



*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**

**VA-DC-MD LAWYERS AND LAW STUDENTS -**  
**WE NEED YOU ON ELECTION DAY!!!**



Change only happens when people enter the political process and make their voices heard. Senator Barack Obama's Campaign for Change in Virginia is assembling a legion of attorneys and law students to help promote and protect the rights of each and every voter in the Commonwealth on Election Day, November 4th. You are invited to be a part of this historic effort. Please put your legal skills to work for change on the front lines of a battleground state by clicking on <http://my.barackobama.com/counselforchange>.

N.B. For those of you who have expressed a generous willingness to travel to battleground states including Virginia (thank you!), you will be contacted directly by the respective state counsel/voter protection coordinators shortly.

## CANVASSING/VOTER REGISTRATION - YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN VIRGINIA

- Who:** Campaign for Change - Virginia
- What:** Canvassing and Voter Registration in Prince William County
- Where:** Campaign for Change- Virginia Office  
4308 Ridgewood Center Drive, Woodbridge, VA 22192
- When:** Saturday (Sept. 13) or Sunday (Sept. 14), 2-5:00 p.m.

It is 56 days till Election Day and we have less than a month to register people to vote in Virginia (October 4 is the deadline). If you want to effectuate change, we need to do everything -raise money, be foot soldiers, protect the integrity of the vote and get people to the polls. All of us lead very busy lives but please consider what is at stake for our country and find time to help however you can.

INVITE FRIENDS, FAMILIES AND COLLEAGUES! For federal workers, canvassing and voter registration is not covered by the Hatch Act. See [http://www.osc.gov/ha\\_fed.htm#fed\\_adv](http://www.osc.gov/ha_fed.htm#fed_adv).

Please RSVP to [fyoungberg@yahoo.com](mailto:fyoungberg@yahoo.com). Your personal efforts can turn Virginia into a blue state!

## DC TO VA VICTORY TEAMS

The Virginia Campaign for Change, D.C. for Obama, YLFO, and others are teaming up to get volunteers down to Virginia to canvass between now and election day. This race will be close, and we need to do all we can to turn Virginia blue. We have seven teams focusing on different areas in Northern Virginia. Teams will get to know a precinct and make repeat visits to one area. To join, please visit [http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=001mq1M0U\\_4cwZalYOZXIJ2xOeMFiRRJFVcsf-CrqZDYm2I1knpvKC8HLv3pWWXTXwbgt7MM4j03OsMi62Q7htBrEhy1SLMfJuA50BRTUiUJTw4ACnOZJwYXMfusjAW6AJ1jyK6MSC8rHpbO-zZEzT484ugsnFGSAye](http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=001mq1M0U_4cwZalYOZXIJ2xOeMFiRRJFVcsf-CrqZDYm2I1knpvKC8HLv3pWWXTXwbgt7MM4j03OsMi62Q7htBrEhy1SLMfJuA50BRTUiUJTw4ACnOZJwYXMfusjAW6AJ1jyK6MSC8rHpbO-zZEzT484ugsnFGSAye).

Also, if you would like to help fund this program through a pledge of an in-kind contribution to go towards buses or vans, please contact Adam Barr ([albarr@gmail.com](mailto:albarr@gmail.com)).

## YLFO



### *POLL MONITOR CALLS*

We will be assisting the campaign by calling attorneys in swing states to encourage them to volunteer to be poll monitors. This will involve a commitment of 2-3 hours of calls over the span of a week. Please contact Jamie at [jamiemlong@gmail.com](mailto:jamiemlong@gmail.com) if interested.

### *BUS TRIP TO WINCHESTER - SAT. 9/20*

DC for Obama is sponsoring a bus trip to register and identify Obama supporters in the heart of Virginia. We'll be headed to the Winchester area Saturday September 20th at 7:30 am at the corner of Mass Ave NW and 21st St NW, and return that evening. To register go to: <http://dc2va2.eventbrite.com/>. Please consider a minimum donation of \$10 to cover the bus and gas costs.

