



# THE VOTER

SEPTEMBER 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



## LET'S CELEBRATE NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY!

Tuesday, September 22

Take part! Take action!

### #1 PUSH VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS

Push them out to everyone you know and challenge them to reach at least 3 more folks. Enlarge your circle of influence.

Registration forms are coming to you in a separate email and they are ready to forward to EVERYONE. (Forms can be for new voters or to update an address change or a name change.)

#### SURPRISE! YOU EARN A DECAL

- Pass forms along to 25 or more folks by email.
- Report the number of emails you sent to:
  - [LWVjacksonarea@gmail.com](mailto:LWVjacksonarea@gmail.com)
  - Report due 5:00 pm on September 22
- Decal is 4"x6", removable, reusable, save it. It's for your car window!



### #2 SIGN UP FOR A SIGN

**Reply to this email to place your order by Monday, September 14.**

Durable plastic signs are being printed with vote messages on both sides. Put one in your yard and/or ask to put one where even more drivers will see it. Both sides will show when put in your yard.

Side 1 – Register to Vote by Oct. 5

Side 2 – Your Vote Counts!

Drive-thru pick up day on Sunday, September 20, from 2 – 4 pm.

Location: MCELROY Architecture, 4880 McWillie Circle, Jackson, MS 39206

# LWV-JA VISITS WITH CIRCUIT CLERKS OF RANKIN COUNTY MADISON COUNTY

## **By Joanne Olson**

On September 1 at 2 PM, Betsy Boyd, Rankin County Circuit Clerk, met via Zoom with LWVJA President, Kay Brodbeck, and members Rae Dillon, Savina Schoenhofer and Joanne Olson to discuss questions regarding voting procedures in Rankin County.

Voter registration documents must be received in the Circuit Clerk's Office or postmarked by October 5, 2020. Regular office hours will be maintained Monday through Friday. Additionally, the office will be open on Saturday October 3 from 8 A.M. until noon.

Polling locations are listed on the Circuit Clerk's website and at the time of the meeting, have not changed from previous years. If the polling location for any precinct is changed, the voters in that precinct will be informed by postcard.

Registered voters can vote absentee for a variety of reasons including being age 65 or older, being temporarily or permanently disabled, or being away from Rankin County on election day. Voters may vote absentee at the Circuit Clerk's Office beginning September 21. Additionally, the Circuit Clerk's Office will be open for absentee voting on Saturday, October 24 from 8 A.M. until noon and October 31 from 8 A.M. until 5 P.m.

Registered voters who wish to vote absentee and to transmit their documents by mail can phone the Circuit Clerk's Office to request a ballot. The ballots will be mailed beginning September 21. The instructions for submitting a ballot by mail must be followed exactly. Most ballots need to be notarized. The completed ballot must be postmarked by election day, November 3 and received by 5 days after.

The meeting was cordial and productive. Mrs. Boyd is clearly a dedicated public servant and committed to good government.

## **By Mary Ann Everett and Carolyn Townes**

Recently President Kay Brodbeck gave us the opportunity to meet with the Madison County Circuit Clerk Anita Wray to talk primarily about voting issues. We called her mid-morning, and she met with us immediately after lunch.

Ms. Wray invited an Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioners' attorney, so we had a full house. It was very helpful to have all of them there, as so much of the work around elections involves a high level of coordination and cooperation between the two entities.

In the past, absentee ballots were sent to each polling place and counted there at the end of a 13-hour work day. Because of the anticipated huge increase in absentee ballots this year, in Madison County, the absentee ballots will be kept in the Circuit Clerk's office until the time to count them. This is the responsibility of the Resolution Committee. This group is a standing committee comprised of a representative from each district appointed by the Election Commissioner for that district. Its usual job is to resolve issues about possible invalid ballots, but this year its members will be counting the absentee ballots also.

Ms. Wray displayed a tall stack of voter registration forms, estimating they receive about fifty each day. Her office will be open during the morning on the two Saturdays prior to the registration deadline. She thinks this will give everyone an opportunity to register.

There have been a few polling places which have been changed but none because of the Covid19 pandemic. Procedures have been established for protection of workers and voters at the polling places. In addition to the usual protocol, the workers will have acrylic shields in front of them and will be wearing plastic face shields. Sanitation will be ongoing throughout the day. A limited number of voters will be allowed in the polling place at one time.

We enjoyed our visit and learned a lot about our own county. The Election Commissioner in our meeting is from our district, so that was a pleasant surprise. The attorney for the Election Commission stated he was familiar with the League and was appreciative of the efforts of the League to keep voters informed.

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS - JACKSON AREA

2020-2021

## OFFICERS & 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

## CALENDAR

**Sept. 4-24** Absentee ballot applications available

**Saturday, Sept. 19** Pearl River Clean Sweep 2020  
www.pearlriverkeeper.com  
Cleanup teams will be deployed along the Pearl River Watershed. Register prior.

