



# League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area **THE VOTER**

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

[http://www.lwv-ms.org/Jackson\\_League.html](http://www.lwv-ms.org/Jackson_League.html)

## OCTOBER 2018

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



**Kate Farabaugh and Julia Weaver**  
Mississippi Public Education PAC board members

### ***Mississippi Public Education PAC Representatives to Speak at LWV-JA Meeting Nov. 17, 2018.***

Representatives of the Mississippi Public Education PAC (MSPEPAC), a nonpartisan political action committee that champions public education, will discuss the PAC’s work at the League of Women Voters-Jackson Area membership meeting Saturday, November 17, 2018. The meeting will be held at the Willie Morris Branch Library, 4912 Old Canton Road, Jackson, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. This meeting is free and open to League members and the general public.

Founded in 2016 by a group of passionate public school parents from around the state who advocate for high-quality public schools, MSPEPAC’s mission is to help elect pro-

public education candidates to the Mississippi Legislature to strengthen, support and protect existing public schools in the state. The MSPEPAC is a nonpartisan organization.

The MSPEPAC’s mission aligns with the League’s position on education, which states, “The League supports uniformity in student opportunity, including equity in spending and quality of education.” To this end, the League maintains a number of positions related to education, which can be found on the Mississippi LWV website: [http://www.lwv-ms.org/about\\_action.html](http://www.lwv-ms.org/about_action.html).

Speaking on behalf of the MSPEPAC will be Tupelo resident Kate Farabaugh, who has been involved in Tupelo’s public schools since her first child entered kindergarten. She currently serves on the MSPEPAC board, as well as PTO president at Carver Elementary and Tupelo High School. She will be joined by fellow MSPEPAC board member Julia Weaver of Ocean Springs, who is a longtime advocate for children and public schools and is one of the founders of Fed Up with 50th, a statewide public education advocacy group. She has been a volunteer at Oak Park Elementary, Taconi Elementary, Ocean Springs Middle School and Ocean Springs High School, all in Ocean Springs.

Please plan to attend and bring a guest.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Carol Andersen**



We are in the midst of an important season in the political life of our state, with elections pending on Nov. 6 for all of our congressional offices, four special elections to fill vacant seats in the Mississippi State Legislature, and elections to fill one Mississippi Supreme Court justice position and numerous intermediate appellate courts and local judge positions.

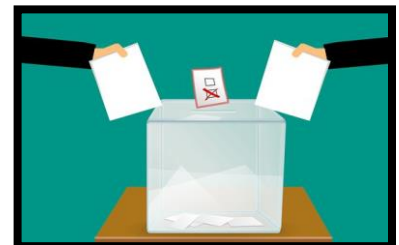
Your local League of Women Voters has been very busy these last several weeks, registering new voters, updating voter registration information for folks who have changed addresses since the last election, helping coordinate candidate forums and generally informing and educating our communities about the elections and voting processes. You may read about some of these activities in detail elsewhere in this newsletter.

The National League of Women Voters recently shared a very useful article that appeared on the [Elle magazine website](#) which offers several very good suggestions for how we can all participate in the upcoming elections, as citizens, whether we have 5 minutes or an entire day to spare. A few highlighted activities are summarized below. I hope you will scan this list of ways to participate in our local political processes this election season. I read a fitting line once that said democracy is not a natural force or secret weapon; it only works when most citizens actively participate. Here are a few ways we can all participate in our democracy, whether we have 5 minutes or several hours per week.

1. Get registered to vote—and actually show up to the polls—on Nov. 6.
2. Talk to your friends and family about their voting plans. Research shows if someone has thought through their plan on Election Day, that increases the likelihood they will actually go and vote.
3. Post on social media. Even small things, like posting a selfie with your voter registration card or voting sticker, is helpful.
4. Donate to a candidate or a related organization
5. Volunteer for a campaign. Your role could be as intensive as going door to door talking to voters or as simple as dropping off food for volunteers and staffers.
6. Volunteer with a political organization, such as your local chapter of the League of Women Voters where we help register voters, host debates, staff information tables at festivals, and inform voters about various ballot initiatives.
7. Become a poll worker.

As you can see, there are many ways you can become involved in our political process. The League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area encourages you to get involved in any way your schedule allows, and at the very least, cast your vote on Election Day.

See you at the polls Nov. 6!



