



Fighting for Voting Rights and a Democratic United States

DEMOCRATIC LAW BRIEFS

A Publication of the DC Chapter of the National Lawyers Council

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WELCOME TO DEMOCRATIC LAW BRIEFS, the official newsletter of the DC Chapter of the National Lawyers Council. If you would like to be on our mailing list, please sign up at <http://www.democraticlawyers.org/join.php> or e-mail your name, title, company, addresses, and phone numbers to signup@democraticlawyers.org. We'll happily add you to the list.

EVENTS

AMERICAN CONSTITUTION SOCIETY NATIONAL CONVENTION

Program includes panel on election law.

Who: ACS

Where: Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill

When: June 12-14, 2008

Program is available at:

<http://acslaw.org/pdf/ACS%20National%20Convention%20Schedule.pdf>

Registration information: <https://secure.acslaw.org/convention/register.php>

CAPITOL HILL NETWORKING RECEPTION WITH REP. ARTUR DAVIS

Who: ACS

Special Guests at this reception will be Congressional staffers from House and Senate Leadership offices, the House and Senate Judiciary Committees, and other Congressional committees and offices.

Where: Jones Day LLP, 25 Louisiana Avenue, N.W., Rooftop Terrace

When: Wednesday, June 25, 2008, 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

RSVP by clicking [here](#). If you have any questions regarding the event, please contact Emily Chatterjee at echatterjee@acslaw.org.

Please join congressional staff, members of the Washington progressive legal community, and law students from across the nation for a networking reception in a beautiful room featuring a terrace with a spectacular view of the Capitol. Hear inspirational remarks from Rep. Artur Davis. Make worthwhile new connections in the ACS network.

There is no charge for this event. This will be a widely-attended event, and ACS will provide refreshments but no meal.

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

VOTER IDENTIFICATION

Mississippi - GOP legislators in the Mississippi house have once again failed to pass a restrictive voter ID law. This was their third attempt to use procedural tricks to get past the Democratic majority in that body. Read the details here: <http://www.clarionledger.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080603/NEWS03/80603022>

National - In the month since the Supreme Court issued its decision in the Indiana voter ID case, researchers have continued to explore the issues presented in the Court's opinions. A new report from the Congressional Research Service provides a concise analysis of the case, and a report from the Center for American Progress examines broader issues related to the use of IDs. Read the report here: <http://www.electionreformproject.org/Features/b9ae420a-0a1f-47f6-aff7-27e4e509f2c4/r1/Detail.aspx>

INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE PETITIONS

OHIO - Earlier this month, Ohio US District Court Judge Gregory Frost issued an injunction preventing enforcement of an Ohio law requiring independent candidate circulators to be registered voters in Ohio. Pending a full determination of the case, any adult may circulate independent candidate petitions in Ohio. Ohio will not appeal the ruling. Read the ruling here: <http://www.ballot-access.org/2008/06/02/brian-moore-wins-injunctive-relief-against-ohio-petition-restriction/>
<http://www.ballot-access.org/2008/06/06/ohio-will-not-appeal-injunction-that-lets-out-of-staters-circulate-independent-candidate-petitions/>

ELECTORAL COLLEGE

National - Voters this fall will still use the Electoral College to determine the next occupant of the White House, but a movement is bubbling at the state level to bypass the process and instead ensure future presidents are the candidates who get the most votes nationwide – an outcome not always guaranteed under the current system. Calls to reform or abolish the Electoral College were common after the 2000 presidential election, when former Vice President Al Gore won the popular vote, but didn't have enough votes in the right states to carry the electoral vote over Republican George W. Bush. While Bush won the popular vote in 2004, he could have lost the election if John Kerry (D) had won Ohio. Read more here:
<http://www.stateline.org/live/details/story?contentId=316080>

FEDERAL VOTING RIGHTS

Washington DC - Last week, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund won two major victories in federal court; the first, *Villas at Parkside Partners v. The City of Farmers Branch*, struck down an anti-immigrant ordinance in Farmers Branch, TX and the second, *Northwest Austin Municipal Utility District Number One v. Michael B. Mukasey*, upheld the constitutionality of the federal Voting Rights Act.

Read the opinions here:

<http://www.maldef.org/>

http://www.simplesend.com/clientimages/maldef/Memorandum_Opinion_Order_Granteeing_Permanent_Injunction.pdf

<http://www.maldef.org/pdf/VRA.decision.pdf>

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE TRACKING

NEW BILLS

S.J.RES.39

Title: A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to abolish the electoral college and to provide for the direct popular election of the President and Vice President of the United States.

