Mississippi
VOTER GUIDE
2023
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Dear Reader,

Mississippi, our home state that showcases plenty to be proud of and celebrate, also faces some pretty dire and complex problems.

Federal and state prosecutors are still investigating the state’s welfare scandal, what some have labeled the largest embezzlement scheme in state history in which tens of millions of dollars intended for our poorest residents were misspent or squandered by powerful, wealthy and politically connected people.

Our state’s already weak hospital system is continuing to show signs of impending failure, with many rural hospitals on the brink of closure and even large metropolitan hospitals forced to cut critical health care services and lay off employees to make ends meet.

Residents of Jackson, our state’s capital and largest city, lost running water for days last fall and may never be able to trust the safety and reliability of the water system again. The state as a whole has the highest homicide rate in the nation, our state’s young people are moving away at a troubling pace, and our economy is struggling to keep up with our immediate neighbors.

Voters this year have a chance to address all of these problems and more at the polls in November.

Mississippi is one of just three states with gubernatorial elections this year. But we also have seven other crucial statewide offices up for grabs, two key regional commission elections, as well as 174 legislative races and district attorney races. All of these people will be elected by Mississippians later this year to positions where they absolutely could improve problems and lives across the state.

We’re already becoming overloaded 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.

That’s why we wanted to create this voter guide, where you can find most everything you need to know about our 2023 statewide elections. We’ll keep asking every major candidate for office this year key questions about how they would use their positions of power for good, and we’ll present their answers in an easy-to-digest way.

Here, you will 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.

If you don’t see something you’d like to know, view our full coverage 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.

Adam Ganucheau, Editor-in-chief
General Election Day:  
Tuesday, November 7th

**Am I a registered voter?**

[Link: Search your name] on the Secretary of State’s website and find out if you are registered.

**Where do I go?**

[Link: Find your polling place] by visiting the Mississippi Secretary of State’s Office and entering your address.

**What do I bring?**

What do you need to bring to your polling place or to the Circuit Clerk’s office for absentee voting?

Any of the following types of photo IDs may be used on Election Day:

1. A driver’s license
2. A photo ID card issued by a branch, department, or entity of the State of Mississippi
3. A United States passport
4. A government employee ID card
5. A firearms license
6. A student photo ID issued by an accredited Mississippi university, college, or community/junior college
7. A United States military ID
8. A tribal photo ID
9. Any other photo ID issued by any branch, department, agency or entity of the United States government or any State government
10. A Mississippi Voter Identification Card

If a registered voter does not have any of these acceptable forms of photo ID, a FREE Mississippi Voter Identification Card will be provided at no cost to the voter at any Circuit Clerk’s Office in Mississippi during normal business hours.
Election Timeline

**September 25** - Circuit clerks office open for absentee voting from 8 a.m. to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday until November 3, 2023.

**October 10** - Voter Registration deadline

**October 28** - One of the two Saturday in-person absentee voting. Circuit Clerks office open from 8 am to 12 pm.

**November 4** - Last day for in-person absentee voting. Circuit Clerks office open from 8 am to 12 pm.

**November 7** - Absentee ballot by mail deadline. Any mail-in absentee ballots must be received within five business days after the election, as long as the envelope has been postmarked on/before election day.

General Election Day
Polling places are open from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.
What does the Governor do?

The governor of Mississippi is the head of the executive branch of Mississippi’s state government. They have a duty to enforce state laws and serve as the commander-in-chief of the state’s military forces. The governor also holds the power to approve or veto bills passed by the Mississippi Legislature and to convene the legislature at any time. The governor also has the sole authority to issue pardons and reprieves, except in cases of treason or impeachment. The governor of Mississippi also appoints the members of the Institutions of Higher Learning Board of Trustees.

Republican

Tate Reeves

A native of Rankin County, Tate Reeves was elected to his first term as governor in 2019. Previously, he had served two terms as lieutenant governor. His political career started with his election to state treasurer in 2003 at age 29. This not only made him the youngest state treasurer in the nation but also the first Republican to hold the office in Mississippi.

Reeves, 49, graduated from Florence High School in 1992 and then studied economics at Millsaps College. While at Millsaps, he played one year as a point guard for the Millsaps Majors basketball team and was a member of Kappa Alpha Order.

After Millsaps, Reeves pursued a career in banking and finance in Jackson, where he became assistant vice president and served as a senior investment analyst for AmSouth. In 2000, Reeves became an investment officer for Trustmark National Bank in Jackson.

