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Expanding Early Voting in Mississippi: A White Paper

The scope of this white paper is to further public discussion and understanding around the issue of expanding early voting in Mississippi. The aim of the paper is to define early voting, examine the history of early voting in Mississippi, investigate the pros and cons of early voting, and outline what the expansion of early voting would mean for the voters of Mississippi.

Content for this paper is drawn entirely from discussions held during a series of four **Voter Education Forums presented by the League of Women Voters of Mississippi (LWVMS)**, with coalition partners, and hosted on college campuses around the state during the month of October 2024. The purpose of the public forum events was to elevate the conversation about expanding voting access in Mississippi. The dates and locations of these events: Tuesday, October 8, 2024-Jackson State University (Jackson); Tuesday, October 15, 2024-The University of Mississippi (Oxford); Tuesday, October 22, 2024-The University of Southern Mississippi (Hattiesburg); and Tuesday, October 29, 2024-The Leflore County Ag and Civic Center (Greenwood).

The LWVMS Voter Education Forums focused on topics around expanding early voting in Mississippi. A diverse group of panelists spoke at each Forum as subject matter experts in their respective fields. Their statements form the basis for this paper and their individual views do not represent the League of Women Voters of Mississippi. The panelists are mentioned in the content and listed in the endnotes, along with their affiliations.¹

¹ Jackson State University, Jackson, October 8, 2024. Panelists: Amir Badat, Manager, Black Voters on the Rise, Voting Special Counsel NAACP Legal Defense Fund; Jacobi Grant, Research Compliance Officer, Division of Research and Education and Adjunct Professor, Jackson State University; Paloma Wu, Director, Department of Impact Litigation, Mississippi Center for Justice. Moderator: Carol Andersen, Assistant Deputy Director, Mississippi Humanities Council.

The University of Mississippi, Oxford, October 15, 2024. Panelists: Laura Antanow, Lafayette County Elections Commissioner, District Four; Jeff Busby, Circuit Clerk, Lafayette County; Shanika Ward, Qualified Intellectual Disabilities Professional, North Mississippi Regional Center; and Jonathan Cole Winburn, Professor of Political Science, University of Mississippi. Moderator: Don Mason, Professor Emeritus, University of Mississippi.

The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, October 22, 2024. Panelists: Johniece DuPree, Forrest County Election Commissioner, District Two; Troy Gibson, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Southern Mississippi; Christy Kayser, Director of the Center for Community Education, University of Southern Mississippi. Moderator: Daniel Regal, Assistant Dean of Students/Advisor, SGA, University of Southern Mississippi.

The Leflore County Agricultural and Civic Center, Greenwood, October 29, 2024. Carol Blackmon, Senior Organizing Manager Mississippi for Black Voters Matter Fund; Wakinya J. S. Clanton, Executive Director of Mississippi at

The League of Women Voters of Mississippi is a nonpartisan, all-volunteer group of diverse women and men from various backgrounds, dedicated to educating voters, promoting voter registration, encouraging more voter engagement, for a robust, active state of self-governing and self-rule. We advocate for fair representation and simplified voting access for all eligible voters.

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I. Mississippi is One of the Last States to Enact Early Voting Laws

Forty-seven states offer early voting in various forms and regulations. Recently, Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Missouri and South Carolina passed laws enabling forms of early voting. Mississippi, along with Alabama and New Hampshire, does not allow early voting. For Mississippi in particular, most discussions around expanding early voting are framed as offering any registered voter the opportunity to vote in-person, for any reason, in advance of an election.² This definition was provided by Christy Kayser, Director of the Center for Community Education, University of Southern Mississippi (USM) in Hattiesburg, on October 22, 2024.

In many states, early voting is accomplished at designated polling places. To vote under these circumstances, a voter simply presents their ID and requests a ballot. In most states, these votes are counted as they are cast, prior to the election. However, results are released along with votes cast on election day. In others, counting must occur no earlier than the day of the election.

Troy Gibson, Associate Professor of Political Science, USM, offered that, classified broadly, “any legal vote” that is cast prior to Election Day can be defined as early voting.³ This might explain why some legislators and voters refer to the current legal process of absentee voting in Mississippi as early voting. It is not.

Southern Poverty Law Center; Byron Horry, Professor of Political Science, Jackson State University. Moderator: Judge Carlos Palmer, Leflore County Justice Court.

² Kayser.

