

THE VOTER

SEPTEMBER 2019

P.O. Box 68214, Jackson, MS 39286-8214

http://www.lwv-ms.org/Jackson_League.html

<https://www.facebook.com/LWVJA/>

League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Carol Andersen



The impact of the August 7 raids by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency at companies across Mississippi on families and the communities where these individuals live and work has been shattering, with immigrant children placed in vulnerable situations and businesses that relied on immigrant labor and on immigrant consumers facing sharp declines.

What is the solution to our "immigration problem" in America? Even ignoring the humanitarian argument for better solutions, our capitalist economy *needs* immigrants. Economists across the board agree the U.S. requires immigrant labor to help our economy grow. It is estimated that, for every 1 percent increase in immigration to the U.S., GDP rises by 1.15 percent. Numerous key industries in our country are facing a labor shortage, and those with the greatest labor shortages are the industries that largely employ immigrants. From construction to agriculture to the restaurant industry, America needs more immigrants of all skill levels.

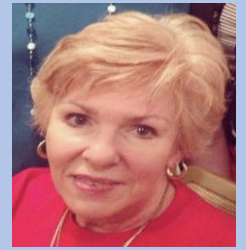
Beyond the fiscal rationale for better immigration policies, the League of Women Voters believes

those policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet economic, business and employment needs; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. The League believes all persons should receive fair treatment under the law and moreover, the League believes it is critical for the U.S. to encourage immigrant participation in our democracy. The League supports federal immigration laws that provide efficient, expeditious systems for immigrants to enter the United States and exhorts the 116th Congress to take immediate action to pass common sense, fair immigration policies that end the crisis at our border, ends the separation of families, and provides a path to citizenship.

Please join us for a panel discussion on current and ongoing threats to our Mississippi immigrant community at our LWV-Jackson Area September 21 member meeting. The September meeting will be held at the Fondren Presbyterian Church, 3220 Old Canton Road, Jackson, beginning with sign-in and a brunch at 9:30 a.m. The panel discussion is scheduled to begin at approximately 10:45 a.m. All LWV members and the public are welcome.

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Elaine Talbott



The League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area is growing. We would like to take this opportunity to welcome all of the new members who have joined since our last membership meeting. We look forward to getting to know you better and hearing your thoughts as to how we can make our League better and more visible in our community.

It occurs to us on your LWV-JA board that we haven't done a thorough job of explaining how your annual membership dues are used to do League business. When you join your local League you are automatically enrolled in your state and national League as well. Each local League sets their annual dues. In Jackson it is \$50 for a primary member, \$25 for each additional household member and \$5 for students. Your annual renewal dues occur each year on the anniversary of your initial joining.

State (LWV-MS) and national (LWV-US) Leagues bill the local Leagues for an annual per-member-payment (PMP). At present it is \$32, \$16 and zero for LWV-US for primary, additional and student. For LWV-MS it is \$10, \$5 and zero for primary, additional and student. That leaves \$8, \$4 and \$5 respectively with LWV-JA. As PMP payments have increased over time, LWV-JA has elected to keep our annual membership dues at \$50/25/5. Around the country some local Leagues have dues as high as \$100 per quarter to cover the cost state offices, etc.

To cover our budget we do fund raising and donation solicitation activities rather than raise our dues. Those members who are able make regular donations over and above their annual dues.

Even so we realize that \$50 at one time may be difficult for some members or potential members. Your LWV-JA board has addressed this matter. We feel that finances should never be an impediment to those who believe in and are willing to work for good government. Please reach out to your President Carol Andersen, your treasurer Lakeeta Jones or **Elaine Talbott your membership director to discuss your particular needs. We want everyone to have a seat at the table.**

