

# THE VOTER

**JUNE 2020**

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

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

**Kay Brodbeck**



If ever there was a time when the League of Women Voters is desperately needed, this is it. The ability to cast our votes is threatened by a health crisis compounded by the assaults on accessibility to voting over recent years. Recent election experiences in other states have shown that voters strongly desire to be safe when they vote so there is a steep increase in absentee voting. However, lessons learned in these elections include the need to better prepare for that surge.

The Mississippi League of Women Voters is urging state lawmakers to open up absentee voting due to COVID-19, so that our fundamental right of voting does not expose us to a deadly virus. You should have received an email with contact information for legislators now dealing with HB 1521, reconciling the two different versions passed in the House and in the Senate. Information is also up on League's Facebook page. As stated by LWVMS Co-presidents Christy Wheeler and Carol Andersen, "The League of Women Voters of Mississippi specifically supports that anyone may vote absentee if they have a concern about their health due to COVID-19 and that the witness requirement on absentee ballots should be removed."

**MAKE YOUR VOICE KNOWN IMMEDIATELY.**

The Mississippi State Flag is in the news daily, with more and more entities supporting a change to remove the Confederate symbol. League takes a solid stand for the Legislature to act now. LWVMS Co-Presidents Wheeler and Andersen also addressed this issue:

*The League of Women Voters Mississippi (LWVMS) is opposed to oppression and discrimination in any form. With this as our guiding principle, the LWVMS calls for a change in the Mississippi state flag. The current flag carries an image of the Confederate battle flag, a symbol of a failed attempt to create a nation built on enslavement of black people. This symbol must be removed if we are to become an inclusive state that acknowledges the inherent value of all its citizens. **We believe the Legislature has the authority and the responsibility to act now to change the flag.***

*The League of Women Voters of Mississippi believes in equality of opportunity for education, employment, and housing for all persons regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability. The League supports civil and voting rights, and social and economic justice, and calls for inclusion of all segments of society in this democracy, and for equity in the way government treats its citizens.*

This is a time to take action to ensure that every eligible voter has an opportunity to cast their vote and a time for Mississippians to welcome our diversity.

Kay Brodbeck,  
President

# **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE JACKSON AREA**

**2020-2021**

## **Officers and Board of Directors**

### **President**

Kay Brodbeck

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

#### **Program/Administration**

Deloris Lee

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

#### **Voter Services**

Willie Jones

### **Secretary**

Megan Tidwell

### **Treasurer**

Lakeeta Jones

### **Elected Directors**

Membership: Elaine Talbott

Voter Editor: Savina Schoenhofer

### **Appointed Directors**

Social Media/PR: Joy Parikh

National Items: Emily Stanfield

State Items: Annie Reiher

### **Nominating Committee**

Martha Phillips

Margarett Barnes

Dierdre Payne

# MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Elaine Talbott



## **No one is Safe until Everyone is Safe: The Urgent Case for Healthcare Reform in Mississippi**

In 2010 when The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) was signed into law, this mammoth piece of legislation sought to ensure that nearly every man, woman and child would have access to healthcare provided by affordable health insurance. Those who had coverage at work would retain that coverage. Those who could afford private insurance would continue to shop the open market for their plans.

Those who could not afford insurance, those in a lower income bracket, but making over \$15,000 a year would now be able to shop the health insurance exchanges, some state run and others federally managed. Their premiums would be subsidized in order to make the plans affordable. Everyone would be mandated to carry coverage or pay an income tax penalty.

Then there was a third portion of the population who did not make enough to qualify for the exchanges yet made too much to qualify for traditional Medicaid. Under the original law, as written, these low wage workers would be covered under Medicaid expansion. Before from 2014-2019 those additional costs would be covered by the federal government. Starting in 2020 there would be a 90/10 split with the state paying a 10% match for their expansion recipients.

In 2012 in *National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius* which challenged the entire law, the Supreme Court did an unprecedented ruling. They defined the meaning of the individual mandate to carry insurance as a tax. Therefore, within the Constitutional power of the Congress to levy tax. But before they did that, seven judges on the panel severed Medicaid expansion from the rest of the ACA and held the federal government had no Constitutional authority to mandate Medicaid expansion to the states. Expansion then became an option. This left many low wage workers in limbo.

