

Vote 901



I'm Linda Phillips, the new Administrator of your Shelby County Election Commission. My husband and I moved to Memphis from Lafayette, Indiana during the summer, and we have really enjoyed meeting people and getting to know the community. Everyone has been so friendly and welcoming, both at the office and in your beautiful city.

One of the things I want to do as administrator is to make sure that you, the citizens of Shelby County, know what's going on here at the Election Commission. To that end, we'll be sending out a quarterly newsletter to keep you in the loop.

First, let me tell you a little about myself. I have worked in every area of elections. I started in Voter Registration in Indiana, where we made the transition from a paper-based registration system to a computerized system. Later, I became the Co-Director of Elections in Tippecanoe County and spearheaded the introduction of convenience voting in Indiana. After that, I worked for a company that conducted international elections, and I worked on a variety of projects in the U.S. and Canada. I have lots of exciting plans for the Election Commission in the coming months. We'll keep you posted on the happenings here. In between publications, signing up for the newsfeed at shelbyvote.com is a great way to stay informed about election-related events.

Linda Phillips
Administrator of Elections

UPCOMING ELECTIONS

TENNESSEE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DISTRICT 95

There are 10 candidates in this race. Seven are Republican candidates: Joseph Aaron Crone, Gail Williams Horner, Curtis D. Loynachan, Missy Marshall, Billy Patton, Frank Uhlhorn and Kevin Vaughan. Julie Byrd Ashworth is the sole Democratic candidate, and there are two Independent candidates, Robert Schutt and Jim Tomasik. Though Tomasik did not reside in the 95th district at the time he became certified as a candidate, according to state law, he has until the General Election Day to become a resident in the district.

The Primary for the Special Election for the District 95 seat in the House of Representatives will be held on April 27 with Early Voting from April 7 through April 22. There is no early voting on Sundays or on April 14, when the SCEC office is closed in observance of Good Friday. Early voting will be held at New Bethel Church in Germantown and at Collierville Church of Christ.

The General Election will be held on June 15, with Early Voting beginning May 26 and continuing through June 10.

CITY OF LAKELAND

The City of Lakeland will have a Special Election to fill a vacant seat on its Board of Commissioners on May 25, with Early Voting from May 5 through May 20. There is no early voting on Sundays. Petitions became available for pick up on March 16, and April 13 is the qualifying deadline. Prospective candidates must have their petitions, containing the signatures of 25 registered voters, who live in Lakeland, by noon on that date. Noon on April 17 is the deadline for candidates to withdraw their petitions.

TOWN OF ARLINGTON

Petitions are now available to run for positions on the School Board and the Board of Aldermen in the Town of Arlington. The following: **Board of Aldermen positions: 2, 4, 5, 6 - School Board positions: 1, 3, & 5**

Taking the Oath



Deputy Registrars Sworn in by Linda Phillips

During the 2nd and 3rd weeks of March, the Shelby County Election Commission (SCEC), held classes to certify people who wanted to register people to vote. The classes were free, and open to the public. “We knew there were some leaders of civic organizations, members of church groups and clubs who may want to spearhead voter registration events, and we decided to offer this class to help them,” said Linda Phillips, administrator of elections for SCEC. People who completed the class were deputized for a one-year term as a SCEC Registrar. While being a deputy registrar isn’t required to hold voter registration events, it has a definite benefit. Unless a deputy registrar or member of SCEC staff is present, the registration is not considered to be “in person.” People who do not register in person are ineligible to receive absentee ballots, and must vote the first time in person.

“It’s beneficial to have registered in person because if, for some reason, you’ll be out of town around election time, you’ll be able to vote absentee,” Phillips said. Four classes were held at the SCEC Operations Center on Nixon Drive, and a total of 128 people were sworn in as deputy registrars. Classes were held both during the day and in the evening, and a Saturday class was offered as well. “We wanted to offer the classes at several different times so people who are unavailable during working hours could still attend,” Phillips said.

There are strict guidelines for conducting voter registration. In addition to making sure people complete the voter registration application properly, election officials are prohibited from trying to influence whether a person registers in a certain political party. “A deputy registrar is strictly prohibited from attempting to register people in a specific political party,” Phillips said. “Anyone who does that will have their certification as a deputy registrar revoked.”

In addition to party-neutral behavior, deputy registrars must be registered to vote in Shelby County. Deputy registrars are required to submit completed voter registration applications to a SCEC office within five days of receiving them, or before the registration deadline of an upcoming election, whichever comes first.