Membership Brunch 9/21/19

Fondren Presbyterian Church, 3330 Old Canton Rd, Jackson, MS
9:30 - 12:00

Panel Discussion on Immigration Reform starts at 10:45



League of Women Voters – Jackson Area 2019-2020



Officers and Board of Directors

President

Carol Andersen

1st Vice-President

Program/Administration

Deloris Lee

2nd Vice-President

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Secretary

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Lakeeta Jones

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Membership: Elaine Talbott

Voter Editor: Savina Schoenhofer

Appointed Directors

Social Media/PR: Joy Parikh

National Items: Emily Stanfield

State Items: Annie Reiher

Nominating Committee

Dierdre Payne, Chair

Joy Parikh

Barbara Powell

Calendar

Sept 14	Ready to Run Mississippi 8:30am-4:00pm Millsaps College, Jackson Click for more details
Sept 21	LWV-JA Membership Brunch 9:30am-noon Fondren Presbyterian Church 3330 Old Canton Rd., Jackson
Sept 25 Sept 28	National Voter Registration Day LWV-JA Voter Registration Wellsfest Jamie Fowler Boyll Park 9:30 – 4:30
Oct 8	LWV-JA Board Meeting*
Dec 10	LWV-JA Board Meeting*
Jan TBA	LWV-JA Board Meeting*
Jan 14	Millsaps Art & Lecture Series “Possibilities and Limitations: 100 Years of Women’s Suffrage” Sponsored by LWVMS
Jan 21-22	LWVMS Legislative Day, Jackson
Feb 11	LWV-JA Board Meeting*
Apr 14	LWV-JA Board Meeting*

* Unless otherwise noted, all board meeting will be at 5:00 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, 121 Jefferson St., Jackson. All meetings are open to the public.

LWVJA Seeks Voter Services Director to Coordinate Voter Education and Voter Registration Activities, a key function of the LWV.

For more information, contact Carol Andersen.

People Powered Fair Maps, LWV 50-state + DC Redistricting Campaign

In June, the Supreme Court ruled that partisan gerrymandering is a political question because no fair test exists for courts to determine when partisan gerrymandering has gone too far. That means all federal courts will be hands-off even when redistricting intentionally decreases the voting power of voters based on their political party.

Redistricting has long been a priority issue of the League, and a signature part of the LWV Campaign for Making Democracy work. In response to the Supreme Court decision, the LWV has launched a 50-state + DC campaign called the *People Powered Fair Maps Campaign*. The national board has authorized half a million dollars to launch this campaign, and every state League will receive some of that funding through grants to develop their own response to this threat to democracy.

National Voter Registration Day is September 24

Tuesday, September 24, is National Voter Registration Day. League of Women Voters activities will take place across the nation, making the LWV the single largest on-the-ground partner of this holiday.

Restore the Voting Rights Act

August 6 was the 54th anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA), a landmark piece of voting rights legislation. However, the Supreme Court's *Shelby County v. Holder* decision in 2013 overturned an essential provision of the VRA which has led to countless attacks on the voting rights of Americans. Since *Shelby*, voter ID laws, gerrymandering, and voter purges have created barriers to voting for all people—especially young people and communities of color—in 20 states across our country.

Congress currently has legislation to restore the Voting Rights Act but has taken no action despite mounting evidence of voter discrimination. LWV members nationwide are urged to speak out for voting rights by contacting their Representative and asking them to support H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act.

She Is Me Campaign

As the League of Women Voters kick off the centennial year of women winning the right to vote, the national League aims to bridging the gap between our legacy and our destiny with *She Is Me*, a League-wide celebration of voting reformers from various backgrounds and experiences. Take a look [here](#). Check out LWV posts on Facebook and Twitter, and browse the hashtag #ShelsMeLWV.

Our Priorities

Elections Tools

We are all equal at the ballot box, but only if we vote. These tools support our work to engage voters and ensure Americans have the information they need to participate in elections.

Voting Rights Tools

Voting is a fundamental right and all eligible voters should have the equal opportunity to exercise that right. These tools provide assistance in our work to ensure that our elections remain free, fair, and accessible.

Other Issues Tools

From advancing health care to protecting the environment, voters care about many issues. Use these tools to promote our goals of social and economic justice as well as the health and safety of all Americans.



Details @

<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/mission-impact-tools>



Senior Editors
Ted Ownby and
Charles Reagan Wilson

Associate Editors
Ann J. Abadie,
Odie Lindsey, and
James G. Thomas, Jr.

The MISSISSIPPI ENCYCLOPEDIA

League of Women Voters of Mississippi History

The League of Women Voters (LWV) began in 1920 at the recommendation of Carrie Chapman Catt of the National American Woman Suffrage Association as a means of educating white women to vote. When the Nineteenth Amendment went into effect despite Mississippi's rejection of it, the same women who had lobbied the Mississippi legislature on behalf of woman suffrage organized the state LWV and then began working to form local chapters. By the first state convention in 1921, the group had more than one thousand members, with chapters in Greenwood, Hattiesburg, Laurel, Columbus, Brookhaven, Jackson, and other towns; by the following year 2,080 members had joined twenty-eight official state chapters.

