

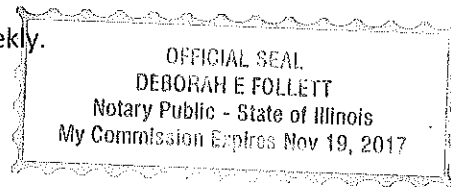
Public File Information for 4th Quarter of 2015

As station News Director, I can certify that this group of stations runs daily newscasts from 5AM-9AM and also airs "Focus," a news and public affairs program on Sunday mornings on WLRW 94.5 FM-WIXY 100.3 FM-WREE 92.5 FM-WYXY 99.1 FM-Oldies 97.9 (WLRW 94.5 FM HD-2)-Extra 92.1 (WCFF 92.5 FM HD-2)-Hits 99.7 (WIXY 100.3 FM HD-2). "Focus" deals with the issues facing our community and our state. Here are some of the issues covered on "Focus" programs in recent weeks with attached scripts:

1. Food insecurity in Champaign-Urbana schools.
2. Illinois a good state in which to be a teacher, based on starting salary.
3. Bullying at the start of the school year.
4. October = Domestic Violence and Breast Cancer Awareness Months, and Manufacturing Month.
5. New state law protecting nursing-home residents.
6. State budget crisis.
7. Affordable and public housing.
8. Transgender discrimination.
9. The benefit of using "sit-stand" desks.
10. Chicago's diesel pollution problem.
11. Protecting environmentally fragile areas of the state.
12. Processed foods linked to addiction.
13. The rate of uninsured children dropped in Illinois.
14. Early tax preparation.
15. Cutting the cost of prison phone calls.
16. Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative.
17. A new scam targeting grandparents in Illinois.
18. Bike safety at night, post-Daylight Saving time.
19. Federal healthcare enrollment underway.
20. The "Fight for \$15" (to raise the minimum wage.)
21. A study on police body cameras.
22. Cashing in on Social Security.
23. Funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
24. New food safety rules from the FDA.
25. Illinois' juvenile commitment rate has dropped.
26. A tough year for Lumber Liquidators.
27. Replacing the No Child Left Behind Act.
28. Extending the Child Tax Credit.
29. An investigation into campaign spending rules in Illinois.
30. Shifting to 100% renewable power by 2050 and a look at Renewable Fuel Standards.
31. Illinois leads the way when it comes to animal protection laws.
32. "Operation Santa."
33. The impact of a parent's criminal record on their children.
34. Data caps.
35. A possible retirement income tax.

I can attest that newscasts run on a daily basis, and Focus airs weekly.

Sarah Sheppard, News Director
 Illini Radio Group



FOCUS 10/4/2015

10/11/15

Feeding Our Kids feeds the soul...

Good morning and welcome to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. Focus is a weekly show dedicated to a look at news, and public affairs. *Our stations here at the Illini Radio Group partnered with the local non-profit group Feeding Our Kids to raise money for food insecure children in Champaign County. At our fundraiser this past Thursday, thanks to your generosity, we successfully raised over \$20,200. Tim Taylor from Mix 94.5 and I spoke with founders Janel and Ann about why they started the group and what it means to be food insecure.* (START FOK SEGMENT)

IN: "Feeding Our Kids..."

OUT: "... up with us."

We also spoke with Becca Guyette with the Champaign County United Way on what the cost of living is like in Champaign and how that can play a role in food insecurity. (START UW CALL)

IN: "So people get..."

OUT: "... place to live."

Is Illinois a financially rewarding place for teachers? That story is next on Focus.

PSAs

Welcome back to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. *Illinois is at the top of the list among states for teachers, according to a new ranking from personal finance website WalletHub. The state is rated as the 11th best nationally overall, and eighth in terms of average starting salary. Mary Schuermann from Illinois News Connection has more* (START TEACHER SEGMENT)

IN: "Teachers around Illinois..."

OUT: "... Illinois News Connection."

Meanwhile, classes are in full swing and it's also the time of year when bullying starts to happen. The Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition is offering tips to help identify when a child is being bullied, as well as advice for parents to help prevent children from becoming a victim, or a bully.

IN: "With back to..."

OUT: "... Illinois News Connection."

PSAs

And that'll do it for this week's Focus. Thanks for joining us. If you have any questions or comments about this week's show, write to me, Sarah Addison – News Director. 2603 West Bradley Avenue. Champaign, IL 61821. Or email me, news@illiniradio.com. Focus will return same time next Sunday morning.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Mary Kuhlman, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail:
inc@newsservice.org

**MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29**

September 28, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

School's in Full Swing: Avoiding the Slings and Arrows of Bullying

Springfield, IL – Classes are in full swing around Illinois, and it's also the time of year when bullying starts to happen. The Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition is offering tips to help identify when a child is being bullied, as well as advice for parents to help prevent children from becoming a victim, or a bully. Comments from Anne Studzinski, managing director, Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition.

Intro: With back to school excitement winding down in Illinois, now is the time that bullying can rear its ugly head. Data from the U.S. Department of Education shows about 22 percent of students ages 12 to 18 report being bullied at school. Anne Studzinski of the Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition says sometimes a victim can brush off bullying behavior, but for others the situation can stray into the realm of childhood trauma.

Cut 28249 :15 *"When it gets into a child is having nightmares, kids that are afraid to ride the bus, kids that are afraid to use the bathroom at school because those are the places where some of that face-to-face bullying happens, and then when you start to see self-destructive behavior in kids, running away, harming themselves."*

Tag: Studzinski notes that bullying today goes beyond the "school yard," and students can be harassed online. And she says cyber bullying is especially difficult because it can happen 24/7, involve many people, and be done anonymously. The 'look through their eyes.org' website offers warnings signs of bullying, along with tips and resources to help children who have been the victim of a bully.

Second Cut: Starting at an early age, Studzinski recommends parents teach good social skills and help foster resilience in their children. Both, she says, can help them if the child is bullied.

Cut 29249 :12 *"But also it helps you protect yourself from raising a bully. Making sure that your kid can navigate the social ups and downs of childhood as well as any other kid."*

Third Cut: Studzinski says structured activities like sports or scouting can help a child build lasting friendships that can offer protection from the slings and arrows of bullies. And she also suggests parents make a point to know the teachers, coaches, and other adults involved in their child's life.

Cut 30249 :12 *"It helps to have an accompanying circle of adults who care about the kid, so that as a parent you can approach somebody and say, 'Uh, I'm afraid this is going on, what are you seeing, what are you hearing, what can we do together?'"*

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: With back to school excitement winding down in Illinois, now is the time that bullying can rear its ugly head. More from Mary Schuermann.

Cut 31249 :34 *Outcue...Mary Schuermann reporting.*

Note to Editors: Reach Studzinski at 312-516-5560.

Data: <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/new-data-show-decline-school-based-bullying>.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Mary Kuhlman, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

Two Stories Available Today

October 1, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Analysis: Illinois Financially Rewarding Place for Teachers

Springfield, IL – Illinois is at the top of the list among states for teachers, according to a new ranking from personal finance website WalletHub. The state is rated as the 11th best nationally overall, and eighth in terms of average starting salary. Comments from Jill Gonzalez, spokeswoman for WalletHub.

Intro: Teachers around Illinois are instrumental in the development of children, and a new analysis finds the Prairie State is among the most financially rewarding places for their work. Personal finance website WalletHub ranks Illinois eleventh nationally on its list of "The Best and Worst States for Teachers." Spokeswoman Jill Gonzalez says the state did so well because the income growth potential is huge.

Cut 35249 :14 *"The average starting salary for teachers - and this is adjusted for cost of living - is about \$39,000 per year. That ranked eighth highest in the country. But the median annual salary ranked second highest - \$64,000 a year."*

Tag: Illinois ranked second for teachers' median annual salary, ninth for Safest Schools, and tenth in School Systems, But the state receives not-so-good marks for its pupil-to-Teacher ratio, ranking 30th.

Second Cut: Since education budgets were slashed during the recession, Gonzalez says teachers are shortchanged every year. She adds there's a high turnover rate in the profession because of salaries that do not keep up with inflation and tough standards such as No Child Left Behind.

Cut 36249 :15 *"They're having these, a lot of times, non-competitive salaries while they have to really amp up what they're doing in terms of results and test scores. So we're seeing that about a fifth of all new public school teachers leave their positions before the end of the first year."*

Tag: According to the National Center for Education Statistics, teachers often feel overwhelmed, ineffective and unsupported. And Gonzalez says teachers should be paid reasonably and treated fairly to ensure the quality of education.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: Teachers around Illinois are instrumental in the development of children, and a new analysis finds the Prairie State is among the most rewarding places for their work. Mary Schuermann explains.

Cut 37249 :42 *Outcue... Mary Schuermann reporting.*

Note to Editors: Reach Gonzales through Diana Pope at 703.722.0601, The analysis: <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-and-worst-states-for-teachers/7159/>

FOCUS 10/18/2015

It's not just physical... mythbusting domestic violence in Illinois.

Good morning and welcome to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. Focus is a weekly show dedicated to a look at news, and public affairs. *October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Advocates around the state are busting some of the myths about domestic violence and connecting victims with support resources. Mary Schuermann from Illinois News Connection has more.* (START DVA MONTH SEGMENT)

IN: "It's often a..."

OUT: "... Illinois News Connection."

Meanwhile, work is under way to spread the word about a new security measure that can improve safety conditions for nursing-home residents. A state new law goes into effect Jan. 1 that establishes the right of residents of nursing facilities to purchase and use an electronic monitoring device that can record or broadcast audio and video. (START NURSING HOME SEGMENT)

IN: "Family and friends..."

OUT: "... Illinois News Connection."

Illinois' money problems could get worse. That story is next on Focus.

PSAs

Welcome back to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. *Even with a federal stopgap budget in place, experts say Illinois' money problems could get worse. With no end in sight to a four-month state budget impasse, citizen watchdogs hope the debate will open to new solutions. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection has more.* (START BUDGET PROBS SEGMENT)

IN: "A stop-gap federal..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

Meanwhile, a new exhibit at the National Public Housing Museum in Chicago is aimed at changing how people view public housing and helping teens living in the city's public housing developments to help tell their stories. (START PUBLIC HOUSING SEGMENT)

IN: "A Chicago museum..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

Transgender Discrimination at an Illinois school could have national effects. That story is next on Focus.

PSAs

Welcome back to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. *A suburban Chicago school district is butting heads with federal authorities now that it is denying locker room access to a transgender student who identifies as female. A civil rights group says the battle could affect school policies across the country. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection reports.* (START TRANS SEGMENT)

IN: "A Chicago-area transgender..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

And that'll do it for this week's Focus. Thanks for joining us. If you have any questions or comments about this week's show, write to me, Sarah Addison – News Director. 2603 West Bradley Avenue. Champaign, IL 61821. Or email me, news@illiniradio.com. Focus will return same time next Sunday morning.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Mary Kuhlman, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org **Your Web Account ID is: INC-249**
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

October 9, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

It's Not Just Physical: Mythbusting Domestic Violence in Illinois

Springfield, IL - Governor Rauner has declared October Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Advocates around the state are busting some of the myths about domestic violence and connecting victims with support resources. Comments from Vickie Smith, executive director, Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Intro: It's often a hidden problem, but domestic violence occurs in Illinois homes more often than some may think. Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October is being used to highlight misconceptions about abuse. The executive director of the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Vickie Smith, explains it's not always physical violence, but also a series of behaviors used to gain and maintain control over another person.

Cut 56249 :13 *"It's often psychological, emotional abuse, financial abuse, sexual exploitation, use of children and other families members to frighten an individual into behaving in certain ways."*

Tag: And she adds it can happen regardless of gender, age, race or economic and educational background. According to the coalition's Domestic Violence Homicide Report, 35 domestic violence incidents took the lives of nearly 50 people in Illinois between July 2014 and June 2015. □□

Second Cut: A common misconception is that a victim can simply walk away from an abuser. But Smith says often a victim feels they must stay for the children, fears retaliation or does not have adequate resources to get away.

Cut 57249 :15 *"It's not just simply a matter of saying, 'I'm done, I'm leaving.'" For many people that's the most dangerous time. So we encourage survivors to reach out and get help and to think and plan about what is the safest way to get away."*

Third Cut: The Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence helps connect survivors of abuse to emergency shelters, counseling services, legal aid and other supports. And Smith says the statewide hotline is also there for victims seeking help. (That number is 877-863-6338.)

Cut 58249 :12 *"Anybody that answers a hotline in Illinois is trained to respond to the individual on the other side of the phone and you can ask questions and ask for the local support services nearest you."*

Tag: An estimated one-in-four women, and one-in-seven men, will be a victim of partner violence in their lifetime.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: It's often a hidden problem, but domestic violence occurs in Illinois homes more often than some may think. Mary Schuermann has more.

Cut 59249 :51 *Outone... Mary Schuermann*

Note to Editors: Reach Smith at 217-789-2830, The report: <http://www.ilcadv.org/HomicideReportFY15.pdf>

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Mary Kuhlman, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

Two Stories Available Today

October 5, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Nursing Home Cameras: Ensuring the Safety of Loved Ones

Springfield, IL – Work is under way to spread the word about a new security measure that can improve safety conditions for nursing-home residents in Illinois. A new law goes into effect Jan. 1 that establishes the right of residents of nursing facilities to purchase and use an electronic monitoring device that can record or broadcast audio and video. Comments from Gerardo Cardenas (car-DUH-NAS), communications manager, AARP Illinois.