What followed was a disorderly process of some states adopting Medicaid Expansion in 2014 when it became available and as written, while others used a patchwork of 1115 waivers from HHS to craft a state-run variation. Over time 35 states have implemented some form of Medicaid expansion. Nebraska is in the process and 14 state including Mississippi have yet to do so.

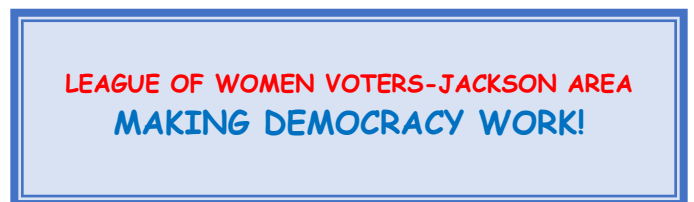
The Mississippi Hospital Association has been petitioning the state legislature to adopt the Mississippi Cares Act to bridge that gap. They framed it on a nearly identical plan that was signed into law in Indiana while VP Mike Pence was their Governor. Under this plan rather than the state paying the 10% match the Mississippi Hospital Association would contribute the lion's share with the difference being paid through \$20.00 per month premiums for every adult enrolled in the program. Working Together Jackson/ Working Together Mississippi have recently become a coalition partner to the MHA.

It has become abundantly clear that through the pandemic Mississippi hospitals can no longer bear the strain of uncompensated care. Our entire medical system is in danger of collapse. The state board of LWV-MS has taken up the cause of Medicaid expansion as one of our areas of concentration for 2020-21. Working Together Mississippi is asking for us to consider becoming one of their coalition partners in this and other efforts such as voting rights. The link below is to the Mississippi Cares website.

<https://mississippicare.com/>



Voter Services VP Willie Jones' Interview on Expanding Voter Access with Sen. David Blount [here](#).



## LWVMS Annual Council Meeting (Online-Zoom) June 13, 2020 Police Violence, Racism and the Mississippi State Flag

### Police violence

On May 29<sup>th</sup> LWVUS issued a statement in response to the May 25<sup>th</sup> murder of George Floyd which included these words, “*As an organization whose mission is to empower voters and defend democracy, we stand in solidarity with all Black communities. The League shall do so not only by speaking out against racism in all forms, but by doing the work required of us to be antiracist. We are committed to listening to and amplifying Black voices, and educating ourselves and our children on the historic and ongoing systemic racism that plagues this country.*” [https://www.lwv.org/newsroom/press-releases/lwvus-responds-police-killing-georgefloyd?utm\\_source=MonthlyHighlights&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=May2020](https://www.lwv.org/newsroom/press-releases/lwvus-responds-police-killing-georgefloyd?utm_source=MonthlyHighlights&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=May2020)

LWVUS CEO, Virginia Case, said in her May 29<sup>th</sup> email, “**Addressing the police murder of George Floyd and violence against Black people everywhere**, “We commend the Minnesota, Minneapolis, and St. Paul Leagues for their leadership in their communities at this trying time and the national office stands with you.”

On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, LWVUS joined a letter with over 400 civil rights organizations calling on Congress to implement needed policing reforms. The letter urges congressional leadership to swiftly rectify the legacy of white supremacy and anti-black racism that has led to police violence against Black people across our country.

The list is a roll call of civic and religious organizations of all faith traditions. I want to give you the names of twelve:

Mississippi Coalition against Domestic Violence	League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Louisiana Coalition against Domestic Violence	BLACK LIVES MATTER
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.	Children’s Defense Fund
Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights under Law	Chinese American Progressive Action
	CONTACT Rape Crisis Center
	Innocence Project
	National Disability Rights Network
	National Immigrant Justice Center

[https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Coalition\\_Letter\\_to\\_House\\_and\\_Senate\\_Leadership\\_on\\_Federal\\_Policing\\_Priorities\\_Final\\_6.1.20.pdf](https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Coalition_Letter_to_House_and_Senate_Leadership_on_Federal_Policing_Priorities_Final_6.1.20.pdf)