**Sunday, Sept. 20** Drive-thru Pick up of Voting Signs  
2 – 4:00 pm  
MCELROY Architecture  
4880 McWillie Circle, Jackson, MS 39206

**Monday, Sept. 21** Absentee Ballots will be available from the County Circuit Clerk

**Tuesday, Sept. 22** NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

**Saturday, Sept. 26** LWV Jackson Area Zoom Meeting  
10 – 11:15 am “Children and Teachers in School During the Pandemic: Hearing from teachers of Virtual and In-Classroom”  
Voter Services Work Session following the education discussion.

**Monday, Oct. 5** VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE

**Saturday, Oct. 27** LWV-JA Board Meeting (Zoom)

**Saturday, Oct. 31** In-Person Absentee Voting Deadline

**Tuesday, Nov. 3** ELECTION DAY.  
ABSENTEE BALLOTS HAVE TO BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN NOV. 3.

**Saturday, Nov. 14** LWV-JA Program Meeting  
10-11:30 AM (Zoom) Topic: Post-Election Analysis

# MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Elaine Talbott



Greetings LWV-JA members,

As I write this it is hard to believe Labor Day weekend has come and gone. It has been a year of cancellations and changes from the in-person to the virtual. Go To Meeting, ZOOM, Skype and Facetime have occupied our days. While that can be a glitchy but efficient way to conduct business, it also feels a little cold. I do not know about all of you, but I miss the comradery of our member meetings. We were discussing that last week at the board meeting and decided to make a small adjustment to try to get us reconnected. Look for the ZOOM link to our virtual meeting on September 26th at 10:00 AM. But plan to log on at 9:50 AM for some social time before we get down to business. Plan to stay for a few minutes after as well. We plan to leave the meeting open until about 11:15AM for more chat and discussion. Some of our best time is the meetings after the meetings.

Our League continues to grow. We would like to welcome new members, Madeleine Blackely, Lou Ann Cavett, Debra Ferguson, Jennifer Hardy, Ora Johnson, Devin Klugh, Livi Mawson and Kathryn Rodenmeyer. I would encourage new members to make themselves known during our social time so we can put a face with a name. We would also encourage all our members to use their video if they can. It is so good to see each other.

Our Treasurer Lakeeta Jones and I have been working on getting everyone current on their dues for 2020. These next two years are going to be highly active for your local and state Leagues. We will need everyone current and on our active roles. We have the election and after that the census will require the electoral districts to be redrawn in 2022. The League intends to be involved in that process. We will need all hands on deck to foster public awareness about this process through the national LWV People Powered Fair Maps Campaign. If you haven't paid your 2020 dues or you aren't sure please contact me at elainemtal@gmail.com or 601-942-0401. By the way, it is okay to pay early. It will be applied without changing your anniversary date.

Elaine Talbott  
Membership Director



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

@LWVMS

# A Lawsuit? How Did We Get There?

By Christy Wheeler, Co-President, LWV-MS



Carol Andersen and I got a query from a group called Equal Citizens about joining a lawsuit finding Mississippi's excuse for Absentee Voting for those 65 and older to be unconstitutional under the 26th Amendment. As this group was unknown to us, I asked my friend Brandon Jones, Policy Director at Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in Jackson, if he was familiar with the group. He wasn't, but engaged some other attorneys with the Lawyers' Committee and Mississippi Center for Justice (MCJ) to sit in on the meeting. Meanwhile, Carol engaged with Celina Stewart, Senior Director for Advocacy and Litigation with LWV, who agreed to sit in also. Because the Legislature was in session and actively working on Absentee access, we all agreed to hold off on any litigation until after the Legislature finished the session to give them the opportunity to expand Absentee Voting in Mississippi.

Before the Legislature had finished, Equal Citizens came back to us with the bad news that the 5th Circuit had heard their case in Texas and had ruled unfavorably. Since we are also under the 5th Circuit, a lawsuit here would most likely be viewed the same.

The Legislature acted and HB 1521 was signed into law by the Governor, expanding the Absentee Voting excuse to temporarily or permanently disabled under a physician imposed quarantine. This narrow expansion was both vaguely defined and totally confusing. Your personal physician? Dr Dobbs with MDH? The doctors at CDC who say to stay home and avoid crowds? The Secretary of State (SoS) said it would be up to Circuit Clerks to decide. Great. With 82 Circuit Clerks, we could have 82 interpretations.

But, as agreed, the lawyers got back together with us to discuss litigation. LWVMS agreed to sign on as a plaintiff in a Federal suit asking basically for the court to expand Absentee Voting to any voter who was concerned about going to the polls due to COVID-19 and to eliminate the notarization/witness requirements. That was the easy part.