Intro: Family and friends of nursing-home residents in Illinois soon will be able to have additional peace of mind in knowing that their loved ones are receiving adequate care. A new state law takes effect January 1 that allows residents at nursing homes to install surveillance cameras. Gerardo Cardenas with A-A-R-P Illinois says the Illinois Department of Public Health receives about 19 thousand complaints of abuse and neglect each year from people residing in long-term care facilities.

Cut 45249 :13 *"It was critical to have something in place that allows nursing home resident(s) to feel that they're safe in their room. That they're being monitored and that abuses and neglect will be recorded and reported."*

Tag: AARP is working to educate residents about the law's provisions. Cardenas says before deciding to install a camera, consent is required from the resident and his or her roommate and a sign must be posted outside the room to alert staff, residents and visitors of the camera. He adds that it is the responsibility of the patient or the family to pay for the costs of the device, and the facility is not required to provide internet service for streaming video. While the law begins at the start of 2016, the Department of Public Health has an additional 60 days to provide a consent form for residents.

Second Cut: The department also will publish guidelines for the cameras, but Cardenas suggests interested families go ahead and begin researching their options.

Cut 46249 :15 *"They need to look for equipment that fits their budget, of course, but also fits the provisions. It must be visible; it must be installed in a certain position in the room. Fortunately there are many, many options out there that fit different kinds of budgets because the costs will fall upon them."*

Tag: The law also states that the facility cannot retaliate or discriminate against a resident with a camera, and employees are forbidden to tamper with an installed device without a resident's permission. Cardenas says any violations are subject to a misdemeanor or felony charge depending on the circumstances.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: Family and friends of nursing-home residents in Illinois soon can be able to have additional peace of mind in knowing that their loved ones are receiving adequate care. Mary Schuermann explains.

Cut 47249 1:07 *Outcue...Mary Schuermann reporting.*

Note to Editors: Reach Cardenas at 312-458-3609. More information is available at <http://states.aarp.org/IL>.

Illinois News Connection - PAGE 2

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

October 5, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Museum Hoping to Change Attitudes Over Public Housing in Illinois

Chicago, IL -- A new exhibit is aimed at changing how people view public housing in Illinois. The National Public Housing Museum in Chicago worked with teens living in the city's public housing developments to help tell their stories. Comments from Museum Curator Todd Palmer.

Intro: A Chicago museum is hoping its latest exhibit will help change hearts and minds when it comes to public housing. Over the weekend, the National Public Housing Museum unveiled its "We, Next Door" project. Museum Curator Todd Palmer says they co-created it with a group of Chicago teens who are growing up in the city's public housing developments.

Cut 48249 :12 *"I think one of the questions the young people got to is: why is the person that owns or that pays market rate rent somehow more valued in society than those that might need a bit of help?"*

Tag: Together they created an interactive experience filled with photos, collages and interviews, which Palmer says should provoke a conversation about the role public housing plays in thousands of people's lives.

Second Cut: It's all part of a larger showcase called "House Housing." That portion of the exhibit is focused on how architecture and real estate development literally shape the world around us, and not always for the better. Palmer's hope is that the "We, Next Door" project will add a creative critique to that conversation.

Cut 49249 :09 *"So, somehow there's a sense that the people of public of housing are failures, and I think this exhibit, if anything, really pushes hard against that idea."*

Third Cut: According to the latest numbers from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, more than 54,000 families across Illinois use federal public housing assistance. Most are working families, many with children or disabled or elderly members. With the exhibit, Palmer's looking to put a more human face on those public housing numbers.

Cut 50249 :12 *"We reduce the people in it to statistics and numbers and crime figures. I think that bringing these nine individual stories forward, we hope change how we consider these deserving citizens."*

Tag: The "House Housing" and "We, Next Door" exhibits will run in Chicago now through January 3rd, 2016.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: A Chicago museum is hoping its latest exhibit will help change hearts and minds when it comes to public housing. Brandon Campbell has more.

Cut 51249 :32 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Todd Palmer, curator National Public Housing Museum 646-245-0259; CBPP Housing Study <http://bit.ly/1FNjC2u>; House Housing <http://bit.ly/1j5O3qD>

Illinois News Connection - PAGE 2

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

October 1, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Federal Stop Gap Exacerbates Illinois' Money Problems

Watchdogs: State needs new solutions

Springfield, IL – Even with a federal stop-gap budget in place, experts say Illinois' money problems could get worse. With no end in sight to a four-month state budget impasse, citizen watchdogs hope the debate will open to new solutions. Comments from Jasmine Tucker, researcher with National Priorities Project and Ralph Martire (mar-TEER-ee), executive director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability.

Intro: A stop-gap federal budget won't take Illinois' state agencies out of limbo anytime soon. Today kicks off the fourth month of a budget impasse in Springfield. Jasmine Tucker, a senior researcher with the National Priorities Project, says about a third of every state's services are tied to federal dollars.

Cut 38249 :08 *"Come January through the rest of the fiscal year they have no idea what the funding level's going to look like. So, again, we're coming against this sort of bad business, bad budgeting practices."*

Tag: The combination of state and federal budget problems have left some of Illinois' vital services slashed, with others hanging by a thread.

Second Cut: Illinois' Democrat-led legislature is continuing to butt heads with Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner over how to fix the state's nearly \$9 billion budget problem. While lawmakers argue, Ralph Martire, executive director of the Chicago-based Center for Tax and Budget Accountability says thousands of Illinois families are being hurt.

Cut 39249 :10 *"We in Illinois literally don't have the capacity to provide those core services that are driven by demographic needs. That's really not an acceptable place to be."*

Third Cut: Martire suggests several changes can be made to help dig Illinois out of its financial mess, such as expanding the state sales-tax base to include more of the service industry.

Cut 40249 :14 *"Right now, services make up 72 percent of Illinois' economy, and services are what we don't tax with our sales tax. What we do tax is the sale of goods, well that's only 17 percent of our economy. Of the 45 states with a sales tax, we have absolutely the most-narrow base in the country."*

Tag 2: Other ideas include taxing some retirement income and bumping up the state income tax. Martire says many of those ideas have at least some bipartisan support in the state legislature.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses second soundbite(s)

LEAD: Even with a federal stop-gap budget in place, experts say Illinois' money problems could get worse. We get more from Brandon Campbell, □□

Cut 41249 :28 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Jasmine Tucker at 240-529-4158; Ralph Martire at 312-332-1049, CTBA's report on budget suggestions <http://bit.ly/1POnPDe>

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail:
inc@newsservice.org

**MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29**

October 14, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

ACLU: Transgender Discrimination at Illinois School Could Have National Effects

Chicago, IL - A suburban Chicago school district is butting heads with federal authorities now that it is denying locker room access to a transgender student who identifies as female. A civil rights group says the battle could effect school policies across the country. Comments from John Knight, director of the LGBT and HIV Project at the ACLU of Illinois.

Intro: A Chicago-area transgender student who identifies as female is again being denied access to a school locker room by district officials. That's even though the federal Department of Education ordered the school to give her full access to the girl's locker room. John Knight with the ACLU of Illinois says the district is clearly discriminating against the student.

Cut 64249 :12 *"This is the first the Department of Education has ruled on a case of this sort, and they are the experts and their determination that this is a violation of federal law should have an impact nationally."*

Tag: The student, whose name has not been released, first raised a complaint over District 211 with the federal government about a year and a half ago. The district is arguing that it's protecting the school's other students' right to privacy by giving the transgender student her own changing room.

Second Cut: Knight says she and other transgender students across the country are already facing undue hardships, like bullying and being ostracized at school.

Cut 65249 :06 *"A policy like District 211's is something that places these vulnerable students in even greater risk of harm."*

Third Cut: So far the Department of Education hasn't made any public comments on the issue, but Knight says it's likely the department could soon force the school to follow the federal civil rights mandate.

Cut 66249 :11 *"What the department's asking for is fair and equal treatment for our client and the school has absolutely refused to do so; that would mean she's given the same options that the other girls are given."*

Tag: If the school district continues to deny the transgender student full locker room access it could lose about \$6 million in federal funding.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: A suburban Chicago school district is butting heads with federal authorities now that it is officially denying a federal order to give locker room access to a transgender student. A civil rights group says the battle could end up affecting schools across the country.

Cut 67249 :48 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting*

Note to Editors: John Knight, ACLU - 312-201-9740 x335; ACLU press release <http://bit.ly/1Nba3FD>

FOCUS 10/25/2015

Fighting breast cancer one stroke at a time.

Good morning and welcome to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. Focus is a weekly show dedicated to a look at news, and public affairs. (START PRAIRIE DRAGON PADDLERS INTERVIEW)

IN: "So, October is..."

OUT: "... for having us."

Taking a healthy stand at work. That story is next on Focus.

PSAs

Welcome back to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. *Employees with sit-stand desks stood 60 minutes more – and walked an additional six minutes – per day at work compared with co-workers with conventional desks, according to a new study by the University of Iowa. The study found workers continued using the new desks even after they had lost their novelty. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection has more.* (START SIT-STAND SEGMENT)

IN: "A new study..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

The work of three photographers is being used to help preserve an environmentally fragile area of eastern Lake Michigan that is also being eyed for real estate development. The Environmental Law and Policy Center is hosting the Scenes from Saugatuck exhibit in Chicago, which highlights the beauty of the Saugatuck Dunes in Michigan. (START PRESERVE SEGMENT)

IN: "A Chicago art..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

Measuring Chicago's diesel pollution problem. That story is next on Focus.

PSAs

Welcome back to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. *As Chicago continues to grapple with higher than average rates of asthma, an environmental law group is trying to figure out just how much diesel pollution is affecting parts of the city. The group, along with the Respiratory Health Association, has been using an air monitor to keep an eye out for dangerous diesel particulates, which can lead to serious illnesses. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection reports.* (START DIESEL SEGMENT)

IN: "Trying to get..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

As manufacturing jobs continue to be cut across the country, our state seems to be one of the hardest-hit in the nation. But, as part of Manufacturing Month here in Illinois, local businesses and groups are trying to change that trend.

IN: "Illinois is one..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

~~PSA~~

And that'll do it for this week's Focus. Thanks for joining us. If you have any questions or comments about this week's show, write to me, Sarah Addison – News Director. 2603 West Bradley Avenue. Champaign, IL 61821. Or email me, news@illiniradio.com. Focus will return same time next Sunday morning.

Prairie DRAGON PADDLERS

Our Mission:

Prairie Dragon Paddlers inspire hope and contribute to health and well being by providing community, recreation and encouragement for breast cancer survivors through dragon boating.



You do NOT need to be athletic, young, or have a history with sports to be in the boat. You only need the desire to try something new! The beauty of dragon boating is that just about anyone can do it. It is not how strong or skilled you are. It is all about how well you paddle in time with your neighbors. The boat will not go unless we are all paddling together. Teamwork is the key.



There are 22 people, total, in a dragon boat, which is comprised of 20 paddlers (10 rows of 2 per seat), a steerperson in the back and a drummer in the front.



Breast Cancer Dragon Boat teams are all over the world now and offer hope and a floating support group for quality of life



Try us out for free. And Oh...bring a smile... it will prepare you for the laughs ahead!



Not a breast cancer survivor and want to participate? Absolutely! Our "Prairie Partners" are a network of friends, family and people who love to paddle and support the team.



Visit us on the web at www.prairiedragonpaddlers.org
or contact us at prairiedragonboat@gmail.com

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

October 15, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Taking a Healthy Stand at Work

Springfield, IL – Employees with sit-stand desks stood 60 minutes more – and walked an additional six minutes – per day at work compared with co-workers with conventional desks, according to a new study by the University of Iowa. The study found workers continued using the new desks after they had lost their novelty. Comments from Lucas Carr, assistant professor and member of the Obesity Research and Education Initiative, University of Iowa.

Intro: A new study suggests that employees with desks that force them to stand at regular intervals stood 60 minutes more per work day than co-workers with regular desks. Lucas Carr, an assistant professor who worked on the study at the University of Iowa, says sitting eight hours a day puts workers at risk for cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and diabetes – and becomes more of an issue with each passing year.

Cut 68249 :13 *"The idea here is to really redesign the work environment, because most of us will be working for anywhere between 20 and 30 years. So if somebody is sitting for 40 hours a week and for 30 years, you can imagine how those things would build up."*

Tag: Carr says doctors now recommend that workers take a break from sitting at their desks to get their blood flowing at least once an hour. He adds that re-configuring work spaces could play a big role in fighting the obesity epidemic in the U-S. The study found employees with sit-stand desks burned up to 87 more calories a day – and walked an additional six minutes at work – than their sitting counterparts.

Second Cut: Carr says the study focused on workers who had been using sit-stand desks for an average of one-point-eight years. He says, unlike an exercise bike that ends up collecting dust in the garage, workers continued using the new desks even after they had lost their novelty. Carr says if you can't convince your boss to buy everyone a newfangled desk, there still are ways you can short circuit the negative impacts of sitting all day.

Cut 69249 :10 *"One thing that I even recommend is for people just to drink more water. And by doing that, you know, it's a natural reminder for you to get up and get away from your desk every 45 or 50 minutes and go to the restroom."*

Tag: Carr says sedentary jobs have risen 83 percent since 1960 and now account for 43 percent of all jobs in the U-S. He says on average office workers sit more than 80 percent of the work day. So the next time your boss asks why you're not sitting at your desk? "Sorry, doctor's orders."

