

✓ 2020

VOTER GUIDE



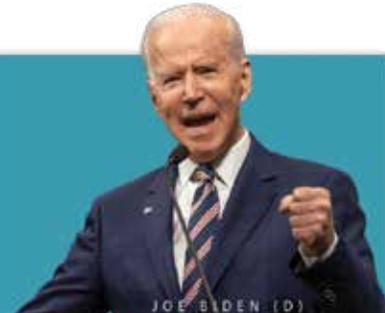
CINDY HYE-SMITH (R)



MIKE EPTON (D)



DONALD TRUMP (R)



JOE BIDEN (D)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Introduction
4	Voting Information
5	Voting Timeline/The Ballot
6	On the Ballot
7	The Candidates - U.S. Senate
8/9	The Issues
10	The Candidates - House of Representatives
11	The Candidates - Mississippi Supreme Court

INTRODUCTION

Dear reader,

From the 100-year pandemic to a national reckoning on race to unprecedented political polarization, we've never covered an election year quite like 2020. And so, so much is at stake.

We're swamped with rhetoric from both sides of the political aisle, making it difficult to understand which ideas from candidates are real or feasible. We have critical questions for those seeking office, but it's often impossible to sift through talking points to understand which of those ideas could be most effective for us. Partisan bickering regularly leads to few positive changes at the highest levels of government, often leaving us feeling ignored or unheard.

Our political system often seems designed to be confusing, particularly in Mississippi, where we have major election cycles every single year. And this election year, with all its unprecedented craziness, makes it particularly difficult to feel connected to the political process.

That's why we wanted to create this voter guide, where you can find most everything you need to know about our 2020 statewide elections. We asked every candidate for office this year key questions about how they would use their positions of power for good, and we laid out their answers in an easy-to-digest way.

You'll also find basic information about how to vote, as well as critical voting deadlines. We believe that civic engagement is the most effective way we can help move Mississippi forward.

We hope this will be a helpful resource as you navigate these next few weeks before Election Day, but we want to know how it could be improved. If you don't see something you'd like to know, visit our website at MississippiToday.org. There, you'll find the most robust, comprehensive coverage of Mississippi politics. If you still have questions or suggestions for us, don't hesitate to reach out.

Thank you, as always, for reading. Vote on November 3!

- Adam Ganucheau, Editor-in-Chief



VOTING INFORMATION



When do you vote?

Mark your calendar for Election Day, **Tuesday, November 3**. Make sure to set a notification so you're reminded in advance. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Absentee voting, in person or by mail, will begin Sept. 21 in Mississippi. You can submit mail-in ballot requests and conduct early in-person voting at the local circuit clerks' office.

To vote early in Mississippi, a person must be away from home on election day, over age 65 or must have a permanent or temporary disability. During 2020, a person can vote early if under physician-imposed quarantine because of COVID-19 or taking care of someone under a physician-imposed quarantine.

The ballot application must be filled out and notarized. When returned, if eligible, the person will then receive a ballot. **The mail-in ballots must be postmarked by the day of the election and must arrive in the circuit clerk's office no more than five days after the election.**



Are you registered to vote?

Search your name on the Secretary of State's website and find out if you are registered.

Not registered? The local circuit clerk office will be open from 8 a.m. until noon on Oct. 24 and from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Oct. 31 for absentee voters before the Nov. 3 election.



Where do you go to vote?

Find your polling place by visiting the Mississippi Secretary of State's Office website and entering your address.



What do you need to bring?

The Secretary of State's Office website lists that any one of the following types of photo IDs may be used on Election Day or at the Circuit clerks' offices for absentee voting:

- A driver's license
- A photo ID card issued by a branch, department, or entity of the State of Mississippi
- A United States passport
- A government employee ID card
- A firearms license
- A student photo ID issued by an accredited Mississippi university, college, or community/junior college
- A United States military ID
- A tribal photo ID
- Any other photo ID issued by any branch, department, agency or entity of the United States government or any State government
- A Mississippi Voter Identification Card

VOTING TIMELINE

OCTOBER 24

CIRCUIT CLERKS' OFFICES OPEN FOR ABSENTEE VOTING

Circuit clerks' offices must be open from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.