Early efforts of the Mississippi LWV included support for legislation benefiting children and women, such as the 1921 Sheppard-Towner Maternal and Infancy Act, which made federal funds available for pre- and postnatal care. The LWV's national president, Maud Wood Park, addressed a 1921 joint session of the

Mississippi legislature, advocating on behalf of the Sheppard-Towner Act as well as denouncing national efforts to introduce an equal rights bill on the grounds that it would threaten existing laws protecting women's interests, such as the right to alimony. The league also supported an equal guardianship law that passed during this legislative session.

League organizers in Mississippi faced resistance from women suspicious of the national organization's aims. National LWV representative Liba Peshakova first found that Mississippians believed that the organization was "militant, aggressive and a political party," but recruitment efforts improved when civic leaders such as Helen G. Yerger, women's editor of the *Jackson Clarion-Ledger*, threw their support behind the group. The Mississippi LWV nevertheless continued to struggle to gain members and faced a dearth of leadership.

According to a 1931 report, the Mississippi LWV's priorities included prevention of war, child-labor reform, maternal and infant hygiene, women's representation on the state textbook committee, and public employment opportunities for women. By the following year, however, the records of the national LWV show no evidence of any activity in Mississippi, and the state organization remained defunct until 1950, though activity in local chapters might have continued. In one-party Mississippi, the group struggled to gain a following as a nonpartisan voter education organization.

In 1946 a group of Jackson women invited representatives from the national office to help restart a unit, and by 1956 the LWV again had active chapters in Bay St. Louis, Greenville, Jackson, Meridian, and Natchez, with a total of 568 members. However, many Mississippians remained suspicious of the national organization's engagement with international relations and civil rights, areas perceived as having ties to communism. League leaders in the state tried desperately to provide reassurance, emphasizing noncontroversial programs and the LWV's nonpartisan stance and remaining silent on controversial topics. In addition to focusing on basic voter education, water resource management, fire prevention, and city planning, the league worked on behalf of children's issues, such as poor conditions in juvenile detention centers.

The LWV's avoidance of civil rights issues created a curious situation for an organization ostensibly devoted to voters' rights and political engagement. Feminist Lucy Somerville Howorth left the LWV because she found it a "studious, lady-like group that wouldn't really tangle." And indeed, league minutes show repeated calls for extensive "study" of contentious issues rather than action. Perhaps because of such silence or because of the national LWV's reputation, the statewide membership dropped to 347 in 1959. The group's failure to organization as integrationist. Following the 1962 integration of the University of Mississippi, the founding of conservative groups such as Women for Constitutional Government siphoned off women uncomfortable with the LWV's public perception. Through the early 1960s, Mississippi LWV meetings continued to avoid the topics of voting rights, segregation, and violence. The 1963 annual meeting, for publicly support segregation resulted in a "loss of prestige" as many white southerners perceived the example, made no mention of the bloody September 1962 integration of the University of Mississippi or its political implications for the Oxford chapter or Mississippi more broadly. Despite violent reprisals against boycotts in Jackson and the assassination of Medgar Evers, the minutes of another meeting later in 1963 merely noted that "members . . . expressed opinions that certain subjects were not as they should be." Such studied disengagement made it difficult for the organization to demonstrate its relevance at a time when voting rights was a central national concern and Mississippi the key battleground. For much of its history, the LWV supported the poll tax and literacy tests, the most prominent methods of disfranchising African Americans, if those practices were "uniformly administered." As activists risked and gave their lives to register black voters, the league instructed members to go about their voter registration work by "talk[ing] quietly with your acquaintances" lest their efforts be confused with those of the civil rights groups.

By 1964, however, the Mississippi LWV could no longer avoid civil rights, and many did not expect the league to survive the civil rights movement. The state league president during the 1960s, Betty Rall, corresponded frequently with June Morgan of the national office, describing the loss of twenty-five Jackson members amid fears about the planned Freedom Schools and voter registration efforts by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Congress of Racial Equality. When she received letters from league women in other states whose children were planning to be Freedom Summer volunteers, Rall responded with ambivalence. She applauded the voters' basic educational mission but warned of Mississippians' violent mistrust of activists from outside the state. The League of Women Voters in Mississippi remained all-white until the 1960s.

