

Aisha Sanders

Mississippi House of Representatives District 96

ABOUT THE CANDIDATE



LEARN MORE

Aisha Sanders

<http://www.aishasanders.com/>



Aisha Sanders is a native of Natchez, Mississippi. She received a degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Kentucky. In 2014, Aisha graduated from the Southern University Law Center (SULC) in Baton Rouge, Louisiana with a Juris Doctorate degree. She is a member of the Mississippi, Louisiana and Magnolia Bar Associations. Aisha practices law at the Sanders Law Firm PLLC, where she serves as the Managing Partner.

Aisha was born into a family of lawyers and educators who emphasized the importance of education as well as public service. Aisha learned to appreciate these values at an early age. Her passion for the law runs as deep as her commitment to improving the quality of life for all Mississippians. While in law school, Aisha was an intern with the Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus. As a Marshall Brenan Scholar, she served as a tutor and worked in the classrooms with teachers and students in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System.

As Aisha advanced her professional career, she did so while serving her community. Aisha became the youngest, first female and first African-American to serve as Adams County Prosecutor. She currently serves as a public defender with Adams County, the city prosecutor for the Town of Woodville and an Adjunct Instructor at Alcorn State University. Aisha is also a tutor at the D&J Youth Group in Natchez. She is the founder and president of the Dunbar-Green Foundation, which annually gives away school supplies, and provides the students with a fun day prior to the beginning of school.

As a candidate for the state legislature, Aisha has made funding for public education, raises for teachers and state employees, job security for state employees and affordable healthcare for all, the cornerstones of her campaign.

Aisha is running for State Representative because she believes she can serve her community more efficiently in the State Legislature. District 96 was created to give a voice to the underrepresented black community in Southwest Mississippi. This district includes public employees, public educators, failing school districts, low income families, and citizens who are often overcharged and heavily policed resulting in disproportionate representation in the criminal justice system.

SOCIAL MEDIA + LINKS

SDP ACTBLUE LINK <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/sdp-ms-sanders>

WEBSITE <http://www.aishasanders.com/>

FACEBOOK <https://www.facebook.com/aishasandersforhouse/>

TWITTER <https://twitter.com/Sanders4Rep96>

INSTAGRAM <https://www.instagram.com/sanders496rep/>

DATA ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Population	Households	Over 65	White	Black	Latinx	Median Income	Below Poverty Line	Unemployed	College Grads	HS Grads	No HS Grad
23,399	8,532	17.8%	36.2%	63%	0%	26,300	32.7%	3.8%	18.9%	56.6%	24.5%

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Mississippi House of Representatives District 96

PAST RACES

Congressional Districts

Nested Congressional Districts: CD3 (Cook PVI: R+13)
Learn more about Cook Political Ratings (Partisan Voting Index):
<https://cookpolitical.com/ratings>

2015 House of Representatives Election Results

Angela Cockerham (incumbent)* 100% 7,548
In 2005, Cockerham was elected to the office as a Democratic candidate. On March 1, 2019, she filed for re-election as an independent.

2015 House of Representatives Fundraising

Democrat \$40,400
Republican \$0

2018 Congress

Michael Evans 54.67% 3,547
Michael Guest 44.31% 2,875

2016 President

Hillary Clinton 58% 5,633
Donald Trump 41% 3,967

ON THE ISSUES

Quality Public Education

An opportunity to improve our social and economic conditions- insure that our children have a chance at a better life than we have.

Supporting education, of course, means increased salaries for teachers who are on the front lines of the educational battle.

Retirement Benefits

Public employees, after rendering a life of service, should not have to worry about whether their retirement benefits will somehow be jeopardize. Employees have invested in a retirement system and the state should make sure they receive a fair return on their investment.

This also means providing state employees with greater job security. They should not be without the protection of the state personnel board. It is just wrong to place state employees in a position where they are subject to transfer and termination without any right to contest the action of their supervisor.