Sponsor: *Sen Nelson, Bill* [FL] (introduced 6/6/2008) Cosponsors (None)

Latest Major Action: 6/6/2008 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

S.3100

Title: A bill to require early voting in Federal elections, to prohibit restrictions on absentee voting in Federal elections, to establish a grant program to promote voting

by mail, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: *Sen Nelson, Bill [FL]* (introduced 6/6/2008) Cosponsors (None)

Latest Major Action: 6/6/2008 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

DC DLC BRAIN TEASERS

DC DLC BRAIN TEASERS - Each week we have a puzzle or a brain teaser or a trivia question for you to answer. You can e-mail your answers to editors@democraticlawyers.org. Please put "Brain Teaser" in the subject line. We will run the names of all those who get the right/best answer in the following issue.

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION

Who were the last two Presidents to be combat veterans?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

Who was the only President to have been held as a prisoner of war?

ANSWER

Jackson was the only President to have been held as a prisoner of war. This was during the Revolutionary War. Jackson was only 13-years-old. We did not have any correct responses last week. Good luck this week.

JOBS

If you know of a legal or other position of interest that should be listed here (or corrections or updates to job openings that are listed), please contact your editors at editors@democraticlawyers.org.

Office: Common Cause

Position: Director of Abuse of Power Campaign, Washington DC office

Contact: Please submit resume, cover letter and salary requirements to Director of Human Resources at hr@commoncause.org and include "Director of Abuse of Power Campaign" in the subject line; or fax to 202.355.7546. No phone calls please.

Description: Work with VP for Legislative Affairs to follow up on creation of the House Office of Congressional Ethics. Oversee effort to pull together names of possible candidates. Answer questions in the press and with Common Cause members. Monitor the progress of the OCE and suggest alterations if needed. Manage other congressional ethics issues as they arise.

Work with VP for Legislative Affairs to design and implement campaign strategy on Common Cause's new "abuse of power" program; coordinate day-to-day campaign efforts of Common Cause team. Build and manage relationships with key coalition partners and VIPs, including planning, recruitment for, and execution of conferences with expert panelists. Work with VP for Communication and Director of E-Advocacy to write press statements, advisories, action alerts, and other communications, as well as answering press questions and communicating with online activists. Develop fact sheets and other collateral materials for short- and long-term use. Other duties as needed.

The "abuse of power" campaign will address issues that include:

- Signing statements
- Executive privilege and contempt of Congress
- Domestic spying, torture and the rules of law
- Possible expansion of the War Powers Act relating to Iran
- Destruction of torture tapes and loss of possibly millions of executive branch emails covering CIA leaks
- Our resulting diminished stature in the world

QUALIFICATIONS: Minimum five years advocacy or campaign experience; excellent verbal skills, written and oral; ability to work well in a collaborative setting and with coalition partners; self-starter but able to take direction; demonstrated ability to be flexible and work well under pressure; strong organizational and interpersonal skills; and a good sense of humor. Bachelors Degree required.

Office: Common Cause

Position: Director of Campaign Finance Reform, Washington DC office

Contact: Please submit resume, cover letter and salary requirements to Director of Human Resources at hr@commoncause.org and include "Director of Campaign Finance Reform" in the subject line; or fax to 202.355.7546. No phone calls please.

Description: Lead Common Cause team to design and implement campaign finance reform strategy and campaigns, with primary focus on public financing of elections, as part of a broader pro-democracy agenda. Build and manage relationships with key coalition partners and allies. Serve as spokesperson and resource to the media and the public on Common Cause campaign finance reform efforts. Assist in the development of public education materials, policy briefings, and online and offline grassroots engagement strategies. Assist development staff in writing of grant proposals and reports. Work closely with other Common Cause staff to ensure overall success of

campaign finance reform campaigns at the national, state, and local level. Manage program budget. Other duties as needed.

Bachelor's degree required, JD preferred; extensive knowledge of campaign finance law and policy; demonstrated political judgment and advocacy skills; minimum ten years advocacy, legal or political campaign experience; minimum five years coordinating or supervising the work of others; commitment to Common Cause issues and agenda; ability to analyze complex public policy issues and communicate them effectively to a broader audience; demonstrated ability to be flexible and work well under pressure; strong organizational and interpersonal skills; and a good sense of humor.

Editors' Note: Jobs listings are gathered from various sources in an effort to collaborate, disseminate, and share information with members of the DC Democratic Lawyers Council regarding career development and professional opportunities. No guarantee is given concerning the accuracy of the job announcement, job descriptions, qualifications, availability, application process, deadlines, salaries, work hours, or other information. If you have questions about a particular opening, please follow up directly with the designated contact listed. Thank you.