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: Office workers have an easier way to burn some extra calories and avoid the health risks of sitting all day just by standing up. Brandon Campbell has more.

Cut 70249 :50 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting*

Note to Editors: Report at <http://goo.gl/M6RER2> - Reach Carr at (563) 468-9420.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

**MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29**

October 21, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Photographers Aim to Preserve Parts of Lake Michigan

Chicago, IL - The work of three photographers is being used to help preserve an environmentally fragile area of eastern Lake Michigan that is also being eyed for real estate development. The Environmental Law and Policy Center is hosting the Scenes from Saugatuck exhibit in Chicago, which highlights the beauty of the Saugatuck Dunes in Michigan. Comments from Brad Klein, senior attorney at ELPC, and Erin Wilkinson, photographer.

Intro: A Chicago art exhibit opens today (Wednesday) and it is focused on capturing the beauty of an ecologically sensitive area on Lake Michigan. Brad Klein, senior attorney with the Environmental Law and Policy Center, says the center is showcasing the photos of three artists to help bring attention to a section of land near the Saugatuck Dunes in Michigan. A real estate developer is considering some of that land for residential properties. □□□□

Cut 74249 :06 *"If you allow this kind of development in such a critical area, you really threaten to kind of kill the goose that laid the golden egg."*

Tag: Klein says the local economy in Saugatuck relies in part on the natural beauty of the dunes to draw in tourists, and that the real estate development could put that at risk. The photos, featuring natural scenes of the dunes, will be on display at the Environmental Law and Policy Center in downtown Chicago.

Second Cut: Klein says the Great Lakes are a treasure for the area and all Midwesterners should feel a common pull to protect the areas around them.

Cut 75249 :11 *"One of the things that's exciting about this exhibit, to be able to come in and see these photos that you understand are just a stone's throw from Chicago and right on the lake that we see everyday, really kind of brings it home."*

Third Cut: One of the exhibit's photographers, Erin Wilkinson, admits there is an economic argument to be made in favor of developing real estate near the dunes. But she also says undeveloped spaces, like the dunes, provide people with more than economic benefits.

Cut 76249 :15 *"It also pulls a lot of tourism from the Chicago area, because this side of the lake somehow is a slower pace and a more tranquil feel and I think that is due to the lack of development; that we have this precious jewel of the lake and the dunes."*

Tag: Speakers from the Saugatuck Dunes Coastal Alliance will kick off the Scenes from Saugatuck exhibit tonight. To see the gallery you can RSVP with Environmental Law and Policy Center.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: A Chicago art exhibit opens today (Wednesday) and it's focused on capturing the beauty of an ecologically sensitive area on Lake Michigan that's also being eyed for real estate development. Brandon Campbell has more.

Cut 77249 :37 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting*

Note to Editors: Brad Klein, ELPC - 312-795-3746; Erin Wilkinson, photographer 616-990-1817; Exhibit site: <http://bit.ly/1hQX7hI>

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail:
inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

October 19, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav

Measuring Chicago's Diesel Pollution Problem

Chicago, IL – As Chicago continues to grapple with higher than average rates of asthma, an environmental law group is trying to figure out just how much diesel pollution is affecting parts of the city. The group, along with the Respiratory Health Association, has been using an air monitor to keep an eye out for dangerous diesel particulates, which can lead to serious illnesses. Comments from Susan Mudd, senior policy advocate, Environmental Law and Policy Center.

Intro: Trying to get a handle on how much diesel pollution is being pumped into the air by Chicago's cars, trains and trucks is serious work. Over the past few months, an air monitor has been set up in popular public places, like the Shedd Aquarium; and also in Chicago neighborhoods like Pilsen, which until a few years ago was home to one of the dirtiest coal power plants in the country. Susan Mudd, senior policy advocate with the Environmental Law and Policy Center, says the focus has moved from coal to diesel pollution to help assess the risk.

Cut 71249 :08 *"Diesel pollution is very dangerous for people's health; it is linked with asthma, COPD, it's even linked with some cancers."*

Tag: The federal EPA tried to collect data on diesel pollution in Illinois a few years ago, but those samples were deemed unusable. Mudd says her group's project is too narrow to replace the EPA's work, but she hopes it will give people an idea of how and where diesel emissions are affecting residents.

Second Cut: Later this year, when they are done collecting air samples, Mudd says a chemist will run through the numbers. That will help identify diesel pollution hotspots.

Cut 72249 :14 *"The other important reason for us to have a monitor is to help citizens learn about air pollution, and over time hopefully figuring out things that can be done to reduce the asthma and other health problems associated with diesel pollution in Chicago."*

Tag: Diesel pollution is not known to cause asthma, but it can make the problem worse. Compared to the preceding few years, the CDC says asthma rates, especially among children, are at a new high.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: Trying to get a handle on how much diesel pollution is being pumped into the air by Chicago's cars, trains and trucks is serious work. As Chicago continues to grapple with high rates of asthma, an environmental law group is trying to figure out just how much diesel emissions are affecting parts of the city. Brandon Campbell has more.

Cut 73249 :50 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Susan Mudd, Environmental Law and Policy Center 312-795-3722; CDC asthma data <http://1.usa.gov/1rm7iKi>

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

October 12, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Illinois Manufacturers Seeing Job Losses, Pushing for Reforms

As manufacturing jobs continue to be cut across the country, Illinois seems to be one of the hardest-hit states in the nation. But, as part of Manufacturing Month in Illinois, local businesses and groups are trying to change that trend. Comments from Mark Denzler (DENS-ler), vice president, Illinois Manufacturers' Association.

Intro: Illinois is one of the only states in the Midwest to have lost thousands of manufacturing jobs this year alone. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Illinois shed about 9,800 jobs while neighbors such as Michigan have added thousands. Mark Denzler, vice president of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association, says his group is working with dozens of Illinois companies as part of Manufacturers Month to stir up interest in these careers.

Cut 60249 :12 *"We continue to provide the largest share of the gross state product, and so, while there's a lot of folks that think manufacturing's demise is well under way, it continues to be an economic powerhouse and a vital cog in the Illinois economy."*

Tag: Many of those companies and even several cities are hosting events, including today in Elk Grove. The town is hosting its third Manufacturing and Technology Expo, which will showcase locally made high-tech products.

Second Cut: Denzler says while Illinois is lagging behind in job growth in these industries, the state still is home to some of the best-paying high-tech manufacturing jobs in the country. Denzler also suggests that jobs like these are important for the state's middle class.

Cut 61249 :10 *"They average about \$70,000 per year with benefits and pay. Manufacturing jobs are the types of jobs that allow somebody to support a family, put kids through college."*

Third Cut: So, what can be done about Illinois' precipitous manufacturing job loss? Denzler says the Illinois Manufacturers Association is pushing state lawmakers to consider a broader tax base with lower rates.

Cut 62249 :08 *"We think there's a lot of things that can be done on tax reform, and we certainly think that looking at a sales tax on services is one of things that should be under discussion."*

Tag: A recent report from a watchdog group, the Center on Tax and Budget Accountability, says the service industry makes up about 72 percent of Illinois' economy, but it's not taxed. Denzler claims a move to change that could help bring more manufacturing jobs to the state.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: As part of Manufacturing Month in Illinois, local businesses and groups are trying to change the trend of serious job losses this year. More from Brandon Campbell.

Cut 63249 :48 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Mark Denzler, Illinois Manufacturers Association 630-368-5300; CTBA Report <http://bit.ly/1L4tBzz>

FOCUS 11/1/2015 → 11/8/15

Processed foods linked to addiction.

Good morning and welcome to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. Focus is a weekly show dedicated to a look at news, and public affairs. *Ever wonder why you can't eat just one potato chip? Turns out you can blame science. Numerous bodies of research suggest processed foods trigger opiate receptors in our brains that can trigger over eating, or even substance abuse in those prone to addiction. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News connection has more.* (START FOOD ADDICTION SEGMENT)

IN: "While many of..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

New numbers show Illinois is one of several states where the rate of uninsured children dropped in 2014. A new report released from the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families finds that Illinois and other states that expanded their Medicaid programs, fared best. (START UNINSURED SEGMENT)

IN: "Illinois is doing..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

It's never too early to prepare for tax season. That story is next on Focus.

PSAs

Welcome back to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. *It's never too early to prepare for tax season, and the AARP Foundation is looking for volunteer accountants in Illinois. The group is signing up people who are interested in helping with their free tax assistance program. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection reports.* (START EARLY TAX PREP SEGMENT)

IN: "Trying to get..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

On Thursday the F-C-C put caps on the amount phone companies can charge inmates and their families to make calls. Starting next year the rates will go from as high as a dollar a minute down to as low as 11 cents. (START PRISON CALLS SEGMENT)

IN: "Expensive phone calls..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

Juvenile justice reform. That story is next on Focus.

PSAs

Welcome back to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. *Hundreds of professionals who work with young people attended a conference about the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, called JDAI. JDAI is in 39 states, including Illinois, and the goal is to keep children out of the juvenile justice system. Mary Schuermann from Illinois News Connection reports.* (START JUVIE JUSTICE SEGMENT)

IN: "You don't have..."

OUT: "... Illinois News Connection."

State advocates warn that President Obama's new international trade deal could hurt state jobs and public health. The Trans-Pacific Partnership could end up driving some state jobs overseas and raise the price of some medicines. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection has more. (START TPP SEGMENT.)

And that'll do it for this week's Focus. Thanks for joining us. If you have any questions or comments about this week's show, write to me, Sarah Addison – News Director. 2603 West Bradley Avenue. Champaign, IL 61821. Or email me, news@illiniradio.com. Focus will return same time next Sunday morning.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

October 30, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Food Experts: Processed Foods Linked to Addiction

Springfield, IL - Ever wonder why you can't eat just one potato chip? Turns out you can blame science. Numerous bodies of research suggest processed foods trigger opiate receptors in our brains that can trigger over eating, or even substance abuse in those prone to addiction. Comments from Keith Kantor, nutritionist and author of the book, "What Matters".

Intro: While many of us are still digesting the news that the comfort and convenience foods of bacon and lunch meat could cause cancer - according to the World Health Organization - some experts also say processed foods can play a role in addiction. After studying nutrition and addiction for 30 years, Keith Kantor has observed a diet high in processed foods can contribute to substance abuse or relapses for recovering addicts.

Cut 88249 :15 *"All we really did was transfer the addiction from the drugs or the alcohol to something else like sugar or caffeine, which gives them the same highs and lows that they give from the drug by raising and lowering in most cases their sugar level."*

Tag: Kantor says processed foods can trigger the same opiate receptors in the brains of people who are not addicts. In those cases, grabbing a handful of candy corn or other simple carbohydrates can trigger the brain to demand more of the sugar high that comes from eating those foods.

Second Cut: Kantor explains that sugars trigger a boost of dopamine in your brain, which impacts your brain's pleasure and reward system. Refined sugar sparks a high release of dopamine because it's digested into the body quickly. While it might be difficult to eliminate all processed foods and simple sugars from your diet, Kantor says it's important to at least understand the impact of grabbing a handful of candy.

Cut 89249 :15 *"So they want to stay away from sugar, gluten as much as you can because they're going to stimulate the opiate receptors and it will cause them to eat more and if they're trying not to during the holidays there's lots of little tricks that you can do during the holidays to not eat more and eat healthy."*

Tag: Nutritionists suggest increasing the number of whole grain foods, fruits and vegetables in your diet to improve health and achieve weight loss if that is your goal.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: While many of us are still digesting the news that the comfort and convenience foods of bacon and lunch meat could cause cancer - according to the World Health Organization - some experts also say processed foods can play a role in addiction. Brandon Campbell has more on what that means for everyone as we approach Halloween.

Cut 90249 :41 *Outcue...Brandon Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Reach Kantor through Molly Robinson at (404) 380-1079 ☐☐

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org **Your Web Account ID is: INC-249**
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

October 28, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Report: Illinois Has Fewer Uninsured Children, But Cook County Needs Work

Chicago, IL - New numbers show Illinois is one of several states where the rate of uninsured children dropped in 2014. A new report released today from the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families finds that Illinois and other states that expanded their Medicaid programs, fared best. Comments from Kathy Waligora (wall-uh-GOR-uh), Director of Health Reform Initiative at EverThrive Illinois; and Joan Alker, Executive Director at the Center for Children and Families, Georgetown University Health Policy Institute.

Intro: Illinois is doing better than most states when it comes to children's health insurance coverage. A new report released today from the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families shows Illinois' rate of uninsured children dropped more than 20 percent from 2013. Kathy Waligora with EverThrive Illinois credits both Illinois' decision to expand Medicaid coverage and the state's All Kids program for helping more young people get access to insurance.

Cut 84249 :14 *"Health insurance has been shown to be a good return on government investment; it shows higher earnings, a lower likelihood to drop out of high school, they do better as adults. We're happy that Illinois has committed to kids and is setting ourselves up for a stronger future."*

Tag: As for the rest of the country, the number of uninsured children dropped to a historic low of six percent last year. The report notes that much of that is due to changes under the Affordable Care Act, including Medicaid expansion.

Second Cut: Joan Alker, executive director of the Center for Children and Families, says states that chose to expand their Medicaid coverage saw the biggest drops.

