

# The Mississippi Voter

League of Women Voters of Mississippi

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<http://www.lwv-ms.org/>

## President's Corner



This is the last article I will be writing to each of you through the "President's Corner." I am so proud of what our Local Leagues have accomplished in serving your communities and the growth in membership. The resilience of members of the LWV of the Gulf Coast League and the Pearl River County Unit has been remarkable. They survived the horrific Katrina hurricane and yet still have been able to give time to their Leagues.

What great board members I had to work with! We are a diverse group representative of our state. Such warm, happy, determined, energetic, members and we worked so cohesively together always keeping the LWV mission as our goal.

We have accomplished a lot. We supported the implementation of HAVA and the securing of the electronic voting machines and provided a new web site to serve the public and League members on election information and issues. Using our concurrence on the Merit Judicial program position, we had bills entered. We took successful action on the Adequate Education Program bill that the Governor says he will sign. Many more of you have been responsive to action requests from LWVUS on such issues as ethics, campaign finance, civil liberties and other government issues. At present we are still advocating for the Tobacco tax/food decrease tax. Financially we have increased the amount of money in our Endowment

Fund and purchased three CDs to increase our working capital. We published the 2007 Citizens Guide/Calendar and had two community finance drives. This year there will be new state board books for the incoming board members.

As I write this I can't help but reminisce about my tenure as President 36 years ago. All of the characteristics of that board were the same as now. The biggest difference is that we have entered the electronic age. This has been such an advantage helping us to keep in touch with each other and helping to keep us more efficient and productive.

League members, then and now, have a desire to make their communities, state, and country a better place for all to live. We want to continue to educate ourselves, get the facts, and do something about a situation that needs to be changed. League members always show a fond feeling of respect for each other and others. This feeling of respect follows through into the community populace.

The Nominating Committee has put together a great slate of officers to serve on your state board for the next two years. I know the effectiveness of LWV in Mississippi will grow under their gifted leadership. And I also know that the new board can depend on your support. I thank you for the opportunity to have served as your LWVMS president and the support you have given me.

Fondly, *Fran Leber*

## Immigration Study

If your local League or Unit is planning to participate in the LWVUS immigration study, please let the LWVMS board know and we will forward any information we think will be helpful. The LWVUS published an excellent article, the first in a series of articles on immigration, in your *last "National Voter."* There is a good web site that gives information on immigration nationwide and state-by-state:

<http://www.migrationinformation.org>

Click on "US in Focus" and then scroll down and click on "State Data on Foreign Born").

### **Immigration study timeline (note that this study has been reduced from 3 to 2 years).**

- Sept. 1, 2007: LWVUS distributes leader's guide that includes consensus questions.
- Sept. 06 - Jan. 08: Local Leagues help educate members and communities about immigration issues.
- Sept. 07 – Jan. 08: Local Leagues take consensus.
- Feb. 1, 08: Deadline to get consensus response forms into LWVUS.
- Feb. 1 – March 20, 08: LWVUS Immigration Study Committee formulates position using member consensus forms.
- Late March/early April, 2008: LWVUS Board adopts the position that will be presented at the next convention for member approval or disapproval.



## LWVMS Convention



Every odd-numbered year, the LEVMS holds its convention. At this meeting the budget (including setting the dues level), program priorities (including any proposed studies and our focus of action), election of officers, proposed bylaw amendments, reports of board committees, and other business takes place. We will have a speaker and enjoy dining together.

The other very important thing that happens is that like-minded League women from all over Mississippi come together to network, compare notes and just have fun. We hope that we will see all of you in Jackson this year – ***League does serious work but it isn't just about business!***

**The LWVMS Program Priorities for FY 2007-2008 were printed in the last Voter. It would be a good idea to bring both that one and this to Convention.**

### Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee will present the following slate of proposed officers at Convention. Nominations can also be offered from the floor – just follow the bylaw guidelines.

**President** – Mary Margaret Bollinger, Jackson

**VP, Membership** – Bill Hawley, Picayune

**VP, Voter Service** - Minta Uzodinma, Jackson

**Treasurer** – Natalie Maynor, Jackson

**Secretary** – Jane Lindsey, Biloxi

### Elected Directors:

**"MS Voter"** – Ellen Russak, Starkville

**Webmaster & Calendar** – Stacy Callender, Jackson

**Lobby Corps** – Fran Leber, Jackson

## Lobby Corps Report

The following is a partial list of bills that LWVMS worked and continues to work on and their status as of 2-19-07. When a bill is in Conference Committee, three conferees from each house are chosen as the committee and they work on the final bill. The exception to the above is **HB 247, the tobacco tax increase/Food decrease bill** that dies in the senate. HCR 91 has been filed by the house to suspend the rules in order to reconsider the issue.



### **Education**

**HB 238 – Mississippi Adequate Education Program** – Secures every child a quality education, enhances at-

risk student programs, allows new curriculum “redesign” programs, and additional funding for high growth districts. \$125 million has been allocated for the proposed budget with \$30 million additional for the following years. LWVMS supports this bill. It presently is in Conference. Committee House Conferees: Stringer, Brown and Meyes. Senate: Gordon, Chaney, and Burton.

**HB 1058 – To initiate the screening of children in grades 1-3 for dyslexia and to monitor them.** LWVMS supported this bill and the governor signed it.

**HB 554 – Charter Schools** – Extends the law that allows new charter schools to be built that would otherwise “sunset.” LWVMS supports this bill. Presently in Conference: House Conferees are Brown, Dickson, and Mayo. Senate Conferees have not been appointed.

## **Election Laws**

**SB 2233 – Election to fill legislative vacancy and increase the number of days before an election that a person must qualify.** LWVMS supports this bill. Presently in Conference. House Conferees are Reynolds, Smith (27<sup>th</sup>), and Warren. Senate conferees to be appointed.

**HB 997 – Runoff for special elections three weeks after initial balloting instead of two.** LWVMS supports this bill. Sent to conference.

**SB 2823 – Voter Registration – Delay the date municipalities must comply with the requirements of the State Wide Election management system.** League is watching this bill. Presently in conference. Senate Conferees: Burton, Lee (35<sup>th</sup>). House: Reynolds, Smith (27<sup>th</sup>), and Jennings. One senate conferee to be appointed.



### **Health Issues**

**SB 2764 – State Board of Health. This extends the life of the department and reconstitutes the membership of the board.** League supports reconstruction of the board. Presently in Conference. Conferees are House: Holland, Fredericks, and Bondurant. Senate Conferees to be appointed.

**SB 2319 – Abortion** – House has combined three anti abortion bills into one. LWV opposes this bill. Bill has been sent to governor.

## LWVMS 2007 Calendar

**May 19** - (Saturday) – **LWVMS Convention** – see enclosed flyer.

**June 9 – June 11 - LWVUS Council 2007** - at the Marriott Metro Center Hotel, 775 12<sup>th</sup> St., NW, Washington, D.C. Voting delegates are selected from the State League but anyone is welcome to attend. More information is on their web site: [www.lwv.org/](http://www.lwv.org/)

**July 15** – Deadline for submitting articles to be included in the Aug. “*MS Voter.*”



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MISSISSIPPI**  
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**Mission:**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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