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Young Mississippi Voters Are Left Out Without Online Voter Registration

Thessalia Merivaki, Georgetown University

Leslie Baker, Mississippi State University

James Chamberlain, Mississippi State University

“You should have hand-delivered these forms, instead of relying on USPS to deliver them on time.”

This is what the Oktibbeha County circuit deputy clerk told Dr. Thessalia Merivaki when she visited the election office with an envelope filled with 200 voter registration forms. USPS had returned them back to her office as undeliverable.

“We will process these, and they will be registered to vote, but they will not be eligible to vote in November 2022,” the deputy clerk continued.

There was no postmark on the envelope, so even though college students—who wished to register to vote on Sept. 20, 2022—signed paper registration applications on National Voter Registration Day, there was no “proof” that these forms were sent to the local elections office prior to Mississippi’s registration deadline on Oct. 10, 2022. Mississippi election law is clear that [registration applications](#) “must be postmarked or hand delivered to the Circuit Clerk’s Office located in the county of your voting residence no later than 30 days before an election.”

We have this same conversation every two years with our local elections office. MSU political science and public administration faculty partner with the MSU Student Association and hundreds of student volunteers to organize [campus-wide voter registration drives](#) on National Voter Registration Day. These drives have been effective in getting first-time voters to register to vote and learn about how to vote in Mississippi.