Another set of classes is planned for May. For more information, email Sharon.logan@shelbycountyttn.gov.

City School Students Learn About Election Process

On Feb. 27, students at Willow Oaks got a special view of the election process, when officials from SCEC took voting machines into the school to conduct a student election. Six machines were taken to the school, where more than 300 students in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades cast their votes on a ballot that contained questions relevant to them.

Administrators wanted to get the students' opinion on some changes being considered at the school. The point went deeper than just letting the children have a say in things. "It's important for children to learn about voting at an early age," said Linda Phillips, SCEC administrator of elections. "We want to engage them as soon as possible. The hope is that when they reach adulthood, they will not only be prepared, but perhaps even look forward to exercising their right to vote."



Deputy Administrator Joe Young assists a student voter.

Veronica Aldridge, guidance counselor at Willow Oaks Elementary, said the children had a great time and learned a lot. "It started the conversation about voting and having a voice in things that are important to you," she said.

And the results of the election? Flowers won the garden question by a landslide in the 1st question. The option of students bringing their technology to school won the 2nd question though surprisingly, adding Saturday school and expanding tutoring did get a few votes. Students voted hands down that they would rather be the ones at the helm of a Student Teacher conference in question 3 and Royal Blue eked out Yellow as a new uniform color in question number 4.

Student's Ballot:

1. What would you like to see planted in the Learning Garden
 - Flowers
 - Vegetables
 - Greenery (no blooming plants)
2. What amendment would you like to see the school consider for next year?
 - No homework on the weekends
 - Expand tutoring
 - Saturday School
 - Another Playground
 - Bring your technology to school
3. Who would you prefer lead Student Teacher conferences?
 - Student
 - Teachers
 - Parents
4. What uniform color would you like to add?
 - Yellow
 - Gold
 - Royal Blue

If you would like to have SCEC conduct an election at your school, call (901) 222-1200.

SCEC OFFICIALS EDUCATE ADULT STUDENTS ABOUT VOTING RIGHTS RESTORATION

On a chilly February morning, administrators from the Shelby County Election Commission (SCEC) gave a presentation to a group of students at the Excel Center for Adult Learning about the process for felons to have their voting rights restored.

Individuals who have lost the right to vote due to a felony conviction may have their rights restored if they have completed their restitution. Even those with multiple felony convictions are eligible to have their voting rights restored, if they meet certain conditions.

“You’ve had some things in your past, but that’s over,” said Linda Phillips, administrator of elections for SCEC, as the presentation began. “One of the most important things you can do as a citizen is vote.”

Eboni Rideout, lead teacher at the Excel Center, worked with members of the Student Government Association, and co-sponsored the event. She said she wanted to have SCEC make the presentation because she believes it will strengthen the students’ ties in the community. “I think restoring your voting rights makes you feel more like a citizen,” she said. “Most of our students don’t feel like they are part of the community.”



Beunica Scott (left) and Pauli Maldonado

The criteria for eligibility to restore voting rights after a felony conviction is that the person must have completed their probation and have paid all their court costs. People who are on a diversion plan, or who have had their records expunged, don’t need to go through the process. They can simply submit their voter registration application, since they don’t have a felony conviction on their records.

Students were given a packet containing instruction material, a form and a pamphlet on the procedure of voting restoration along with a voter registration application. The process for those convicted in Shelby County is to take the form to the Office of the Criminal Court Clerk at 201 Poplar Avenue, 4th Floor. People who have multiple felony convictions must have a separate form completed for each conviction. Those who have felony convictions in other counties in Tennessee or other states, must submit the forms to the Clerk of the Court in the county where they were convicted. Forms must then be returned to either SCEC office along with a completed voter registration application.

Those who have committed murder, rape, treason or voter fraud are permanently ineligible for restoration of their right to vote.



Front row: l-r Trussie Hudson, Keysha Warr, Eboni Rideout, Charles Morgan
Back row: l-r Lana West, Faustin Henderson, Keodara Thongdy

SCEC Welcomes Interns

Two interns from the University of Memphis, Zach Harpole and Peyton Whitehead, started with SCEC in March. Both men are students in the Journalism Department.



Zach Harpole

Harpole is a graduate student in Journalism and Strategic Media at the University of Memphis. He is an alumnus of Rhodes College and a native of the Memphis area. He plans to pursue a career in law or media.



Peyton Whitehead

Whitehead is a junior in Journalism and Strategic Media at the University of Memphis. He is a native of Atlanta, GA and plans to pursue a career in advertising.