NOVEMBER 2

ABSENTEE BALLOT BY MAIL DEADLINE, 5:00 P.M.

Circuit clerks' offices must be in actual receipt of absentee ballots returned by mail for ballots to be timely. This is not a postmark deadline but an actual receipt deadline.

SEPTEMBER 21

ABSENTEE BALLOTS AVAILABLE

Earliest day to vote by an absentee ballot in the Circuit clerks' office in the General Election.

OCTOBER 31

IN-PERSON ABSENTEE VOTING DEADLINE, 12:00 P.M.

Circuit clerks' offices OPEN from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.

NOVEMBER 3

GENERAL ELECTION DAY

Polls open from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.



THE BALLOT

Here's what the November ballot will look like with three pages of the sample ballot released by the Secretary of State's Office. The ballot will feature three initiatives on medical marijuana, the state flag design and a Jim Crow era provision.

SAMPLE Official Election Ballot
STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
2020 General Election
Tuesday, November 3, 2020

TO VOTE, YOU MUST DARKEN THE CIRCLE (●) COMPLETELY USING A BLACK OR BLUE PEN. Do not use a red pen, felt tip pen or any type of pencil. Do not cross out or erase - If you make a mistake, you may request a new ballot.

For United States President Vote for ONE		For United States Senate Vote for ONE	
<input type="radio"/> Presidential Electors for Joseph R. Biden Jr. for President and Kamala D. Harris for Vice President	Democrat	<input type="radio"/> Mike Espy	Democrat
<input type="radio"/> Presidential Electors for Donald J. Trump for President and Michael R. Pence for Vice President	Republican	<input type="radio"/> Cindy Hyde-Smith	Republican
<input type="radio"/> Presidential Electors for Don Blankenship for President and William Mohr for Vice President	American Constitution	<input type="radio"/> Jimmy L. Edwards	Libertarian
<input type="radio"/> Presidential Electors for Brian Carroll for President and Amar Patel for Vice President	American Solidarity	For US House Of Representatives 1st Congressional District Vote for ONE	
<input type="radio"/> Presidential Electors for Phil Collins for President and Bill Parker for Vice President	Independent	<input type="radio"/> Antonia Elason	Democrat
<input type="radio"/> Presidential Electors for Howie Hawkins for President and Angela Nicole Walker for Vice President	Green	<input type="radio"/> Trent Kelly	Republican
<input type="radio"/> Presidential Electors for Jo Jorgensen for President and Jeremy "Spide" Cohen for Vice President	Libertarian	For US House Of Representatives 2nd Congressional District Vote for ONE	
<input type="radio"/> Presidential Electors for Brock Pierce for President and Karla Ballard for Vice President	Independent	<input type="radio"/> Brian Flowers	Republican
<input type="radio"/> Presidential Electors for Kanye West for President and Michelle Tidball for Vice President	Independent	<input type="radio"/> Bennie G. Thompson	Democrat
		For US House Of Representatives 3rd Congressional District Vote for ONE	
		<input type="radio"/> Dorothy Dot Benford	Democrat
		<input type="radio"/> Michael Guest	Republican

TURN BALLOT OVER TO CONTINUE VOTING

**For US House Of Representatives 4th Congressional District
Vote for ONE**

Steven H. Polson

Republican

**NONPARTISAN JUDICIAL ELECTION
For Supreme Court Justice
Supreme Court District 1 (Central)
Position 1
Vote for ONE**

Kerry Galle

Nonpartisan

Leslie Westbrooks

Nonpartisan

**NONPARTISAN JUDICIAL ELECTION
For Supreme Court Justice
Supreme Court District 1 (Central)
Position 2
Vote for ONE**

Leslie G. King

Nonpartisan

**NONPARTISAN JUDICIAL ELECTION
For Supreme Court Justice
Supreme Court District 2 (Southern)
Position 3
Vote for ONE**

Mike Randolph

Nonpartisan

**NONPARTISAN JUDICIAL ELECTION
For Supreme Court Justice
Supreme Court District 3 (Southern)
Position 3
Vote for ONE**

Juhah Dennis Coleman

Nonpartisan

Peng L. Luchford

Nonpartisan

TURN BALLOT OVER TO CONTINUE VOTING

**Statewide Ballot Measure 1
Initiated by Petition and
Alternative by Legislature**

Initiative Measure No. 65 (Should Mississippi allow qualified persons with debilitating medical conditions, as certified by Mississippi licensed physicians, to use medical marijuana?)

Legislative Budget Office Fiscal Analysis for Initiative 65:

The overall cost to Mississippi for the first year is estimated to be \$11,568,150. The anticipated expenses for the first year to implement a medical marijuana program is \$24,000,150 (Plants - seeds to Sale: \$4,000,000; Licensing, Marketing, Inspection: \$14,525,150; and Cost to Cultivate Revenue: \$2,848,000). The anticipated revenue is \$13,000,000 (User ID Cards: \$2,500,000; Commercial Licenses: \$500,000 and sales tax at 7 percent: \$10,000,000).

The anticipated expenses for years following the first for a medical marijuana program is \$15,038,000 (Plants - seeds to Sale: \$5,000,000; Licensing, Inspection: \$8,738,000; and Cost to Cultivate Revenue: \$1,530,000). The anticipated revenue is \$26,000,000 (User ID Cards: \$5,000,000; Commercial Licenses: \$1,000,000 and sales tax at 7 percent: \$20,000,000). The overall annual revenue is anticipated to be \$13,000,000, all of which must be used to support the state marijuana program.

Alternative Measure No. 65A (Should Mississippi establish a program to allow the medical use of marijuana products by qualified persons with debilitating medical conditions?)

Legislative Budget Office Fiscal Analysis for Initiative 65A:

The cost or revenue impact associated with this initiative is undeterminable.

**VOTE FOR APPROVAL OF EITHER, OR
ADMIT NOTE**

FOR APPROVAL OF EITHER Initiative Measure No. 65 OR Alternative Measure No. 65A

AGAINST BOTH Initiative Measure No. 65 and Alternative Measure No. 65A

AND VOTE FOR ONE

FOR Initiative Measure No. 65

FOR Alternative Measure No. 65A

**Statewide Ballot Measure 2
House Concurrent Resolution No. 47**

This amendment provides that to be elected Governor, or to any other statewide office, a candidate must receive a majority of the votes in the general election. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes, then a runoff election shall be held as provided by general law. (The requirement of receiving the least votes in a majority of Mississippi's House of Representatives's districts is removed.)

VOTE FOR ONE

YES

NO

**Statewide Ballot Measure 3
House Bill 1796 - Flag Referendum**

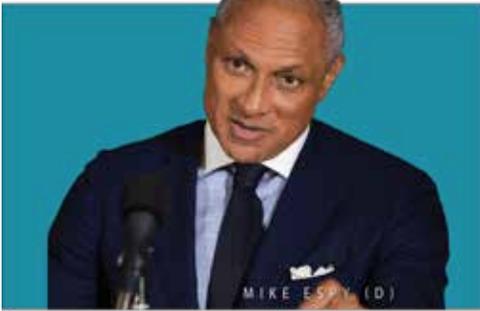
Please vote "Yes" or "No" on whether the following design shall be the official Mississippi State Flag.

YES

NO

END OF BALLOT

Democratic - Mike Espy



Mike Espy, age 66, is vying to be the first African American elected to the United States Senate from Mississippi.

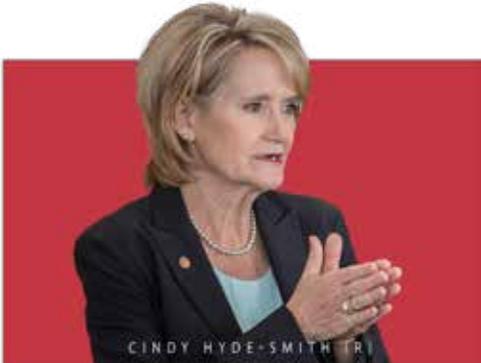
In 1986, Espy, a Democrat, became the first Black Mississippian elected to the U.S. House since Reconstruction. He was re-elected by comfortable margins to the 2nd District post three additional times before he resigned to accept the appointment as Secretary of Agriculture in the Bill Clinton administration. He also was the nation's first African American secretary of agriculture.