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## RACISM

The League joined a March 23<sup>rd</sup> letter led by OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates and 186 other organizations calling on President Trump, Attorney General Barr, and FBI Director Christopher Wray, to publicly recognize and denounce the increasing racist attacks and discrimination against the Asian American community, in the wake of rising concerns over the Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19). Among the signatories were NAACP and the NAACOP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Human Rights Campaign, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

<https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/OCA%20Letter%20to%20President%2003.23.2020.pdf>

National Museum of African American History and Culture Releases “Talking About Race” Web Portal

Check out this website: [https://nmaahc.si.edu/about/news/national-museum-african-american-history-and-culture-releases-talking-about-race-web?fbclid=IwAR1Pr5ytQIGmODYUTm2Q5GaBaVjv87jY0Il25vf67MK\\_36LJLxXZtLOBYs](https://nmaahc.si.edu/about/news/national-museum-african-american-history-and-culture-releases-talking-about-race-web?fbclid=IwAR1Pr5ytQIGmODYUTm2Q5GaBaVjv87jY0Il25vf67MK_36LJLxXZtLOBYs)

*[I have found that many Leagues across the country have taken a direct stand against racism, have formed study groups, and participated in demonstrations against it. I find no documentation of a Mississippi League prior to the Everett-Townes presidency making a public statement against it. Kudos to Carolyn and Mary Ann.]*

Mississippi State Flag

### PRESS RELEASE

July 1, 2015

#### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MISSISSIPPI CALLS FOR CHANGE IN STATE FLAG

Jackson, MS -The League of Women Voters of Mississippi believes in equality of opportunity for education, employment, and housing for all persons regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. League supports civil and voting rights, and social and economic justice, and calls for inclusion of all segments of society in this democracy, and for equity in the way government treats its citizens. The League is opposed to oppression and discrimination in any form.

With this as our guiding principle, the League of Women Voters of Mississippi calls for a change in the Mississippi state flag. The current flag carries an image of the Confederate battle flag that is a painful reminder of a chapter in our state’s history of the brutal and unequal treatment of its black citizens. That image must be removed from our state flag.

Mary Ann Everett, League of Women Voters of Mississippi, co-president  
Carolyn S. Townes, League of Women Voters of Mississippi, co-president

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## VOTER SUPPRESSION

*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.*

### LEAGUE FIGHTS VOTER SUPPRESSION

Early this month, a federal judge in Virginia waived the absentee ballot witness requirement for the state's June primary.

The League of Women Voters of Virginia brought legal action challenging the witness requirement during the COVID-19 pandemic. The court's decision applies to the state's June 23 primaries. Voters who cast absentee ballots in that election will be able to submit their signed ballots without a witness signature.

Because of this decision, Virginia voters will be able to cast their ballots in safety without risking their health to locate a witness.

Dierdre Payne  
LWVMS, Director-at-Large

## From LWV-JA ANNUAL MEETING MAY 23, 2020

### ➤ LWV-JA PRIORITY ISSUES FOR 2020-2021

- ❖ PUBLIC EDUCATION
- ❖ VOTER EDUCATION
- ❖ PUBLIC HEALTH





Mississippi Library Commission Virtual Humanities Talk

# BLACK WOMEN AND THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN MISSISSIPPI



**Shennette Garrett-Scott** @EbonRebel

Author of *Banking on Freedom* and Associate Professor of History and African American Studies, University of Mississippi

**June 26**  
**12 noon**

Register at  
[bit.ly/mlcZoomlectures](http://bit.ly/mlcZoomlectures)



## **YOU ARE INVITED...**

Zoom in for the [Mississippi Library Commission](http://bit.ly/mlcZoomlectures) Summer Lunch Series virtual talk about Black women's political culture in Mississippi. Friday, June 26 at 12 noon CST. Visit <http://bit.ly/mlcZoomlectures> for more information and to register. Supported by the [Mississippi Humanities Council](http://bit.ly/mlcZoomlectures), hosted by Shennette Garrett-Scott, Associate Professor of History and African American Studies, University of Mississippi and Author of *Banking on Freedom*.