Cut 85249 :09 *"We found nearly double the rate of decline in uninsured kids that accepted the Medicaid expansion option, even though these states already had fewer uninsured kids to begin with."*

Third Cut: The report also lists Cook County, home to the Chicago area, as having the tenth highest rate of uninsured children out of all the counties in the country. Waligora says many area parents who are living at or near the poverty line, may not realize their children are eligible for insurance.

Cut 86249 :08 *"In-person assistance really makes the biggest difference for low-income communities and for communities of color; and that's where we still have a lot gains to be made in children's coverage."*

Tag 2: Waligora suggests that Illinois' next steps should include more outreach and education on the available health insurance programs in those communities.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: Illinois is doing better than most states when it comes to children's health insurance coverage. Brandon Campbell has more on some new data.

Cut 87249 :47 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Joan Alker, Georgetown University 202-784-4075; Kathy Waligora, EverThrive Illinois 312-763-2389; The report: <http://ccf.georgetown.edu/>

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

**MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29**

October 26, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Tax Prep Volunteers Needed in Illinois

Springfield, IL - It's never too early to prepare for tax season, and the AARP Foundation is looking for volunteer accountants in Illinois. The group is signing up people who are interested in helping with their free tax assistance program. Comments from Gerardo Cardenas, AARP Illinois spokesman.

Intro: If you've got good math and accounting skills and want to help out those who don't, the AARP Foundation is looking for Illinois volunteers for its annual Tax-Aide program. This is the 48th year AARP is providing the service. Gerardo Cardenas, with AARP Illinois, says they get started early so they can have plenty of time to get trained with the IRS. And they're not just looking for accountants. □□□□□□

Cut 81249 :13 *"Based on skill level, that is how we determine who gets to be a tax preparer. But also folks who provide individuals who approach the center with basic information. We're looking for bilingual individuals who can help."*

Tag: Cardenas says no prior experience is needed, but it helps. If you're looking to volunteer you can find more information at "AARP dot ORG slash TAX AIDE," □□□□

Second Cut: More than a thousand volunteers joined up in Illinois last year to help about 83,000 people get their taxes in order, all for free. Cardenas says anyone who is a low- to moderate-income earner can use the service. He also says it saves people hundreds of dollars in tax preparation fees. Volunteers have helped U.S. taxpayers get back a total of one-point-three billion dollars in tax refunds.

Cut 82249 :10 *"You're going to be working with volunteers that are friendly, they're helpful and that have been trained and certified by the IRS so that you know that you're in good hands."*

Tag: By the time tax season kicks off early next year, Cardenas says AARP Tax-Aide volunteers will be stationed at more than 200 sites across Illinois, including libraries and senior centers.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: If you've got good math and accounting skills and want to help out those who don't, the AARP Foundation is looking for Illinois volunteers for its annual Tax-Aide program. Reporter Brandon Campbell has more.

Cut 83249 :35 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Gerardo Cardenas, AARP Illinois 312-458-3609. More information at <http://www.aarp.org/taxaide>

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

October 23, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Pricey Prison Phone Calls Slashed by FCC

Springfield, IL - On Thursday the F-C-C put caps on the amount phone companies can charge inmates and their families to make calls. Starting next year the rates will go from as high as a dollar a minute down to as low as 11 cents. Comment from Aleks Kajstura, (alex kadge-TOUR-uh) legal director of the Prison Policy Initiative.

Intro: Expensive phone calls to and from prison inmates in Illinois will soon be a thing of the past. On Thursday, the Federal Communications Commission voted to cap rates and fees starting next year. The FCC also strongly discouraged the providers' practice of paying commissions to the prison facility in exchange for the phone service contract. Critics have been calling these fees kickbacks. Aleks Kajstura with the Prison Policy Initiative says the existing prison phone rates are outrageous.

Cut 78249 :17 *"There was no cap on how much they were charging, so they were charging people a dollar a minute. There were programs that charged 15 dollars flat rate per call. You could talk just for two minutes and still be charged 15 dollars. There were all sorts of fees tacked on, on top of those phone rates. Costing ten dollars just to add to the account so you could make the call."*

Tag: The latest research from the Prison Phone Justice group shows that last year families in Illinois who called inmates paid the highest fees in the country - about 13 million dollars. That's almost twice what families in the next state on the list, Pennsylvania, paid that year.

Second Cut: Kajstura says phone calls are a lifeline especially for inmates in parts of rural Illinois, where families may have to drive hundreds of miles to visit in person. And she notes, this change could save prisoners' families hundreds of dollars a month.

Cut 79249 :13 *"And of course it's unfair to make the least able in our society pay the most for keeping in contact with their loved ones. All of society benefits when families keep in touch. It reduces recidivism in the end."*

Tag 1: The issue has been on the F-C-C's plate for a decade. Four phone service companies dominate the prison market. They have called this a business-ending event and are threatening to sue the F-C-C.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: Expensive phone calls to and from prison inmates in Illinois will soon be a thing of the past. On Thursday, the Federal Communications Commission voted to cap rates and fees starting next year. Reporter Brandon Campbell has more.

Cut 80249 :47 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell*

Note to Editors: Kajstura can be reached via Peter Wagner at (413) 961-0002; Prison Phone Justice IL Data <http://bit.ly/TW7huor>

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Mary Kuhlman, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

**MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29**

September 29, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Juvenile Justice Reforms Top of Mind at National Conference

Springfield, IL – Hundreds of professionals who work with young people are in Arizona this week for a conference about the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, called JDAI. JDAI is in 39 states, including Illinois, and the goal is to keep children out of the juvenile justice system. Comments from Nate Balis (BAY-liss), director of the Juvenile Justice Strategy Group at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which sponsors the event.

Intro: You don't have to lock up young people to reduce juvenile crime. It's a change in thinking that's spread across the country with the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, referred to as J-D-A-I. Professionals who work with young people are in Arizona this week to discuss the successes of the program -- which is in place in nine Illinois jurisdictions, and 38 other states. Casey Foundation Juvenile Justice Strategy Group director Nate Balis says the program came about after decades of documented abuse in juvenile detention centers and disparities regarding which youths were being locked up.

Cut 32249 :14 *"Ensuring that it's done equitably in terms of gender, and particularly race and ethnicity, and making sure that young people who are in detention are in environments that are safe and that they're there for the shortest amount of time."*

Tag: The conference will also include a discussion on closing all youth prisons because of widespread maltreatment. The Casey Foundation sponsors the conference.

Second Cut: Balis says J-D-A-I sites have seen reductions in daily juvenile detention populations, and declines in detention sentencings -- both by at least 40 percent. Additionally, he says public safety is still top of mind.

Cut 33249 :08 *"It's been accomplished without any harm to public safety, and in fact if we look across sites, we see juvenile crime down by almost half since they started JDAI."*

Tag: One focus of the conference is ending solitary confinement, as research has shown it is damaging to young people -- and teens have even died in such situations. Illinois banned the use of solitary confinement for juveniles in the state earlier this year.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: You don't have to lock up young people to reduce juvenile crime. It's a change in thinking that's spread across the country with the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, referred to as J-D-A-I. Professionals who work with young people are in Arizona this week to discuss the successes of the program, as well as the challenges ahead. Mary Schuermann has the story.

Cut 34249 :41 *Outcue...Schuermann reporting.*

Note to Editors: Nate Balis via Carol Abrams: abrams.carol.l@gmail.com. The conference runs through Wednesday, Sept. 30. Conference agenda: <https://goo.gl/O986zn>.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org **Your Web Account ID is:** INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

October 6, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Advocates: TPP Deal Could Hurt Illinois Jobs and Health

Chicago, IL – Illinois advocates warn that President Obama's new international trade deal could hurt state jobs and public health. The Trans-Pacific Partnership could end up driving some state jobs overseas and raise the price of some medicines. Comments from Carson Starkey, executive director of the Illinois Fair Trade Campaign; and Jan Rodolfo, Midwest director of National Nurses United.

Intro: With the Trans-Pacific Partnership a step closer to becoming reality, some advocacy groups say the trade deal could end up hurting some Illinois residents' jobs and health. In all, 12 countries, including the United States, agreed Monday on what's being called the largest regional trade deal in history. Carson Starkey, executive director of the Illinois Fair Trade Campaign, says the deal was negotiated behind closed doors and claims that it'll mostly benefit large corporations at the expense of American workers.

Cut 52249 :13 *"It's an incentive to force working people to fight each other for the scraps on a table. There's nothing to stop Caterpillar or GM or any other company based in Illinois from packing up and moving to Vietnam, if they're going to get a better deal."*

Tag: Starkey, along with groups such as Doctors Without Borders, also warn that the TPP could drive up the cost of what already are some of the world's most expensive drugs. These include some vaccines and life-saving cancer treatments.

Second Cut: Jan Rodolfo, Midwest director of National Nurses United, says while there's still time for parts of the agreement to change, as it stands now the people who rely on those drugs are not being protected.

Cut 53249 :12 *"We should be providing any additional protections to the pharmaceutical industry, whether here or elsewhere. As drugs are developed, they should be distributed as low cost and as broadly as possible to those that need treatment."*

Third Cut: Supporters of the deal claim the TPP will help keep the U.S. economy competitive with international trade. But Rodolfo says some early provisions in the deal could put public health in Illinois at risk, because they would allow companies to challenge the state's environmental protections.

Cut 54249 :09 *"You could see something like that happening in Illinois. That we would democratically regulate something to protect public health and then have a corporation challenge our right to do that."*

Tag: The final details of the TPP won't be released for another month or so, and it still faces a vote by each country's government, including the U.S. Congress.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: The Trans-Pacific Partnership is a step closer to becoming reality, but some trade reform advocates in Illinois are warning it could have bad effects on workers in the state. Brandon Campbell explains.

Cut 55249 :34 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Carson Starkey, Illinois Fair Trade Coalition, 218-230-5299; Jan Rodolfo, National Nurses United 312-491-4900

FOCUS 11/15/2015

Scammers are targeting our grandparents.

Good morning and welcome to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. Focus is a weekly show dedicated to a look at news, and public affairs. *Scammers have been stealing money from grandparents in Illinois. A consumer protection watchdog is warning seniors to protect themselves from thieves pretending to be family members asking for money. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection reports.* (START GRANDPARENT SCAM SEGMENT)

IN: "Reports of a..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

With daylight saving time having just ended, a bike safety group is warning riders to take extra care during the earlier night time hours. The Active Transportation Alliance recently released a new video highlighting the need for bike lights. (START BIKE LIGHTS SEGMENT)

IN: "Now that daylight..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

Health insurance open enrollment is underway. That story is next on Focus.

PSAs

Welcome back to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. *The third annual three-month enrollment period for health insurance on the federal marketplace has started, and Illinois has an 11-percent uninsured rate. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection has more.* (START OPEN ENROLLMENT SEGMENT)

IN: "If you need..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

Chicago-area fast-food workers walked off their jobs this week to underscore their request that the presidential candidates pay attention to their demands for a \$15 hourly minimum wage. The Chicago strike was one of about 270 strikes across the country, a year before the presidential election. (START FF STRIKE SEGMENT)

IN: "Fast-food workers..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

Most affordable housing waitlists in the state are closed. That story is next on Focus.

PSAs

Welcome back to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. *If you are among the many in the state who need affordable-housing vouchers, you're not alone in having a tough time even getting on a waiting list. A new study from Housing Action Illinois and Heartland Alliance shows almost three-quarters of the state's public-housing authorities have closed waiting lists. This comes as Congress debates what will happen with federal public-housing dollars tied to the national budget. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection has more.* (START AFFORDABLE HOUSING WAIT SEGMENT)

IN: "Many Illinois families..."

OUT: "... Illinois News Connection."

A new report from a coalition of civil rights groups includes a scorecard of how body cameras are used by 25 police departments nationally. It says the Chicago Police Department gets several things right, but the CPD also needs to add rules prohibiting officers from tampering with their own footage, and end the practice of showing officers the video before they write their reports. (START BODY CAMERA SEGMENT)

IN: "The Chicago Police..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

PSAs

And that'll do it for this week's Focus. Thanks for joining us. If you have any questions or comments about this week's show, write to me, Sarah Addison – News Director, 2603 West Bradley Avenue, Champaign, IL 61821. Or email me, news@illiniradio.com. Focus will return same time next Sunday morning.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

**MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29**

November 9, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Scammers Targeting Illinois Grandparents

Chicago, IL – Scammers have been stealing money from grandparents in Illinois. A consumer protection watchdog is warning seniors to protect themselves from thieves pretending to be family members asking for money. Comments from Steve Bernas, CEO of Chicago Better Business Bureau.

Intro: Reports of a scam targeting senior citizens in the Chicago area have been on the rise recently. According to the Better Business Bureau, the con involves someone who calls an elderly person pretending to be a grandson or daughter and claiming they're in legal trouble and need bail money. Steve Bernas, president of the Better Business Bureau of Northern Illinois, says the thieves are preying on vulnerable people.

Cut 17249 :09 *"Last week was an individual who lost \$1,800, basically was most of his life savings left, to get his grandson out of jail, and his grandson was home sleeping."*

Tag: Bernas says nationally the number of reports of the grandparent scam, and others like it, have risen from 12,000 to about 15,000 over the past three years.

Second Cut: Bernas notes that the scammers are likely using social media sites, like Facebook, to find their victims. He says the grandson of one recent victim posted pictures of himself in Mexico and that's all it took.

