

WAXB FIRST QUARTER 2015

ISSUES AND PROGRAMS LIST

Each program has a duration of 30 minutes

Each program has aired on the date indicated from 0600-0630

## Connecticut Radio Network Dialogue 2015 Guests and Subject Matters

(January, February, March)

January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 - Lisa Tepper Bates - Executive Director of the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness.

Subject Matter: On this Dialogue edition Lisa Tepper Bates, Executive Director of the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, discussed what's being done to address homelessness in the state. She says she believes that there's a whole new will in Connecticut to end a couple of forms of homelessness: homelessness among veterans and homelessness for people they categorize as chronically homeless. Tepper Bates says the chronically homeless are people who have been homeless a long time and who have a disability. She says these are folks that we need to find a way to take better care of. Tepper Bates tells that when they are homeless on our streets – not only is it the wrong thing – but it's also an expensive issue for society. She says they are often going to cycle in and out of jails and in and out of emergency rooms.

Lisa Tepper Bates says they are helping the chronically homeless by talking to each person who is homeless and understanding their set of needs. She says many of the people who are homeless need just a small amount of support to get up on their feet and stay housed. For others Tepper Bates says they might need more significant support like housing subsidization and case management services to keep them healthy, well, and housed. She says keeping them healthy, well, and housed often times means a much less expensive public cost than having them homeless on the streets or in shelters.

As for homeless veterans, Lisa Tepper Bates told that it's very exciting that the Veterans Administration at the national level has really stepped up the last few years and is providing substantial resources to help them identify every veteran and help them to be housed. She explained that for some of those veterans there is a disability status such as post traumatic stress disorder that has made it difficult for them to manage in a post-military deployment world. Tepper Bates says they need to provide the right type of help for those soldiers. For others she says it is just a

January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 - (Tepper Bates continued) - little bit of a helping hand to get on their feet as they adjust in the civilian world and in a difficult economy. She says they are working with both the mainstream providers, but also working with the veteran's specific service providers including the VA here in Connecticut, to reach out to each and every one of those veterans and provide the support that they need.

Another significant portion of the homeless population is families with children. Lisa Tepper Bates explained that every year they do a "point in time count" of homelessness. She says it's a once a year sort of census across the nation to count the homeless in our communities. Tepper Bates told that the point in time count last January showed that unfortunately Connecticut had about a 5% increase in families homeless with children. She says on the night of that count last year they counted 458 families being homeless. Tepper Bates says that was just on one night and told that over the course of a year some 13-hundred families will be homeless in Connecticut and that includes more than 24-hundred children. This year's point in time count will be conducted on January 28<sup>th</sup>. She says it's tough times across the nation and here in Connecticut.

The problem Lisa Tepper Bates says with homeless families with children is that there is considerable evidence that shows children who experience homelessness have a real set of issues to cope with that puts them behind. She says unfortunately children who have experienced homelessness have physical health problems, sometimes mental health problems, and are more likely to need special services in school. Tepper Bates says these children are also less likely to graduate from high school and are more likely to be incarcerated later in life. She says they are trying to build a fund so that emergency resources can be available to the frontline providers across Connecticut working with those families to keep them out of homelessness which they are calling "Be Homeful." Tepper Bates also added that Connecticut needs to address what she feels is the biggest problem: the lack of affordable housing in this state. She told that Connecticut has the 6<sup>th</sup> most expensive housing costs in the nation ... out of reach for many people.

January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015 - Bob Duff - State Senate Majority Leader, Democrat from Norwalk.

Subject Matter: On this show the new State Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff talked about issues facing the 2015 general assembly session. Governor Dannel Malloy in his State of the State address outlined an agenda whereby improving Connecticut's transportation system should be a top priority this session. Senator Duff told that the governor's message was music to his ears because it's the lifeblood of our economy by having a good transportation system. He explained that his district is in Fairfield County where traffic is probably the worst. Duff says they have been dogged by a crumbling infrastructure and though they have made really good investments over the last 4 years it has not been in pace with what they should have done over the last 20 years. So he feels that having a transportation plan and vision that goes for a generation or more is extremely important. Duff says it sends a real good signal to the business community as well by saying we're going to make these investments because people want reliability and predictability in their transportation and infrastructure. He says it'll show that they are serious about fixing it and moving it forward.

Now the big question is how is the State of Connecticut going to be able to pay for these transportation improvements? Right away the possible answer being floated about is new highway tolls. State Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff says he knows people are very anxious about the issue of tolls. But he says tolls are not the way they were many, many years ago when Connecticut had them with long lines and people throwing their money into the buckets. Duff says through technology paying tolls has changed quite a bit. He also says if they went that way to pay for the transportation improvements it wouldn't happen overnight. Senator Duff says the state would need federal approval and then they would have to be built.

Also in his State of the State address Governor Malloy talked about wanting to get a law on the books that would create what he called a "lock box" on transportation dollars. This would make money allocated for transportation off limits to the governor and legislature for other purposes, such as using it to try and erase a deficit that popped up. Senator Bob Duff feels that they are all in favor of a transportation lock box to be able to keep that money separate. He says he is

January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015 - (Duff continued) - certainly open to doing that so they are putting the money away in a place where it belongs so that those projects continue to move forward.