# League of Women Voters – Jackson Area 2018-2019

## Officers and Board of Directors

### President

Carol Andersen

### 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President

#### Program/Administration

Deloris Lee

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President

#### Voter Services

Anna Ingebretsen Hall

### Secretary

Megan Tidwell

### Treasurer

Gene Everitt

### Elected Directors

Membership: Elaine Talbott

Voter Editor: Savina Schoenhofer

### Appointed Directors

Social Media/PR: Joy Parikh

National Items: Vacancy

State Items: Annie Reiher

### Nominating Committee

Elaine Talbott

Nicki Green

Barbara Powell



## Calendar

Nov. 10 **Board Meeting\***

Nov. 17 **Membership Meeting,**

10:30-11:30 AM

Willie Morris Library

4912 Old Canton Rd.

Jackson, MS 39211

TOPIC: Mississippi Public Education PAC

Jan. 8 **Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m.\***

Feb. Date TBD

LWV-MS Legislative Day

Feb. 12 **Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m.\***

Mar. 2 **Membership Meeting**

Willie Morris Library

4912 Old Canton Road

Jackson, MS 39211

Topic: TBD

Mar. 12 **Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m.\***

Dates and Locations To Be Determined for:

LWV-JA Annual Meeting

LWV-MS Annual Meeting

Unless otherwise noted, all board meeting will be at 6:00 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.



# LWV-JA MEMBER PROFILE

## JOANNE OLSON



For several years in the 1980's I served as Director of a program for teen school dropouts from low income homes. One of our enrollees, 17-year-old Jack, was living with his 22-year-old guardian after being released after 10 months in pre-trial detention for a crime he did not commit. While Jack was enrolled in the program, he stole a car "because he needed one." One of the program's goals for Jack was to have him gain entry level employment. After completing the program's job-getting skills component, Jack was ready to take his completed application to the Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant. However, this teen, after spending a year in jail and stealing a car, simply did not have the confidence to walk into the restaurant and hand the manager his application.

At the same time I was working with teen school dropouts, my own children, Pete, Matt, and Kristin, after finishing at Casey Elementary School, were enrolled at Chastain Middle School and Murrah High School. While volunteering as a PTA member at these schools, I often heard that lower income parents "didn't care" enough to come to parent teacher conferences or otherwise participate in school activities. . While working with the dropouts, I realized that many lower income parents simply did not have the confidence to enter the school and speak with the teachers.

In August of this year, I participated in a voter registration drive that ultimately resulted in well over 200 voter registration forms being submitted. Not everyone we talked to wanted to register to vote. One common response from people who were eligible to vote was some variation of "I've been in jail and don't want to go back. Even though they

(DOC) told me I can vote, I don't want to because it might cause me trouble." These individuals had a real fear that voting could result in their being arrested and returned to jail.

A second frequent response was "I don't believe in voting." This response remains a mystery to me but definitely signals a need for greater understanding of civics.

Recently, I have spent several afternoons participating in a get-out-the-vote effort that identified 2000 voters removed from the voter registration list in Hinds County and also identified over 10,000 citizens who are on the voter rolls but have not voted in recent elections. The volunteers prepared letters to the dropped voters telling them how to get reregistered and postcards to many of the non-voters encouraging them to vote on November 6, 2018.

Amazingly, both the voter registration and the get-out-the-vote effort were organized by a group of 7 committed citizens who felt the need to take action.

Obviously the problems of voter confidence and knowledge of the voting process and current issues cannot be solved by any single organization. It will take many, many groups organizing voter registration drives, informing citizens of issues, participating in get-out-the-vote activities, canvassing neighborhoods, arranging forums, and sitting around dining room tables preparing informational letters and postcards for mailing. The League of Women voters can certainly be one of these many groups who together can make a difference.

## **Drawing the Line: A Proposal to Amend How State Legislative Districts are Assigned**

### **Carol Anderson reports on Brad Pigott's Presentation at the September 15, 2018 Meeting of the League of Women Voters-Jackson Area**



The practice of manipulating the boundaries of electoral districts for party or class gain dates to the earliest days of U.S. government, and it plays a significant role in the divisive nature of American politics. Jackson attorney Brad Pigott shared some of the history of political redistricting – or gerrymandering – with the League of Women Voters-Jackson Area at their September meeting, and discussed a proposal the state League of Women Voters is supporting to amend the state constitution to change how redistricting occurs in Mississippi.

Mississippi's state legislative lines are drawn by the Legislature and passed as a joint resolution every 10 years, following the U.S. census. The Legislature is assisted in this process by a 20-member joint legislative committee. If the Legislature fails to pass a state legislative plan, lines are drawn by a five-member backup commission.

When the redistricting process is controlled by a legislature, partisan gerrymandering can occur. Gerrymandering is when this map-drawing process is intentionally used to benefit a particular political party — to help that party win more seats in the legislature, or more easily protect the ones it has. The goal is to create many districts that will elect members of one party, and only a few that will elect members of the opposite party.