³ Gibson.

Mississippi does offer absentee balloting, which gives eligible voters who meet special qualifications and exclusions the opportunity to cast a ballot prior to the election. Mississippi passed a law in 1972 that allows a registered voter with a specific “excuse” to request an absentee ballot either in person at the Circuit Clerk’s office, or by mail to vote by mail; student, teacher, administrator in a school, disabled, 65 years old or older, hospitalized, parent of disabled person, member of congressional delegation and their spouse or dependents, persons required to work during the poll open hours, and incarcerated persons convicted in Mississippi of non-disenfranchising crimes.

Early voting in person comprises two parts. First, at a qualified place of voting, a voter receives an application to be completed. Then the ballot is provided to be completed and placed in a special envelope, which has to be signed on the outside flap in the presence of a staffer at the Clerk’s office.

Voting by mail requires first that the voter request a ballot application by mail which must be returned by deadline and approved in order to obtain a follow up ballot by mail. Both the mailed application and the subsequent completed ballot must be officially notarized and postmarked for mail by a specified date. Completed absentee ballots are counted on election day. Johniece Dupree, Forrest County Election Commissioner, District Two, confirmed that Circuit Clerks’ offices are open for in-person absentee voting in Mississippi Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and from 9 a.m. to noon on the two Saturdays prior to Election Day.⁴

To understand why expanding voting for all eligible voters is a topic of importance to voting advocates, it is necessary to examine the history of voting legislation in Mississippi since the end of Reconstruction. Byron Horry, Professor of Political Science, Jackson State University, in the October 29th Forum in Greenwood, cited the Compromise of 1877 and the 1890 Constitution as key factors affecting the evolution of voting laws in Mississippi. Even following the passage of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965, Mississippi legislators have consistently supported laws to disenfranchise historically underrepresented voters who are disproportionately black and lower income. Horry cited *Shelby vs. Holder*, which gutted Section 5 of VRA and allowed states and municipalities to make changes in voting processes without clearance from the federal government as part of an ongoing pattern of voter suppression.⁵ Carol Blackmon, Senior Organizing Manager of Black Voters Matter, contended that the 1890 Plan is being revisited not only in Mississippi, but across the nation in efforts for partisans to sustain their power base.⁶

The effect of current absentee ballots laws on incarcerated individuals was discussed in all panels. Amir Badat, Manager, Black Voters on the Rise, in the October 8th forum at Jackson State University (JSU), cited Mississippi’s incredibly difficult absentee balloting process and its very restrictive felony disenfranchisement law as impediments to voter access.⁷

⁴ Dupree..

⁵ Horry.

⁶ Blackmon.

⁷ Badat.

Across panels, there was consensus that having more than twelve hours in which to cast one's vote would be a benefit to all voters. Having only a few hours in one day to vote severely challenges a typical person's time in competition with their careers, family life, unexpected challenges, and other daily demands. Shanika Ward, Qualified Intellectual Disabilities Professional, North Mississippi Regional Center, stated that, in a time crunch, casting one's vote can easily fall to the bottom of a voter's list of priorities for that day.⁸

II. Changing Legislative Landscape: Early Voting Has Gained More Interest

Over the past few years, there has been more national debate about whether the requirements for voting should remain as they are, or made tighter? Should the requirements for voting be made less restrictive for more participation or more exclusions? Is mail-in early voting as safe an alternative to in-person? Who is eligible for early voting? How can we expand voting/make it easier for people to vote? Partisans concerned about voter fraud support tightening requirements. Others, concerned about voter suppression and disenfranchisement, favor relaxing some requirements.⁹ Most panelists at the League-sponsored Forums supported some form of early voting or expanding ways to increase voter participation.

Most arguments against early voting are framed as concerns surrounding the security of vote casting and allegations of increased opportunities for fraud. Paloma Wu, Director of Impact Litigation for the Mississippi Center for Justice, insists that this question presents a false choice. "Show me the proof that expanding access reduces security," she challenged during the voter education forum at Jackson State University on October 8, 2024.¹⁰

Jeff Busby, Circuit Clerk of Lafayette County, during the October 15th forum at University of Mississippi, credited the newfound attention for early voting to a series of round table discussions that have taken place in Mississippi over the past several years. These discussions have enabled the voting public and the Circuit Clerks to get the attention of some legislators. He stated that enabling early voting will cost more, but one main way to achieve higher voter turnout is to offer (people) more days to vote. In his view, doing nothing about early voting is not an option.¹¹ If the state claims costs as a reason for not enabling early voting, it avoids the main issue, he states. In response to fears expressed about fraud, he said that early voting, done during an average two-week period, would be shorter than the current absentee voting of 45 days. Busby reminds that votes cast in-person before the election are secure. Voting machines are not connected to the Internet. Every vote is counted and there is accountability at each level. And poll workers are trained in checks and balances.¹²

⁸ Ward.