Of course the other big issue for the 2015 legislative session is the budget. Republicans have been saying for weeks that there are huge deficits on the horizon and it'll be a major challenge. Meantime Governor Malloy is taking an additional two weeks to deliver his budget address. State Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff told on the show that we are still in tough budgetary times. He said we are in a recovery ... but it's a recovery with a black cloud over it. Duff says they know there are not enough people back to work, that wages are not up, and there's lower tax revenue coming in because people aren't spending. So he says they will have to make some tough decisions by making government more efficient and cutting spending. However Senate Majority Leader Duff does feel that Governor Malloy will hold to his "no new taxes" pledge.

January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015 - Michael Lawlor - Chief Advisor to the Governor on Criminal Justice Issues.

Subject Matter: On this show Michael Lawlor, the governor's criminal justice advisor, discussed a monthly report that came out from the state's criminal justice division. It stated that Connecticut ended the year 2014 with a prison population of only 16,167 inmates ... an 18 year low. Lawlor told that the reason the state's prison population is dropping is because fewer people are committing crimes, fewer people are getting arrested, and so fewer people are being sentenced to prison. He says the most surprising thing and really the best news from this data is that the big change is amongst the youngest offenders. Lawlor told for example the number of inmates in the Department of Corrections between the ages of 18 and 21 today is only half of what it was just 6 years ago. He says we see the same thing going on in the juvenile system where there are very few kids ending up sitting in jail or sitting in detention. So Lawlor says if there are fewer people coming into the prison system at a young age it means there will even be a lot fewer in 5 to 10 years, which is the best news of all.

The governor's criminal justice advisor Michael Lawlor told on the program

January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015 - (Lawlor continued) - that most of the murders in Connecticut happen in Hartford, Bridgeport, and New Haven. But the number of people murdered last year in those 3 cities was about half of what it was 4 years ago. He says if you go back to the early 1990's typically there would be about 210 to 220 murders each year in Connecticut ... but in 2013 there were only 86 murders. Lawlor says when the final numbers come in for 2014 they expect that number to be even lower. So he says 2 years in a row Connecticut has had a historically low number of murders.

Now the economy has not been very good in recent times ... so one would actually expect crime in Connecticut to have gone up during this period but that hasn't been the case. So Michael Lawlor, the governor's criminal justice advisor, was asked on the show what are the factors that have helped crime go down, despite the rough economy. He says it's a number of factors including community policing. Lawlor says police have gotten very good at what they do and nowadays they focus on trying to prevent crime more so than simply responding to crime. He says a huge factor in discouraging crime these days is technology. Lawlor says it's almost impossible to commit a crime these days without being caught on video camera. He says there are lots of video surveillance cameras all over the place, police are armed with all kinds of surveillance equipment, and plus everyone has a camera on their cell phone. Lawlor even mentioned that these days things are captured on video surveillance where one never would have thought years ago like an elevator in the Ray Rice punch-out of his girlfriend. Lawlor told as well that in these modern times DNA evidence is available to link an individual to a crime scene. He also explained that communication is better these days where through technology everyone is instantly notified about Amber alerts. Lawlor says the criminal justice system and corrections have also done a much better job at risk assessment and behavioral modification through treatment and supervision which has also helped to drive crime down and reduce the prison population in the state.

Now some critics might say that a reason for a decreasing prison population in Connecticut is because the state has a liberal early release program that is allowing a lot of people out of prison early. Michael Lawlor responded to that accusation on the show saying the number of people being released from prison has dropped every year for the past 10 years. He says that's just a fact, that

January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015 - (more Lawlor continued) - releases are way down, there are a lot fewer people on parole and a lot fewer people on probation. Lawlor says the reason the prison population is coming down is not because more people are being released ... the reason is there are fewer people going to prison in the first place. He says the prison population is down about 18% compared to 2008 and the number of new people going into prison is down about 20%. Lawlor says the best news is there are a lot less younger people going to prison.

January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 - Ellen Shemitz - Executive Director of Connecticut Voices for Children.

Subject Matter: On this week's show Ellen Shemitz, Executive Director of Connecticut Voices for Children, discussed their agenda for this year's legislative session. She told that there has been a dramatic decrease in the priority the state places on the well being of children and families. The amount of funding for children's programs and services has gone down in recent years from about 40% 20 years ago to about 30% of the budget now made up of programs and services for children. Shemitz says they need to really step back and think about what that means for the future of the state. She says the reality is when there are big budget deficits like the state is facing there are always going to be winners and losers. Shemitz says the research has shown that if we don't make children top of the line winners then ultimately we will all be losers. She told that unless our children are thriving we won't be able to sustain a strong economy and develop the workforce that's needed for real success for the state. Shemitz says we need to invest in our children because they'll either be our future workforce, heads of family, consumers, voters of tomorrow ... or they could be part of our prison population which is a drain on our society. She says we want to make sure we're building the next generation of leaders, workers, consumers, and voters ... not the next generation of young people who were unable to meet their full potential and took the wrong path.