Carol had to complete a Federal Action Form on the LWV website, a requirement by LWV whenever a state or Local League (LL) engages in Federal litigation. We also had to sign a Retainer that basically spells out what our responsibilities were in the lawsuit and what the attorneys were responsible for. The important piece was that as long as we were honest and worked to respond to the attorneys' needs, we had no financial responsibility. Whew!

I got asked a ton of questions about LWVMS and our LLs. What were our demographics? What was our mission? How do we go about accomplishing our goals? Since, as you know, much of our work is done by our LLs, I had to reach out to Kay and our other LL Presidents to get the needed information. Here's a shout out to Linda Bishop, President of LWV Oxford/North Mississippi, who provided the most amazing, detailed information on demographics! All this information was compiled into a document called a Declaration, which was used extensively in drafting the Complaint.

We also worked with our LLs to solicit individual plaintiffs for the suit. We needed individuals who were not

(continued on p. 6)



(continued from p. 5)

eligible to vote Absentee, but had underlying health concerns about going to the polls; individuals who were not eligible to vote Absentee, but had no underlying health concerns, but were just worried about catching the virus at the polls; and, finally, we needed individuals who were eligible to vote Absentee, but who were concerned about the additional contact with notaries for their Absentee Ballot Application and the Ballot envelope. The attorneys decided on three individual plaintiffs meeting those three criteria. A big thanks to all those who volunteered to be plaintiffs.

The Complaint stated what the problems were with HB 1521 and what we, as the Plaintiffs, wanted the courts to do, using a great deal of legal language that made my head hurt to review. The bottom line was to open Absentee Voting to any Mississippian who had a concern about going to the polls due to the pandemic, to remove the requirement to get Absentee documents notarized or witnessed, and to have the opportunity to fix an Absentee Ballot that got rejected.

COMING SOON...A SPECIAL EDITION OF  
**THE VOTER**  
ADDRESSING ABSENTEE VOTING



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

KAY BRODBECK



There are so many “new normals” around us due to Covid-19 and one of them is having many more individuals voting by mail. League members have visited with Circuit Clerks who confirmed that they are gearing up for the increase. In Mississippi, absentee ballots are the only way that we have mail-in voting. When you hear concern that mail-in voting is not as secure, be prepared with the facts. Read on (pages 9-10) and you’ll see an enlightening article from the Brennan Center for Justice.

There are many ways that Leaguers can make sure the public knows about voter registration deadline and how to be prepared for the General Election. PLEASE give it your best and take part in the activities on this newsletter cover page. Every little bit helps.

# MEMBER PROFILE

## NINA PARIKH



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

NP: My name is Nina Parikh, I've lived in Jackson for the last 12 years and previously lived in Brandon. I have spent most of my life in central Mississippi, but my first 11 years of life were in Illinois, New York, and Indiana. I'm married to Jerel Levanway, a Jackson native, and we have one son who is in middle school within the Jackson Public School District.

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

NP: I've been a public servant, working at the Mississippi Film Office, for the last 22 years and have also taught as an adjunct instructor at Millsaps College. I'm one of the co-founders of the volunteer organizations, Crossroads Film Festival and Mississippi Film Alliance and one of the producers of TEDxJackson. I've served on the boards of the Millsaps Arts & Lecture Series, Creative Mississippi, South Arts, Mississippi Book Festival, school PTAs and have served as a mentor for high school and college-aged students.

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

NP: I became a member seven years ago because I believe voting is one of the most powerful ways to make an impact in our communities. I also believe we have many that are apathetic or uneducated as related to voting in Mississippi, so LWVJ allows me to participate in voter education and encouragement.

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

NP: Edward Snowden turned over classified documents to journalists, emergence of the Affordable Care Act, government shutdowns, gun control, immigration reform, DOMA overturned, new voter ID law...President Obama's 2nd term, Governor Bryant's 1st term.

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

NP: I attempt to attend as many meetings as possible and volunteer during voter registration events. I have also assisted with training folks on how to register voters and how to vote absentee recently.

LWV: Why has the League remained important to you?

NP: It will always be important to me that every eligible person's vote counts and I will do all I can to assist those with exercising their right to vote. It's fulfilling to know that I have played a role in assisting even one person get registered or leading them to information about voting through my involvement with the League.

(continued on p. 8)

(continued from p. 7)

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

NP: Registering voters has been one of the most fulfilling community activities I've been involved with over the years.

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

NP: I don't have one particular memory, but I have particularly enjoyed broadening my circle of friends with like-minded women of diverse ages and backgrounds over the years.

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

NP: Public education, climate change, gun control, congressional redistricting, campaign finance laws, congressional term limits, labor issues, immigration reform, health care, police and social services reform, alternative energy and the creation of jobs,...