He and his wife, Elee, have three daughters, Sarah Tyler, Elizabeth Magee and Madeline Tate.
Democratic

Brandon Presley

Commissioner Brandon Presley was elected Public Service Commissioner for the Northern District of Mississippi in 2007, re-elected in 2011, 2015 and most recently in 2019 without opposition. Elected to the Public Service Commission at age 30, he was the youngest Commissioner ever elected in Mississippi.

Prior to his election to the Public Service Commission, he served as Mayor of Nettleton from 2001 to 2007, having been elected at the age of 23, making him one of the youngest mayors in Mississippi history.

Presley, 46, is a lifelong resident of Nettleton, where he and his wife, Katelyn, are members of the First Methodist Community Church. He is past-President and current member of the Nettleton Lions Club and is a member of the Nettleton Civitan Club.

He studied at Itawamba Community College and Mississippi State University. He is also a member of the Financial Research Institute Advisory Board, and he is a graduate of Harvard University’s Kennedy School program for State and Local Government Executives.
What does the Lieutenant Governor do?

The Lieutenant Governor of Mississippi is the second-highest ranking officer in the executive branch of Mississippi’s state government, right below the governor. The office of lieutenant governor was established when Mississippi became a state, abolished for a few decades in the first half of the 19th century, and restored later in the century. The Lieutenant Governor is president of the state Senate and presides over it, only voting to break a tie. Compared to the same office in other states, Mississippi’s lieutenant governor has much more power because of their role with the state Senate. The Lieutenant Governor has the sole ability to appoint members, vice-chairmen, and chairmen to the various Senate committees, regardless of which party has control of the chamber.

Republican

Delbert Hosemann

Elected in November 2019 with more than 60 percent of the vote, Delbert Hosemann is serving as Mississippi’s 33rd Lieutenant Governor. He previously served three terms as secretary of state.

His political career began with an unsuccessful campaign for Mississippi’s 4th Congressional District in 1998. Hosemann was once registered as a Democrat before switching to the GOP.

Hosemann graduated from University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, in 1969 with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree. In 1972, he earned a Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Hosemann is married to Lynn L. Hosemann, and they have three children. He lives in Jackson, where he is a partner with Phelps Dunbar LLP.

Democratic

D. Ryan Grover

D. Ryan Grover is a political newcomer. Since 2018, he has been a business consultant and has worked in that role with numerous governmental and non-profit organizations as well as businesses both large and small, according to his campaign website. A Hattiesburg native and current resident, the 33-year-old attended Oak Grove High School and later attended University of Mississippi.
The Candidates - Secretary of State

What does the Secretary of State do?

The Mississippi State Constitution refers to the secretary of state of Mississippi as the “keeper of the capitol." This officer of the executive branch is responsible for publishing documents dealing with the acts of the state legislature, as well as other official documents, including the Mississippi Official and Statistical Register, commonly called the Blue Book. This office is also responsible for ensuring fair, accurate elections throughout the state of Mississippi. The secretary of state also manages some state-owned lands and is responsible for ensuring certain businesses are operating under the law.

Republican

Michael D. Watson, Jr.

Michael Watson is finishing his first term as secretary of state. Prior to taking office in January 2020, Michael served three terms in the State Senate, where he represented District 51 in Jackson County.

After graduating from Pascagoula High School, Watson earned a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Mississippi. Watson’s involvement in Mississippi politics began with an internship under then-U.S. Senate Majority Leader, Trent Lott, in 1999. Watson operates his own legal firm, Watson Legal, PLLC.

Watson and his family – his wife Lauren and their three daughters, Gracie Pierce, Annie and Cora Elizabeth – live in Hurley and attend First Presbyterian Church in Pascagoula.

Democratic

Ty Pinkins

Ty Pinkins is a political newcomer. He is an eleventh-hour replacement for the secretary of state race because the Democratic Party’s previous nominee, Shuwaski Young, withdrew his candidacy from the race because he recently experienced a sudden medical event.

Since January 2023, Pinkins has been actively campaigning as a Democratic opponent against incumbent Republican U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker, who is up for reelection in November 2024.

Pinkins was born in Rolling Fork. He served in the U.S. Army from 1996 to 2017. He earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Maryland Global Campus in 2012 and a law degree from the Georgetown University Law Center in 2020.

His career experience includes working as an attorney, small business owner.
What does the Attorney General do?

The attorney general of Mississippi is the chief legal officer of the state and serves as the state’s lawyer. Only the attorney general can bring or defend a lawsuit on behalf of the state.