State Subsidized Pay for Law Enforcement

Members of the law enforcement community put their lives on the line for us each and every day without adequate compensation. The state of MS should provide supplemental in order to equalize pay, so that an officer can focus on his job and career. And, not be continuously faced with the notion of looking for a better paying job.

Civil Service Protection Bill

In 2017 Sanders opponent (Cockerham) supported House Bill 974 which would have removed most state employees from civil service protection for a three year period, allowing agency heads to more easily fire, demote or transfer employees to other positions under the pretext of saving money during the state budget crunch. The Civil Service Protection Bill passed 62-58 in the House, mostly along partisan lines, with Republicans voting in favor of the Bill and Democrats voting against it. Sanders' opponent (Cockerham) presented the bill on the House floor. However, the bill ultimately died in a Senate committee.

Equal Pay

During the 2017 Legislative Session, Bills that would have required employers to pay women equal pay for the same jobs as their male counterparts died again in the Mississippi Legislature. The Democratic Caucus said in an email statement from Chairman David Baria, D-Bay St. Louis, and Reps. Sonya Williams-Barnes, D-Gulfport, and Bryant Clark, D-Pickens. Said the following: *"Despite strong bipartisan effort and all evidence regarding the wisdom and benefits of ensuring equal pay for equal work, there will be no pay equity law passed by the Mississippi Legislature in 2017,"* The caucus said they tried to maneuver the bill out of committee by suspending House rules. That effort failed on a partisan vote 47-72 with Democrat Rep. Angela Cockerham (Sanders' opponent) joining Republicans in opposition.

Education

Although the Mississippi Legislature passed and the Governor signed, a \$1,500 across the board pay raise for the state's teachers and teacher assistants, the income boost hardly scratches the surface. The Mississippi Department of Education says that before the raises, teachers in the state received an average of \$44,659, which is less than the Southeastern average of about \$51,000. The minimum salary for assistant teachers has long been frozen at \$12,500. That will increase to \$14,000.

It is unfortunate that the economic wellbeing of professionals who have such a profound impact on all of our lives for such an extended period of time is not better protected. Sanders supports salary increases that will make our state competitive in the education area by attracting and retaining talented persons. A teacher should not be required work a second job in order to provide for his or her family.

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ABOUT THE STATE

General Demographics:

- As of July 2018, there is estimated to be 2.99 million people living in Mississippi, per the US Census.
- The state population has not grown substantially in the past ten years, due to a decline in birth rates and because Mississippi is not a destination for immigrants or migration from other states.
- 56.7% of the state is non-Hispanic White (1.7 million people) and 37.8% of the state is Black/African American (1.13 million people).
- 76.1% of the state is over the age of 18 (2.27 million people). 15.5% of the state is 65 years or older.
- In 2008, 347,400 people were 65 years old or older in the state—a number that has been steadily rising. In 2017, there were 451,200 people 65 years or older.
- The median household income is \$42k, and 19.8% of people are in poverty (591k people). The national median household income according to the 2016 U.S. Census Bureau is \$55,516 and the national poverty rate was 12.7%
- In 2013, the unemployment rate was 8.4%. It has been steadily declining. In 2018, the unemployment rate was 4.8%. By comparison, The US unemployment rate was unchanged at a 49-year low of 3.7% in November 2018.

Senate and Congress

One Senator and four Representatives whose seats will be up for election in 2020. This includes Republicans Cindy Hyde-Smith, Trenty Kelly, Michael Guest, Steven Palazzo, and Democrat Bennie Thompson.

Gubernatorial

Mississippi limits governors to two terms. The current governor, Republican Phil Bryant, completes his two terms in 2019. The Republican candidate for governor is the current lieutenant governor, Tate Reeves, who is considered the heir-apparent by Republicans. When he announced his intention to run at the GOP headquarters, he had already raised more than \$5 million. But Attorney General Jim Hood, known as the “last Democrat in Dixie” announced his intent to run in October. He is considered very popular and has strong support in rural and North Mississippi.

