As NC Newsline's Greg Childress reported last week, North Carolina's latest school discipline numbers make this fact plain once more. The numbers show that K-12 students of color are suspended and expelled from schools at dramatically higher rates than their white peers. What's more experts verify that racial bias and stereotyping often leads to harsher punishments for kids of color than white kids for the same behaviors. And this is a problem we can't deny or ignore. The bottom line: America is not a color-blind society. And if we're ever to have success in building anything close to one, addressing injustices like these in our public schools is an excellent place to start.

NC NEWSLINE 4-6-23

NC Newsline report spotlights a grave injustice, and state leaders should take action - It's a hard truth that North Carolina's criminal justice system regularly metes out wrongful and inequitable sentences, and this week, NC Newsline investigative reporter Kelan Lyons detailed one such deeply disturbing case. Bobby Norfleet was convicted of a crime in 1979 as a young man – trying to set a fire to a house – that would likely have landed him in jail for a decade or so had it occurred a year earlier or later. But because of the way the law read then (and because Norfleet was poor, Black and represented by a new and inexperienced attorney) he got sentenced to life. Forty-three years later, a social worker discovered him as a feeble and much-abused inmate and thanks to an attorney at the group Disability Rights North Carolina, Norfleet was released. But of course, it should never have come to this. The bottom line: there are scores of people like Norfleet in our state prisons who pose no threat to society and should not be there. State leaders should enact a fair and accessible parole system that provides a path for addressing these injustices.

NC NEWSLINE 4-24-23

Stunning hypocrisy and cynical manipulation on women's sports bill: Last month, USA Today published a study on Title IX – the federal law that requires schools receiving public funds to ensure gender equity in sports. The key finding: even when one excludes football from math, colleges and universities spend millions and millions of dollars more on men's sports than women's. And it's in light of this report that the recent attacks on transgender athletes by Republican lawmakers emerge as stunningly hypocritical. You see, the politicians and the women athletes and coaches they've cynically manipulated to join them, say they oppose participation by transgender kids out of a desire to aid women's sports. But, of course, if they really cared about women's sports, they'd be raising heck and raising public appropriations to end the funding gap and thereby aid tens of thousands of young women (surprise, they haven't), not cruelly making things hell for a tiny handful of transgender girls, who just want a chance to play. Unfortunately, the recent attacks confirm that when it comes to their ongoing culture war, the hypocrisy and cynicism of conservative politicians is boundless.

NC NEWSLINE 5-1-23

Legislative proposal to allow healthcare providers to deny services is an outrage - As late as the mid-20th Century, U.S. healthcare in some places was still segregated. Even blood was marked to denote whether the donor was Black or white because the authors of these racist rules had what they called a moral objection to treating patients of different races together. Thankfully, America long ago outlawed such outrageous apartheid, but, under a bill in the state legislature, it could be making a comeback. House Bill 819 would permit health care workers to deny treatment that conflicts with their moral, religious, or philosophical beliefs. And the bill is so vaguely written that it would insulate providers who deny care in all kinds of situations. Denying birth control to unwed couples. Refusing to help gay men with STD prevention. Declining to fill hormone prescriptions for transgender patients. All these discriminatory acts and many others would be protected. And this is downright barbaric. The bottom line: North Carolina licenses healthcare providers to deliver services that science and medical ethics require, not to serve as freelance morality cops. The bill should be defeated.

NC NEWSLINE 5-11-23

Sudden silence on Jones Street highlights the cynicism of rushed abortion ban legislation: It's been a quiet week at the state Legislative Building. Just days after lawmakers rushed madly to shovel through dozens of momentous bills in just a few hours – including a radical abortion law overhaul – meetings and votes have been extremely scarce. And the sudden silence serves only to highlight the calculated cynicism with which the abortion ban was passed. Simply put: the rushed process was a sham. As this week's relative quiet makes clear, there was plenty of time to hold full and genuine hearings at which experts and impacted people were heard, amendments were given fair consideration, and all aspects of a 47-page bill were thoroughly vetted. Instead, the bill went from unveiling to the governor's desk in less than 72 hours as amendments were prohibited, and a tiny handful of speakers got just 90 seconds each to speak. In short, the process used to pass the abortion ban would have been insufficient for a city council voting to amend local parking rules. For a state legislature acting on the very lives and health of millions of people, it was simply a travesty.