Pigott, along with Rep. Tommy Reynolds of Tallahatchie County, has proposed an addition to the Mississippi Constitution to lessen the potential for political manipulation of the redistricting process, and he has approached the LWVMS for League support of the amendment. Pigott shared key points of the proposed amendment with Jackson League members at their September meeting:

- each district shall be a single member district;
- the population of each house and senate district shall be substantially the same;
- counties shall be divided as few times as possible to create districts;
- if a county does not have sufficient population to comprise a complete district, it shall be included as a whole in whatever district it is assigned;
- each municipality shall be divided to the minimum extent possible in the creation of districts

Pigott told LWVJA members he is available to speak to other groups that may be willing to support such an amendment and to assist in collecting the 86,000 signatures required to place the initiative on the 2020 Mississippi ballot.

## LWV-US News

### Priority - Voting Rights

Voting is a fundamental right and all eligible voters should have the equal opportunity to exercise that right. We are dedicated to ensuring that our elections remain free, fair and accessible.



One of the Voting Rights Priority issues being addressed currently by the League of Women Voters nationally is Redistricting. Here is our national position on this important issue:

*Congressional districts and government legislative bodies should be apportioned substantially on population. We oppose partisan and racial gerrymandering that strips rights away from voters.*

To learn more about the LWV effort to assure fair apportionment, go to the Featured Content section:

[https://www.lwv.org/voting-rights?\\_ga=2.151770042.22911683.1539169968-1936928575.1539169968](https://www.lwv.org/voting-rights?_ga=2.151770042.22911683.1539169968-1936928575.1539169968)

## LWV-JA Voter Services



The good news is that Voter Services VP Anna Hall was delivering her last group of voter registration forms to the mailbox just as The Voter was going to press...and that's the bad news too – Anna has been so busy organizing and conducting voter registration drives and helping with candidate forums that she was not able to prepare a report this month, but she promises to be back in November. However, we do know that the registration drive at Wellsfest was a resounding success, with 25 voter registration forms completed. **Good work, Anna and Team!**

**Photos from LWV-JA Membership Recruitment Brunch,  
September 15, 2018  
courtesy Joy Parikh and Natalie Maynor**

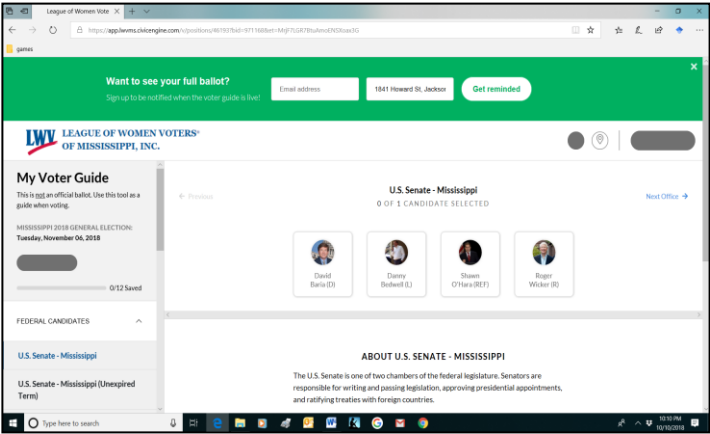


# LWV-MS Voter Guide

*“The League of Women Voters of Mississippi is furthering our mission of empowering and educating voters in our state. The Mississippi General Election is Tuesday, November 6, 2018. Research candidates on the entire ballot and prepare to vote this election.”*

The League of Women Voters of Mississippi is participating in a resource project to educate voters by providing a sample ballot and sharing campaign literature of candidates. Although the Voter Guide is presently under construction, you are invited to visit the site and become familiar with its function.

It is easy to operate – just go to <https://lwvms.civicingue.com/> and type in your address, then click on **GET STARTED**. When the site is fully functioning, you can click through a series of pages to review each race and material provided by candidates. This would be a good time to sign up to be notified when the ballot is complete (see green banner at the top of the ballot).



**CLICK BELOW**

- \* WE REGISTER VOTERS
- \* AIR THE ISSUES
- \* PUBLISH VOTER GUIDES
- \* RUN CANDIDATE FORUMS
- \* ARE NON-PARTISAN

**JOIN US!**



**MEMBERSHIP NEWS**  
Elaine Talbott




With this busy election season it is a great time to be part of the League of Women Voters Jackson Area. Voters count on League for not only voter registration but also accurate non-partisan information on candidates and issues.

Although we are always welcoming new members, our September meeting places a special emphasis on member recruitment. We had five guests in September and we are pleased that Noreen Prouty, Susan Carson and Katie McClendon are now League members.

If you haven't met them please introduce yourself at our upcoming meeting. Also be sure to invite a neighbor or friend to our meetings. We have many interesting topics on the agenda in the coming months.

Elaine Talbott  
Membership Director

A large, multi-pointed starburst graphic in a medium blue color with a white outline. It is positioned on the right side of the page, overlapping the main text area.

**A warm welcome  
to our newest  
LWV-JA members**

**Noreen Prouty  
Susan Carson  
Katie McClendon**

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS-JACKSON AREA  
MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK**