



*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](mailto:signup@democraticlawyers.org). We'll happily add you to the list.

## HELP WANTED

### OBAMA VOTER PROTECTION PROGRAM - JOIN TODAY!



The effort to promote and protect the vote has begun -- and it needs volunteers. Earlier than ever before, in a more comprehensive fashion than ever before, building on three years of base work and an extensive primary season, we're making sure that **every eligible citizen who wants to vote can, and that the vote will count.**

**If you haven't already done so, please sign up at** [my.barackobama.com/counselforchange](http://my.barackobama.com/counselforchange). The information on that form will feed directly into our voter protection efforts in the states.

We'll connect you to trouble spots in the summer and fall, making sure that you're equipped and able to resolve problems before they happen. And on Election Day, we'll

have broader coverage than ever, using your talent and energy across the country to safeguard every vote that's cast.

## VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

### PAPER BALLOTS

**San Diego, CA** - Come November, more Americans might cast their ballots on paper than in any other election in U.S. history. That wasn't supposed to happen. If everything had gone according to the government's \$3 billion plan to upgrade voting technology after the hanging-chad fiasco in Florida in 2000, that sentence would read "electronic machines" instead of paper. Instead, thousands of touchscreen devices are collecting dust in warehouses from California to Florida, where officials worried about hackers and fed up with technical glitches have replaced the equipment with scanners that will read paper ballots. An Associated Press Election Research survey has found that 57 percent of the nation's registered voters live in counties that will be relying on paper ballots this fall. Read the complete story here:

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080806/ap\\_on\\_el\\_pr/paper\\_voting](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080806/ap_on_el_pr/paper_voting)

### THE RIGHT TO VOTE

**New York** - In a *New York Times* editorial, the work of the non-partisan Election Protection is discussed in relation to the work the group has been doing critical work in standing up for voter. The *Times* states that the Election Protection is already working with election officials trying to eliminate obstacles to voting. In November, Election Protection plans to have 10,000 lawyers, law students and other volunteers working around the country to help voters whose names are not on the rolls when they should be. Election Protection will be working to have the polls to stay open late when there are long lines as well as assuring that everyone gets to cast a ballot who is entitled to. Read the editorial here:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/09/opinion/09sat1.html?\\_r=1&ref=opinion&oref=](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/09/opinion/09sat1.html?_r=1&ref=opinion&oref=)

### VETERAN VOTING

**Hartford, CT** - The Secretary of State for Connecticut, Susan Bysiewicz, in a *New York Times* Editorial, describes how administrators at Veterans Affairs Hospital in West Haven, CT denied her access to register veterans in residence at the VA Hospital. Read about the voter suppression here:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/11/opinion/11bysiewicz.html?\\_r=1&ref=opinion&](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/11/opinion/11bysiewicz.html?_r=1&ref=opinion&)

## LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE FOR VOTERS

**Penns Grove, NJ** - The DOJ has settled a law suit with Salem County, NJ and the Borough of Penn Groves. Under the agreement, the county will now provide bilingual ballots and election information while developing a remedial plan that ensures Spanish-speaking citizens can fully participate. That plan includes an adequate number of bilingual poll workers and the ability for Spanish speakers to use assistants of their choice while voting. The Justice Department explained that Latino voters were apparently subject to racial comments, asked disproportionately for identification and turned away from polling stations. Read the detail of the settlement here:

<http://www.nj.com/news/sunbeam/index.ssf?/base/news-4/1217308244304090.xml&coll=9>

**Anchorage, AK** - Late last month, a federal court ordered Alaska's state and local elections officials to provide effective language assistance to citizens who speak Yup'ik, the primary language of a majority of voters in the Bethel region of Alaska. The victory came in a legal challenge brought by Native American Rights Fund (NARF) and the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of four Alaska Natives and four tribal governments. Read the details here:

<http://www.aclu.org/votingrights/gen/36227prs20080731.html>

## VOTER IDENTIFICATION

**Tucson, AZ** - Shirley Freeda Preiss of Surprise is one ticked-off little old lady. The 97-year-old retired schoolteacher and onetime traveling showgirl has voted in every presidential election since 1932 when she cast a ballot for Franklin Delano Roosevelt. But thanks to the state's voter identification requirements, it's looking unlikely that she'll be able to vote in the upcoming presidential election. She simply can't prove her citizenship as required by a 2004 law passed by Arizona voters. Read the complete story here:

[http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/ss/elections\\_other/92782.php](http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/ss/elections_other/92782.php)

## 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](mailto: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 visit China while in office?

## LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

Leslie Lynch King, Jr., was the birth name of which President?

## ANSWER

Gerald Ford name at birth was Leslie Lynch King, Jr. after his biological father. He was renamed after his adoptive father. We had correct answers from James Gibson, Mac Campbell and Diana Marit Kunkel. Congratulations to all of you. Good luck this week.

## JOBS

**Office:** Project Vote

**Position:** Two full-time Staff Attorneys

**Contact:** Applicants should submit resume, 3-5 page writing sample, and three references. Applications will be accepted until positions are filled. Please send materials to [info@projectvote.org](mailto:info@projectvote.org), attention Ms. Rogers.

**Description:** Staff attorneys will assist in litigating challenges to restrictive laws and procedures that hamper voter registration and participation. Ensure that eligible applicants are registered in a timely manner and informed of their registration status. Enforce federal mandates that public assistance and disability agencies provide voter registration services for clients. Identify and address administrative barriers to registration. Assist with verification of registration applications. Meet with local election officials to gather information and negotiate solutions. Assess allocation of personnel and equipment for Election Day. Conduct legal research on applicable federal and state laws and regulations. Draft public education materials and correspondence with election officials. The candidate must have strong research, writing, and interpersonal skills. Familiarity with the National Voter Registration Act, Help America Vote Act, and Voting Rights Act is preferred but not required. Experience with voter registration process or Election Day voter protection activities also preferred. Litigation experience and ability to travel are required. Bar membership is required.

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](mailto:editors@democraticlawyers.org).

Editors' Note: *The above listed job(s) were gathered from various sources in an effort to 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](mailto: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](mailto:david@democraticlawyers.org)), Curtis LeGeyt ([curtis@democraticlawyers.org](mailto:curtis@democraticlawyers.org)) & Candice Jones ([candice@democraticlawyers.org](mailto: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](mailto: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.

### **Federal Legislation Committee**

*Chair*, Dick Meltzer ([dick@democraticlawyers.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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???**

To get your own copy of Democratic Law Briefs, please visit

<http://www.democraticlawyers.org/join.php> or e-mail your name, title, company, addresses, and phone numbers to [signup@democraticlawyers.org](mailto: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](mailto:editors@democraticlawyers.org). We reserve the right to use, not use, edit, paraphrase, or otherwise play with your submissions.

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