Cut 18249 :09 *"The scam artists saw that, was able to determine who the grandparents were, found them through the directory assistance. And called the grandparents saying 'This is Johnny, I'm in Mexico, I got hurt, I need bail money.'"*

Third Cut: Bernas claims the scam tends to work because seniors are more likely to answer their phones than younger people who tend to rely on voicemails and text messages. Plus, by being pushy, the scam artist tries to create a sense of urgency to confuse their victims. Bernas says don't fall for it.

Cut 19249 :07 *"What we always call the tip off to the ripoff is anybody calling you up saying you've got to pay money within 30 minutes, that it's a scam, it's a ripoff."*

Tag: The Better Business Bureau advises that if you get a call like that, the best thing to do is to hang up and report it to the police.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: Reports of a scam targeting senior citizens in the Chicago area have been on the rise recently. Reporter Brandon Campbell spoke with a consumer watchdog about how it works.

Cut 20249 :36 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Bernas at 312-245-2514; BBB info on Grandparent Scam <http://go.bbb.org/1S4IXG0>.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail:
inc@newsservice.org

**MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29**

November 4, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Safety Advocates: Bike Lights Extra Important During Daylight Saving

Chicago, IL - With daylight saving time in full effect, a bike safety group is warning riders to take extra care during the earlier night time hours. The Active Transportation Alliance recently released a new video highlighting the need for bike lights. Comments from Jason Ray Jenkins, education specialist with the Active Transportation Alliance.

Intro: Now that daylight saving time has kicked in, bike safety advocates are urging Chicago-area cyclists to be more careful. With daytime hours being shorter, Jason Ray Jenkins, an education specialist with the Active Transportation Alliance, says this time of year, it's especially important to have fully functional front and rear bike lights.

Cut 11249 :10 *"A lot of folks who are riding bikes just don't realize how difficult it is to be seen from behind the windshield of a car at night if you're not wearing lights as a bicyclist."*

Tag: Jenkins can be seen in a new video from the Alliance where he details how different types of lights work best in different conditions and for different budgets. And he also says Illinois law requires nighttime riders to have at least a front light that can be seen for up to 500 feet.

Second Cut: As for bike riders in the suburbs, Jenkins says they face different nighttime safety challenges than their Chicago counterparts; the need for good quality bike lights, however, is the same.

Cut 12249 :14 *"In the suburban areas sometimes it's darker, not as much street lighting, roads are wider, traffic is faster; in those scenarios it's important to be seen as well, because the people have less time to react."*

Tag: For most riders, in suburbia or the city, Jenkins recommends buying LED lights that are at least 100 lumens in brightness. For more information you can check out the Active Transportation Alliance's video on YouTube.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: Now that daylight saving time has kicked in, bike safety advocates are urging Chicago-area riders to be more careful. Brandon Campbell has more.

Cut 13249 :39 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting*

Note to Editors: Jason Ray Jenkins, Active Transportation Alliance 312-216-0469; Bike Light Safety Video
<http://bit.ly/116zwvz>

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail:
inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

November 2, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Health Insurance Open Enrollment Under Way

Springfield, IL – The third annual three-month enrollment period for health insurance on the federal marketplace started this weekend, and Illinois has an 11-percent uninsured rate. Comments from Annette Raveneau, (RAV-en-oh), regional communications director for Get Covered America.

Intro: If you need health insurance – now's the time to sign up. The annual open-enrollment for health coverage through the state's federally-run exchange started over the weekend and runs through the end of January. A Gallup survey earlier this year showed eight-point-eight-percent of Illinoisans lacked health insurance in 2014 – down quite a bit from the year before, when it was more than 15 percent. Annette Raveneau with the nonprofit "Get Covered America," says people who can afford health insurance but choose not to buy it will face a pretty hefty fine.

Cut 91249 :16 *"For the 2016 taxes, if you don't have health insurance throughout the year, you would be penalized \$695 per person or 2.5 percent of your income, whatever is greater."*

Tag: Illinois residents now have 480 plans to choose from on the exchange. In 2016, dental plans for adults will be offered for the first time. People who want their new insurance coverage to start on January first have to sign up by December 15th.

Second Cut: Raveneau says if you think you can't afford it, you should check out Illinois' federal health-insurance exchange at Get Covered Illinois anyway, because more than 231-thousand people across the state who had coverage this year are getting federal financial assistance to pay for their health insurance. She says their average subsidy is 212-dollars a month.

Cut 92249 :08 *"Some think that health insurance is too costly. There is financial assistance available to make your health insurance affordable for you and your family."*

Tag: Illinois started its state and federally-run exchange partnership in 2013, and chose to expand Medicaid to cover more low-income people under the Affordable Care Act.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: If you need health insurance – now's the time to sign up. Brandon Campbell reports the annual open enrollment period for health insurance through the "Get Covered Illinois" state exchange started Sunday, and runs through the end of January.

Cut 93249 :50 *Outcue...Campbell reporting*

Note to Editors: Raveneau is at 202-909-3044. Consumers can go to GetCovered.Illinois.gov or www.healthcare.gov or call 800-318-2596 to enroll.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249

Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

Direct login: www.newsservice.org/story

November 10, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Fast-Food Workers Join National Wage Hike Strike

Chicago, IL – Chicago-area fast-food workers are walking off their jobs today (Tues.) to underscore their request that the presidential candidates pay attention to their demands for a \$15 hourly minimum wage. The Chicago strike is one of about 270 simultaneous actions planned across the country, a year before the presidential election. Comments from Solo Littlejohn, a cook at a Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) eatery in Cicero, IL.

Intro: Fast-food workers in Chicago are going on a one-day strike today, exactly a year before the next presidential election. The idea is to get the presidential candidates to listen to their demands for a 15-dollar hourly minimum wage and the right to organize without retaliation from their bosses. Solo Littlejohn works as a cook at K-F-C in Cicero. He says he's going on strike because his wage of eight-dollars-25 cents an hour isn't enough to live on.

Cut 21249 :07 "I'm behind on rent, I'm near getting my electricity cut off; and I've had my mother and father helping me, but they can only do so much."

Tag: The strike in Chicago is one of about 270 planned across the country. The "Fight for 15" organizers are calling it their biggest nationwide action yet.

Second Cut: Earlier this year, the National Employment Law Project reported that just under half – about 42 percent – of American workers make less than 15-dollars an hour. The project also found a majority of them, potentially numbering in the millions, would vote for a candidate who supports the 15-dollar wage increase – and that includes Littlejohn.

Cut 22249 :06 "No president will be getting our votes unless they support us on our union rights and \$15 minimum wage raise."

Tag: Some business groups, including the Illinois Retail Merchants Association, don't like the idea of a minimum wage hike. Its president, Rob Karr, has said a state wage raise would be too expensive for some employers, who would then be forced to cut jobs.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: Fast-food workers in Chicago are going on a one-day strike today, exactly a year before the next presidential election. Brandon Campbell explains.

Cut 23249 :40 Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting.

Note to Editors: Littlejohn can be reached through Jennifer Owens at 312-218-8785; NELP worker study <http://bit.ly/1CBr5u4>. IRMA statement on wage: <http://bit.ly/1RJbUrg>.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

November 5, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Most Illinois Affordable-Housing Waitlists Closed

Chicago, IL - Illinoisans who need affordable-housing vouchers are having a tough time even getting on a waiting list. A new study from Housing Action Illinois and Heartland Alliance shows almost three-quarters of the state's public-housing authorities have closed waiting lists. This comes as Congress debates what will happen with federal public-housing dollars tied to the national budget. Comments from Bob Palmer, policy director for Housing Action Illinois.

Intro: Many Illinois families that need access to affordable housing are finding it more difficult this year to get on a waiting list for housing vouchers. A new report from Housing Action Illinois and Heartland Alliance shows 72 percent of Illinois' public housing authorities have closed waiting lists. Bob Palmer, policy director for Housing Action Illinois, says the number of closed lists has jumped 16 percent since 2007 as Illinois poverty rate also continues to grow. □□□□

Cut 14249 :10 *"Families that need affordable housing can't even get in line to get a Housing Choice Voucher to help them pay their rent. So, that puts them at risk of homelessness."*

Tag: The study claims the only waiting lists that are open are in rural areas of Illinois, but those have only just a few slots left to fill, Palmer's urging Congress to restore the federal housing vouchers that were lost to budget cuts going back to 2013.

Second Cut: Congress still is debating how much money federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, will get as part of a two-year budget agreement signed by President Obama on Monday. Palmer says while restoring the vouchers will help, it's only part of alleviating Illinois' poverty problem.

Cut 15249 :14 *"Increasing the number of Housing Choice Vouchers available is just one solution, and we would support things like raising the minimum wage, creating more living-wage jobs, using other programs, public and private, to increase the amount of affordable rental housing."*

Tag: In all, about 67,000 housing vouchers could be restored, and up to five percent of those could end up helping Illinois.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: Many Illinois families that need access to affordable housing are finding it more difficult this year to get on a waiting list for housing vouchers. Brandon Campbell has more.

Cut 16249 :43 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting*

Note to Editors: Bob Palmer 312-282-3959; Housing waitlist report <http://bit.ly/1RuT0nX>

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org **Your Web Account ID is: INC-249**
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

November 12, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Chicago Police Body Camera Program a Mixed Bag, Say Civil Rights Groups

Chicago, IL – A new report from a coalition of civil rights groups includes a scorecard of how body cameras are used by 25 police departments nationally. It says the Chicago Police Department gets several things right, but the CPD also needs to add rules prohibiting officers from tampering with their own footage, and end the practice of showing officers the video before they write their reports. Comments from Harlan Yu, report coauthor and principal at Upturn, a technology and policy consulting firm in Washington, D.C.

Intro: The Chicago Police Department shouldn't let cops review the footage from their body cameras before they write their incident reports. That's one of the findings in a new report released this week by a coalition of civil rights groups, called The Leadership Conference. The report, by the D-C consulting firm Upturn, scores 25 municipal police departments, including Chicago, on how transparent and fair their policies are, and whether they respect people's privacy. Harlan Yu with Upturn is co-author of the report.

Cut 24249 :07 *"In order for cameras to live up to their promise, departments must have carefully crafted policies in place to guide the use of these cameras and the footage that they produce."*

Tag: The report notes that Chicago PD is doing the right thing by making its body camera policy publicly available online. But improvements could be made by limiting the use of facial-recognition software, and by allowing people who file police misconduct reports to view the footage themselves.

Second Cut: Harlan Yu says the policy of letting police officers review their own body-camera footage before they write a report gives them an unfair advantage. He says criminal defendants don't get to check the tape prior to giving a statement.

Cut 25249 :13 *"Pre-report viewing creates an uneven playing field. And in the worst case, an office could conform his or her report to match only what was shown in the video, rather than report an independent account of what he or she saw."*

Tag: The Department of Justice awarded the Chicago Police Department a one-million-dollar grant earlier this year for body-camera equipment and training.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: Police body cameras are only as good as the policies that regulate them, according to a new report that rates their use in police departments across the U-S. Brandon Campbell has more.

Cut 26249 :51 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Yu is at 408-544-0178. The full report is at <https://www.bwescorecard.org/>.

FOCUS 11/29/2015

Can you afford to wait for social security?

Good morning and welcome to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. Focus is a weekly show dedicated to a look at news, and public affairs. *You're eligible at 62, but is that the right time to take Social Security? Experts caution that for those who can afford to wait, there are benefits to holding off. Mona Shand from Illinois News Connection has more.* (START SS SEGMENT)

IN: "You've been paying..."

OUT: "... I'm Mona Shand."

~~Scammers have been stealing money from grandparents in Illinois. A consumer protection watchdog is warning seniors to protect themselves from thieves pretending to be family members asking for money. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection reports.~~ (START GRANDPARENT SCAM SEGMENT)

~~IN: "Reports of a..."~~

~~OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."~~

~~The push to fund Illinois' protected lands. That story is next on Focus.~~

PSAs

Welcome back to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. *As Congress continues to debate a public-lands funding bill, the future of some of the state's best hunting and hiking grounds hangs in the balance. Conservationists want to see the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) reauthorized and permanently funded after it lapsed in September. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection has more.* (START LAND SEGMENT)

IN: "Some of Illinois'..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved new food safety rules that, for the first time, will include regulations on produce farmers. A sustainable agriculture expert says while the rules are a step in the right direction, some parts of the Food Safety Modernization Act are lacking. (START AG SEGMENT)

IN: "It took five..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

As the juvenile imprisonment rate drops, racial disparities continue. That story is next on Focus.

PSAs

Welcome back to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. *New research shows the state's juvenile commitment rate has dropped more than most other states, but racial disparities persist. Juvenile Justice advocates say Illinois is on the right track, but more needs to be done to close the gap. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection has more.* (START JUVIE SEGMENT)

IN: "The number of..."

OUT: "... Illinois News Connection."

A consumer watchdog is claiming victory now that Lumber Liquidators has agreed to remove controversial flooring products from its stores. This move comes after a tough year for Lumber Liquidators, which was under two federal investigations for illegally importing products and for allegedly selling flooring that contains toxic chemicals. (START TOXIC FLOORS SEGMENT)

IN: "After a rough..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

PSAs

And that'll do it for this week's Focus. Thanks for joining us. If you have any questions or comments about this week's show, write to me, Sarah Addison – News Director, 2603 West Bradley Avenue, Champaign, IL 61821. Or email me, news@illiniradio.com. Focus will return same time next Sunday morning.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Mona Shand, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail:
inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

November 16, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Maximizing Benefits: Can You Afford to Wait For Social Security?

