

The Voter

League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area

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

September 2015

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

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

Fall 2015 Members and Friends Brunch

When: Saturday, September 12

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Where: Jackson Municipal Art Gallery, 839 N. State Street

Agenda:

9:15 Members set-up for brunch

9:30 Light brunch

9:50 Welcome and outline of plans for the 2015-2016 year

10:00 LWVUS study of Money in Politics

11:00 Adjournment



Note: Members are asked to bring finger foods for the brunch. Coffee and juice will be provided.

Directions: Parking is behind the Municipal Art Gallery and the entrance to the parking lot is from N. President Street. Take Fortification St. to N. President. Go south on N. President St. There is a Municipal Art Gallery sign by the entrance.

LWV of the Jackson Area Participates in national Money in Politics review and update

The LWV of the Jackson Area is joining Leagues from across the nation to take part in the *Money in Politics (MIP) Review and Update*. Adopted at the 2014 LWVUS Convention, this involves a member study and consensus to update the League's position on campaign finance in order to obtain member understanding and agreement on the extent to which political campaigns are protected speech under the First Amendment. Leagues are being asked to consider: the rights of individuals and organizations to express their political views through independent expenditures and the finance of election campaign activities; and how those rights, if any, should be protected and reconciled with the interests set out in the current position.

LWVUS has set this timetable for the MIP project:

- Spring to summer 2015: Education materials are posted periodically on the League Management website. Leagues can use these materials for member and community meetings;
- Fall 2015: A study guide and consensus questions will be posted for the *Money in Politics* Review and Update. Leagues will hold consensus meetings;
- February 1, 2016: Consensus reports (electronic) from Leagues due to LWVUS, and
- April 2016 national LWV Board meeting: Consensus reports and resulting position(s), if any, will be approved.

The LWVUS Money in Politics (MIP) Committee that formed last fall includes LWV leaders from across the country and national board and staff members. The Committee has developed ready-to-use resources and strategies that are designed to help League members and the citizenry understand money in politics issues. They will prepare members for the update of LWVUS's campaign finance position. These educational materials, called "Meetings-in-a-Box," are designed to use for member and community activities and are available at <http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/our-work/money-politics-review>. Resources include a PowerPoint presentation with script, outside readings and issue papers prepared by the MIP Committee. Check the MIP webpage often, as materials are being added frequently.

Join the LWV MIP Google Group. If you would like to join the new discussion group, follow the instructions at <https://groups.google.com/d/forum/lwv-money-in-politics>.

Please join the LWV of the Jackson Area as we participate in this important League study on an issue that is critical to our democracy. Come join us at 9:30 a.m. September 12 at the Municipal Art Gallery in Jackson as we examine the issue of *Money in Politics*.

Submitted by ***Barbara Powell***

1st Vice-President/Administration



From August 11th through September 8th, the Secretary of State's Election Division held a series of citizen's forums around the state to gather input on the public school funding ballot initiatives which will appear on the November ballot. LWVMS is a member of the Better Schools-Better Jobs coalition which supports Initiative 42, and is assisting with providing education on the benefits of voting for Initiative 42.

LWVJA president, **Marcia Weaver** spoke at the August 11th forum held in Jackson. This is her statement:

I joined League of Women Voters about 1974. The League was already active in supporting public schools. League started action for 5 year old kindergartens in public schools. In 1965, with strong help from Representative Robert Clark, we succeeded in getting legislation to allow five year olds to go to public school kindergarten, giving them a good start in education.

Now it is time to fully fund K-12. We believe this is important action we can take to get Mississippi off the bottom of the ladder in matters of achievement. If, however, we want to continue to have poverty and stay at the bottom, then throw out fully funding public education.

Public education is a state function, supported by city and county funds. Some cities and counties have more ability to help public schools but many do not. Fully-funding public education is critical to Mississippi's well-being.

Today state funding is directly in the hands of our state legislative body. They need to adequately fund school districts across the state. If not, the alternative might be funding more prisons when youth are not educated so they can be financially successful adults.

Be aware of scare tactics of those who say funding public education will make deep cuts in other state functions. The alternative is very costly. Another scare tactic is that one county judge will make the decision on this matter. Of course, as always, a nine-member State Supreme Court can ultimately decide the issue.

Educating our youth is critical to the well-being of Mississippi. Tell legislators that education for our youth is essential for Mississippi to climb off the bottom in this nation. Tell our legislators to fully fund public education in Mississippi then we would not need 42 or 42A but until then vote 42.