⁹ Gibson.

¹⁰ Wu.

¹¹ Busby..

¹² Busby.

Kayser concurs with other panelists on the so-called unfounded concerns about security of the vote and opportunities for fraud. She reminded that provisions can be made to make votes secure and the benefits of expanding access to the vote would outweigh the costs.¹³ Per Gibson, the real problem in expanding early voting is that it is not the highest budget priority in the state. In a political culture that is suspicious of change, where there is a Republican-controlled legislature and Republican governor, the idea that Democrats in Mississippi may be more likely to use early voting, there is no strong support to expand it. By contrast, in Oregon, when the Republicans first supported early voting, the Democrats objected, for the same reasons. The motivation of partisan positions cannot be discounted.¹⁴

Even though early voting can reduce barriers and increase access, Badat and other panelists said that access versus security is a so-called “boogeyman”. There has been no documented evidence of widespread voter fraud, according to the state and federal Departments of Justice. He calls continued allegations of voter fraud a narrative ploy akin to poll taxes and literacy tests.¹⁵ Jonathan Cole Winburn, Professor of Political Science, University of Mississippi (UM), weighed in on the issue. He stated that evidence of voter fraud is miniscule despite widespread allegations in recent elections.¹⁶ Ward cited a Brennan Center for Justice study that found .0003% cases of fraud.¹⁷ Consensus among panelists was that in the cases uncovered, people simply made mistakes, and did not purposefully try to commit fraud.

The argument over access versus security reflects the polarization of today’s society, says Jacobi Grant¹⁸, Research and Compliance Officer, Jackson State University. Concerns about financial costs of early voting is part of this polarization. Panelists across forums echoed Grant’s observation.

III. Potential Impact of Early Voting: Participation, Legislative Makeup, Societal Shifts

All panelists concurred that having more than one day to cast one’s ballot would expand access to voting. The opportunity to cast one’s vote prior to the election would prevent long lines at the polls, allow more people to participate while the issues are fresh on their minds, offset the effect of most polls having low walkability scores, align with busy lifestyles, and offset possible power outages/heat index issues that are all likely occurrences during an Election Day in Mississippi.

¹³ Kayser.

¹⁴ Gibson.

¹⁵ Badat.

¹⁶ Winburn.

¹⁷ Ward.

¹⁸ Grant..

In his side-by-side comparison of Mississippi's Absentee Balloting process and early voting, Busby stated that early voting would increase the number of people who go to the polls. Votes cast by Absentee Ballot are counted on Election Day. By contrast, votes cast during the process of early voting could be counted when cast, although they would not be reported out until Election Day. This would not only lighten the workload of Circuit Clerks' offices, it would avoid the complications inherent in the certification process that could render a(n) Absentee Ballot invalid. He pointed out that there are systems of checks and balances in the process to prevent duplicate ballots.

Wu emphasized that early voting would provide voters the opportunity to exercise the fundamental right to vote that they have.

IV. Population Surveys Regarding Early Voting

Wu cited a 2024 Pew polling survey indicating that most respondents approve eligibility vote casting as well as restoration of enfranchisement to felons who have completed their sentences. 82% approved of printing backup ballots. 81% were in favor of the requirement of a government-issued ID (Student ID is an accepted form of ID). 76% were in favor of allowing early voting at least two weeks prior to the election. 72% were in favor of making Election Day a National Holiday. 57% believe that any eligible citizen should be automatically registered to vote.¹⁹

A 2023 survey (ARC Insights) indicates that 74% of respondents support in-person early voting access to all voters. This is supported by voters across the age spectrum.

Badat referenced polls by Chisholm Strategies (and Millsaps) (2018? 2019?) that consistently show that 60 to 70% of respondents want early voting in Mississippi. Secure Democracy polling corroborates these findings.