Springfield, IL – You're eligible at 62, but is that the right time to take Social Security? Experts caution that for those who can afford to wait, there are benefits to holding off. Comments from Kristen Arnold, income security policy analyst, National Academy for Social Insurance.

Intro: You've been paying into the system your whole working life, but deciding when to begin claiming Social Security benefits is a complex decision that experts say needs careful consideration. According to the most recent data, 62 remains the most prevalent age people choose to begin receiving Social Security. Kristen Arnold with the National Academy for Social Insurance says that might be the right choice for those struggling with health issues or without other sources of income. But she says for those who can afford to wait, there is a big payoff.

Cut 27249 :14 *"If you're working, you don't have to take Social Security. You can wait, and for each year you wait, your monthly benefits increase by eight percent, and that monthly increase in benefits lasts for as long as you live."*

Tag: According to the Social Security Administration, more than 72 percent of Social Security beneficiaries in Illinois have reduced monthly benefits because they claimed benefits early.

Second Cut: Arnold says it's important to think through all the factors and, when possible, to consult a qualified financial planner. She adds that waiting is not the right decision for everyone.

Cut 28249 :16 *"If you have poor health, if you need to stop working to care for a sick family member, if you lose your job or if you have a physically demanding job and you need to quit working and take benefits to make ends meet, Social Security is there for you. You should take the benefits."*

Tag 1: With the future of Social Security a hotly debated topic during this election season, Arnold says it is important to remember that the program is fully financed for the next 15 to 20 years, and 75 percent financed beyond that. A toolkit to help decide the best time to start receiving Social Security can be found at "NASI.org."

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: You've been paying into the system your whole working life, but deciding when to begin claiming Social Security benefits is a complex decision that experts say needs careful consideration. Mona Shand has more.

Cut 29249 :46 *Outcue...Mona Shand reporting.*

Note to Editors: Reach Arnold at 202-243-7289. Link to Social Security toolkit: <http://bit.ly/1MVwtSF>.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail:
inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

November 25, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Conservationists Push to Fund Illinois' Protected Lands

Springfield, IL – As Congress continues to debate a public-lands funding bill, the future of some of Illinois' best hunting and hiking grounds hangs in the balance. Conservationists want to see the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) reauthorized and permanently funded after it lapsed in September. Comments from Alan Rowsome ('ROW' rhymes with 'now'), senior director of government relations for lands, The Wilderness Society; and Gelasia (jell-AY-zhla) Croom, spokesperson for the Nature Conservancy.

Intro: Some of Illinois' best public spots for hunting, fishing and hiking could be at risk of losing about 54-million dollars in federal support. That's because Congress can't agree on the future of a program that funds public conservation and recreation projects. The Land and Water Conservation Fund has been around for 50 years, but lawmakers let it expire at the end of September. Last week, they continued the debate. But Gelasia Croom with the Nature Conservancy says the program does important work, so there shouldn't be much to argue about.

Cut 41249 :10 "By removing these funds, you're affecting the economy, the ecology and overall, the quality of our basic natural services, including drinking water and things like that. You know, we have to be careful."

Tag: At issue is a proposal from Utah Republican Congressman Rob Bishop, which sets limits and restricts L-W-C-F funding. However, two Senate bills call for reauthorization and full funding of the program. The L-W-C-F gets its revenue from offshore oil and gas royalties.

Second Cut: Alan Rowsome with The Wilderness Society, says a compromise is needed. Rowsome claims that, unlike the Senate plans, Bishop's proposal has no bipartisan support.

Cut 42249 :12 "It's out of step and out of touch with what most Americans want – and his proposal, you know, would forever alter a program that isn't broken and doesn't need fixing."

Tag: Bishop's plan has come under fire for proposing changes that run counter to the goals of the L-W-C-F, such as redirecting about 20 percent of its funding back to the oil and gas developers. Bishop says the money will pay for education and job training programs in that industry.

Third Cut: Meanwhile, Croom says by funding public land projects, like the Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge in central Illinois, the government also helps local farming businesses. She adds the Nature Conservancy has been working to restore floodplains in that area.

Cut 43249 :11 "By having a wetland area there, and working in concert with federal agencies, we are able to address conservation issues as well as flooding and mitigating negative impacts from not taking care of that land."

Tag: Several members of Illinois' congressional delegation have signed letters in support of the L-W-C-F, including Democratic Senator Dick Durbin and Republican Representative Adam Kinzinger.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: Some of Illinois' best public spots for hunting, fishing and hiking, like the Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge, could be at risk of losing about \$54 million in federal support. Brandon Campbell explains.

Cut 44249 :48 Outcue... Campbell reporting.

Note to Editors: Reach Rowsome at 202-429-2643; Croom at 312-580-2175. Bishop's plan: <http://1.usa.gov/1RYpFIN>.
Reauthorization bills: HR 1814, S 338, S 890.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

**MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29**

November 18, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Expert: New Food Safety Rules Mixed Bag for Sustainable Ag

Springfield, IL - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved new food safety rules that, for the first time, will include regulations on produce farmers. A sustainable agriculture expert says while the rules are a step in the right direction, some parts of the Food Safety Modernization Act are lacking. Comments from Sophia Kruszewski (crew-SHEF-ski), policy specialist with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition.

Intro: It took five years of debate, but the U.S. Food and Drug Administration finally has approved new food safety rules. Late last week, the F-D-A set the official standards for the Food Safety Modernization Act, the first major reform in more than 70 years. Sophia Kruszewski is a policy specialist with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. She says, overall, the act does right by food producers who choose not to use chemical fertilizers.

Cut 30249 :11 *"We're pretty supportive of their significant change in their approach to the use of manure, compost that we think will make it a lot easier for farmers using sustainable and organic practices to continue to do that on their farm."*

Tag: The F-D-A says it's still researching any possible health effects from using raw manure, but for now the Modernization Act won't prohibit farmers from using it; that is, as long as they follow the USDA's National Organic Program standards.

Second Cut: Kruszewski's praising that move, but she claims other parts of the new rules, such as those concerning the water that's used to grow food, could pose problems down the line. Kruszewski says that's because the F-D-A is using a clean-water standard that is not tailored toward agriculture.

Cut 31249 :12 *"Its assessment is based on the hazards posed by ingesting water while swimming or while boating, which vary significantly from the hazards posed by consuming produce that's had water used in its growing."*

Third Cut: She acknowledges that there are provisions in the Modernization Act to work around the water rule, but it could make the transition difficult, especially for produce farms. Kruszewski says for them, this will be first time they have to come into compliance with federal rules "for growing, harvesting, packing, and holding produce." And she says there's still a big question there.

Cut 32249 :08 *"Requirements coming from the marketplace and requirements coming from the federal government; how are they going to be streamlined, so that farmers aren't having to deal with two sets of requirements?"*

Tag: Kruszewski's hoping that will be answered after the food-safety rules are published in the Federal Register on November 27th. The rules will go into effect 60 days after that. Most U.S. farms will have two years to comply.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: It took five years of debate, but the U.S. Food and Drug Administration finally has approved new food safety rules. Brandon Campbell has more from a sustainable agriculture expert who says the guidelines are a bit of a mixed bag.

Cut 33249 :42 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Kruszewski can be reached at 810-441-9947; FDA Produce Safety Rule <http://1.usa.gov/IGWO4me>; NSAC on FSMA <http://bit.ly/1H7rRqT>.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org **Your Web Account ID is: INC-249**
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

November 23, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Illinois' Juvenile Imprisonment Rate Drops, Racial Disparities Continue

Springfield, IL - New research shows Illinois' juvenile commitment rate has dropped more than most other states, but racial disparities persist, Juvenile Justice advocates say the state's on the right track, but more needs to be done to close the gap. Comments from Robin Olsen, manager at the Pew Charitable Trust; and Elizabeth Clarke, president of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Initiative.

Intro: The number of children being committed to prisons or other detention facilities has dropped by about 53 percent across the country. According to a recent look at federal data by the Pew Charitable Trust, Illinois saw the eighth-largest drop in that number from 2001 to 2013. Elizabeth Clarke, president of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Initiative, says that's a positive step, but the state still has a big problem when it comes to racial disparities.

Cut 37249 :07 *"It is horrific. As we've driven down the numbers in the Department of Juvenile Justice, the disparities have gotten worse."*

Tag: Federal data also shows black children make up 66 percent of Illinois' youth prison population, more than any other racial group. Still, other research suggests that black kids aren't necessarily more likely to commit crimes, but they are more likely to be arrested by police.

Second Cut: Community programs and other rehabilitation alternatives were cited by researchers as a big reason behind the overall drop in the youth commitment rate. Robin Olsen, who manages state policy work on juvenile justice for the Pew Charitable Trust, says those programs have proved to have multiple benefits, including lowering recidivism rates.

Cut 38249 :09 *"States are definitely able to reduce some of their budgets related to juvenile justice and make reinvestments in things that are providing better results for youth and families."*

Third Cut: Clarke says Illinois has made reforms to reduce the youth prison population, such as the 2011 law that asks judges to consider the least-restrictive alternatives, only resorting to prison time as a last resort.

Cut 39249 :15 *"To imprison children is just an outdated concept. There's no research showing that it makes really a dent in crime. What makes a dent in crime are community programs that are individualized and holistic."*

Tag: Clarke says the state is on the right course, but it should do more to invest in restorative justice programs to further reduce the youth commitment rate and help level out racial disparities.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: The number of children being committed to prisons or other detention facilities has dropped by about 53 percent across the country. Brandon Campbell has more on what that means for Illinois.

Cut 40249 :42 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Olsen through Darienne Gutierrez at 787-697-6668; Clarke at 847-864-1567; Pew Research <http://bit.ly/INuFCOJ>.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org **Your Web Account ID is: INC-249**
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

November 19, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Lumber Liquidators Removes Potentially Toxic Flooring from Stores

Springfield, IL - A consumer watchdog is claiming victory now that Lumber Liquidators has agreed to remove controversial flooring products from its stores. This move comes after a tough year for Lumber Liquidators, which was under two federal investigations for illegally importing products and for allegedly selling flooring that contains toxic chemicals. Comments from Miko Schade (shade) with the Mind the Store campaign.

Intro: After a rough year for Lumber Liquidators, a consumer watchdog says the major flooring retailer is making some positive changes this week. The company was at the center of federal investigations this year over allegations it has been selling foreign-made vinyl flooring that may contain potentially toxic chemicals. And in May, Lumber Liquidators C-E-O Bob Lynch resigned. Mike Schade is the director of the Mind the Store campaign, which is working with the group Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families. He says the company has agreed to take the controversial flooring off its shelves.

Cut 34249 :08 *"These are chemicals that could be dangerous at very low levels of exposure. They've been linked to asthma in children and birth defects in baby boys."*

Tag: Lumber Liquidators, which has 16 locations in Illinois, settled a plea deal last month with the Department of Justice for illegally importing some of its products. The company agreed to more than \$13 million in criminal fines and community service payments.

Second Cut: The company also agreed to limit the lead count in its flooring to less than 100 parts per million. A test from the Ecology Center in Michigan showed that the reprocessed vinyl plastic sometimes had lead levels up to 10-thousand parts per million. Considering all of the trouble facing Lumber Liquidators, Schade feels the company is now going above and beyond.

Cut 35249 :16 *"In some ways, though, Lumber Liquidators has leap-frogged both Home Depot and Lowe's by banning the use of reprocessed plastic; making Lumber Liquidators the first major retailer in the state of Illinois, and the first major retailer nationwide, to ban this unnecessary contaminated material."*

Tag: In a statement given through Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families, Lumber Liquidators Legal Officer Jill Witter said the company was pleased to work with the group and is now trying to lead the industry with "responsible sourcing practices."

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP; uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: After a rough year for Lumber Liquidators, a consumer watchdog says the major flooring retailer is making some positive changes this week. More from Brandon Campbell.

Cut 36249 :52 *Outcue...I'm Brandon Campbell reporting*

Note to Editors: Schade at 646-783-3477; Safer Chemicals press release <http://bit.ly/1YeMLZq>; DOJ plea deal <http://1.usa.gov/1OKWkgH>.

Russell (R)

Mushroom (K)

3x CB (G)

12/20
FOCUS 12/11/2015

~~Can you afford to wait for social security?~~

Saying Goodbye to No Child Left Behind.

Good morning and welcome to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. Focus is a weekly show dedicated to a look at news, and public affairs. *State educators backed the U.S. Senate's approval of a replacement to the No Child Left Behind Act. Supporters say they are glad the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) will return a lot of educational control to the states. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection reports.* (START ESSA SEGMENT)

IN: "After a round..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

As Congress continues to debate more than 50 tax breaks, child-welfare advocates in Illinois are asking lawmakers to add extensions for the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Meanwhile, some House Republicans have laid out plans to let those credits expire in 2017 unless changes are made. (START CHILD WELFARE TAX CREDITS SEGMENT)

IN: "Congress soon will..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

It's time to rework Illinois' campaign spending rules. That story is next on Focus.

PSAs

Welcome back to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. *A New York Times profile of millionaire Gov. Bruce Rauner shows how he and a few wealthy allies used the state's campaign finance rules to Rauner's advantage. A local campaign finance reform group helped with the investigation and is suggesting ways in which to level the playing field for candidates who have less money. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection has more.* (START CAMPAIGN SPENDING SEGMENT)

IN: "Never have so..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

100% renewable power in Illinois by 2050? That story is next on Focus.

PSAs

Welcome back to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. *As climate talks continue, Stanford University has new research showing that a 100 percent shift to renewable energy is possible within 35 years. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection has more.* (START RENEWABLE ENERGY SEGMENT)

IN: "As the Paris..."

OUT: "... Illinois News Connection."

After two years of delays, the Environmental Protection Agency released its Renewable Fuel Standards this week. Not everyone thinks the rules go far enough to protect the environment or encourage new renewable-fuel technologies that could boost the Illinois economy. (START AG ENERGY SEGMENT)

IN: "After a rough..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

PSAs

And that'll do it for this week's Focus. Thanks for joining us. If you have any questions or comments about this week's show, write to me, Sarah Addison – News Director, 2603 West Bradley Avenue, Champaign, IL 61821. Or email me, news@illiniradio.com. Focus will return same time next Sunday morning.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail:
inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

December 9, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Illinois Educators Back Overhaul to No Child Left Behind

Springfield, IL - Some Illinois educators are backing the U.S. Senate's expected approval today (Wed.) of a replacement to the No Child Left Behind Act. Supporters say they are glad the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) will return a lot of educational control to the states. Comments from Cinda Klickna, president of the Illinois Education Association.

Intro: The 14-year-old No Child Left Behind Act could become a step closer to ending. After a round of talks Tuesday, U-S senators agreed to take a final vote today on the new Every Student Succeeds Act. Some Illinois educators are praising the fact that the House passed a version of the E-S-S-A last week with overwhelming bipartisan support. Cinda Klickna, president of the Illinois Education Association, says she likes the overhaul because it returns a lot of control to the state when it comes to the local education system.

Cut 64249 :11 *"I think that's really important not just for us, but for the parents to know that the experts who are in the classrooms are able to be at the table talking about what is it that students really need."*

Tag: The new act has less emphasis on standardized testing and gives states more freedom in deciding how much students test scores will count when evaluating teachers. But opponents have said they fear that the new law relies too heavily on Common Core standards.

Second Cut: In the House last week, 64 members voted against the changes, however, all 18 representatives from Illinois backed the plan. Klickna says concerns over Common Core might be overstated, because it will ultimately be up to the states to decide what standards will be used.

Cut 65249 :10 *"This law takes away the federal mandate and the punitive measures and puts a lot of work back on the states to have good conversation."*

Tag: The E-S-S-A would also give Illinois and other states the power to set educational goals for specific schools, and it will allow districts to come up with their own solutions to turning around struggling schools. According to the New York Times, President Obama has hinted that he will sign the bill if it reaches his desk.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: The 14-year-old No Child Left Behind Act could become a step closer to ending. After a round of talks Tuesday, U-S senators agreed to take a final vote today on the new Every Student Succeeds Act. Brandon Campbell has the reaction from Illinois teachers.

Cut 66249 :44 *Outcue...Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Reach Klickna via IEA at 217-544-0706. Summary of ESSA: <http://1.usa.gov/1KLRqRS>.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

December 7, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

IL Child Welfare Advocates Begin Final Push for Extending Tax Credits

Springfield, IL - As Congress continues to debate more than 50 tax breaks, child-welfare advocates in Illinois are asking lawmakers to add extensions for the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Meanwhile, some House Republicans have laid out plans to let those credits expire in 2017 unless changes are made. Comments from David Lloyd, director of the Fiscal Policy Center at Voices for Illinois Children; Ralph Martire (mar-TEER-ee) executive director for the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability.

Intro: Congress soon will break for the holidays, but there's still a big issue on the table: whether or not to make permanent or even just extend parts of the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit. Child welfare advocates, such as David Lloyd with Voices for Illinois Children, say these credits help about 900-thousand Illinois children. But the credits are slated to expire in 2017.

Cut 60249 :07 *"It's really critical that Congress, when they're thinking about putting in extensions for business tax credits, that they also take care of children and families."*

Tag: Last week, a group of House Republicans laid out their tax credit priorities, which includes letting the C-T-C expire unless there are "significant improvements to the programs." But both tax credits have a long history of bipartisan support. The E-I-T-C was enacted by Republican President Gerald Ford in 1975, and later expanded by President Ronald Reagan.

Second Cut: Lloyd is hopeful that lawmakers will extend the credits during their upcoming talks. But he points to numbers from the left-leaning Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) that show about 322-thousand children could end up "pushed into or deeper into poverty."

Cut 61249 :13 *"The kids who receive the Earned Income Tax Credit make more as adults. Even, you see less incarceration. All sorts of positive benefits, much of which we'll lose if provisions to these credits expire."*

Third Cut: Ralph Martire, director of the Chicago-based Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, says the credits have had support from both sides of the political aisle because it's an economic driver for low-income families.

Cut 62249 :12 *"Every additional dollar they get, whether it's in direct income or, in this case, through a tax credit, they spend in their local community. So, that then becomes the income of the dry cleaner or the grocery store."*

Tag: Still, some House Republicans say many people are abusing the tax credits with fraudulent claims. Congress may decide on the tax extenders before lawmakers adjourn for the holidays on December 18th.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: Congress this week could be deciding the fate of the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit. Brandon Campbell has more on what the could mean for hundreds of thousands of Illinois families.

Cut 63249 :41 *Outcue... Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Reach Lloyd at 312-516-5557; Martire at 708-366-8373. CBPP on EITC/CTC:
<http://bit.ly/1OSbxvt>

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

**MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29**

December 4, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Reformers: It's Time to Rework Illinois' Campaign Spending Rules

Springfield, IL - A New York Times profile of millionaire Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner shows how he and a few wealthy allies used the state's campaign finance rules to Rauner's advantage. A local campaign finance reform group helped with the investigation and is suggesting ways in which to level the playing field for candidates who have less money. Comments from David Melton, executive director, Illinois Campaign for Political Reform (ICPR).

Intro: Never have so few people given so much campaign money in the modern history of Illinois politics. That's the big takeaway of a New York Times profile this week of millionaire Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner's run for office last year. The Times found that Governor Rauner's funders took advantage of a state law that is supposed to level the playing field for candidates with less money. Instead it allowed Rauner's allies to spend lavishly. David Melton, with the the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform, says this is one of the clearest signs that it's time to fix the state's campaign finance rules.

Cut 56249 :10 *"The problem is very simple; it's that when politicians are dependent on a very small sliver of people to get reelected that's whose voices and concerns they pay attention to and listen to."*

Tag: Using numbers compiled by Campaign for Political Reform, the Times investigation shows that the average campaign contribution in last year's general election tripled that of the year before.

Second Cut: At issue is an Illinois law that removes limits on campaign contributions once a wealthy candidate pumps lots of money into their own race. Rauner did just that, and Melton says that's when his rich allies were able to pile on even more money, to the tune of about 30-million dollars.

Cut 57249 :14 *"The amount of money necessary to participate in the political process as a candidate has been upped by an order of magnitude, about 10 times. Rauner and his friends have raised the stakes in elections from being in the single-digit millions to the tens of millions of dollars."*

Third Cut: So, what's the solution to actually level the campaign playing field? Well, Melton points to places like Seattle and Maine where voters last month backed campaign finance reforms. These alternatives include making it possible for candidates to get public funds instead of relying on unlimited private spending. Melton says the issue is starting to cross party lines.

Cut 58249 :10 *"There are actually a number of Republicans and conservatives who now recognize the problems with the campaign finance system, and there are groups on the right that are beginning to advocate for campaign finance reform just as there a groups on the left."*

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: Never have so few people given so much campaign money in the modern history of Illinois politics. That's the big takeaway of a New York Times profile this week of millionaire Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner's run for office last year. Brandon Campbell has more on what finance reform groups want to see next.

Cut 59249 :41 *Outcue...Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Melton at 312-436-1274 x104. NYT piece on Rauner: <http://nyti.ms/1Nj7ub2>. ICPR funding numbers: <http://bit.ly/119VMP1>.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail:
inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

December 10, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

100% Renewable Power in Illinois? It's Possible by 2050

Springfield, IL – As climate talks continue in Paris, Stanford University has new research showing that a 100 percent shift to renewable energy is possible within 35 years. Comments from Mark Jacobson, Stanford engineering professor and director of the Stanford University Atmosphere/Energy Program.

Intro: As the Paris climate talks are well into their second week, new research from Stanford University shows Illinois and other states could shift to 100-percent wind, water and solar power by 2050. The Solutions Project shows that, factoring in the health and climate-related costs of air pollution, the transition would save money and spark more employment. Stanford engineering professor Mark Jacobson says when all costs are included, wind is now the cheapest energy source in the U-S – even without subsidies. He says that could lead to faster economic growth.

Cut 67249 :12 *"In this transition in the United States alone, across all fifty states, by transitioning we'd create two million more jobs – both construction and permanent operation jobs – than we would lose."*

Tag: The report says a full move to clean power would bring in about 192-thousand of those jobs to Illinois. Critics of renewables, however, argue they would raise the price of electricity. Jacobson says that's only true if you ignore the negative health effects of air pollution.

Second Cut: Electricity generated by an older coal plant can sell for as little as three-cents per kilowatt-hour, compared to four to seven cents for wind or solar. But Jacobson says some of the most important costs of coal are hidden.

Cut 68249 :13 *"We are all paying higher taxes, higher insurance rates, higher workmen's compensation rates, because of coal, oil and gas air pollution health problems – asthma, cardiovascular disease, respiratory illness."*

Third Cut: According to Jacobson, air pollution in Illinois causes up to 23-billion dollars in associated health costs. He says fossil fuels only look cheap when some very real costs are ignored.

Cut 69249 :12 *"The rest of us are paying that cost. So, while somebody's using coal electricity, someone else is getting a cardiovascular disease. Say you're having a heart attack – you're more likely to die of that heart attack when you're in polluted air than when you're in clean air."*

Tag: According to the research, savings from reduced pollution could cover the cost of Illinois' transition to clean power in as little as three years.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: As the Paris climate talks are well into their second week, new research from Stanford University shows Illinois and other states could shift to 100-percent wind, water and solar power by 2050. Brandon Campbell has more.

Cut 70249 :48 *Outcue...Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: An interactive map of plans by state: www.thesolutionsproject.org. Reach Jacobson through Aaron Huertas, 202-236-8495.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

**MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29**

December 3, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Sustainable-Ag Backers Want More from New Renewables Rules

Springfield, IL – After two years of delays, the Environmental Protection Agency released its Renewable Fuel Standards this week. Not everyone thinks the rules go far enough to protect the environment or encourage new renewable-fuel technologies that could boost the Illinois economy. Comments from Scott Irwin, agricultural and consumer economics professor at the University of Illinois; and Johnathan Hladik (huh-LAH-dick), senior policy advocate for energy and climate at the Center for Rural Affairs.

Intro: It took two years of delays, but this week the E-P-A finally released new renewable fuel standards for the country. The rules include upping the amount of renewable fuel, mostly corn-based ethanol, to more than 18-billion gallons by 2016. That will bring renewable sources up to about 10 percent of the national fuel supply. But the E-P-A's original rules from earlier this year set a renewable fuel target of 22-billion gallons. Scott Irwin, agricultural and consumer economics professor at the University of Illinois, says that change is upsetting some of the state's ethanol and corn producers.

Cut 52249 :14 *"Even though the ethanol mandates may have been higher than expected, they were not moved all the way back to the levels that were stated in the original RFS legislation."*

Tag: Although the local corn ethanol industry adds more than five-billion dollars to the state economy, sustainable agriculture advocates still want to see more federal incentives for new forms of alternative fuel sources.

Second Cut: Johnathan Hladik, with the Center for Rural Affairs, says the future focus should be on cellulosic ethanol. That's the type of biofuel made from materials such as wood, certain grasses, or the inedible parts of plants such as wheat. Hladik says states such as Illinois are uniquely positioned to lead the charge with emerging alternative fuels.

Cut 53249 :12 *"In order to get the technology where it needs to be, we need to make sure that we have our foot on the gas pedal, and we're doing what we can to help this industry thrive and to evolve. Certainly this announcement could have done a better job of helping us do that."*

Third Cut: Still, the E-P-A has set its new national target for cellulosic biofuels to 230-million gallons in 2016, which is almost double the amount for this year. Irwin says that might mean the demand could rise for Illinois' corn and soybeans, which are used in biodiesel.

Cut 54249 :13 *"I think it is a definite positive, particularly at a time when we have relatively low corn and soybean prices. This has the potential to help us kind of grind out of these low prices as we look forward to the next couple of years."*

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: It took two years of delays, but this week the E-P-A finally released new renewable fuel standards for the country. Brandon Campbell reports on what they could mean for Illinois.

Cut 55249 :53 *Outcue...Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Reach Hladik at 402-687-2103 x 1028. Irwin at 217-333-6087. ICGA economic stats on IL ethanol: <http://bit.ly/1Ovfd6F>.

FOCUS 12/27/2015

Illinois may not have a state budget, but we're good at protecting our pets...