### *PHONE BANKING*

We are starting a phone banking effort in D.C. and are looking for volunteers to help organize the effort and spaces to hold phone banks, such as offices. Please email Tree Martschink at [treemartschink@gmail.com](mailto:treemartschink@gmail.com) if interested.

## EVENTS

### LET'S BUILD THE PARTY! - WED. SEPT. 10

**Who:** The Obama/ Biden campaign, Wellstone Action, or Equality CA

**What:** A party that will help raise funds to support progressive victories in November! Featuring special guests and DC-Whammy winning DJ, Arthur Loves Plastic.

**Where:** Darlington House, 3rd floor (formerly Childe Harold Restaurant)  
1610 20th Street, NW (north exit of the Dupont Circle metro)

**When:** Wednesday, September 10, from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Contribution: Minimum donation of \$80 to one of 3 causes:

1. *Obama/Biden Campaign*
2. *Wellstone Action* (please note on your donation "in honor of CRHH"):
3. *Equality CA*

### THE AMERICAS FUNDRAISING RECEPTION - THURS. SEPT. 11

**Who:** Dan Restrepo, Senior Policy Advisor for Western Hemisphere to the Obama Campaign; and Arturo Valenzuela, former NSC Senior Director under President Clinton's Administration and member of the Obama Latin American Policy Group

**What:** The Future of US-Latin American Relations under an Obama Administration

**Where:** Home of Barbara Gordon, 2905 Q. St NW, Washington DC

**When:** Thursday, September 11, 7-9:00 p.m.

Contribution: \$50. RSVP to [foreignpolicyforobama@gmail.com](mailto:foreignpolicyforobama@gmail.com) or purchase tickets at <http://my.barackobama.com/page/event/detail/gplr53>.

### ERIC HOLDER EVENT AT BLT STEAK - WED. SEPT. 17

**Who:** Young Lawyers for Obama

**What:** Event with Eric Holder, former Deputy Attorney General and Co-Chair of the Obama campaign's VP search committee and entertainment by the terrific band No Second Troy

**Where:** BLT Steak Rooftop Deck, 1625 I St NW

**When:** Wednesday, Sept. 17, 7:00 pm general reception; 6:00 pm VIP reception

RSVP and donate at

<https://donate.barackobama.com/page/contribute/YLFO?custom1=Sep+17+Holder+Event%20>.

Contribution: ticket: \$150; VIP session with Eric Holder: \$250; students: \$50

Hosts: Raise or write \$750; committee still in formation! Please contact Eric (ericharen@gmail.com) to host.

### VALERIE JARRETT EVENT - FRI. SEPT. 19

**Who:** Young Professionals mingling with Obama Campaign advisors, including senior advisor Valerie Jarrett.

**Where:** 3303 Water Street in Georgetown, roof top deck with a Potomac view

**When:** Friday, September 19 from 7-9:00 p.m.

Contribution: \$1,000; Contact David Tafuri (dtafuri@pattonboggs.com) to RSVP.

## VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

### VOTER CAGING

**Columbus, OH** - In response to strong concerns expressed by Project Vote about the potential for partisan abuse of Ohio's vague voter challenger laws, Ohio's Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner took an important step to clarify the law and protect Ohio voters from partisan voter caging. In a directive issued on Friday to all Ohio Elections Boards, the secretary makes it clear that Ohio voters must be afforded notice and due process before their right to vote is challenged, and that returned mail alone can not be used as a partisan tool to suppress the vote in this presidential election year. Read more here:

[http://projectvote.org/index.php?id=80&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=2512&tx\\_ttnews\[backPid\]=75&cHash=462d9b04a6](http://projectvote.org/index.php?id=80&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=2512&tx_ttnews[backPid]=75&cHash=462d9b04a6)

