



Fighting for Voting Rights and a Democratic United States

DEMOCRATIC LAW BRIEFS

A Publication of the DC Chapter of the National Lawyers Council

Volume 4 Issue 25 July 8, 2008

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

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING - NEXT TUESDAY

Please join us for our next steering committee at the DNC headquarters. The agenda will focus on General Election plans, near-term projects, and **feature principals from Obama for America/Democratic election protection operation.**

When: Tuesday, July 15, 2008, 7:00 p.m.

Where: Democratic National Committee Headquarters, 430 S. Capitol St., SE
Capitol South Metro (blue and orange lines), limited street parking

All Democratic lawyers committed to voting rights are welcome!

Please let us know if you plan on attending by dropping a note to erika@democraticlawyers.org.

DC COUNCIL HEARING

Who: Committee on Workforce Development and Government Operations, Carol Schwartz, Chairperson

What: Public Oversight Hearing - "Board of Elections and Ethics and their Plans for the September Primary Election"

Where: Council Chamber, Room 500

When: Thursday, July 10, 10:00 a.m.

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

ELECTRONIC VOTING

Texas - As the debate over e-voting continues around the country, more Americans will be returning to paper ballots in the fall as several states, including California, Colorado, Ohio and Florida, shift away from electronic voting machines. Texas, however, remains wedded to the technology because of its large investment in the machines (at least \$93 million, mostly with federal dollars) and the solid track record of e-voting during the March 4 primaries despite record turnouts. Read more here: <http://www.statesman.com/news/content/region/legislature/07/04/0704evoting.html>

National -Electronic-voting machines used in federal elections would have to produce an independent, voter-verified "paper trail" of each ballot cast, under a bill announced Tuesday by U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA). Feinstein had introduced an election-reform bill last year, but it had only Democratic support and didn't get far. This bill has bipartisan support, but isn't as far-reaching and won't take effect as soon. http://www.insidebayarea.com/timesstar/ci_9756737

EX-FELON VOTING RIGHTS

Tennessee - Tennessee is on track this year to double the number of felons who saw their voting rights restored, a sign some experts and ex-offenders say demonstrates an eagerness to vote in November's historic presidential election. <http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080702/NEWS0206/807020421/1006/NEWS01>

POLL WORKERS

National - A new analysis from the Election Reform Project looks at young people as a potential source of new volunteers on Election Day. Read more here: <http://www.electionreformproject.org/Resources/8c6c074e-2e42-4e2f-9291-a2e9c04ad32a/r1/Detail.aspx?emc=lm&m=216639&l=25&v=421197>

A SHORT PRIMER ON THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE^A

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

On May 15, 1776, the Virginia Convention, then meeting in Williamsburg, passed a motion instructing Virginia's congressional delegation "to propose to that respectable body to declare the United Colonies free and independent States, absolved from all allegiance to, or dependence upon, the Crown or Parliament of Great Britain". In accordance with those instructions, on June 7, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia presented a resolution of independence to Congress. The resolution, seconded by John Adams, read in part:

Resolved, that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.

On June 11, 1776, Congress appointed a "Committee of Five", consisting of John Adams of Massachusetts, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, Robert R. Livingston of New York, and Roger Sherman of Connecticut, to draft a declaration. Because the committee left no minutes, there is some uncertainty about how the drafting process proceeded—accounts written many years later by Jefferson and Adams, although frequently cited, are contradictory and not entirely reliable. What is certain is that the committee, after discussing the general outline that the document should follow, decided that Jefferson would write the first draft. Considering Congress' busy schedule, Jefferson probably had limited time for writing over the next 17 days, and likely wrote the draft quickly. He then consulted the others, made some changes, and then produced another copy incorporating these alterations. The committee presented this copy to the Congress on June 28, 1776. The title of the document was "A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled."

The committee's draft was set aside while Congress resumed debate on Lee's resolution of independence. John Dickinson made one last effort to delay the decision, but following a speech by John Adams, Congress approved the resolution on July 2. Twelve of the thirteen delegations voted in favor; the New York delegation abstained, since they had not yet been authorized to vote for independence, although they would be allowed to do so by the New York Provincial Congress a week later. With the passage of the resolution of independence, the colonies had officially severed political ties with Great Britain. In a now-famous letter written to his wife on

the following day, John Adams predicted that July 2 would become a great American holiday.

