Local bands uniting Saturday for fundraiser to support WKU Public Media

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Eighteen bands and solo musicians will hold a daylong fundraiser Nov. 22 at the White Squirrel Brewery for WKU Public Media following federal funding cuts that necessitated the latter's removal of one-third its staff.

The bands, 15 of them local, will perform across two stages 11:30 a.m. to around 9:30-10 p.m., said Ernie Small, organizer for the "Pints for Public Media" fundraiser. They plan for the fundraiser to include QR codes for donations as well as T-shirts and other merchandise for sale — with all proceeds going to the local media organization, which includes WKU Public Radio and WKU PBS, Small said.

"I think we believe in public media and certainly grew up with PBS and the radio station, listening to different news and music and different things," Small said. "It felt like it was an important thing to try to help support."

Upon President Donald Trump's request, Congress in summer cut $1.1 billion from Corporation of Public Broadcasting, the largest funding source for public radio nationally. Cut proponents, including Trump, argued in favor of the defunding with claims that public broadcasting fueled propaganda; public broadcasting leaders, such as NPR President and CEO Katherine Maher, reaffirmed commitment to informing the public and decried ripple effects to local public broadcasting stations nationwide as CPB winds down operations to close.

WKU Public Media has bolstered its own fundraising efforts and received about 40% more in donations than usual since its fiscal year began July 1 — but the federal clawback still necessitated the elimination of a third its staff on Oct. 1: six full-time and two part-time positions, according to the nonprofit.

The backroom bands are "Fat Box, the Michael Gough Group, Bueller's Day Off, Tyrone Dunn,

the Amazing Figtones, Bad Navigator, the Song Farmers, Marmalade, BG Rock Academy, and the Ernie Small Blues Band. The tasting room bands are the Lowland Ramblers, Mark Whitely, Jane Pearl, Leslie Meng, the Mt Victor Revue, Jay

Rin, and Blake Lynn," according to the event flyer.

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People can donate at wkyufm.org.