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Tuesday, September 22nd, is National Voter Registration Day. If someone you know recently turned 18, or will be 18 on the next General Election Day, get them registered. If you know someone who has moved recently, or has changed their name, get them to update their registration information. Make sure their registration form gets to their county circuit clerk's office immediately. This is how we make democracy work!

President Elisabeth MacNamara recently issued the following in an email to members:

Election Day 2015 will be here before we know it, and just in case you haven't noticed, the election 2016 cycle is already in full swing! We both know that more is at stake than who gets elected this year and in 2016 – it's about every voter having the opportunity to participate – and to accomplish that, we need your help.

We at LWVUS are excited to take part once again in National Voter Registration Day, a nationwide, nonpartisan effort to register thousands of voters on one single day – Tuesday, September 22, 2015 – and we hope you'll join us!

On September 22, 2015, thousands of volunteers from hundreds of organizations will unleash a nationwide field effort to register voters where they are – on their way to work, on campus, in the community, out shopping and online. By doing this, we're helping to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to register and participate in upcoming primaries and elections!

But to succeed, we need your help.

Voting Rights Act Turns 50 – Congress Must Restore Its Protection



August 6, 2015 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the passage of the Voting Rights Act (VRA).

This landmark civil rights legislation has protected voters from discrimination for nearly half a century. The VRA is one of the most significant laws ever passed by Congress and it changed America.

But today, the Voting Rights Act does not offer the same protections it did in 1965.

Two years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court gutted key provisions of the VRA in its *Shelby County v. Holder* decision, weakening vital voter protections. Since then Congress has done nothing to repair the damage. Congress currently has before it various proposals, but there's been no action, no legislation passed. As a result, voter discrimination at ballot boxes across the nation has become more pronounced and we are dangerously close to holding our first presidential election in 50 years without critical protections once embodied in the VRA.

Each and every eligible American voter deserves to be treated fairly and have free and equal access to the ballot. During the August congressional recess, voters should be loud and clear that the right to vote is fundamental to our democracy. Join me to tell Congress it's time to restore the VRA.

The League of Women Voters in the Jackson Area has been standing its ground in the fight against discrimination and for voting rights protections for over sixty years, and restoring the VRA is an important step to keep our elections fair, free and accessible.

Marcia Weaver, President
LWV of the Jackson Area

League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area 2015-2016 Calendar

- Sept. 12 **Membership Solicitation Brunch.** Topic: LWVUS Money in Politics study. Location – Municipal Art Gallery, 839 N. State St., Jackson. 10:00 a.m.
- Sept. 22 Board meeting
- Sept. 28 Deadline for Voter articles
- Oct. 17 **General Meeting,** Topic: Constitutional Amendment consensus study. Location - Willie Morris Library, 4912 Old Canton Rd. 10:00 a.m.
- Oct. 20 Board Meeting
- Nov. 2 Deadline for Voter articles
- Nov. 3 **GENERAL ELECTION DAY**---LWVJA Election Hotline
- Nov. 21 **General Meeting.** Topic: Money in Politics consensus study. Willie Morris Library, 4912 Old Canton Rd. 10:00 a.m.
- Dec. 1 Board Meeting
Deadline for consensus report on Constitutional Amendment study
- Jan. 4 Deadline for Voter articles
- Jan. 23 **General Meeting,** Legislative Issues, Willie Morris Library, 4912 Old Canton Rd. 10:00 a.m.
- Feb. 1 Deadline for consensus report on Money in Politics study
- Feb. 11 **State Legislative Day**
- Feb. 16 Board Meeting
- Feb. 22 Deadline for Voter articles
- Mar. 12 **General Meeting,** Affordable Care Act Update
- March 29 Board Meeting
- April 23 **Annual Meeting**
- May 21 LWVMS State Council



Who are the members?

Membership in the League of Women Voters, the most respected and effective grassroots organization in the country, is open to men and women of all ages. Our members make a visible difference by serving as community leaders using their experience to create positive, lasting change in our communities.

How do I join?

It's easy! Just fill out this form - http://www.lwv-ms.org/join_form.html. You can also contact us at http://www.lwv-ms.org/Jackson_League.html or at 601-372-8851. We'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
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Serving the people of the state of Mississippi.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, multipurpose organization of women and men that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences policy through education and advocacy. The League does not support or oppose candidates or political parties. We do provide a forum where all candidates to an office can state their own positions.

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