# **LWVMS Statement on Changing the State Flag**

The League of Women Voters Mississippi (LWVMS) is opposed to oppression and discrimination in any form. With this as our guiding principle, the LWVMS calls for a change in the Mississippi state flag. The current flag carries an image of the Confederate battle flag, a symbol of a failed attempt to create a nation built on enslavement of black people. This symbol must be removed if we are to become an inclusive state that acknowledges the inherent value of all its citizens. We believe the Legislature has the authority and the responsibility to act now to change the flag.

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# MEMBER PROFILE

Kay Brodbeck



LWV: How long have you lived in Jackson and what have been your activities in Jackson (jobs, other organization memberships, etc.)?

KB: I have lived in Clinton for 40 years. I have been co-owner and CEO of Mississippi Safety Services for 31 years, which provides traffic safety courses of the National Safety Council throughout the state of Mississippi. Prior to MSS, I was executive director of the Clinton Community Christian Corporation for five years, a multi-purpose social service agency under the United Way umbrella.

Prior to that, I was on staff of the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District. Some of my activities: I am currently president of the National Association of Women Highway Safety Leaders. I am a former chairman of the Mississippi Association of Highway Safety Leaders. I am active in the Northside Baptist Church, Clinton, and have been Sunday school teacher for 14 years.

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

KB: I first joined the League in Warren, Ohio, when I worked at a community house in a low-income area (much like Boys or Girls Club). On the Board was a forward-thinking lady who invited me to League. When we moved to Clinton, I joined the League as soon as I found it!

LWV: What were some key political issues in Mississippi and nationally at the time you first joined the League?

KB: The first study I was involved with in 1973 was on international relations. It was complicated then also!

LWV: Describe your involvement in the League over the years (offices held, committee work, etc.).

KB: I served as president of the Jackson (MS) League and the League in Warren, Ohio. I was also co-president of the Mississippi state league. My work with League is consistently on voter education through our voter services.

LWV: Why has the League remained important to you?

KV: I love the League for its members who care about their community and are willing to invest time and energy to improving it. I appreciate the connection to intelligent, involved and open-minded people.

LWV: Has League membership given you an opportunity to make an impact on your community? How?

KB: I would like to think so! Just heard from a teacher who uses League's candidate guides with students. We intend to provide unbiased information on issues that goes beyond the sound bites that flood the airwaves.

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

KB: We have not always stood on the popular side of issues, such as our support for state funded kindergartens. I appreciate the League's dogged stance for kindergartens. In Voter Services, for the previous Jackson city elections, we cooperated with the Clarion-Ledger and WAPT TV to organize seven candidate forums. It was quite an undertaking, but well attended and worth the effort. On the League's 90th anniversary, Dick Johnson, Dary Shenefelt and I presented a playlet on the times around 1920 leading up to the suffrage amendment passing, giving women the right to vote. As Susan B. Anthony, I felt immersed in the struggle for voting rights.

LWV: What are current political issues that particularly pique your interest?

KB: Open government. At a time when newspapers are downsizing, I'm concerned about losing investigative reporting. Government needs watchdogs. I'm glad to see campaign finance reforms also.

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

KB: The League is trusted and we must live up to that trust. We have to be true to the principle of non-partisanship.

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

KB: Keeping a social media presence that is current and interesting. Personally reach out to younger people. It was an invitation from a seasoned member that brought me into League in my early 20s.

LWV: Tell me a bit about yourself.

KB: I have three daughters of whom I am very proud, Jessica in Miami, Amy and husband Casey in the Seattle area and Laura in Oslo, Norway with husband, Oyvind. My husband, John, passed away 2 years ago. I spend my time at work and in the dirt! Just finished a landscape re-do with two 15-year-old boys, 34 shrubs, 2 trees and a myriad of flowers.

## MISSISSIPPI SECRETARY OF STATE VOTER SERVICES

### ❖ ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?

Verify that you are a registered voter in Mississippi

### ❖ UPDATE NAME AND ADDRESS INFORMATION

To update your name and address registration information online, you must already be a registered voter of the State of Mississippi and have a current and valid Mississippi driver's license or photo identification card issued by the Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

For More Information: <https://www.sos.ms.gov/Vote/Pages/default.aspx>