Good morning and welcome to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. Focus is a weekly show dedicated to a look at news, and public affairs. *As more states improve their animal protection laws, Illinois continues to be a leader in the country. After measuring 15 categories of animal protection measures, a new report shows Illinois is the top state for the eighth year in a row. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection has more.* (START PET PROTECTION SEGMENT)

IN: "For the eighth..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

Every year, thousands of Chicago-area kids get a little holiday help from "Santa's elves" at the Chicago Post Office. This year, the post office expects to help close to 5,000 holiday wishes come true through the annual holiday tradition known as Operation Santa. (START SANTA SEGMENT)

IN: "Thousands of Chicago-area..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

Just how many kids in Illinois are affected by their parents' criminal records? That report is next on Focus.

PSAs

Welcome back to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. *With millions of Americans having a criminal record, criminal-justice reformers say nearly half of the country's children are being negatively affected. A new report shows that more than 300,000 Illinois children with at least one parent who has a criminal record have less access to good incomes, savings, education and housing. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection reports.* (START CRIMINAL RECORD SEGMENT)

IN: "With the United..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

"Just say no to data caps." That story is next on Focus.

PSAs

Welcome back to Focus. I'm station news director Sarah Addison. *As Comcast rolls out new data usage billing trials, a consumer watchdog group is asking Internet subscribers to sign a petition aimed at curbing data caps and overage charges. The Illinois Citizens Utility Board (CUB) says these practices can hurt customers. Internet service providers (ISPs) argue the caps would affect only the heaviest Internet users. Brandon Campbell from Illinois News Connection has more.* (START DATA CAPS SEGMENT)

IN: "A consumer watchdog..."

OUT: "... Illinois News Connection."

Illinois seniors are overwhelmingly opposed to any plans for a retirement income tax. A new survey shows more than half of people 50 or older in Illinois would consider moving out of the state if such a tax was implemented. (START RETIREMENT TAX SEGMENT)

IN: "As Illinois continues..."

OUT: "... I'm Brandon Campbell."

PSAs

And that'll do it for this week's Focus. Thanks for joining us. If you have any questions or comments about this week's show, write to me, Sarah Addison – News Director. 2603 West Bradley Avenue. Champaign, IL 61821. Or email me, news@illiniradio.com. Focus will return same time next Sunday morning.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

December 18, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Illinois Tops Nation in Protecting Pets

Springfield, IL - As more states improve their animal protection laws, Illinois continues to be a leader in the country. After measuring 15 categories of animal protection measures, a new report shows Illinois is the top state for the eighth year in a row. Comments from Lora Dunn, staff attorney, Animal Legal Defense Fund.

Intro: For the eighth year in a row Illinois is topping the list of states that are doing the most to bolster animal protection laws. A new report from the Animal Legal Defense Fund shows that overall the country is doing better by its pets, but especially Illinois. Lora Dunn, staff attorney at the defense fund, says there are several reasons the state is staying at the top, including Illinois' felony penalties for cruelty or even neglecting an animal.

Cut 78249 :14 "Not all states have felony penalties for neglect, which in many cases where animals are not given adequate basic care, those animals suffer for a very long period of time. So, often those are the worst cases that prosecutors encounter."

Tag: Another positive cited by the report: Illinois' courts are allowed to force convicted animal abusers to give up custody of victimized pets. Still, like much of the country, Dunn says, the state can always do more by making that rule mandatory.

Second Cut: Another area where the report suggests that Illinois can make improvements is by mandating that police officers enforce animal protections.

Cut 79249 :12 "In many states, if law enforcement has reasonable belief, or even a stronger probable cause to believe that animal cruelty is occurring, law enforcement is actually required to take action and investigate the situation."

Third Cut: Dunn says while more states are making animal cruelty a felony, states like Wyoming, Iowa and Kentucky rank at the bottom. That's because, among other reasons, they do not treat animal neglect as a felony crime.

Cut 80249 :10 "We're hopeful that the public will look at where their laws rank and contact their representatives, get involved, work toward new and stronger animal protection legislation."

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: For the eighth year in a row, Illinois is topping the list of states that are doing the most to bolster animal protection laws. Brandon Campbell explains.

Cut 81249 :46 Outcue...Campbell reporting.

Note to Editors: Reach Dunn via Natalia Lima at 201-679-7088. Report synopsis: <http://bit.ly/1k2sXZK>.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

December 23, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Operation Santa to Help Thousands of Chicago-Area Kids

Chicago, IL - Every year, thousands of Chicago-area kids get a little holiday help from "Santa's elves" at the Chicago Post Office. This year, the post office expects to help close to 5,000 holiday wishes come true through the annual holiday tradition known as Operation Santa. Comments from Mark Reynolds, Chicago district spokesman for the U.S. Postal Service.

Intro: Thousands of Chicago-area kids are getting some holiday help from the Chicago Post Office. Every year, a team of "postal elves" help out with Operation Santa by collecting children's letters and email messages to Santa. Mark Reynolds, Chicago district spokesman for the U.S. Postal Service, says then they make the letters publicly available so others can help fulfill those holiday wishes.

Cut 85249 :12 *"We've got many customers, many families, many businesses and organizations who've made it part of their holiday tradition to come look through the letters and find those that touch their hearts and try to fulfill them."*

Tag: Last year, the Chicago Post Office received more than 10-thousand letters to Santa. Reynolds expects the same this year, although only a little more than half of those letters are typically answered.

Second Cut: Still, Reynolds says this can be a great way to help get holiday gifts to children who might not otherwise receive them.

Cut 86249 :14 *"We see everything from, 'Santa, send me an iPhone,' to the really heartfelt letters. 'I'm writing on behalf of my grandma, she's working hard, I need clothes, I need shoes, we need just the basics to have a nice Christmas.'"*

Third Cut: While the official deadline was Monday to help with Operation Santa donations, Reynolds says there's still a chance to sneak in some last-minute gifts.

Cut 87249 :12 *"We'll be here for the rest of the week to accept the packages. So if anybody out there has a letter and hasn't finished shopping, we really need them to hurry up and finish and bring the package back so we can get it on its way."*

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: Thousands of Chicago-area kids are getting some holiday help from the Chicago Post Office. Brandon Campbell has more.

Cut 88249 :40 *Outcue...Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Reach Reynolds at 312-983-8371. Operation Santa info: <http://1.usa.gov/1U3etVV>.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

**MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29**

December 17, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Report: 300,000 IL Kids Affected by Parent's Criminal Records

Springfield, IL - With millions of Americans having a criminal record, criminal-justice reformers say nearly half of the country's children are being negatively affected. A new report shows that more than 300,000 Illinois children with at least one parent who has a criminal record have less access to good incomes, savings, education and housing. Comments from Rebecca Vallas, director of policy for the Poverty to Prosperity Program at the Center for American Progress.

Intro: With the United States leading the world in incarceration rates, criminal-justice reformers are targeting an unintended consequence of that. A new report this month from the left-leaning Center for American Progress reveals that children who have at least one parent with a criminal record also have a tougher time in life. Rebecca Vallas, with the center, is co-author of the report. She says for the first time they have been able to estimate that nearly half of the country's children are affected, even if a parent has only been arrested and never convicted.

Cut 74249 :11 "Having even a minor criminal record can in many ways be a life sentence to poverty - not just for the person with the record, but also for their kids and for their family."

Tag: Vallas estimates that in Illinois more than 300-thousand children have a parent with a criminal record. The report notes this can negatively affect a parent's access to good incomes, savings, education and housing.

Second Cut: A Washington Post analysis earlier this year found that the U.S. puts people behind bars at a higher rate than any other country. The center's report shows that most employers, colleges and landlords use criminal background checks. With so many parents having criminal records, Vallas says those factors can combine to create a less-than-ideal childhood.

Cut 75249 :09 "It can affect their language development, their school performance, their educational attainment, their health and even their employment and earnings prospects in adulthood."

Third Cut: To help with this issue, Vallas specifically suggests that lawmakers could enact changes such as the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2015.

Cut 76249 :12 "We've got bipartisan agreement among policy makers in Washington that our criminal-justice system needs to be reformed, that we need to be smart on crime instead of being tough on crime."

Tag 2: These changes include ideas such as a clean-slate policy, which would seal low-level, nonviolent criminal records once a person has proved they can live "crime-free for a set period of time." You can find the full report at AmericanProgress.org.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: The U.S. leads the world in incarceration rates, and criminal-justice reformers are targeting an unintended consequence of that. Brandon Campbell explains.

Cut 77249 :45 Outcue...Campbell reporting.

Note to Editors: Reach Vallas at 202-481-8174. Criminal records report: <http://ampr.gs/1QyeK3A>. WaPo on prison rates: <http://wapo.st/1JcFkt9>.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org **Your Web Account ID is: INC-249**
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29

December 14, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

IL Consumer Group Urges Internet Users: "Say No to Data Caps"

Chicago, IL – As Comcast rolls out new data usage billing trials, a consumer watchdog group is asking Internet subscribers to sign a petition aimed at curbing data caps and overage charges. The Illinois Citizens Utility Board (CUB) says these practices can hurt customers. Internet service providers (ISPs) argue the caps would affect only the heaviest Internet users. Comments from Jim Chilsen, CUB communications director.

Intro: A consumer watchdog group in Illinois has been asking Internet users to sign a petition aimed at convincing Internet service providers or "I-S-Ps" to drop potential plans for data caps and new overage charges. This comes as one of the country's largest I-S-Ps, Comcast, has been rolling out new data usage billing trials in several cities. Jim Chilsen with the nonprofit Citizens Utility Board, says the changes could end up costing some customers more than they're paying now, and could hurt competition in the marketplace.

Cut 71249 :11 *"The data caps aren't in the Land of Lincoln yet, but Comcast is showing signs that it could roll this out nationwide. And we want people to let ISPs know that we're angry about this."*

Tag: A regional Comcast spokesman confirmed there are no user-based billing trials in the Chicago market. Comcast's previous data cap has been suspended locally since 2012. Supporters of the new billing methods say they're more flexible and only the heaviest Internet users would end up paying overage charges.

Second Cut: According to Comcast, only about eight-percent of users nationwide would hit the proposed monthly data cap of 300 gigabytes. As an example, someone would have to stream about 100 hours of H-D videos before being billed an overage charge. Still, Chilsen says with more people working from home, and more devices and apps online, more people could end up feeling the sting of a data cap.

Cut 72249 :12 *"What's particularly disturbing about this is, U.S. consumers already pay some of the highest broadband rates in the world. We're talking about an industry trend that is going to make our Internet bills even higher."*

Tag: Chilsen says more than 17-hundred people have signed the "no data cap" petition on its website. Meanwhile, as a low-cost alternative, Comcast points to its 10-dollar-a-month Internet plan, which has been available to about 30-thousand low-income Chicago households since 2011.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: A consumer watchdog group in Illinois has been asking Internet service customers to sign a petition aimed at convincing Internet service providers or "I-S-Ps" to drop any potential plans for data caps or new overage charges. Brandon Campbell reports.

Cut 73249 :45 *Outcue...Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Reach Chilsen at 312-263-4282. CUB petition: <http://bit.ly/1SSoRQb>. Comcast trial FAQ: <http://bit.ly/1H985uZ>.

Illinois News Connection

A statewide news service for Illinois

Producer: Brandon Campbell, 4064 N. Lincoln Ave. #231, Chicago, IL, 60618 Ph: 800-931-9973 Fax: 208-247-1830 E-mail: inc@newsservice.org

**MEDIA PRODUCTS ONLINE: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: INC-249
Sound Files on the Phone: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 29**

December 21, 2015

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Most Illinois Seniors Saying No to Retirement Tax

Springfield, IL - Illinois seniors are overwhelmingly opposed to any plans for a retirement income tax. A new survey shows more than half of people 50 or older in Illinois would consider moving out of the state if such a tax was implemented. Comments from Gerardo Cardenas, communications manager for AARP Illinois.

Intro: As Illinois continues its nearly six-month-long budget battle, a new survey shows much of the state's senior population is opposed to a retirement income tax. Illinois' AARP took a poll of about 1,000 state residents ages 50 and older. Gerardo Cardenas, spokesman for AARP Illinois, says many retired Illinois seniors are living on fixed incomes, and about 70 percent said they would have to cut their household spending if such a tax were made law.

Cut 82249 :12 *"Meaning cutting on basic things like groceries, healthcare costs, including prescription drugs. Another 60 percent would be forced to move to another state where the laws didn't include a tax on retirement income."*

Tag: Currently, there are no official plans in the state legislature for a retirement income tax. However, the Daily Herald reports that some Illinois lawmakers have been talking about the idea privately.

Second Cut: This comes as the state's deficit continues to grow. Meanwhile, state lawmakers and the Governor continue to debate on how to fund public services. Cardenas says the state shouldn't look to retirees to raise new revenues.

Cut 83249 :14 *"Some things that the legislators need to understand, just because somebody's retired doesn't mean that they live comfortably. About 20 percent of Illinois retirees live on Social Security alone, which means a lot of them are living in poverty."*

Tag: Some state lawmakers have already been opposing the idea, including Democratic state senator Tom Cullerton and Republican Representative David McSweeney. Many states do impose a tax on retiree income, though often with an exemption until a certain income threshold is met.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP; uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: As Illinois continues its nearly six-month-long budget battle, Brandon Campbell reports on a new survey that shows much of the state's senior population is opposed to a retirement income tax.

Cut 84249 :38 *Outcue... Campbell reporting.*

Note to Editors: Reach Cardenas at 312-458-3609; Survey results: <http://bit.ly/1OdvuOX>.