

STR[✓]GGLES

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Mississippi & Felony Disenfranchisement

In Mississippi, felony disenfranchisement laws permanently withhold an ex-felon's right to vote. It's a lifetime punishment, regardless of how long they've been reformed, have been out of prison, or have paid their fine. There are 23 disenfranchising crimes in Mississippi and they include: murder, rape, bribery, theft, arson, obtaining money or goods under false pretense, perjury, forgery, embezzlement, bigamy, armed robbery, extortion, felony bad check, felony shoplifting, larceny, receiving stolen property, robbery, timber larceny, unlawful taking of a motor vehicle, statutory rape, carjacking, or larceny under lease or rental agreement.

OVERVIEW:

- MS & Felony Disenfranchisement
- Education History, part 1
- #COUNTMEIN
- Last Day to Register to Vote
- Spotlight -Constance Burwell

Southern Echo is a non-profit, leadership development, education, and training organization dedicated to enhancing democracy and empowering marginalized and vulnerable communities.

FELONY VOTING cont'd.

It is no coincidence that many of these crimes are “money crimes,” meaning that they are more commonly associated with the most vulnerable and impoverished. Mississippi’s felony disenfranchisement laws were created with the Constitution of 1890 and were specifically designed to prevent or substantially hinder newly freed African Americans from voting. Shortly after the development of the 1890 Constitution, the intent behind the laws was stated explicitly in *Ratliff v. Beale* where the court stated, “Restrained by the federal constitution from discriminating against the negro race, the convention discriminated against (the race’s) characteristics and the offenses to which its weaker members were prone.”

Since the original 12 disenfranchising crimes, 11 more have been added in recent years. Currently, there are 23 crimes that can prevent you from voting.

If you have voting questions, visit VOTE.org for more information.



JUST BECAUSE YOU'VE BEEN CONVICTED DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN'T VOTE

Only the following crimes can prevent you from voting: murder, rape, bribery, theft, arson, obtaining money or goods under false pretense, perjury, forgery, embezzlement, bigamy, armed robbery, extortion, felony bad check, felony shoplifting, larceny, receiving stolen property, robbery, timber larceny, unlawful taking of a motor vehicle, statutory rape, carjacking, or larceny under lease or rental agreement.

If you were not convicted of any of these, **YOU CAN STILL VOTE.**

If you were convicted of one of these crimes, call your State Representative to see about reinstating your right to vote.

www.southernecho.org

EDUCATION CORNER

A Brief History of Public Education in Mississippi

Part 1:

By Ashura Lewis

The history of public education in Mississippi has been a long and difficult journey culminating in a present-day dirty mess that still leaves much to be desired. A system underfunded and biased from the start, Mississippi schools have fostered a self-perpetuating educational deficit that keeps black and brown students from learning.

As a result of over a century of racially based bigotry, many of the state’s schools are considered “at risk” and are even more poorly funded than other successful schools striving to succeed in an overtaxed, beleaguered state system. Whether viewed from a policy driven, cultural, racial, or purely fiscal position, Mississippi’s educational funding history and present state funding reveal only one inarguable conclusion: Mississippi, as a state, was ill prepared to create a stable, fully funded public education system from the very start.

PLAN TO BE COUNTED IN THE CENSUS 2020!

2020
CENSUS



CountMeIn

Use the hashtag #COUNTMEIN to show that you intend to participate in the 2020 Census. For more information, visit southernecho.org.

Education cont'd.

Following the close of the Civil War the state of Mississippi was in shambles. Brought to heel by Union troops for its rebellion, the landscape of the state politically and economically was as devastated as the land was physically.

In fact, Mississippi, prior to the Civil War, had no public education system established at all.

In the 1868 Constitutional Convention, ten out of the ninety delegates were African Americans. Among the many topics of discussion was education. Several measures were introduced; most notably the idea of integration and requiring compulsory attendance in the school system. Both measures failed. Provisions that did pass included voting rights for African-American males as required by Congress and the establishment of a framework to create state wide comprehensive public school systems.

Within Mississippi's new public school system segregation and inequality was the status quo.