In the mid-1960s a shift occurred as more conservative members left the league. The Oxford chapter, founded in 1962 and including a number of women professors and others affiliated with the University of Mississippi, remained quite active. The state league advocated on behalf of public education as legislators began exploring the diversion of funds to private schools to avoid integration. League women worked with public schools and Head Start programs and began interacting with black and interracial civic groups, an activity that chased off additional conservative women. In 1969 the Mississippi LWV had 238 members divided among chapters in Jackson, Meridian, Vicksburg, Long Beach, and Oxford. In the late 1960s the league began to collaborate with the American Association of University Women to sponsor Legislative Days on which women attended sessions of the state legislature. In 1968 the league finally saw the success of its four-decade-long effort to gain Mississippi's women the right to serve on juries. The LWV began to support the Equal Rights Amendment in the early 1970s and adopted a pro-choice stance in 1990, positions that alienated some members. By the second decade of the twenty-first century, the state had only two local LWV groups, the Mississippi Gulf Coast League of Women Voters and the League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area.

Written by [Becca Walton, University of Mississippi](#)

<https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/league-of-women-voters/>

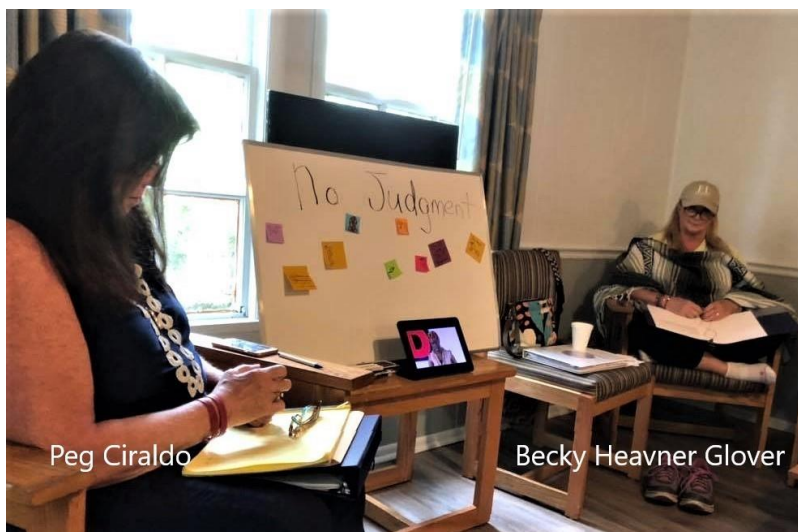
Submitted by Dierdre Payne, LWV-JA

A roundup of highlights from the most recent LWV-MS board meeting, held August 24 at Roosevelt State Park, Morton, MS:

- Dierdre Payne of Jackson was welcomed to the LWV-MS board as a director at large.
- Local Leagues reported their membership numbers as of August:
 - Oxford-North Mississippi, 80
 - Jackson Area, 82
 - East Central, 47
 - Pine Belt, 35
 - Gulf Coast, 45



- The board reviewed the national Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy (DEI) initiative. The Gulf Coast, Pine Belt and East Central Leagues have signed on to the policy; the Jackson Area and Oxford-North Mississippi Leagues will confirm their status at their next local board meetings. The LWVMS reaffirmed the LWVUS DEI Policy and will review all Board actions through a DEI lens.
- The LWV-MS has opted-in with the LWVUS Redistricting Initiative, in response to a recent Supreme Court ruling that partisan gerrymandering is a political question because no fair test exists for courts to determine when partisan gerrymandering has gone too far. As a result, all federal courts will be hands-off even when redistricting intentionally decreases the voting power of voters based on their political party. In response, the LWV has launched a 50-state + DC campaign called the People Powered Fair Maps Campaign. The national board has authorized half a million dollars to launch this campaign, and every state League will receive some of that funding through grants to develop their own response to this threat to democracy.
- Approximately one-third of the candidates in the Mississippi primary election submitted biographical information for voters to access via the Vote411.org website. The site is now being revised in preparation for the Nov. 5 General Election.