WHO ARE WE?

The DC Democratic Lawyers Council (DC DLC) is a group of Democratic lawyers, affiliated with the National Lawyers Council of the Democratic National Committee, volunteering their legal skills to strengthen the democratic process. We work to ensure that every eligible citizen is allowed to vote and that every vote cast in every election is counted. The DC DLC was formed out of a concern that voting rights are increasingly under attack in our country and an understanding that now is the time to put the skills of Democratic attorneys to work to ensure that every citizen's right to vote will be upheld in future elections. Our activities include advocating for better laws and regulations and initiating litigation when necessary to guarantee the fairness of and the widest participation in the U.S. electoral process.

The Democratic Lawyers Council was founded by attorneys who have served on the front line of election law for the Democratic Party in numerous elections, including most recently, the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. The lesson learned from the recount debacle was that post-election day litigation will hardly ever fix any election injustice. Given that, many of the recount lawyers, particularly those based in Florida, engineered a comprehensive voter protection program to confront and deal with voter and election issues before Election Day. One aspect of this effort was the recruitment of 3200 lawyers who, after receiving specialized election law and procedures training, worked inside the polls in key precincts in Florida on Election Day to assure that every citizen who showed up to vote, was able to do so.

Our mission statement is simple:

We are a coalition of lawyers and others dedicated to fostering universal participation and trust in the electoral process by ensuring that:

- All eligible persons can register to vote easily;
- All registered voters are able to vote simply, fairly, and without intimidation; and
- All votes are counted accurately and all voting systems are open and reliable.

We encourage you to send us an e-mail if you would like more information or are interested in becoming a part of our organization.

Please e-mail us at erika@democraticlawyers.org.

COMMITTEES

We are a volunteer-driven and volunteer-dependent organization. Please lend your time, talents, and effort to helping to solve important voting rights issues. Please click on <http://www.democraticlawyers.org/join.php> and sign up for our committees, which include:

DC Community Outreach Committee

Co-Chairs, David Goldblatt (david@democraticlawyers.org), Curtis LeGeyt (curtis@democraticlawyers.org) & Candice Jones (candice@democraticlawyers.org)

This committee is responsible for working with community leaders and Democratic elected officials in the District of Columbia on important voting rights initiatives.

Building the National Lawyers Council Committee

Chair, Rita Aguilar (rita@democraticlawyers.org)

This committee is responsible for working with the National Lawyers Council to build chapters throughout the country, as well as developing “model” chapter and voting rights materials.

State Legislative Watch Team

Chair, Molly Askin (molly@democraticlawyers.org)

This committee is responsible for monitoring state election law activity, e.g., voter-ID, voting systems and election administration legislation, and assisting with related state advocacy efforts.

Federal Legislation Committee

Chair, Dick Meltzer (dick@democraticlawyers.org)

This committee is responsible for monitoring federal election law activity, e.g., HAVA and UOCAVA, educating membership and helping push for voting rights reform at the federal level.

Redistricting & Voting Rights Act Committee

Chair, Jeff Wice (jmwice@democraticlawyers.org)

This committee is responsible for preparing Democrats for the next redistricting cycle (2010), e.g., reviewing case law from the 2000 cycle, and monitoring Voting Rights Act developments.

Ex-Felon Voting Rights Committee

Chair, John Shuman (john@democraticlawyers.org)

This committee is responsible for helping non-incarcerated ex-offenders secure a right to vote in federal elections, e.g., congressional outreach, to encourage successful re-entry of these citizens.

Events Committee

Chair, Jordan Usdan (jordan@democraticlawyers.org)

This committee is responsible for organizing year-round activities. These can include professional networking opportunities, guest speaker events, assisting with National Lawyers Council events, and other social and political activities.

In addition, please consider participating in leadership positions and organizational committees, which include:

- Steering Committee
- Event Planning
- Recruiting and Publicity
- Election/Campaign Finance Law Compliance
- Democratic Party/Candidate Outreach
- Fundraising

[READING SOMEONE ELSE'S COPY???](#)

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<http://www.democraticlawyers.org/join.php> or e-mail your name, title, company, addresses, and phone numbers to signup@democraticlawyers.org.

[GOT NEWS?](#)

If you have news for Democratic Law Briefs, we'd love to get it. E-mail your news, ideas, rumors and thoughts to Paul Roath and Arielle Harry-Bess at

editors@democraticlawyers.org. We reserve the right to use, not use, edit, paraphrase, or otherwise play with your submissions.

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