RECORDED PSA: National Fair Housing Alliance (April-June)

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: Obesity Action Coalition (April-June)

"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 stopweightbias.com.

HEALTHCARE/MENTAL HEALTH/WOMEN'S HEALTH

NEWS & VIEWS FOR 4-2-2023

Guest: State representative Deb Butler: Gov. Roy Cooper's signature brought North Carolina one step closer to expanding Medicaid this week. And assuming Republican lawmakers pass a budget free of objectionable poison pills that could force a Cooper veto – the budget needs to pass for the expansion to take effect – a half-million low-income North Carolinians will soon have access to health insurance and affordable health care. As we learned in a conversation with one of the General Assembly's best-informed lawmakers – New Hanover County representative Deb Butler – there's at least some reason for hope that we could see such a result over the coming months. As Butler also noted, however, the General Assembly continues to advance some deeply troubling proposals – including a bill that would bring 24/7 digital gambling to our state that's likely to produce a lot of destruction in its wake.

Guest: NC Child executive director Erica Palmer Smith

As we discussed in our previous segment, North Carolina became the 40th state this past week to embrace Medicaid expansion and could, within just a few months, be extending health insurance coverage to a half-million or more currently uninsured adults. One of the advocates who's devoted much of her professional career to this achievement and who was at the signing ceremony at the Governor's mansion this past Monday is Erica Palmer Smith, the executive director of the children's advocacy nonprofit, NC Child. Palmer Smith, who prior to taking the helm at NC Child last year, served as director of the Care 4 Carolina coalition, is deeply gratified about the enactment of the expansion legislation, and detailed for us once more some of the many benefits expansion will provide to hundreds of thousands of North Carolina adults and kids.

NEWS & VIEWS FOR 4-16-2023

Guest: Kaylan Szafranski, health policy director for the advocacy group NC Child: One of the most important and worrisome impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath has been the hugely negative impact on the mental health of our nation's youth. Recently, the children's advocacy group NC Child partnered with the North Carolina Institute of Medicine to prepare and release a 2023 Child Health Report Card for our state and mental health was identified as a top concern. Indeed, the report card gave North Carolina an "F" grade in this category. What's more, as we learned in a conversation earlier this week with NC Child health policy director Kaylan Szafransky, this wasn't the only area in which North Carolina received a failing grade. Happily, however, as Szafransky also told us, there are some obvious and affordable steps that state leaders can take to address these problems and, in some instances, there's been at least some initial signs of progress.

NEWS & VIEWS FOR 4-30-2023

Guest: North Carolina Congresswoman Kathy Manning: A recent misguided ruling by a Texas federal judge sought to end the access American women have enjoyed for more than two decades to the safe and effective abortion medication known as Mifepristone. Fortunately, the Supreme Court has – at least for the time being – stayed the ruling, but as we were reminded in a conversation with North Carolina Sixth District Congresswoman Kathy Manning, the stakes in this case go well beyond reproductive rights. Manning is working hard in this and several other arenas to champion access to healthcare for all, and to resist efforts to use the federal debt ceiling debate as an excuse to slash core services like public education.

News & Views for 5-14-2023

Guest: State Rep. Ashton Wheeler Clemmons - When most people think about legislators writing, debating, and enacting new state laws, most envision solemn and deliberate proceedings chockful of parliamentary procedure and lengthy committee hearings featuring an array of witnesses, experts and amendments. Unfortunately, that's not how it usually works in Raleigh. And that was especially the case recently when lawmakers rushed through a restrictive new abortion ban. As State Rep. Ashton Wheeler Clemmons of Guilford County told us last week, the lengthy and complex new legislation went from being unveiled to the Governor's desk in just hours – and that's a fact that has left her deeply frustrated (and deeply worried about the wellbeing of young women and girls who are likely to be the ones most impacted).

ON THE RECORD 5-28-23

WRAL's On the Record discusses the connection between social media use and mental health: Smart Phones have only been in most of Americans' hands since 2012. Now 95% of kids are on social media. What is this rapid technology doing to our teenagers and how can parents adapt to this change? During that same decade, the number of teens with clinical depression more than doubled. WRAL's On the Record discusses the connection between social media use and mental health.

