

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.

January 2016

P.O. Box 68214, Jackson, MS 39286-8214
http://www.lwv-ms.org/Jackson_League



MEETING NOTICE!

LWVJA January Meeting

When: Saturday, January 23rd
Time: 10:00 a.m.

Where: Willie Morris Library, 4912 Old Canton Rd., Jackson

Program: LWVMS 2016 Legislative Priorities
Speaker: Erik R. Fleming, Legislative Strategist

Erik R. Fleming is the Legislative Strategist for the ACLU of Mississippi, and brings a wealth of experience to this position. Fleming, a 2006 and 2008 Democratic nominee for the U.S. Senate in Mississippi, was a member of the Mississippi House of Representatives on behalf of the 72nd District, which encompasses parts of Hinds and Madison Counties.

Fran Leber, LWVMS Lobby Corps director, will chair the business part of the meeting.

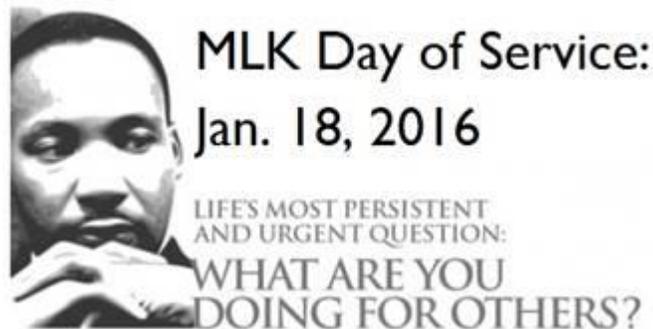
LWVMS Legislative Day at the Capitol is Thursday, February 11, 2016.

Don't miss this opportunity to find out what some of the major issues will be in this session, and how we can all support League's priority issues!

President's Notes for January

Action is on my mind as the Legislature comes back to Jackson to do their work. The session began last Tuesday, January 5th. Fran Leber is our registered lobbyist, and continues to keep us current on the matters we support or oppose. Get ready to take action when she calls! Fran has shared information in the VOTER to prepare us for this term. Please mark Feb. 11 for group action at the State Capitol. Our next meeting on Jan. 23 will help us focus on the issues upcoming and prepare us for Feb 11, LWVMS Legislative Day.

Marcia Weaver, president
League of Women Voters – Jackson Area



Help Needed!

The program for the March 12th meeting will be on Human Trafficking. It is a rapidly growing problem in Mississippi. Volunteers are needed for the planning committee. If you are willing to serve on the committee, contact Barbara Powell (phone, 601-362-8577 or e-mail, barbarapowell1914@gmail.com)

Member Spotlight – Barbara Powell



LWV: Tell us a bit about yourself.

BP: I am 74, I live in Jackson and I grew up in Oklahoma. My family includes my husband, Barry, and three grown children.

LWV: How long have you lived in Jackson and what have been your activities in Jackson?

BP: I have lived in Jackson for 48 years. During that time, I have had a variety of jobs including teaching high school and junior high science, substitute teaching, election commissioner for the city of Jackson and lobbyist for Mississippi Common Cause. The three years prior to coming to Jackson, I taught science and English in a Methodist girl's school in Karachi, Pakistan. Besides being active in the LWV, I am active in the United Methodist Women and am on the board of directors for Common Cause and the Mississippi Center for Freedom of Information.

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

BP: I joined the LWV in 1967 or 1968. The Jackson League was having a meeting in a library community room, and had a sign welcoming the public to participate. The fact that the League studied and advocated on important issues, as well as doing voter service activities to benefit the community impressed me. The League was also one of a very few organizations that were racially integrated.

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

BP: Integration of the schools and parks, allowing kindergartens in public schools, landlord/tenant regulations, open government and nuclear disarmament.

LWV: What leadership positions have you held in the League over the years?

BP: I have held the offices of *Voter* newsletter editor, voter service VP, program/administrative VP, local and state president.

LWV: Why has the League remained important to you?

BP: The same reasons that attracted me long ago: the study and advocacy on important issues and voter service.

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

BP: Change occurs very slowly, but we have seen real change in many of the issues for which League advocated. Public kindergartens are a reality. Some schools even have pre-K programs now. Parks and schools are not restricted by race. League participated in a petition drive to change city government from a council that was elected at large (therefore, always white) to a council elected by wards, which is more representative of the city population. While it used to be controversial to ask public bodies to open their meeting or their records, openness is now required by law.

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

BP: Right after Mississippi passed mail-in voter registration, the League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area had a major voter registration drive at Walmart. A truck driver and his 18-year-old son both registered for the first time. The truck driver explained that he thought voting was very important, but that he was on the road during the week. Since people had to register in the clerk's office during weekday business hours, he had never registered. He said that when other people would talk about voting, he was too embarrassed to admit that he wasn't registered. His gratitude and that of others who registered illuminated the importance of League's work to make voting more accessible to the people.

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

BP: Improving funding of public education, campaign finance reform, openness of government.

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

BP: The wide scope of issues we have studied, our advocacy in the public interest, our voter service.

LWV: What keeps the League relevant?

BP: We speak to current issues on all levels of government.

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

BP: We need to be more diligent in inviting new, younger and more diverse persons to participate.

League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area 2016 Calendar

- 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.



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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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