Espy later resigned after he was indicted on federal corruption charges though, he was acquitted on all counts. Since then, Espy has been practicing law in Mississippi.

In 2018, Espy re-entered politics to vie for the Senate seat left vacant by the retirement of long-time Sen. Thad Cochran. Espy lost the special election to interim Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith. Espy garnered more than 46 percent of the vote in the special election.

Espy is a Yazoo City native. His family has been involved in the funeral home business for decades and his grandfather is credited with starting the first African American hospital in the state in the 1920s to provide a medical option for Black Mississippians.

Republican - Cindy Hyde-Smith



Incumbent Republican U.S. Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith, 61, from Brookhaven is the first woman elected to Congress from Mississippi.

Hyde-Smith, a former longtime state lawmaker and former state agriculture commissioner from 2012 to 2018, was first appointed by then-Gov. Phil Bryant in April 2018 to fill the U.S. Senate seat vacated by Republican Thad Cochran. Hyde-Smith then won a special election for the seat in November 2018.

Hyde-Smith, who served as a Democrat for much of her 12-year tenure as a state senator, has a conservative voting record in Congress and has been a staunch supporter of President Donald Trump's policies both foreign and domestic.

Hyde-Smith serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee, on six subcommittees including agriculture and is chairwoman of the Legislative Branch subcommittee.

Hyde-Smith is a cattle farmer and partner in a stockyard auction in Brookhaven. She and her husband, Mike, have one daughter. She is a graduate of Copiah-Lincoln Community College and the University of Southern Mississippi.

Independent - Jimmy Edwards

Jimmy Edwards of Grenada is the other candidate running for the United States Senate seat this year from Mississippi.

Edwards, the Libertarian candidate, is challenging incumbent Republican Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith and Democrat Mike Espy. Edwards, 56, says he is an independent contractor and is a former teacher and customer service agent. This is his first bid for elected office.

THE ISSUES

We asked U.S. Senate candidates where they stand on issues such as COVID-19 response, public education, police funding and more. Read what **Democrat Mike Espy** and **Libertarian Jimmy Edwards** said in their own words below. Find the rest of their responses in our online voter guide at mississippitoday.org.

Please note that **Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith's** campaign staff ignored 13 calls, texts or emails from Mississippi Today in an 18-day period to submit responses for this questionnaire. Hyde-Smith, in the single public event she attended during that time, also ignored a Mississippi Today reporter who asked her questions about her campaign in person.

Congress' Role in Coronavirus Response

ME: Congress, along with the President, should be leading a cohesive, coherent, and coordinated national approach to addressing the pandemic and the economic crisis so we do not have this ad hoc approach that has left our states and local governments to fend for themselves.

Instead of minimizing the pandemic and denying during the critical early stages, our Congressional leaders should have come together as a body, sat down with our world-renowned medical experts and come up with a comprehensive approach to shut down parts of the United States.

JE: They should encourage local cities and counties to determine the level of protection their residents should take. Each state, city, and county/parish has different levels of coronavirus cases. This is where decisions need to be made.

Healthcare Priorities

ME: I know how important affordable health care is for all Mississippians, because it's part of my family's legacy. In 1924, my grandfather, Thomas J. Huddleston, started the first Black-owned hospital in Mississippi at the height of Jim Crow. Like my grandfather, my number one priority will be guaranteeing all Mississippians access to quality and affordable health care. Too many Mississippians are getting crushed by the rising cost of premiums, copays, and prescription drugs.

I am committed to building upon the Affordable Care Act in order to lower health care costs for all Mississippians, including expanding Medicaid in Mississippi — a policy we are already paying for in other states as taxpayers. It's high time Mississippi had the same benefits for their rural hospitals and lower costs that other Medicaid expansion states like Oklahoma and Missouri do.

JE: Completely repeal Obamacare, allow states to control healthcare exchanges, provide Medicaid to those who need it worst, allow options for those eligible for Medicare B to find more economical plans, encourage new graduates of professional medical degrees to serve in the Reserves/National Guard while providing healthcare to those in communities who need it the most.

Stance on Police Funding

ME: I do not support "defunding" the police. But I have proposed a number of clear steps to reform policing so our law enforcement officers can better serve our communities.

First, we need to hire more officers of color, especially Black men and women. We can attract more applicants by offering competitive salaries and opportunities for continuing education.

Second, applicants and new hires should be subject to stringent background checks on past conduct and previous performance. That's why we must create a national registry of police misconduct and disciplinary actions. State and local police departments should also be required to report use-of-force incidents to the Department of Justice.

Third, we must mandate bias and de-escalation training. I also want our police officers to receive training from our mental health counselors, social workers, child protection officers, and addiction specialists. On a daily basis, officers are confronted with situations involving these afflictions. I want our departments

to work hand-in-hand with these experts so they can better understand these situations in order to better serve our communities. We must create a new prevailing standard of conduct in which the unacceptable standard of "reasonable force" is replaced with "necessary force." And fourth, chokeholds and other restraint positions should be abolished. Finally, all officers should be required to wear body cameras at all times while on duty.

JE: If cities are allowed to defund their police departments, this will set a dangerous precedent for law enforcement at the county/parish and state levels. The "well armed militia" mentioned in the 2nd Amendment needs to be applied to civilian law enforcement as well as our armed forces.

THE CANDIDATES - HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

District 1

Republican: Trent Kelly*

Democrat: Antonia Eliason

Incumbent Republican U.S. Rep. Trent Kelly faces Democratic challenger Antonia Eliason, a University of Mississippi law professor, in the House District 1 race.

Kelly, of Slatton, has served in the House since winning a special election in 2015 after the death of former Rep. Alan Nunnelee. He was reelected in 2016 and 2018. Kelly is a former Northeast Mississippi district attorney and has served for 30 years in the Mississippi Army National Guard.

Eliason moved to Oxford in 2013, where she teaches international trade and investment law and contracts law at the University of Mississippi. She previously practiced law in London for five years before moving to Mississippi. Eliason is a self-described Democratic Socialist, and said environmental justice, racial justice and economic justice are at the center of her platform.

Kelly, a decorated combat veteran who has served in Iraq, now serves on the Armed Services Committee, where he is ranking member of the Military Personnel Subcommittee, and on the Agriculture Committee.

District 2

Republican: Brian Flowers

Democrat: Bennie Thompson*

Bennie Thompson, who has represented District 2 in the U.S. House since 1993, is the only Democratic member of Congress from Mississippi. He currently serves as chair of the House Homeland Security Committee.

He is being challenged this November by political novice Brian Flowers of Clinton, who is running an underdog campaign to unseat Thompson. Flowers, a North Carolina native, is a Navy veteran. He currently works at the Grand Gulf Nuclear Power Plant in Port Gibson as a FLEX marshal, dealing with security issues. He labels himself as a conservative.

Thompson, who lives in Bolton, often traces his start in politics to his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement during his early life and during his enrollment at Tougaloo College. Thompson has served as a city alderman, mayor and was a Hinds County supervisor when elected to the U.S. House in 1993.

District 2 consists of a large portion of metro Jackson and much of the rural, western areas of the state, including the Delta.

District 3

Republican: Michael Guest*

Democrat: Dorothy "Dot" Benford

U.S. Rep. Michael Guest of District 3 of Mississippi will face perennial candidate Dorothy "Dot" Benford in his first re-election bid.

Guest, a former district attorney in Madison and Rankin counties, emerged from a crowded Republican primary in 2018 to win the post. The District 3 post was vacant because Gregg Harper, who was first elected to Congress in 2008, opted not to seek re-election.

Benford is a Hinds County community activist. She has sought multiple offices. In 1988 she ran for the District 2 Congressional seat held by Mike Espy who in 1986 was elected as the first African American to represent Mississippi in Congress since the 1800s. In 2019, Benford ran and lost in the Democratic primary for the post of Central District public service commissioner.