District Lines:

Both congressional and state district boundaries are drawn by the state legislature. State legislative district boundaries must be approved as joint resolution and are not subject to governor veto, however congressional boundaries are approved by regular legislation and as such are subject to veto by the governor of Mississippi.

45% of the population is registered Republican and 37% Democrat in 2017. Based on historical patterns, Mississippi’s districts have been gerrymandered to favor Republicans, but as of March 2019, 36% of seats in both the state Senate and state House of Representatives are held by members of the Democratic Party.

Mississippi’s gerrymandering has been the subject of recent litigation. Mississippi District 22 was recently ordered to redraw the district based on Thomas v. Bryant. The proposed district line change would increase the black voting age population for 50.8% to 60%, reversing the dilution of African American votes. In February, there was an appeal made to the court by the defendants and a stay of remedial map drawing has been requested, but that stay has been denied and the new maps will be implemented for the 2019 elections.

Voter Registration:

To register to vote you must meet the following criteria:

- 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 election
- Not be disenfranchised because of conviction for one of 22 listed crimes (see below)

Last Day:

Registration must be completed 30 days prior to the election.

The primary is on August 6, 2019, the primary runoff is on August 27, and the general election is on November 5. The filing deadline for candidates was March 1, 2019.

- For the November Election you must register by Tuesday, October 7th, 2019.
- The last day for Voter Registration is Monday, May 20, 2019 for the June Primary.
- Primary: Aug. 6
- General election: Nov. 5
- Voter registration deadline: Oct. 7
- Early voting: N/A
- Absentee voting deadline: Nov. 4
- Online registration: No
- Same-day registration: No
- Voter ID: Photo ID required
- Poll times: 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Absentee Voting:

Mississippi does not permit early voting or no-excuse absentee voting. Valid excuses for voting absentee rather than physically going to the polls are:

Scheduled travel on Election Day

Being a student or teacher

Having a disability or caring for someone with a disability

Being 65 years old or older

Being required to work on Election Day.

There is no specific deadline for applying for an absentee ballot, assuming you are already registered to vote. The absentee ballot must be returned by 5 p.m. on the day before the election.

Since a 2011 amendment which took effect in 2014, Mississippi voters are required to present photo identification in order to vote in person,

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Mississippi House of Representatives District 96

but not to vote absentee. Acceptable IDs include:

- Driver's license
- Photo ID card issued by a branch, department, or entity of the State of Mississippi
- United States passport
- Government employee ID card
- Firearms license
- Student photo ID issued by an accredited Mississippi university, college, or community/junior college,
- United States military ID
- Tribal photo ID
- Any other photo ID issued by any branch, department, agency or entity of the United States government or any State government
- Mississippi Voter Identification Card

Voter Suppression:

There is significant voter suppression in Mississippi, both through the criteria that makes one eligible to register to vote and the requirements to actually exercise their right. In terms of eligibility, individuals convicted of one of 22 specific felony crimes permanently lose the right to vote, even after they have served their time. In 2016, 218,181 people—which includes one in six African American adults in the state—were disenfranchised due to this restriction. Additionally, restrictive voter ID laws (see above) make it difficult for many eligible voters to actually exercise their right.

There is ample evidence that these voter suppression tactics are employed by the right in order to suppress Democratic votes. For example, in 2018 a video of Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith speaking with a small crowd was leaked on Twitter. “And then they remind me that there’s a lot of liberal folks in those other schools who maybe we don’t want to vote,” she says in the video. “Maybe we want to make it just a little more difficult. And I think that’s a great idea.” Original tweet.

There is currently a lawsuit arguing that this change to criteria was intended to discriminate on the basis of race and violates the First and Eighth Amendments of the US Constitution as well as the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment.

The 22 felonies that permanently disenfranchise Mississippians 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.

