



*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 38, October 14, 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](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.

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](mailto: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**

**Tuesdays:** Join DC Young Democrats on Tuesdays, October 14<sup>th</sup> thru Election Day from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Obama-Biden D.C. office (803 Florida Ave NW, near U St Metro) To volunteer or receive further information, please e-mail [Kris @ dcyoungdems.org](mailto:Kris@dcyoungdems.org) or call (202) 445.7159.

**Wednesdays:** Join Young Lawyers for Obama for our weekly phone bank Wednesdays from 6-9 p.m. at the D.C. office (803 Florida Ave NW, near U St Metro). Email Tree ([treemartschink@gmail.com](mailto:treemartschink@gmail.com)) to RSVP.

Other shifts are available Weekdays from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Saturdays from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and Sundays from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (*Shifts may expand through election, and alternate sites may be arranged*)

## VOLUNTEER IN TAPPAHANNOCK

Meet Young Democrats at 430 S Capital Street, SE (near the Capital South metro) on **October 18, 2008** at 12:00 p.m. (return at 8:00 p.m.)

The Commonwealth of Virginia has not voted Democrat in a presidential campaign in recent history. Today, we stand close to changing the tide. Donate your time in towns and counties that are still too close to call. Your efforts can make the difference.

*Lunch will be provided.*

**Contact :**

Kris Benjamin, YDA Political Director Mid Atlantic (202) 445-7159, [kris @  
dcyoungdems.org](mailto:kris@dcyoungdems.org)

Sheila Sarem, DC Field Organizer (202) 579-0812

## EVENTS

### DEBATE WATCH PARTY

**Who:** YLFO and Generation Obama

**Where:** Top of the Hill  
319 Pennsylvania Ave. SE (near Capitol South metro)

**When:** Wednesday, October 15, 8:30AM- 4:30 PM

\$10-20 suggested donation

### A POWERFUL ELECTORATE?: THE IMPACT OF ELECTION LAW ON AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

**Who:** The University of Maryland Law Journal of Race, Religion, Gender and Class

**What:** Fall symposium - "A Powerful Electorate?: The Impact of Election Law on American Democracy." The event will focus on how American laws have provided for or failed to adequately address the rights of American citizens to participate in the political process. Special attention will be given to recent Supreme Court decisions pertaining to voting rights, *Crawford v. Marion County School Board* and *Riley v. Kennedy*.

**Where:** University of Maryland School of Law  
500 W. Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201

**When:** Wednesday, October 15, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Register On-line for this free symposium:

<http://www.acteva.com/booking.cfm?bevoid=167476>

### 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

**Michigan** - The Michigan Secretary of State denies that tens of thousands of eligible voters have been illegally removed from rolls or blocked from registering for the Nov. 4 election. A *New York Times* report said about 33,000 voters were inadvertently removed from the Michigan rolls in August, a violation of federal law. In addition, the report states that eligible voters also were removed from five other key swing states: Colorado, Indiana, Ohio, Nevada and North Carolina. Read more here:

<http://www.freep.com/article/20081009/NEWS15/81009071/1008/news>

## VOTER REGISTRATION CHALLENGE

**Montana** - U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy issued a scathing order last Wednesday lambasting the Montana Republican Party for challenging the registrations of thousands of Montana voters, but stopped short of an actual ruling in the case. In his 19-page order, Molloy denied a temporary restraining order to the Montana Democratic Party, which sought to stop thousands of GOP-led voter challenges from moving forward. Molloy wrote that Secretary of State Brad Johnson “astutely” asked counties not to process the Republicans’ voter challenges, which effectively alleviated a crisis that would have required a restraining order. Details can be found here: <http://www.missoulian.com/articles/2008/10/09/news/local/news03.txt>

## DIEBOLD ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINE GILCHES

**Ohio** - Election officials, who will have plenty on their minds on Nov. 4, have one more thing to worry about: Diebold electronic voting machines that drop votes. Ohio’s secretary of state raised the alarm after local officials reported problems with the March primary count. Diebold has since notified more than 30 states to be on the lookout for missing votes. Read the New York Times Editorial here: [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/09/opinion/09thu2.html?\\_r=1&ref=opinion&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/09/opinion/09thu2.html?_r=1&ref=opinion&oref=slogin)

## 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 born in the twentieth century?

### LAST 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?

## ANSWER

President Kennedy was suffering from Addison's Disease, (also known as adrenal insufficiency, hypocortisolism or hypocorticism), a rare endocrine disorder in which the adrenal gland produces insufficient amounts of steroid hormones (glucocorticoids and often mineralocorticoids). He was first diagnosed with it in 1947. We did not have any correct answers last week. 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](mailto:erika@democraticlawyers.org).

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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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