District 3, viewed as a safe Republican district, includes portions of the Jackson metro area and much of the east-central and southwest portions of Mississippi.

District 4

Republican: Steven M. Palazzo*

Democrat: N/A

THE CANDIDATES - Mississippi Supreme Court

Central District

Place 1:

Kenny Griffis*

Latrice Westbrooks

Place 2:

Leslie D. King (unopposed)

Two judges are squaring off for a seat on Mississippi's high court for District 1, Place 1: incumbent Supreme Court Justice Kenny Griffis and state Court of Appeals Judge Latrice Westbrooks.

Griffis, of Ridgeland, was appointed to the Supreme Court by then-Gov. Phil Bryant to fill out the term Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. who left the bench at the end of January 2019.

Griffis is a former longtime Court of Appeals judge from 2003 until his appointment to the Supreme Court and was serving as chief judge of the appellate court at the time of his appointment. He is running as a "constitutional conservative" and has been endorsed by the state Republican Party, although Supreme Court races are nonpartisan. Westbrooks has the support of numerous Democratic state leaders and groups.

Westbrooks, of Lexington, was elected to the Court of Appeals in 2016. She previously served as an assistant district attorney for Harrison, Hancock and Stone counties – the first African American woman to serve there as assistant DA – and has been an attorney for 25 years. Westbrooks served as prosecutor for the city of Durant and as city attorney for Isola. She served as a public defender in Holmes County for nearly 10 years and has served as legal counsel for the Jackson Police Department and as a municipal judge for the city of Lexington.

Westbrooks, if elected, would be the first African American woman on the Mississippi Supreme Court. The district covers the counties of Bolivar, Claiborne, Copiah, Hinds, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Jefferson, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Madison, Neshoba, Newton, Noxubee, Rankin, Scott, Sharkey, Sunflower, Warren, Washington, and Yazoo.

Southern District

Place 3:

Michael Randolph (unopposed)

Northern District

Place 3:

Josiah Dennis Coleman*

Percy L. Lynchard

Incumbent Supreme Court Justice Josiah Coleman faces a challenge from Chancery Court Judge Percy Lynchard Jr. for the District 3, Place 3 seat on the high court.

Coleman, of Fentress, was elected to the Supreme Court in 2012 and began his term in January 2013. He previously practiced law in Tupelo and Oxford and had served as a law clerk for U.S. Magistrate S. Allan Alexander in Oxford. Coleman's grandfather, the late former Gov. J.P. Coleman, also served briefly on the Mississippi Supreme Court and on the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Coleman's father, Thomas, was an original member of the state Court of Appeals.

Lynchard, of Hernando, is serving his seventh term as chancery judge for the district that includes DeSoto, Grenada, Montgomery, Panola, Tate and Yalobusha counties. He is currently senior chancellor for the district, an previously served as DeSoto county prosecutor and as a municipal judge for Hernando. He ran unsuccessfully for the state Supreme Court 20 years ago.

The District 3 seat for which Coleman and Lynchard are vying covers Alcorn, Attala, Benton, Calhoun, Carroll, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clay, Coahoma, DeSoto, Grenada, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Leflore, Lowndes, Mashall, Monroe, Montgomery, Oktibbeha, Panola, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Quitman, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tippah, Tishomingo, Tunica, Union, Webster, Winston and Yalobusha counties.



MEDICAL MARIJUANA

Mississippians who support medical marijuana will have to decide between two proposals that will be on the November general election ballot.

Lawmakers approved a proposal in March to place on the November ballot an alternative to a citizen-sponsored initiative designed to legalize medical marijuana for people with "debilitating illnesses." Supporters of the medical marijuana initiative say the legislative alternative is designed to confuse the voters and result in the defeat of both.

Mississippi voters statewide will decide between three choices:

- 1.** Approve Initiative 65, for which more than 228,000 Mississippians signed a petition, which opponents say is too permissive and written to help the marijuana industry, not patients.
- 2.** Approve Initiative 65A, put forth by the Legislature, which would allow lawmakers to regulate a medical marijuana program, but which opponents say is a rope-a-dope by lawmakers to thwart medical marijuana usage and dilute the vote for Initiative 65.
- 3.** Vote against both. But voters who do this can still vote for one of the two initiatives, should one pass.