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

NP: The League is powerful because it's a non-partisan, issues driven advocacy organization with a focus on encouraging active and informed participation in government. In my opinion, the LWV will always be relevant as new voters come of age or interest.

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

NP: Once public events are able to happen again, I think outreach by young members to potential new members in relevant settings is essential – at live shows, community wide events, kid-related events where young parents are in attendance, sporting events – to both recruit membership and register/inform voters - could prove successful. I also think the effective use of social media platforms can greatly expand the organization's reach.

LWV: Anything else you would like for us to know about you?

NP: Once upon a time I thought my one little vote was meaningless. Now I now my one little vote is essential alongside everyone else's one little vote. It all adds up.





# **Informed Citizens: Democracy’s Best Defense**

## **Dirty Tricks: 9 Falsehoods that Could Undermine the 2020 Election**

**The Brennan Center for Justice** is an independent, nonpartisan law and policy organization that works to reform, revitalize, and when necessary, defend our country’s systems of democracy and justice. The Brennan Center has recently published a well researched and documented report titled “Dirty Tricks: 9 Falsehoods that Could Undermine the 2020 Election”. Below are excerpted the false claims, the truth, and the consequences of the false claims being given credibility. You may want to read the entire report [here](#) for the full arguments and documentation.

### **1. “Voter Fraud” Is Rampant**

The Claim: There is widespread voting by ineligible individuals.

The Truth: This type of fraud is extremely rare.

The Consequences: More restrictive voting laws and lower levels of trust in elections.

### **2. Election Day Should be Postponed**

The Claim: The president can delay Election Day because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Truth: The president has no authority to change the date of Election Day.

The Consequences: A delay in the election could trigger a constitutional crisis and jeopardize the peaceful transition of power in the United States.

### **3. Noncitizens Are Voting in Droves**

The Claim: Millions of noncitizens are voting and tipping election outcomes.

The Truth: Noncitizen voting is exceedingly rare.

The Consequences: More restrictive voting laws and lower levels of trust in elections.

### **4. The Machines Malfunctioned — They Were Clearly Rigged**

The Claim: “Vote flipping” by voting machines — and other malfunctions, such as machines failing to start, crashing, or freezing — are clear indications that hackers have penetrated machines or that partisans have rigged the election in favor of their preferred candidate.

The Truth: Malfunctions may be the result of wear and tear rather than hacking or manipulation. For example, vote flipping can be caused by the glue between the touch screen and the machine wearing down.

The Consequences: Inaccurate claims of hacking or vote-rigging could lead to extreme partisan conflict over election results in 2020.

### **5. Something’s Fishy — the Results Are Taking Too Long**

The Claim: A failure to announce results on election night is an indication of malfeasance in the election process.

The Truth: In a close election, getting the right result can take time.

The Consequences: Rushing out election results can lead to inaccurate election night calls of outcomes, resulting in increased partisan conflict over election outcomes and decreased trust in democratic processes.

(continued on p. 10)

## **6. That's Not What the Election Night Predictions Said**

The Claim: Election outcomes that differ from election night projections are suspect.

The Truth: Ballots continue to be counted after election night and, in a close election, those ballots can change the outcome.

The Consequences: Increased partisan conflict over election outcomes and decreased trust in election outcomes.

## **7. Recounts, Audits, and Election Contests Are Ways to Steal an Election**

The Claim: Recounts, audits, and election contests are illegitimate attempts to undo a valid election result.

The Truth: Recounts, audits, and election contests are all normal parts of the elections process that help to ensure that every valid ballot is counted accurately.

The Consequences: Increased partisan conflict over and decreased trust in election outcomes.

## **8. People Can't Help People Vote**

The Claim: Groups that help many voters cast their absentee ballots are engaged in illegal “ballot harvesting,” and laws that allow such assistance enable election fraud.

The Truth: Partisans use the pejorative “ballot harvesting” to criticize two very different sets of practices: (a) illegal and illegitimate absentee ballot tampering and (b) legal and legitimate assistance to voters casting their absentee ballots. Voter assistance is not evidence of fraud.

The Truth, Moreover: Absentee ballot assistance laws can be critical lifelines for voters.

The Consequences: Lower levels of trust in elections and more restrictive voting laws.

## **9. We Need More Aggressive Purges to Clear Out All the Ineligible Voters**

The Claim: Aggressive voter purges are needed because voter rolls are infected with large numbers of ineligible voters.

The Truth: Claims that voter rolls are “dirty” are overblown.

The Truth, Moreover: Claims of rampant inaccuracies in the voter rolls are part of a sustained pressure campaign to push election officials to purge their rolls more aggressively. But aggressive purges can result in eligible voters being improperly kicked off the rolls.

The Consequences: Purge numbers are growing.

The Consequences, Moreover: Improper purges can disenfranchise eligible voters, cause undue delays at the polls, and heighten distrust in our election systems.