All others retain their voting rights, even while in prison. Re-enfranchisement for those who have lost the right to vote can only be granted through a bill passed by both houses of the legislature or through the Governor.

Current State Legislature

Mississippi is a Republican trifecta; Republicans control the Governorship and both chambers of the legislature. The entire Mississippi state legislature is up for election in 2019, and these are all “Last Chance” races – the legislators who are elected in 2019 will draw district lines during the 2021 redistricting. The current Governor is a Republican, but is term-limited in 2019 and cannot run again. The Governor does not have the power to veto district maps drawn by the state legislature.

The state senate is currently comprised of 19 Democrats and 33 Republicans. The house currently has 47 Democrats and 73 Republicans. The gubernatorial election is competitive, particularly in this open race. The Democratic gubernatorial candidate is viable and well-liked: he is the current state attorney general, Jim Hood. Building momentum at the bottom of the ticket will benefit the top of the ticket too in this critical redistricting moment.

Mississippi is also poised to make big gains this year. The South is rising, as evidenced by the Doug Jones victory in Alabama, and the near wins of Stacey Abrams in Georgia, Andrew Gillum in Florida, and, of course, Mike Espy in Mississippi—all propelled by people of color, women, and young people. The infrastructure and voter data that was generated during the Espy race can be put toward Democratic efforts this year. The energy around certain progressive issues is also strong and has the ability to bring people across the aisle. In our conversations with stakeholders across the state, we have seen a tremendous amount of energy and strategy stemming from efforts make public education better for everyone.

Takeaways:

- Population Demographics. The population is generally getting older and is majority white. At 37.3%, Mississippi has the largest African-American population of any state, though the District of Columbia is higher at 50.7%. The unemployment rate has stabilized in the past five years to 4.8%.
- How MS Compares. 14.2% of Mississippians under the age of 65 do not have health insurance, and 19.8% of people are in poverty. The national averages are 8.8% and 12.7%, respectively.
- Opportunities this Year - The entire state legislature is up for election in 2019. The Gubernatorial race is also competitive - it is an open seat with a well-known and well-liked Democratic candidate.

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ABOUT THE OPPONENT

Angela Cockerham is an attorney from Magnolia, Mississippi. She is currently employed by Wise Carter P.A. Cockerham earned her B.A. from Jackson State University and J.D. from Loyola University - New Orleans. Representative Cockerham is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha and is a member of the Mississippi and Louisiana Bar Associations. Cockerham is running in the general election on November 5, 2019. She was first elected to the chamber in a special election on November 22, 2005. On March 1, 2019, she filed for re-election as an independent. While Cockerham was affiliated with the Democratic party until she switched affiliation this year, she is a staunch conservative who has almost always voted with Republicans in the legislature.

SCORECARDS

American Conservative Union (ACU)

Cockerham to be the most conservative Democrat in the House, with an overall rating of 56 per cent (the average for Democratic representatives that year was 28 per cent).

ACLU 2017

Legislators are scored by the ACLU on their whether their votes on bills "promote racial, cultural, and economic justice." Cockerham scored an 88% for the 2017 session

Business and Industry Political Education Committee

Legislators are scored on their votes on bills related to business and economic issues. Cockerham received an F on her 2019 scorecard to date and has a score of C over a 4 year period.

Empower Mississippi

Legislators are scored on their votes on bills related to education. Cockerham received a grade C for the 2016 year.

CANDIDATE IN THE NEWS

Sanders runs for State Representative in District 96

<https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2019/07/27/sanders-runs-for-state-representative-in-district-96/>

District Attorney's race to be settled in Democratic Primary

<https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2019/07/30/district-attorneys-race-to-be-settled-in-democratic-primary/>

THE DISTRICT

Mississippi's ninety-sixth state house district is represented by independent Representative Angela Cockerham.

Mississippi state representatives represent an average of 24,322 residents. After the 2000 Census, each member represented 23,317 residents.