After voting in favor of the resolution of independence, Congress turned its attention to the committee's draft of the declaration. Over several days of debate, Congress made a few changes in wording and deleted nearly a fourth of the text, most notably a passage critical of the slave trade, changes that Jefferson resented. On July 4, 1776, the wording of the Declaration of Independence was approved and sent to the printer for publication.

^aAdapted from Wikipedia, available [here](#)

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

True or False? John Trumbull's painting "The Declaration of Independence" depicts the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, 1776?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

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

ANSWER

The first President elected who had a Ph.D. was Woodrow Wilson. We had correct answers from Mac Campbell and Derek Dorn. Congratulations to Mac and Derek! You are the gentlemen an' scholars!

JOBS

Office: Active Rocky Mountain Democrat

Position: Legislative Director

Contact: Email: Cover letter, resume and writing sample to:
rockymountainld@gmail.com

Description: Candidates should have significant legislative and management experience. Excellent writing and communications skills and an in-depth knowledge of the legislative processes are key to this job. The ideal candidate should also have the ability to focus on long-term strategic planning as well as effectively manage daily challenges. If you possess these attributes, please apply to be a part of our talented, hard-working and creative team.

Office: Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton

Position: Legislative Assistant

Contact: Interested applicants should send a cover letter, resume, references and two brief writing samples to (202) 225-1129 (fax) or *NortonLA@mail.house.gov*.

Description: Senior Democrat is seeking a highly energetic, motivated and organized Legislative Assistant with strong interpersonal abilities who can manage multiple tasks, and work well under pressure while handling issues that include but are not limited to government reform and oversight, defense, education, human and civil rights. Excellent writing, analytical and organizational skills are essential. At least two years of prior legislative and/or Hill experience is preferred. Candidate must possess a law degree and be a taxpaying resident of the District of Columbia or willing to move to DC. Salary based on skill and experience level.

Office: D.C. Employment Justice Center

Position: Managing Attorney

Contact: The application should be sent to Karen Minatelli at the D.C. Employment Justice Center, kminatelli@dcejc.org, D.C. Employment Justice Center, 727 15th Street NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, D.C. 20005, Attention: Karen Minatelli, (202) 828-9190 (fax). An application for the position should contain a cover letter, resume, writing sample and list of at least two references and may be sent by mail, fax or email (information below). No phone calls, please. Email is preferred, but all forms of application will be accepted.

Description: The EJC is seeking a Managing Attorney to oversee the legal services program. Responsibilities include managing and training full time staff (including attorney staff), law clerks and an extensive volunteer corps; arranging for and overseeing pro bono referral and representation; litigating employment law cases; conducting and coordinating legal education programming; directing other aspects of the EJC's legal services program; and working in conjunction with the other EJC programs as needed. Limited evening hours are required in order to supervise the Workers' Rights Clinics and to occasionally attend work-related meetings.

A J.D. is required, as is at least three years of litigation experience, which must include the practice of employment law. A high level of proficiency or fluency in Spanish is required for the position. Some prior supervisory experience and experience

representing low income populations is preferred but not required. Membership in the D.C. bar is required. Membership in the Maryland and/or Virginia bar is a plus. Salary will be commensurate with experience. A generous benefits package including health and dental insurance and 5 weeks annual paid vacation is provided.

Office: National Immigration Forum

Position: Senior Legal Advisor

Contact: E-mail cover letter, resume and salary requirements to resume@immigrationforum.org, subject line Senior Legal Advisor. No phone calls please. Candidates are encouraged to apply on or before Monday July 14, 2008. However, the position will remain open until filled.

Description: As a member of the Forum's policy team, the Senior Legal Advisor will assist in identifying significant developments in administrative immigration law, help to develop creative proposals for translating immigration policy into workable solutions, and convene allies to work towards an improved and streamlined administrative process. The Senior Legal Advisor will also represent the Forum in working groups and coalitions that address DHS accountability issues, particularly, but not exclusively, those issues arising in the implementation of regulations and the enforcement of detention and removal laws.

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

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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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Democratic Law Briefs, E-Mail Edition, Volume 4 Number 25

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