**Republican**

**Lynn Fitch**

Lynn Fitch was sworn in as Mississippi’s 40th Attorney General and first ever woman Attorney General on January 9, 2020. A native of Holly Springs, Fitch previously served as Mississippi’s state treasurer since 2012. She is the first Republican woman to hold the position.

Fitch earned both her Bachelor of Business Administration and her Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi. In 2009, Fitch was selected by former Gov. Haley Barbour to serve as executive director of the Mississippi State Personnel Board. She also previously served as deputy executive director at the Mississippi Department of Employment Security and as counsel for the state House of Representatives Ways and Means and Local and Private Legislation committees.

Fitch was named a 2015 Honoree of the Women in Government Leadership Program by Governing Magazine. She has been recognized as a Woman Trailblazer by the Mississippi Bar Association and was honored with the prestigious Susie Blue Buchanan award by the Mississippi Bar association’s Women in the Profession Committee in 2017. Fitch and her family are members of Madison United Methodist Church.

**Democratic**

**Greta Kemp Martin**

Greta Kemp Martin is a political newcomer. For several years, she has served as the litigation director for Disability Rights Mississippi, the protection and advocacy agency for the state of Mississippi. Greta is an active member of the Mississippi Bar, having served in various leadership roles throughout the Mississippi legal community. She is the immediate Past President for the Mississippi Association for Justice (MAJ - formerly the Mississippi Trial Lawyers Association) and the former President of the Mississippi Women Lawyers’ Association (2014-15).

Greta serves on the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission—a task force focused on bringing legal services to underserved communities in Mississippi. She is a past recipient of the Margaret P. Ellis Legacy of Leadership as well as MAJ’s Woman of Achievement Award. Greta is also a member of the American Association for Justice and the Capital Area Bar Association. She’s licensed to practice in all courts in the State of Mississippi as well as the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Raised in Tishomingo County, Greta lives in Jackson with her husband, Drew, her three bonus kids, and their two dogs.
The Candidates - Treasurer

What does the Treasurer do?

The Mississippi State Treasurer is, in many ways, the chief financial officer of the state. The treasurer is in charge of receiving, disbursing and investing state funds. The treasurer is also in charge of the issuance of state debt, as well as paying interest on the state’s bond and note obligations. The treasurer also represents the Executive Branch on more than a dozen boards and commissions.

Republican

David McRae

David McRae is completing his first term as state treasurer. A fourth-generation Mississippian, McRae remains involved in the family business, McRae Investments, as the company’s managing partner. He is also a licensed attorney. McRae is a graduate of Southern Methodist University and received a Juris Doctor from Mississippi College School of Law.

While studying for his law degree, he was Chief Justice of the Honor Court and worked for Justice Jess Dickinson at the Mississippi Supreme Court. McRae and his wife Katherine have three children and live in Ridgeland.

Democratic

Addie Lee Green

Addie Lee Green previously served as election commissioner in Bolton and as a city alderwoman. Her career experience includes working with Packard Electric Division of General Motors. Green served as the vice president of a local International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers (IUE), an election commissioner and city alderwoman of Bolton, Mississippi, and a board member of Hinds County Resource.

Green studied sociology at Jackson State University. She is a member of Chapel Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Bolton.
What does the State Auditor do?

The auditor’s main role is to assess state and local government and other entities to ensure that public funds are properly used.

Republican

Shad White

Shad White is finishing his first full, elected term as state auditor. In July 2018, he was appointed to the position by former Gov. Phil Bryant after previous Auditor Stacey Pickering resigned. White won election to the office in November 2019 and is running for his second full term.

White, a Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE), grew up in Sandersville, Mississippi. He went on to earn degrees from the University of Mississippi, the University of Oxford, where he studied as a Rhodes Scholar, and Harvard Law School.

White, his wife Rina and their children live in Rankin County and are members at St. Richard Church.

Democratic

Larry Bradford

Larry Bradford is the former mayor of Anguilla, located in the Mississippi Delta. This is his first statewide race.

Bradford, according to his campaign website, has worked with numerous nonprofit and for profit organizations to help them get their finances under control.
To learn more or stay up-to-date on the latest with the 2023 election, follow our election coverage at mississippitoday.org or view our full online Voter Guide. We aim to prepare you with anything you need to know to make an informed decision on election day and beyond. If you have questions that are not answered in our coverage, contact us and let us know.

Through interviews and indepth discussion, learn even more about the candidates and get the rundown of the current election season by listening to The Other Side with host and Mississippi Today editor-in-chief Adam Ganucheau, alongside the Mississippi Today political team. Listen on our website here or stream on your preferred podcast platform.