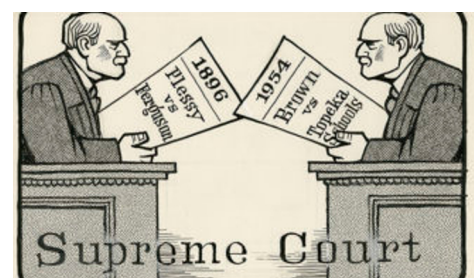
Plessey v. Ferguson in which the Court held that only separate institutions that were equal in quality were permissible constitutionally.

Despite the determinations of the Court in *Plessey*, the newly created public school system continued as it had at its inception. The system, which allowed for the free education of youths ages five to twenty-one, left the decision to integrate entirely to the purview of local officials; all of whom declined to do so. In the first five years it was noted that of the several all-white schools and all African-American schools all were severely underfunded as the state was still recovering from the war. Reconstruction was costly and slow going and many of the state's previous revenues dwindled including property values.

Intolerant of these issues, the 1875 taking of congress by the Democrats saw a party poised

to remedy these problems. In short order, the Democrats reduced taxes, reduced government spending, reduced government funding on a grand scale, and ensured the continuance of a tradition of white supremacy. Democrats pressed further in 1878 as they attempted to codify segregation in schools and insisting on a two-and-a-half-mile minimum distance between schools of differing races.

Most whites of the time held strongly to the conviction that African-Americans were essentially incapable of truly being educated; therefore, any money spent towards such educational endeavors was a waste of funds. ■



Don't forget to vote Tuesday, November 5th in the general election! Make sure your voice is heard! VOTE!

#votingmatters #southernecho

MDE School Ratings 2018-2019

The Mississippi Department of Education has released the state's school ratings and, when all 142 districts were rated, nearly a third of districts received a D or F letter grade. The ratings became official once the Mississippi Board of Education approved them at their meeting on October 10th.

The ratings are designed to measure how well or poorly school districts are performing within an academic year in regards to student achievement and growth measures. The A-F letter grades are determined by an evaluation of multiple factors.

"At the district and high school level, ratings are sorted out according to growth and proficiency on a number of tested subjects including reading, math, science and U.S. history, along with graduation rates, ACT scores and participation in accelerated programs like AP courses or dual enrollment. Elementary and middle schools are graded similarly, minus the graduation rates and higher-level testing." (mississippitoday.org)

Though high schools have always been graded on a slightly different scale, the inclusion of non-traditional high schools (schools that have grades beyond the 9th-12th traditional structure) have caused the need for "adjusted" scores to reflect the difference. The resulting adjustment gave every adjusted score a moderate boost.

The following are listed as the Top 10 districts in the state:

Petal School District
Ocean Springs School District
Clinton School District
Oxford School District
Madison School District
Enterprise School District
Biloxi School District
Union School District
Lamar School District
Rankin County School District

The following are listed as the Bottom 10 districts in the state:

Leflore School District
West Tallahatchie School District
Noxubee School District
North Bolivar Consolidated School District
Amite School District
Holmes Consolidated School District
Wilkinson School District
West Bolivar School District
Yazoo City Municipal School District

[Find all the ratings here.](#)





The OLIVIA Group

SPOTLIGHT: CONSTANCE BURWELL

Constance Olivia Harvey-Burwell serves as president and founder of the OLIVIA Group, LLC., her high school senior year creation and 23-year-young community consulting firm on strategic nonprofit management and education curriculum development in Jackson, Mississippi. She serves as co-founder and Senior Program Director for Legacy Education and Community Empowerment Foundation, Inc. (Legacy) in Forest, Mississippi. Legacy provides educational enrichment for low-wealth families of colors in rural Mississippi and worked under the umbrella organization of her late grandparent's foundation, the W. L. and O.K Slaughter Memorial Foundation incorporated over thirty years ago.

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“

DREAMS ARE LOVELY.
BUT THEY ARE JUST
DREAMS. FLEETING,
EPHEMERAL, PRETTY.
BUT DREAMS DO NOT
COME TRUE JUST
BECAUSE YOU
DREAM THEM. IT'S
HARD WORK THAT
MAKES THINGS
HAPPEN. IT'S HARD
WORK THAT CREATES
CHANGE.

”

-SHONDA RHIMES