STATE FLAG

Lawmakers passed a bill in June that immediately removed the state flag, and Gov. Tate Reeves signed the bill into law. A nine-person commission has been appointed to develop a single new design by September, and Mississippi voters will approve or reject that design on the November 2020 ballot.

In the meantime, Mississippi will have no official state flag.



REMOVING THE HOUSE ELECTORAL PROVISION

Voters will have the opportunity in November to remove a Jim Crow-era provision from the state Constitution that makes Mississippi the only state in the nation where a candidate for statewide office can win a majority of the popular vote and not be elected.

The Mississippi Constitution, adopted in 1890, requires the winning candidate for governor and for other statewide offices to obtain both a majority of the popular vote and win the most votes in a majority of the 122 House districts.

Public Education Priorities

ME: Every child in Mississippi deserves access to a quality education that will allow them to reach their full potential — no matter the school they attend, the color of their skin, or how much money their parents make.

I was fortunate enough to attend a local parochial school in Yazoo City until I integrated the all-white Yazoo City High School. I support all schools in our state. Public dollars should go toward our public schools. For years, our public schools have been underfunded by billions.

Decisions about education are best left to our educators, teachers, parents and school administrators and I will fight to get them the support and funding they need, including increasing teacher pay, adequately funding training programs and expanding federal loan forgiveness programs for teachers.

As Senator, I will work with any president and any legislator to deliver results for Mississippi's schools — and I will demand answers for policies that hurt our teachers and families.

JE: Phase out the Department of Education within 10 years of taking office, designate funding in that period for career education and remedial instruction in language arts and mathematics, tax credits for families who choose non-public education for their children in grades K-12, allow exemptions for Selective Service registration for high-achieving high school graduates.

Removal of State Flag

For context: The candidates were asked whether they agree or disagree that The Mississippi Legislature recently voted to remove the state flag with its Confederate emblem as opposed to putting that decision before voters and if they believe the old state flag should be placed on the ballot for a vote of the people.

ME: Agree. At 66 years old, I never thought I would see the flag come down it in my lifetime. The Confederate battle emblem flag was hurting our state's economy. With the retirement of the old flag, Mississippi is finally ready to turn the page on that part of our state's history and start the next decade as one of prosperity and promise.

No. I believe it was the right decision for the legislature to choose to take down the flag. As a former Congressman and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, I know that sometimes leaders have to make tough decisions. The legislature made the right decision to take down the flag and put a new flag up for a vote. With this new flag, we can all move forward together.

JE: This is an area where our Governor has acted unilaterally without consulting with his legislative branch. Whether you want to consider this action, as well as other decisions he has made in recent months, as an "Executive Order" or not, he has acted without considering legislation passed almost 20 years ago.

Yes.

Criminal Justice Reform

ME: In the last decade, improvements in technology, and better understanding of the impact of sentencing, the criminal justice system and the causes of crime, have forced us to reevaluate policies put into place in the 20th century. I think the FIRST STEP Act was an essential and much-needed bill.

In Mississippi, we have an incarceration problem. There are far too many people, most of whom are Black men, in prison for non-violent crimes and technical violations. It's a drain on the families of the incarcerated, on our economy, and on our state budget.

Most incarcerated Americans are held in state and local jails. As your U.S. Senator, I would work on a "second step act" to address criminal justice issues at the state and local level and allocate federal funds for new programs to help reduce recidivism. By increasing the funding for and availability of addiction and

psychological treatment in prisons, education and job training programs for individuals on the inside and when they are recently released, affordable housing, and private-public partnerships for reentry programs, we can help both incarcerated individuals and their families deal with the financial burden of incarceration and become contributing members of our economy.

JE: Any reform needs to be carried out at the state, county/parish, and city levels. This is a 10th Amendment issue that needs to be handled at these levels.



Text **MSELEX** to
844-626-5588.

Updating you with the most important
election news before you vote November 3rd.



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