Winburn stated that most research suggests increases in voter turnout when early voting is available. It gives more access to the people. He said that campaigns to educate about a new way to vote, that is, early voting, would increase voter participation. Simply passing a law enabling it is not enough. Further, large public surveys show majority public support for early voting.

Gibson's research reflected a slightly different, less strong trend. He referred to Michael McDonald's research (University of Florida) that indicated a little bit of support for early voting. The demographics that were helped by early voting were Democrats, Independents, women, single parents (controlling for other relevant variables). But, he pointed out, polls usually show a

¹⁹ Wu.

weak preference for early voting. “People who vote will find a way to vote!”²⁰ Low information voters, he explained, are less likely to vote.

Kayer shared that, anecdotally, legislators reported that in the 2020 Mississippi Legislative Session, there was not much interest among their constituents in expanding early voting.²¹ She cited this as evidence of the need for voters to communicate to legislators that they do want to expand access to voting, to enact early voting.

While there is growing bipartisan support to increase voting access, it is seen as not favoring either party. All panelists point to the polarization among voters that has made common-sense solutions to real problems such as increasing voter access as a major barrier to progress on this issue.

V. Impact of Early Voting on Student Participation

Information about access to voting is not as well known as it could be among younger people. We don’t have any recent survey information about the issue of early voting among students. Therefore, it is difficult to gauge how much of an increase in participation among this demographic early voting would inspire. Exposure of young people to information would serve as motivation to participate. Most Mississippians want access to early voting, said Grant, but he suspects typical voters who are not in favor of early voting might support political ideology over their own interests - meaning convenient voting options.²² This is the effect of the polarized political climate that all panelists referenced at one point or another.

Grant observed that some young people are more likely to engage in the entertainment aspect of political participation. They may be more likely to protest, organize, be boisterous, and be seen than show up to the polls. Early voting would allow younger populations to utilize what they know best in order to participate in the process. Envision this: People organize around an issue, protest, then march to the polls to vote. In other words, early voting would enable voters to protest an issue all the way to the polls. According to panelists closest to student populations, the state needs to find ways to reach young people in a manner that allows their personal convictions to be expressed politically and at the ballot box where it matters.²³

Horry pointed out that candidates don’t typically visit college campuses to campaign. So it is difficult to gauge how much of an impact a system of early voting in Mississippi would have on student participation in the political process.²⁴

²⁰ Gibson.

²¹ Kayser.

²² Grant.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Horry.

The stereotype that young voters are not engaged and are apathetic is just that, a stereotype. Generation Z is one of the most civically engaged generations. They engage in different ways - on social media, on the streets. Their turnout in the 2020 election was historic. Since studies have shown that 75% of people want early voting, some believe politicians should pass laws consistent with what their constituents want. The past apathy on this subject is disenchanting, according to panelists.²⁵ The solution to increased voter engagement is to incorporate an easy process for voting into people's everyday lives, so folks are interested in information about local and state races, from coroners and election commissioners to governor.

Wu called attention to Mississippi Votes (MSVotes.org) as further proof of engagement by young people. MS Votes is an organization comprised of teens, artists, people who are too young to vote, and run by millennials, as one of the area's most powerful advocacy groups around voting.²⁶

Kayser is a strong proponent of online registration. Early voting, she felt, would help students because it would give them more than one day to cast their ballot, whether they vote where they live or return to their home county to vote.²⁷

Almost all forum panelists advocated for college students to register to vote where they live during the four years they spend in college. Wakinya S. Clanton, Executive Director of Mississippi at Southern Poverty Law Center, spoke of The Power of Place, and urged students to "Vote where you stay!"²⁸ Doing so would enable them to have more access to voting. After all, outcomes of local elections impact daily lives.

VI. Challenges, Obstacles, Opportunities for Early Voting in Mississippi

There are multiple barriers that prevent eligible voters from achieving equity in access, particularly in the case of the current absentee balloting process, stated Ward. Among them are physical disabilities, unavailability of large print ballots, no ballot in Braille, people who have committed non-disenfranchising crimes in the state, lack of knowledge that curbside voting is available, and absence of trust that one's vote will be counted. Education about some of these procedures and conditions is much needed.

Further, Ward stated, in the backlash following the 2020 Election and rumors of fraud, more laws have been put in place to restrict voting. For example, in Georgia, the number of days for mail-in early voting has decreased. In Iowa and North Carolina, mail-in ballots that arrive within a few days of the election, even if postmarked appropriately, are not counted. Mississippi

²⁵ Badat.