- Several local Mississippi Leagues have hosted screenings of Backpack Full of Cash, a film exploring the real cost of privatizing America's public schools. Parents for Public Schools is underwriting the screening fees, making the cost for local Leagues just \$150 for a screening. Gulf Coast officers have viewed it, and are making plans to bring it to their local area. East Central is coordinating screenings →



and discussions to coincide with a Mississippi Humanities Council public discussion about public education in its “Ideas on Tap” think-and-drink series. The Pine Belt League has also made a commitment to screen the film, as has the Jackson-Area League.

- The importance of an accurate Census 2020 was reemphasized. There are resources available via webinar to help guide Leagues in supporting the effort.
- The date for LWVMS Legislative Day was confirmed: January 21-22, 2020, in Jackson.



Member Profile by Savina Schoenhofer

Deloris Lee



LWV: Tell me a bit about yourself (full name, where you live now, where you are from, family)?

DL: I've been here in Jackson since 1978. I was raised in Vicksburg, from Memphis. I have two grown sons, one 19 year old grandson and twins, the latest addition to the family. They are 8 months old, a boy and a girl. They all live here in Jackson, except for my youngest son who lives in the Dallas area.

LWV: Do you get a lot of baby time?

DL: Not a whole lot, they both work, but I try to. Sometimes I have to go love on those babies.

LWV: What have been your activities since living here (jobs, other organization memberships, etc.)?

DL: I am retired from MDOT. I was in human resources, I worked for the state for 31 years. MDOT was the last agency I worked for and the one I worked for the longest. I started off working for the Department of Medicaid, during the later part of Ray Mabus' administration, in the heyday with all the corruption, clearing up all that, so it was really exciting to be in the investigation department during that time. And I left there and went to the State Personnel Board and then to MDOT.

I am a member of the NAACP, joined the local branch back in the early 1990's. I hold the office of First Vice President, and also the Chair of the Labor-Industry Committee at the state level. I am still a member of MACE (Mississippi Alliance of State Employees), we are part of the Communication Workers of America. I joined MACE in the '90s or late '80s. I am also a member of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute, and I'm active on the local, state and regional level; I received the APRI Woman of the Year (2019) award this year at the regional conference in Texarkana, AR.

In the LWV, I have served as 1st VP locally several times, including currently, and as National Items Chair locally, and 1st VP (Programs) and 2nd VP (Membership) on the State level.

LWV: To what do you attribute your activism?

DL: My mentor was Mrs. Robbye Stewart, a very good friend of mine. I went to a community meeting that I was invited to by a coworker and this was when I first started in state government, we worked at Medicaid. She was telling me about an organization she was involved in, can't remember the name, Rev. Hightower was president. I went to the meeting and happened to sit next to Mrs. Stewart and we just started talking. At that meeting the local NAACP president was there, and he said as long as you are a part of us, why don't you come on and join the NAACP and one thing led to another. Mrs. Stewart was truly a community activist. She had moved back to Jackson after living in Rochester NY – that's how I got started in it. Mrs. Stewart was committed to mentoring young women of promise. She just kind of took me under her wing.

LWV: Have you carried on with that tradition of mentoring?

DL: I have tried to. There have been a couple of young ladies across the years that I could see some promise, but so many of the women that I am meeting now, they are already on board, I've seen a revolution....it's wonderful! They are already way down the road and seem to be doing quite well, they have purpose, they have vision and they have all this energy...it's great to see. At the time I got in, my children were small and whatever they were involved in, they involved me....chauffeuring, Scouts...but in following Mrs. Stewart, I started doing things I was interested in, and so it just grew from that. I kind of followed her into several organizations, most of them I'm still active in, such as the NAACP, National Council of Negro Women, League of Women Voters, Federation of Democratic Women - she encouraged me to join them. Needless to say, she was a very involved person and curious about a long of things and very politically motivated. She always believed in direct action, if you had to pick up signs and march, she would do it, a "direct action" person.

LWV: You've lived through an exciting time!

