

Q: CAN I VOTE IN MISSISSIPPI IF I HAVE A FELONY CONVICTION?

A: Unless you have been convicted by a **Mississippi court** of one of the 21 specific crimes listed below, you can vote in Mississippi at all times—even while you are incarcerated.

The 21 crimes that bar you from voting are:

Armed robbery, arson, bigamy, bribery, carjacking, embezzlement, extortion, felony bad check, felony shoplifting, forgery, larceny, murder, obtaining money or goods under false pretense, perjury, rape, receiving stolen property, robbery, statutory rape, theft, timber larceny and unlawful taking of a vehicle.

Ten of these crimes are listed in the Mississippi Constitution as disfranchising. In 2005, the Mississippi Attorney General added 11 new disfranchising crimes. The Mississippi Voter Empowerment Coalition (MVEC) is contesting the addition of these crimes in court. If you have been convicted of one of these disfranchising crimes, contact the ACLU at 601-335-6464 for assistance with restoration or to find out about the lawsuit.

If you were not convicted of one of the crimes listed above, you are eligible to vote. If you were registered before your conviction, you will still be on the voter rolls and can request an absentee ballot during your incarceration.

Q: IF I AM CONVICTED OF ONE OF THE 21 LISTED CRIMES, AM I EVER ELIGIBLE TO VOTE?

A: Yes, there are two ways in which your voting rights can be restored. You must either 1) be pardoned by the governor *or* 2) have the legislature pass a bill restoring your rights. MVEC helps people throughout the state with the process of seeking rights restoration and regularly holds rights restoration workshops. If you are interested in

applying for restoration of your voting rights, contact the ACLU of Mississippi at 601-355-6464.

Q: WHAT MAKES ME ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN MISSISSIPPI?

A: To register to vote in Mississippi you must

- Be a citizen of the United States
- Be a resident of Mississippi
- Be 18 years old at the time of the next election
- Live in the town in which you are registering to vote for at least 30 days prior to the election
- Not be disfranchised by one of 21 listed crimes

Q: WHAT IF I WAS CONVICTED OF A FEDERAL CRIME?

A: You can vote in Mississippi. No matter the crime, federal convictions have no impact on your voting rights in Mississippi.

Q: WHAT IF I WAS CONVICTED OF ONE OF THE 21 LISTED CRIMES, BUT IN ANOTHER STATE?

A: You can vote in Mississippi. No matter the crime, out of state convictions have no impact on your voting rights in Mississippi.

Q: WHERE CAN I REGISTER TO VOTE?

A: You can get a voter registration form at your post office, public library, county court house, probation or parole office, welfare office, community center or NAACP chapter. You can also download a form from the Secretary of State's website at <http://www.sos.state.ms.us/elections/VoterRegistration/>.

Q: WHEN CAN I REGISTER TO VOTE?

A: You can register to vote at any point during the year. It takes 30 days for your registration form to process, so be sure to register at least a month in advance of any

upcoming election. To vote in the November 4, 2008 election, you must register to vote by October 3, 2008.

Q: WHAT INFORMATION DOES THE VOTER REGISTRATION FORM ASK FOR?

A: You must provide your name, address, date of birth and either your Mississippi driver's license number or the last four digits of your social security number. If are registering by mail and are registering for the first time and have neither a driver's license nor a social security number, you must send in either a copy of a current and valid photo identification or a copy of a utility bill with your name and address on it. You will also be asked to swear that you are eligible to vote.

Q: WHERE DO I MAIL MY COMPLETED VOTER REGISTRATION FORM?

A: Mail your application to or drop it off at the circuit clerk's office in your county. A list of circuit clerks, also known as county registrars, is available at <http://www.sos.state.ms.us/elections/VoterRegistrars.asp>.

Q: WHY SHOULD I REGISTER TO VOTE?

A: Vote to empower yourself, your family and your community. Vote so that the needs of your community are addressed by those in office. Vote because your voice is important and deserves to be counted. Registering to vote will also ensure you are not excluded from sitting on a jury.

Q: WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

A: For more information visit www.msacclu.org or contact the ACLU of Mississippi at 601-355-6464 or the Mississippi State Conference NAACP at 601-353-6906.

MISSISSIPPI VOTER EMPOWERMENT COALITION

The Mississippi Voter Empowerment Coalition (MVEC) is a group of grassroots organizations, formerly incarcerated individuals and statewide and national advocacy organizations working together to ensure that all individuals can exercise their right to vote, regardless of a criminal record. MVEC works to bring about change through public education, legislative lobbying and litigation. Please contact the organizations listed below to join or to get more information about this important work.

MVEC ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

Action Communication and Education Reform

(Montgomery County)

Contact: Al White

662-565-2478

acwpro@yahoo.com

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of MS

(Hinds County and statewide)

Contact: Anthony Witherspoon

601-355-6464

awitherspoon@msaclu.org

www.msaclu.org

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)-

Racial Justice Program

(New York, NY/national)

Contact: Rachel Bloom

rbloom@aclu.org

Country Oaks Recovery Center

(Hinds County)

Contact: Louis Armstrong

601-944-1000

countryoaksrec@aol.com

Mississippi State Conference NAACP

(Hinds County and statewide)

Contact: Derrick Johnson

601-353-8452

msnaacpdj@bellsouth.net

Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights

(Washington County and statewide)

Contact: Jaribu Hill

662-334-1122

workersrights@bellsouth.net

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund

(New York, NY/national)

Contact: Jenigh Garrett

212-965-2200

jgarrett@naacpldf.org

Parents Youth United for a Better Webster County

(Webster County)

Contact: Cherraye Oats

662-258-4532

PEER (Preventative Entry and Ex Offender Re Entry Services)

(Pike County)

Contact: Charles Ashley

601-551-7107

ashleyrimsauto@yahoo.com

Rise Above Katrina

(Hinds County)

Contact: LaShawn Traylor

601-923-8229

riseabovekatrina@yahoo.com

SPEAR (Southeastern Prison Education, Advocacy and Reformation Project)

(Washington County)

Contact: Ruby Buck

662-335-7901

Southeaster6609@bellsouth.net

Voting With A Felony Conviction In Mississippi



Mississippi Voter
Empowerment Coalition

