



Fighting for Voting Rights and a Democratic United States

DEMOCRATIC LAW BRIEFS

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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.

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

INDEPENDENT VOTERS

Delaware - The bill, sponsored by Rep. J. Robert Valihura Jr. (R-Beau Tree), would allow voters registered outside the two main parties to cast ballots in primaries. Under House Bill 502, those voters could obtain the permission until 60 days before the primary and must declare which primary they want to vote in. Read more here: <http://www.delawareonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080626/NEWS/80626069>

ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION

Massachusetts - In the midst of an election season that looks to attract record voter turnout, state legislators are considering a new measure that would allow thousands of previously unregistered citizens to cast their ballots on Election Day. Senate Bill No. 2514, now awaiting action by the chamber's Ways and Means Committee, would negate the state's current voter registration deadline of 21 days before any given election. Instead, it would permit hopeful voters to register on Election Day – or re-register, if they have moved since their last registration – at public voting sites. Read the measure details here: <http://www.baystatebanner.com/Local12-2008-06-26>

ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION OF ELECTION RESULTS

Michigan - A bill being considered in the state Senate would allow local election boards across the state to electronically submit election results to county clerks by way of the telephone, fax, e-mail or Internet. Introduced by Sen. Cameron Brown (R-Fawn River Township), Senate Bill (SB) 1379 would authorize the electronic submission

of election returns. Currently the accepted practice is to only allow the actual physical delivery of sealed results immediately after an election count. Read the details of the bill here:

http://www.spinalcolumnonline.com/Articles-i-2008-06-25-55596.113117_Bill_allows_electronic_transmission_of_election_results.html

FEC VACANCIES FILLED

Washington, DC - The Senate confirmed five new commissioners for the *Federal Election Commission* on June 24th, ending a six-month impasse during which the agency was paralyzed by its lack of a quorum. Read more here:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/24/AR2008062401328.html?hpid=sec-nation>

VOTER SUPPRESSION

National - A report out last week indicates that GOPer operatives were planning on scaling back their voter suppression activities in the coming election cycle. "Spreading 10,000 lawyers around the country and announcing a challenge to 40,000 new registrants in Ohio was counterproductive," a Republican familiar with the situation said. The Republican said that many within the party believed that then-Ohio Secretary of State Ken Blackwell's efforts to tighten provisional ballot rules ahead of the 2004 may have increased Democratic turnout because it convinced Democrats that Republicans were trying to disenfranchise voters. However, at the end of the week saw reports out of the McCain campaign that make it sound that it will be business as usual for the GOPer dirty tricks group over the next few months. Read the reports here:

http://marcambinder.theatlantic.com/archives/2008/06/gop_prepares_to_scale_back_agg_1.php

http://marcambinder.theatlantic.com/archives/2008/06/mccain_campaign_on_voter_fraud.php

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE TRACKING

NEW BILLS

H.R. 6240

Title: To change the date for regularly scheduled Federal elections and establish polling place hours.

Sponsor: *Rep Israel, Steve* [NY-2] (introduced 6/11/2008) Cosponsors (None)

Related Bills: S.2638

Latest Major Action: 6/11/2008 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on House Administration.

EAC RULEMAKING

EAC NPRM

On 6/30/08, the Election Assistance Commission issued a notice of proposed rulemaking for administrative regulations to implement the Freedom of Information Act, the Government in the Sunshine Act and the Privacy Act. Comments are due August 29, 2008. The NPRM is available at <http://frwebgate1.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/PDFgate.cgi?WAISdocID=914774396119+0+1+0&WALSaction=retrieve> or www.gpoaccess.gov.

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 was the first President to have a Ph.D.?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

Who was the first African American to be elected to the U.S. Senate?

Extra credit: When was he elected and from what state? Bonus Points: What senator did he replace?

ANSWER

The first African American elected to the U.S. Senate was Hiram R. Revels, elected in 1870 from Mississippi to fill the seat vacated nine years earlier by Jefferson B. Davis. We had a correct answer from Gabriel Acevedo who also correctly identified J. Davis. Congratulations Gabriel.

JOBS

Office: Media Matters for America

Position: General Counsel

Contact: To apply, please send your resume and cover letter (including salary requirements) as Word or pdf attachments to careers@mediamatters.org

Description: The General Counsel provides legal advice to Media Matters' senior management on a wide range of topics including, but not limited to, publishing, intellectual property, defamation issues, employment law, and contracts. S/he will serve as the subject matter expert regarding organizational compliance with federal, state, and local tax laws. The ideal candidate will have demonstrated experience in the aforementioned areas in a nonprofit environment. Position Responsibilities:

Provide significant legal advice related to publishing, including intellectual property and defamation issues. Advise senior management on contracts, employment issues, board governance, and other matters as needed. Ensure organizational compliance related to federal state and local tax laws; local nonprofit corporation laws; and other areas governing nonprofit activities. Manage, retain, and evaluate outside counsel. Work with appropriate senior management on dispute resolution where warranted. Competencies/Qualifications: Law degree required; admitted to practice in the District of Columbia (or eligible for admission without examination)

Demonstrated experience with tax and employment law, intellectual property, and defamation issues. Ability to communicate effectively with senior management, outside counsel, and other external stakeholders. Experience working in a nonprofit environment and the aptitude to advise on legal issues relevant to media monitoring and analysis are highly desirable. Ability to multitask and shift priorities; sensitivity to working under tight deadlines. Commitment to Media Matters' mission and ideology in order to effectively promote and advance the organization's goals.

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

Editors' Note: The above listed job(s) were 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 job, 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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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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