²⁶ Wu.

²⁷ Kayser.

²⁸ Clanton..

passed a new law in 2023 to purge voter rolls based on an individual's history of voting activity. Ward feels that early voting would mitigate some of these barriers.²⁹

Busby emphasized the opportunities for more voter participation in state and local elections. He reported that despite outreach on social media platforms and the Secretary of State's website, livestreaming on Election day, only 34% of registered voters in Lafayette County voted in the last state and local election. By contrast, 75-80% participated in the Federal Election. This opportunity gap, he contended, is an area where additional targeted voter education must take place. The question that he poses to the public is, "Would early voting increase voter turnout?" He thought it was important to instill voter responsibility early in college students through education about local elections, and that early voting access might improve participation for all demographics.³⁰

Ward spoke anecdotally from experience about the positive impact of teaching young adults at home about voting as a factor in the registration of high school students.³¹

Laura Antonow, Lafayette County Election Commissioner, District 4, concurs with other panelists that early voting would increase voter access by providing a longer period of time in which to cast a vote. Weather-related episodes would have less of a negative impact on voter turnout with expanded days to vote. Voter confidence in early voting would increase with in-person, no excuse voting because, unlike current absentee balloting rules, early votes would be counted when cast, thereby eliminating the possible rejection of ballots going through the resolution process. Early voting would assure voters that their votes count.³²

The ability to vote on more than one day might encourage more participation. Early voting, especially for the elderly or handicapped, would make voting more accessible with more opportunity and convenience. It would be much simpler than the current complex and onerous absentee voting process used by many with mobility issues.³³

Since early voting could be processed on the same machines and counted the same way as ballots cast on Election Day, similar equipment can be used at County Clerks' offices. Across the country in other states, early voting takes place 10 to 14 days prior to the election. By way of comparison, Circuit Clerks offices in Mississippi are already open 45 days prior to the election. Compared to the idea of in-person early voting, the process of absentee balloting is both more complicated and time consuming for everyone involved. People moving from current absentee voting processes to in-person voting should actually save time in Clerks' offices.

²⁹ Ward.

³⁰ Busby.

³¹ Ward.

³² Antanow..

³³ Dupree.

To be clear, no one is suggesting there aren't additional costs associated with changing systems for early voting, collecting, counting, and sorting ballots. Plus, there are complexities in developing new processes, and some still have concerns about security.

Since the low information voter is least likely to vote, we're not sure how early voting would expand voter participation.³⁴ We do know that rigid rules block people.³⁵

Questions About a New Process: Clerks want to know how to implement early voting. Some of the important questions to be asked: How many locations need to be available, especially in rural areas? How will early voting be staffed? We do know that early voting would bring extra people to working courthouses (and libraries). How would parking be affected? Busby emphasized the importance of involving Circuit Clerks and Election Commissioners in the process of finding solutions to these problems.³⁶

Antanow suggested having multiple early voting locations might be helpful, especially in rural areas. Early voting would enable people who live in remote areas to cast their votes while in town shopping, for example. Two weeks prior to the election is a reasonable time frame for most.³⁷

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it," is often a response to requests for support of early voting. Proponents of this position argue that absentee voting is just as good as early voting. It is not. Legislators could have more discussions involving the Circuit Clerks from all 82 counties, as there is no standardization for some of their processes. If the Clerks felt that counting in-person ballots early, compared to absentee balloting, would improve voting complexity and expand access, new laws might be considered. Circuit Clerks have the most power in getting this process done in the most efficient manner and their input is critical.³⁸

VII. How Mississippians Can Weigh in on the Process

Panelists at all four Forums suggested ways that Mississippians can let their positions about early voting be known. They all suggested that education is key to a more informed voter.

In the Mississippi state legislative session in 2024, the Senate led on this issue with a law to expand early voting, but the House didn't pass the law. According to Wu, more education must be done to bring lawmakers on board. She advocates for the early voting processes to mirror those on Election Day. The current absentee voting process, which requires multiple steps and for which the voter incurs costs, she argues, amounts to a poll tax and voter suppression, set in motion by the 1890 Constitution, which disproportionately disenfranchised black men. Early

³⁴ Gibson.

³⁵ Kayser.

³⁶ Busby.

³⁷ Antanow.

