

Common Cause – Mississippi
2011 Legislative Issues
October 22, 2010

1. Open Government

- ◆ Increase penalties for Open Meetings and Public Records violations
- ◆ Fine the individuals who violated the Open Meetings Law rather than the public body
- ◆ Hold government officials personally responsible for their mistakes
- ◆ Prevent excessive costs for fulfilling public records requests
- ◆ When the reason for exemption to the Public Records Act no longer exists, the records should be open
- ◆ Require a uniform reporting form for initial reports of Law Enforcement Officers.
- ◆ Require that exemptions to the public records law be strictly construed to prevent abuse
- ◆ Show deleted language in bills
- ◆ Monitor bills related to open government
- ◆ Further oversight by the Ethics Commission

2. Election Issues

- ◆ Enable Early Voting
- ◆ Require a Voter Verified Paper Trail
- ◆ Allow felons to register to vote after they have completed their sentence and parole
- ◆ Voter ID (Federal requirements are sufficient protection)
- ◆ Requiring Voter ID from all voters depresses real voters from voting and does not decrease voter fraud.

3. Redistricting Reform

- ◆ Require fairness and openness in drawing districts
- ◆ Need oversight - *Citizen*
- ◆ Goal is to have cohesive districts that allow for representation from the diverse demographic groups within the state. The goal is not to re-elect the politicians or to favor one party.

4. Campaign Finance Reform

- ◆ Increase transparency
- ◆ Increase accessibility to campaign finances

5. Tax Reform

- ◆ Require the process to be open and allow for public input
- ◆ Assure that the benefits and burdens of tax reform are fairly distributed on the population
- ◆ Assume that there is adequate revenue for the needed functions of government

6. School Bond Issue

- ◆ Require only a majority vote to pass

7. Common Cause Allies

- ◆ **Mississippi Center for Freedom of Information (MCFOI)**
 - Public Records
 - Lowering the cost of public records requests
 - Open Meetings Law
- ◆ **Mississippi's Alliance for Progressive Special Education (MAPSE)**
 - Public Records
 - Open Meetings
- ◆ **Mississippi Press Association (MPA)**
- ◆ **League of Women Voters**