### STUDENT VOTING

**Roanoke VA** - Montgomery County Registrar Randy Wertz said he wrote the news release, distributed through the county's Web site, amid concerns that the hundreds of Tech students registering to vote using their Blacksburg addresses would essentially change their permanent address. That, he wrote, could affect students' scholarships or tax filings and would obligate them to change car registrations and their driver's license to their permanent address. But Obama campaign officials said they had never heard of students' dependency status on their parents' tax forms affected by their voter registration and added that other laws the release cited are rarely enforced or subject to interpretation. The Obama campaign's response highlights the state's newly minted battleground status, but it is also reviving long-held concerns that a

gray area in state election law regarding residency could leave college students vulnerable to having their registrations challenged because of their transient status. Language in the state law could be interpreted to bar students from using their college address if they consider their residence temporary. Read more here: <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/175015>

### VOTER FRAUD OR POOR RECORDS?

**Madison, WI** - In a test comparison of Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) data with state Department of Transportation (DOT) data, four of six members of the Government Accountability Board (G.A.B.) failed the initial data cross-check, Elections Division staff said Thursday. Three Board members' DOT data did not match exactly with their voter registration information due to differences in the first and last name or middle initial, and one member's birth date did not match, according to Division Administrator Nat Robinson. The test was conducted after the Board last week decided against requiring retroactive checks of previously entered voter information back to January 2006. All new voter registration information is now matched against DOT records. Read the complete story here: <http://elections.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=14689&locid=47>

### VOTER REGISTRATION

**Brownsville, TX** - Proposed changes in the state's voting laws could force thousands of South Texans to prove their citizenship in order to vote in local, state and national elections. During the coming legislative session, Texas Republicans plan to introduce a measure that would target perpetrators of voter fraud, especially non-citizens. The stringent voting regulations - deemed the "voter suppression bill" by opponents - are already being discussed by Texas state representatives. On Friday, members of the House's elections committee met at the University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College to take testimony related to voting reform. If voters are required to provide proof of citizenship - as last year's failed House Bill 626 would have required - South Texans will likely be among the most adversely affected. Many Rio Grande Valley residents delivered by midwives are currently struggling to get passports because of State Department suspicions that their birth certificates were fraudulently provided. Read the story here: [http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/voter\\_89780\\_\\_\\_article.html/texas\\_voters.html](http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/voter_89780___article.html/texas_voters.html)

### EX-FELON VOTER REGISTRATION

**Florida** - A *New York Times* editorial blasts Florida Governor Charlie Crist's (R) restoration of voting rights to more than 100,000 former inmates for its failure to realize its full potential. As pointed out in the editorial, an analysis by *The Orlando Sentinel* showed that because of various bureaucratic foul-ups – including the state's

failure to find the right addresses for thousands of ex-inmates – just 8 percent of newly eligible voters had registered to vote by the end of July. Read the editorial here:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/30/opinion/30sat3.html?\\_r=1&ref=opinion&oref=](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/30/opinion/30sat3.html?_r=1&ref=opinion&oref=)

## 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

As we all know regardless of who wins the Presidential Election this year, a sitting Senator will be elected. Who was the first sitting Senator to be elected President? For an extra Attagirl or Attaboy: why is it necessary to add “sitting Senator” to the question?

### LAST WEEK’S QUESTION

Which President won a Pulitzer Prize?

### ANSWER

John F. Kennedy won the Pulitzer Prize for Biography in 1957 for *Profiles in Courage*. We had correct answers from Brad Nes, Kaycee Sullivan, and Christina Pederson. Congratulations to all of you! Good Luck this week.

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The Editors wish to exercise their editorial rights to extend warm Congratulations to our co-founder and co-chair Erika Moritsugu and her husband Brian who brought a new daughter into the world on Labor Day. Please join the Editors and extend a loving welcome to Vianne Leilani. Mother and Daughter are doing great and Father’s happy smile can be seen all the way up to Philadelphia...

## 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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