³⁸ Grant.

voting is a way to deal with systemic and structural obstacles that Mississippi voters face today surrounding exercising their right to vote.³⁹

More public awareness on the benefits of early voting would help lawmakers feel comfortable communicating to their constituents why laws enabling early voting are a benefit to all voters. Passing such legislation would result in Circuit Court staff being able to do their jobs more effectively and efficiently. Voters can make their voices heard by researching candidates and voting for those who support their interests. Early voting would make the process of elections feel very real for more people who can participate.⁴⁰

Telephone calls to legislators are an effective way of communicating, as calls are logged. Messages left by voters are noted. There are also multiple opportunities for voters to interact with legislators on a regular basis in the off season.⁴¹ Voters are also urged to engage with organizations such as League of Women Voters and MississippiVotes.

Winburn, at University of Mississippi, expressed similar sentiments. In order to expand voter access in Mississippi, reach out to state legislators and let your voice be heard.⁴²

Ward encourages people to research, advocate, and get educated, understanding voter rights. She wants people to make informed decisions. Voters have a right for their voices to be heard and enabling early voting would make casting a vote more accessible and fair in Mississippi.⁴³

Busby invited members of the public who wanted to learn more about how ballot counting happens to attend some of the meetings held by Election Commissioners. He also urges everyone to be part of higher voter turnout (>30%) in state and local elections.⁴⁴

Antonow urged voters to volunteer as poll workers to get a close-up look at the checks and balances in the system.⁴⁵

Clanton urges voters to focus on the upcoming legislative session, and be more in tune with what is happening at the Capitol from January to April 2025. She says everyone has an obligation to hold legislators accountable. The Legislature approves funding for what it values. What is a more compelling need to fund than reducing barriers to voting. Voting participation is the very connective tissue of democracy.⁴⁶

Be protective of students whom you register, says Horry. Mentors should educate them about where their precinct is.

³⁹ Wu.

⁴⁰ Grant.

⁴¹ Badat.

⁴² Winburn.

⁴³ Ward.

⁴⁴ Busby.

⁴⁵ Antonow.

⁴⁶ Clanton.

Clanton suggests young people need to be specifically taught about the balloting process/provisional ballots/absentee balloting. It's not common knowledge that one has to return to the Circuit Clerk's office within 5 days to verify affidavit ballots. Civic participation requires one to show up.

She urged candidates to lift up issues that are important to all people in order to engage them. Expanding outreach about early voting to younger workers would catch the attention of this demographic. She spoke of The Power of Place and advocated for educating college students on Voting Where You Stay! She referred to college students as a protected class of voters who can register and vote where they live during their college years or in their home counties. She pointed to reports that 119,000 people had voted absentee in Mississippi by October 29, 2024 as proof that having more than twelve hours to vote increases the number of people who cast ballots.⁴⁷

Blackmon described the work that Black Voters Matter does on college campuses to educate and engage students and emphasized that we need to instill, educate, create opportunities for young people to engage in the political process. In order to enable early voting, legislators only need to introduce bills, pass them with a veto-proof majority, and enable them to become law. However, the fear that people will have too many opportunities to engage in the process, influenced by partisan considerations, is an impediment. She gave as examples teachers, medical and service sector workers, and anyone whose employment present barriers to voting would benefit from expanded access.⁴⁸

Information That Persuades Lawmakers - Horry suggested that when elected officials examine the data they should better understand that expanded early voting would benefit all voters.⁴⁹ However, there is a concern that political partisans want only more of their own partisans to vote.⁵⁰ But, early voting can increase turnout among all parties. With that in mind, it's important that legislators and Circuit Clerks receive education and data about early voting that can lead to common understanding.⁵¹

Many panelists at the forums spoke about the need for more targeted voter education campaigns on topics ranging from basic voting processes, to locating a voting precinct, forms of ID accepted for voting, and absentee balloting.

Forums and town halls open to the public and streamed online were seen as effective ways to reach voters.

⁴⁷ Clanton.

⁴⁸ Blackmon.

⁴⁹ Horry,

⁵⁰ Winburn.

⁵¹ Antanow.

In general, there is a lot of information available about expanding early voting in Mississippi, but whether there's a common understanding and agreement on the facts by lawmakers is a question.

All panelists agree that lawmakers should take up the issues again in the 2025 Legislative Session and have public discussions on the benefits and challenges, followed by a decisive vote.

Recordings of the forums referenced in this document can be found online at <https://lww-ms.org/>.