ON THE RECORD 5-21-23

Abortion bill moves at record pace through NC legislature: Emotional debate and personal stories filled the General Assembly as a long-anticipated abortion bill moved at record pace through the chambers. We're hearing those personal stories from the senate floor as we wait to see what happens after the governor's expected veto.

ON THE RECORD 4-2-23

Top lawmakers in the state agreed on Medicaid expansion after more than a decade of: WRAL's state government reporter Travis Fain spoke with a panel of experts, including the health secretary of North Carolina and two Republican lawmakers, about how it happened and what comes next. For most of the past decade North Carolina Senate leader Phil Berger was maybe the state's biggest opponent of Medicaid expansion. Now, however, he's arguably the main reason expansion appears just a few months from becoming reality.

NC NEWSLINE 4-13-23

Texas judge's abortion pill ruling is an outrageous assault on science and health - Twenty-three years ago, the Food and Drug Administration approved a pill that's come to be used in more than half of the early-term abortions in the United States. As experts determined and repeatedly confirmed, mifepristone is extremely safe and effective. It's successful in 95-98% of cases and the risk of serious complications from the two-drug protocol typically used (mifepristone and misoprostol) is less than 0.3%. By comparison, the risk of serious complications in childbirth is more than four times higher. Despite these remarkable statistics, however, a Trump-appointed federal judge in Texas issued a ruling sought by anti-abortion activists last week that would bar its use throughout the nation. And this is simply an outrage. If this ruling were to take effect, the only option for medication abortions will be to use the drug misoprostol alone – a regimen that has a much lower success rate of 80%. The bottom line: The judge's ruling is a slap in the face to modern medicine that places politics ahead of women's health. It simply must not be allowed to stand.

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

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 (April-June)

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 (April-June)

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 (April-June)

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 (April-June)

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.

POLITICS/VOTING RIGHTS

NEWS & VIEWS FOR 4-30-2023

Guest: Western Carolina University political scientist Chris Cooper- Well, hard is it is to believe, the 2024 election cycle is already underway, with national and state primaries for an array of key offices – including president and governor – already beginning to take shape. Thankfully, North Carolina is blessed with a healthy supply of skilled political scientists who keep close tabs on this situation, and earlier this week we caught up with one of them -- Western Carolina University poli sci professor Chris Cooper. And as Cooper told us, the 2024 election may still be more than a year and a half off, but absent some surprising developments, we already have a pretty good idea about how things are likely to shake out and at least one of the issue debates that figures to have a big impact.

News and Views for 5-07-2023

Guest: State Rep. Julie von Haefen - This past week was crossover week at the North Carolina General Assembly – the legislature’s self-imposed deadline for passing bills to keep them eligible during the 2023 session. It’s an event that helped turn the steady stream of backward-looking bills that have been winning approval from the Republican supermajorities into a virtual torrent. Fortunately, despite the toxic impacts of gerrymandering – a phenomenon that has rigged so many electoral districts -- there remains a cadre of caring and thinking lawmakers who continue to speak up against this regressive turn and earlier this week we caught up with one of the best and brightest in this group – Wake County state representative Julie von Haefen. **Issues discussed:** vouchers, public school funding, pending abortion bans, and future gerrymandering of legislative districts by the Republican-controlled General Assembly.

NEWS & VIEWS FOR 5-21-2023

Guest: State Board of Elections executive director Karen Brinson Bell - As NC Newsline reported at length a couple weeks back, a trio of rulings handed down by the Republican majority of the North Carolina Supreme Court will soon bring some big and important changes to the state’s elections. Not only will a photo ID now be required for all who cast ballots – even by mail – but thousands of formerly incarcerated people who regained the right to vote last year will now be removed from the voter rolls once again. Add to this that the legislature was given a greenlight to gerrymander legislative and congressional districts in another round of redistricting and it’s clear that elections will look very different and soon. At such a time, you’d think legislators would be assuring that election officials have all the resources they need to handle and manage these changes, but as we learned earlier this week in a special extended conversation with the executive director of the State Board of Elections, Karen Brinson Bell, that’s something about which there’s great uncertainty. In Part One of my special extended conversation with State Board of Elections executive director Karen Brinson Bell, we learned that there are some big changes in store for elections in our state and that they come at a time in which officials are already struggling to hold on to the experienced professional staff and volunteers necessary to keep our elections running in a smooth and secure fashion.