DL: Yes, I've seen lots of changes. It's been interesting to say the least, seeing people come and go and ideas come and go. It's all part of things evolving - you look and see that you can track how things evolved from one thing to another. You don't mind joining - I'm at the point now where I realize I can let these younger people go on - if they want help, I can give them help or I can be a support system for them and they've got the drive and the energy...now I'm more like, let me do the fun stuff, always believed in balancing things but the fun is really kind of tipping the scale as I get older. I think there's always, no matter what age you are, a place for you to do something to help move things forward for the majority of the people, even if you're just calling somebody and saying don't forget to vote tomorrow, or let's go to the polls together. Would you like me to come pick you up...that kind of thing, you can do more good I think behind the scenes than you can being out in front - that's just my philosophy...I can get more done behind the scenes. I'm self-motivated. If I see something interesting or something I believe in, I'll just jump in...that's just me...everybody has their own style. I don't necessarily need to have a leader...but there's nothing wrong with having leaders, nothing wrong with working with other people...if I join something I want to be active in it. No point in just having your name down on a piece of paper. I guess you could say I'm a "do-er"!

LWV: Have you ever run for political office?

DL: (laughing) No, I have not lost my mind yet!

LWV: When did you join the League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area, and what drew you to the organization?

LWV: What drew you to join the League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area?

DL: The League has always been about voter registration and voter education, that's what I really like about the league. I can't remember specifically what was going on at the time I joined, but the League was so closely aligned with other organizations I belonged to, I thought it was a good pairing. Fran Lieber - I was very impressed with Fran when I first met her - I liked her spirit and her energy...she was really serious about what she did, she was committed.

LWV: Given the range of organizations you have been involved in over the years, how have you blended partisanship and non-partisanship?

DL: I understand how the League had to be non-partisan, I also belonged to other organizations that were non-partisan. I kind of instinctively knew there was a line there that you don't want to cross. That has been not really a sticking point for me. I've been asked several times to run for president in the LWV but I really don't want to give

up my partisanship. I like the freedom of being in partisan activities and non-partisan activities. And I understand why in certain positions you can't do that.

LWV: Do you have a particular League memory you could share?

DL: Fran and I went over to Emory University to a meeting, it was like a workshop for leaders in the south, sponsored by some part of the League and there were people there from other states. It was really interesting, a fond memory not only of the League but of being with Fran, seeing how she interacted with people.

LWV: What do you see as the strengths of the League of Women Voters? What keeps the League relevant?

DL: I think one of the things that keeps the League relevant not only locally but also nationally is that it are involved with things that are affecting people today – climate change, voter education, voter registration, money in politics – I guess if I would sum it up, I would say the League is constantly involved in good government, not from the politician side but good government for everyday people and they continue to do that. The League is visible; on the national level, they don't mind going up on the hill. On the national website, it's policy, not politics; even coming down the state and local level, that which affects our lives - policy.

LWV: How might the League reach out to new, younger, more diverse members?

DL: I think maybe the League should go to community colleges, and even four-year universities and explain what the League does; and when we are doing voter registration, take that opportunity to let young people know about the League.

Local League Reports

by Carol Andersen

East Central—Seventy-four people attended a screening of *Backpack Full of Cash*, a film exploring the real cost of privatizing America's public schools. A priority issues survey was administered following the film, which revealed education and health care as local priorities. The *Meridian Star* agreed to publish responses to the survey questions regarding the issues.

Jackson Area—The Jackson League co-coordinated a judicial candidate forum with Mississippi Center for Justice. The forum was attended by approximately 30 people and was livestreamed. President Carol Andersen and Membership Director Elaine Talbott met with the Southern Poverty Law Center on a Get Out the Vote campaign for upcoming elections. The Jackson League will host its annual membership brunch Sept. 21. The program will be a panel discussion on immigration. The Jackson League is working with Mississippi Public Broadcasting to create a series of interstitials on aspects of women's suffrage in Mississippi, to be aired throughout 2020, the 100th anniversary year of the 19th amendment and the founding of the League of Women Voters.

Pine Belt—The Pine Belt League had a presence at the Farmers Market in Sumrall, and hosted two candidates' nights, one with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and one with the Hattiesburg Chamber of Commerce. Both were very well attended. The Pine Belt League hosted the Pine Belt Women's Forum at the Civic Center. There are plans for candidates' forums and debates in the fall.

Oxford-North Mississippi—The Oxford League hosted eight candidate forums in July leading up to the primary elections in August. There are fall plans to focus on House and Senate elections.