The Executive Director of Connecticut Voices for Children Ellen Shemitz told that their focus as a whole is ensuring that every child in Connecticut has a meaningful opportunity for success. She says that means health, education, and

January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 - (Shemitz continued) - stable economic means. Shemitz says children will not be able to succeed and do well in school if they are not healthy. She told that right now there is a pretty dramatic disparity in access to healthcare based on color and race. Ms. Shemitz says it's very important that Connecticut address that disparity while at the same time protect the gains that have been seen over the past several years. She says while there is going to be tremendous pressure to find areas to cut they need to make sure they don't cut the Husky healthcare program as a place for potential savings. Shemitz says that would have significant negative consequences for children and families today and the state over the long term. She told that Husky has been a huge success story for children and families.

Ellen Shemitz of Connecticut Voices for Children told that another one of their priorities in regard to health is behavioral health needs. She says the Department of Children and Families found a lack of early identification of social behavioral mental health needs and in some cases the lack of appropriate services. Shemitz says in the wake of Sandy Hook three commissions were formed and the big question was: what is the most appropriate response to make sure this never happens again? She says there are two answers to that: security and prevention. Shemitz says investing in our behavioral health system and ensuring early identification, not only for children but for young parents of families too, is the key way to go to prevent any problems down the road.

Connecticut Voices for Children Executive Director Ellen Shemitz also discussed on the show the importance of children's access to early childhood education. She told that the return on the investment can't be beat. Shemitz says when we invest dollars in early childhood education it leads to a healthy development for children in terms of their readiness for school and they do better in the long term so it is a huge benefit.

For this legislative session Ellen Shemitz talked about two things Connecticut Voices for Children wants to see. She talked about the need to fully restore the state's earned income tax credit. Shemitz says they also want a dependent exemption allowed in Connecticut for the head of household who takes care of a loved one - whether it's a child, disabled, or elderly person. She said that Connecticut is 1 of only 2 states with a personal income tax that doesn't allow it.



February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 - (Sullivan continued) - He also told that if a tax preparer says why don't you have your money sent to this depository account, and then we'll cut you back a check minus your fee ... don't do it, they are probably going to steal it. Sullivan told listeners to be sure they are dealing with someone who is reputable and check with the Better Business Bureau. He says if you are dealing with an attorney or a certified public accountant or a certified financial planner the chances are ... while there could be a mistake ... it's not going to be a question of fraud or theft. But Sullivan says there are unfortunately people that suddenly appear at tax time in a storefront office and when people go back to get their refund they are gone.

February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015 - Carolyn Treiss - Executive Director of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

Subject Matter: On this week's show Carolyn Treiss, Executive Director of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, discussed the Family Medical Leave Act. It is the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of passage of the federal Family Medical Leave Act enacted in 1993. This mandated that employers provide unpaid leave for medical family reasons. Ms. Treiss says that was very significant because it was an acknowledgment at the time of a changing workforce and changing family dynamics. She says for the first time it allowed people to balance work and responsibilities of being family caregivers. Treiss says that was a huge, huge step at the time. Now three years before that Connecticut had passed its Family Medical Leave Act as Connecticut was the first in the nation, which Treiss says is a badge of honor that the state should be very proud of.

Carolyn Treiss says now in 2015 they are looking to go a little bit further and have **paid** leave act. She told that the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women is actually co-chairing the Connecticut campaign for paid family leave. Treiss says it's a coalition of about 50 different organizations and all feel strongly that we've moved to a place where paid family and medical leave is necessary. She said it would include all employees and it would require workers to pay into a system at a very small amount of their salary ... and would reap a great benefit from it in the event that they would need to take the leave. Treiss says they could

February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015 - (Treiss continued) - use their leave for reasons that are currently defined in the existing Family and Medical Leave Act law ... but says they are recommending adding that you could care for a sibling, a grandparent, or a grandchild regardless of their age. She says they feel this is an important addition that reflects reality in today's world with extended family members caring for others.

Carolyn Treiss says they propose that employees would receive 100% of their weekly earnings, up to a cap of a thousand dollars a week. She says they think this is especially important for lower income workers who really need the little that they make as it is for their families. Ms. Treiss says they feel that people should be able to take up to 12 weeks of paid leave within a 12 month period and do it incrementally. She says what they are trying to do is acknowledge the fact that people have responsibilities to care for others, that people themselves get ill, and women have babies, so they need to make the family and medical leave system work. Treiss says the way you do it is to provide this leave PAID! She says they felt for political reasons that it made the most sense to make this employee funded, and based on other states that have done it this way like California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. Treiss added that the big key to family medical leave (whether it be unpaid like it is now or paid which they'd like to see it) is that it protects worker's jobs and guarantees a worker a job when they are due back at work. She says their proposal also protects workers from being retaliated against or penalized when they come back to work. Treiss says they are going to tell the stories of real people who would have benefited from having paid leave for a situation of illness or crisis and how it can change people's lives in trying to get this passed by the legislature. She says the need for this is undisputed and these people's stories will make that very clear.