In Part Two of our conversation, we delved deeper into the details of the many challenges election officials confront and the almost desperate need that our state and county boards have for much better funding from the General Assembly. And as Brinson Bell told us, while she’s still hopeful on this front, the most recent budget proposal from the state Senate comes up woefully and frustratingly short.

NEWS & VIEWS FOR 6-11-2023

Guest: NC Newsline investigative reporter Lynn Bonner - North Carolina is about to implement some big and dramatic changes to the way it regulates voting and conducts elections. Going forward, all voters – even those who vote by mail – must produce a photo ID. Meanwhile, another bill recently introduced by Republican lawmakers would impose additional restrictions on voting by mail and same-day registration.

And while it's perhaps no surprise that Democratic lawmakers and pro-democracy advocates have blasted the substance of these changes, as we learned in a recent conversation with NC Newsline investigative reporter Lynn Bonner, state election officials also have deep concerns about whether they'll be able to effectively implement these changes in time for upcoming elections.

ON THE RECORD 6-18-23

Travis Fain goes on the record with the chairman of the state Republican party to examine how the GOP plans to win local and national elections in 2024.- The calendar says 2023, but politically, it might as well be 2024. The presidential race is loping toward its first turn. Three Republican candidates are in town this weekend for the state Republican Party's convention. President Joe Biden was here Friday. North Carolina won't just be big in next year's presidential elections, it may be huge for control of Congress, because Republicans here will redraw the congressional map this year, tilting those races, potentially adding enough Republican-leaning districts to keep or expand their party's control of the U.S. House. WRAL State Government reporter

NC NEWSLINE 5-19-23

State Board of Elections needs and deserves much better funding: To say that the process of running elections has become much more challenging in modern America of late would be a vast understatement. Donald Trump's lies have wrongly undermined public confidence and intimidated and discouraged election officials, while causing thousands of election job vacancies and making them much harder to fill. Meanwhile, here in North Carolina, legislators have imposed new and burdensome duties on state and local boards of elections. The state's new voter ID law requires a workable and secure system under which the millions of North Carolinians who vote by mail can somehow produce a copy of their ID and mail it in along with their ballot. Unfortunately, as they impose these new demands, the funding to adequately compensate staff and carry them out remains lacking. State Board of Elections executive director Karen Brinson Bell told NC Newsline recently that her agency is in desperate need of more funding to carry out its mission. The bottom line: Running safe, secure, and efficient elections is a core function of a working democracy. The legislature's refusal to provide adequate funds for this purpose is beyond irresponsible.

NC NEWSLINE 5-25-23

Paranoid conspiracies triumph with abandonment of election security group: The disastrous impact that paranoid conspiracy theories are having on American democracy was on display again last week when Republican legislators barred our state's participation in the Electronic Registration Information Center – also known as ERIC. ERIC uses matching software to identify voters who've moved, voters with duplicate registrations, and voters who've died. It also uses driver's license data to help states identify people who may be eligible to vote but who are not registered. The result: a highly effective, low-cost, win-win way to keep voter rolls current and improve voter participation. Unfortunately, Republican-led states started abandoning the group after a right-wing talk show host launched a falsehood-based disinformation campaign. And this is simply tragic. The bottom line: Making voter rolls as complete and accurate as possible ought to be a basic goal of any democracy. That North Carolina Republicans would abandon it based on widely debunked conspiracy theories raises real questions about their ultimate motives.

NC NEWSLINE 6-5-23

New voter suppression bill is yet another assault on democracy: Ten years ago, the Republican majority of the North Carolina General Assembly unveiled a bill to restrict voting and rig elections that was dubbed the Monster Voting Law. A lot of that law was ultimately struck down as unconstitutional, but now having secured more complete control of the state and federal courts, the GOP is trying another bite at the apple. Think of it as Monster Voting Law 2.0. The new bill – written with the help of Cleta Mitchell, the disgraced lawyer who helped spearhead Donald Trump's attempt to overturn the 2020 election -- would, among many other things, create big and burdensome barriers for people who vote by mail and unnecessarily complicate the popular option of same-day registration. Now add in that new state budget proposals from GOP lawmakers fail to provide election officials with adequate resources to run our elections – much less to rapidly implement a bevy of new changes – and it's clear the people of North Carolina are witnessing yet another destructive effort to suppress the vote. All caring and thinking should be outraged by this cynical assault on our democracy.

POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY/HOMELESSNESS

NEWS & VIEWS FOR 4-23-2023

Guest: North Carolina League of Municipalities Director of Government Affairs Erin Wynia: North Carolina is in the midst of an affordable housing crisis. With a fast-growing population – particularly in urban areas – this problem has been present for years, but it's grown appreciably more dire since the onset of the pandemic, with the median price of a home shooting up 25 percent just since 2021. In response to the crisis, NC League of Municipalities and Association of County Commissioners teamed up to produce a new report on the subject that details many of the causes of the shortage – some of which might surprise you – as well as some concrete steps that state leaders can take to tackle it. We were lucky enough to catch up with the League's Director Government Affairs, Erin Wynia, to learn more.

NEWS & VIEWS FOR 6-4-2023

Guest: Tim Curry of the National Fines & Fees Justice Center - Last month, a national research and advocacy group known as the Fines and Fees Justice Center worked with the Wilson Center for Science and Justice at Duke University Law School to produce a new and damning report entitled "Debt Sentence: How Fines and Fees Hurt Working Families." As the title implies, the report explains how the runaway costs of court fines and fees often serve little practical purpose – other than to make it almost impossible for families trying to turn their lives around to escape poverty. And earlier this week, we caught up with the Fines & Fees Justice Center's Policy and Research Director, Tim Curry to discuss the report and how states could better address the issue of excessive fines and fees.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE/ REGULATION

ON THE RECORD 4-16-23

Fentanyl Crisis - Fentanyl is killing people all over NC; more individuals have died from overdoses than from car crashes and shootings.

NC NEWSLINE 4-14-23

Lawmakers should advance bill to study medical benefits of psychedelics: As a large chorus of medical experts have testified in recent years, one of the great public health tragedies of 20th Century "war on drugs" was the total ban on the medicinal use of several so-called psychedelic drugs in the treatment of severe health conditions. Thanks to bad information and some crudely drawn laws that completely banned substances like psilocybin, MDMA and LSD, work that had made great strides in treating maladies like alcoholism, depression and PTSD using small and carefully administered doses of these substances was suddenly shut down. Thousands of people were denied potentially life-saving therapies. Now, thankfully, public officials have begun to rethink the matter. Last week, a bipartisan group of North Carolina state House members led by Rep. John Autry of Mecklenburg County introduced a bill to facilitate university studies of these substances and let's hope it advances quickly. At a moment in which so many Americans struggle with dire mental health conditions, the decision to explore therapies with such great promise ought to be an easy one.

RECORDED PSA: American Lung Association – Youth Vaping (April-June)

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. That's talk about vaping dot org. Brought to you by the American Lung Association and the Ad Council

RECORDED PSA: National Association Boards of Pharmacy (April-June)

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 for more information.

RECORDED PSA: CDC – Drug Overdose Campaign -Naloxone (April-June)

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 (April-June)

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/).

TERRORISM/HOMELAND SECURITY/MILITARY**NC NEWSLINE 5-29-23**

Some welcome news from the U.S. military to contemplate this Memorial Day: It's taken several decades longer than it should have, but there's some extremely welcome news from the U.S. Army to contemplate this Memorial Day. As of this Friday, the largest military base in the world -- North Carolina's Fort Bragg -- will have a new name. As part of the long overdue initiative to remove the names of Confederates who fought against our nation and to preserve slavery during the Civil War (and to use names that honor individuals and ideas truly representative of what's best in America), Fort Bragg will become Fort Liberty. As the base website notes, the new name was not chosen at random. Rather, it was selected because it honors the heroism, sacrifices, and values of the Soldiers, Service Members, Civilians, and Families who live and serve on the base (and because it exemplifies what that community stands for). The change is also, of course, part of a broader ongoing national reckoning with the destructive racism that's so long afflicted and tarnished our nation and, one fervently hopes, a signal of even more progress that's still to come.

RECORDED PSA – Homes for Our Troops (April-June)

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 (April-June)

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.