



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.

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.

Now on FACEBOOK!!!

For up to date information about trainings and events, please join the group: Obama Voter Protection Program, Virginia Counsel for Change

Or click on:



<http://www.facebook.com/n/?group.php&gid=27401417276>

TRANSLATORS: YOU CAN HELP PROTECT THE VOTE!

Help Translate Know Your Rights Materials

Voting can be an intimidating experience for Americans with limited English proficiency who may face discrimination and disenfranchisement. To ensure equal access to voting, the Democratic National Committee's voter protection task forces are recruiting volunteer translators to translate voter education/Know Your Rights materials throughout key battleground states. Translators for the following languages are needed:

Amharic, Arabic, Bangla/Bengali, Chinese, Farsi, Hindi,
Korean, Punjabi, Spanish, Tagalog, Turkish,
Vietnamese, Urdu, and others

To volunteer, please email election.interpreter@gmail.com and indicate your language skills. The DNC Asian American Pacific Islander or Latino Voter Protection Task Force will get in touch with you and provide you with further directions via email.

PHONE BANKING

Join YLFO for our weekly phone bank Wednesdays from 6-9 pm at the D.C. office (803 Florida Ave NW, near U St Metro). Email Tree (treemartschink@gmail.com) to RSVP.

YLFO VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

After the success of last week's canvass, Young Lawyers for Obama are headed back to Springfield this weekend! Meet at 7016 Commerce St. at 10 a.m. It is not metro accessible, but we can arrange carpools or pickups from the metro. Contact Clara (cvondrich@gmail.com) to RSVP.

If you are willing to commit to recruiting 10 friends and co-workers to sign up for election protection, join YLFO's Promote the Vote Task Force. We will keep you posted with election protection updates and will include your name in our report to the campaign. Contact Jamie (jamie@democraticlawyers.org) to join.

EVENTS

DEBATE WATCH PARTY - TONIGHT

Who: YLFO, Generation Obama, Foreign Policy Professionals for Obama, and GW Law for Obama

What: Debate watch party for the second Presidential debate

Where: McFaddens, 2401 Pennsylvania Ave NW (near Foggy Bottom metro)

Contribution: \$15 suggested donation; \$10 for students

LOOKING BEYOND ELECTION DAY: THE FUTURE OF ELECTION REFORM

What: Panel discussion on Problems that Remain: Election Reform Delayed and Return to Reform: Priorities for 2009 and Beyond

Where: Mary Graydon Center Room 5, American University Main Campus, 4400 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20016

When: Thursday, October 9, 2008, 2-5 p.m.

Panelists will include:

Nancy Tate, Executive Director of the League of Women Voters
Bob Edgar, President and CEO of Common Cause
Jamin Raskin, Maryland State Senator and Professor at AU's Washington College of Law

Leslie Reynolds, Executive Director of the National Association of Secretaries of State
Representative Rush Holt (D-NJ), Invited

For more information contact Alison Prevost (202) 885-1523 or prevost@american.edu

HEALTH CARE POLICY DISCUSSION PANEL

Who: Join YLFO for a discussion of Senator Obama's health care policy proposals, featuring former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, and other health care policy experts.

Where: To be announced

When: Monday, October 20, 6:00 pm.

Contribution: Tickets -\$150; public interest/government: \$75; students: \$50 RSVP and donate [here](#). Hosts: Raise or write \$900; contact Tom (tom@groupmagellan.com) to host

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

VOTER PURGING

NATIONAL - The Brennan Center for Justice has released a report on voter purging, the process by which states remove ineligible voters from the rolls. Brennan found that the purging process is secretive, prone to error, and vulnerable to manipulation. Voters are rarely informed that they are being removed from the rolls, and often states rely on poor matching criteria to determine if a voter is eligible. Some of the more dramatic examples include Florida's selective purge in 2000 of "suspected felons," which included a great deal of African Americans but mostly excluded Latinos, or the use of a matching system that purged voters whose names contained 80 percent of the letters in the names of people with criminal convictions. Read the report here:

http://www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/voter_purges

ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

Washington, DC - The U.S. Senate has confirmed the nominations of Rosemary E. Rodriguez, Donetta L. Davidson, Gracia M. Hillman and Gineen Bresso Beach as Commissioners of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. Commissioners Rodriguez, Hillman and Davidson were reappointed to a second term on the Commission.

Commissioner Beach was appointed to a first term. Read about the confirmations here:

http://www.eac.gov/News/eac-commissioners-confirmed-by-u-s-senate/base_view

SAME DAY REGISTRATION

Columbus, OH - In a major defeat for Republican challenge, state and federal courts have cleared the way for a weeklong period in which new voters can register and cast an absentee ballot on the same day in Ohio. Read the details here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/30/us/politics/30ohio.html?scp=1&sq=ohio%20voting&st=cse>

and here: <http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/electionlaw/news/articles.php?ID=2197>

POLL MONITORING

Washington, DC- Lawyers working pro bono for the District will monitor the polls and will be at elections headquarters Nov. 4 after the debacle that caused thousands of phantom votes to be added to initial tallies of this month's primary. Councilmember Mary M. Cheh (D-Ward 3), chairman of a special committee investigating the Sept. 9 blunder, said she wants "independent evaluators" present to observe any problems that might occur. "I don't want to find out . . . that there's the same chaotic situation," Cheh said. Read the details here:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/09/29/AR2008092902832.html>

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

President Kennedy, when asked about his health, replied that he was in "excellent" health. In fact JFK was suffering from what chronic disease?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

Who was the moderator for the first of the 1960 televised debates between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon?

ANSWER

Howard K. Smith was the moderator for the first televised debate between JFK and Richard Nixon. We had correct answer from Pat Fitch. Congratulations Pat! Good Luck this week.

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.

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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 LeGeyst (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.

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???

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.

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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