



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!!!**

In a year that will likely see unprecedented turnout, we can't afford to let our guard down. The stakes could not be higher. This election has to be different.

HELP OBAMA-BIDEN ON ELECTION DAY, NOVEMBER 4



For those of you who have already 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.

PROTECT THE VOTE IN VIRGINIA

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>.

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>

PROTECT THE VOTE IN OHIO

Once again, Ohio is a battleground state that could decide the next president. The stakes couldn't be higher. Once again, the Republican Party is pursuing 2004-style tactics in Ohio. They've already filed frivolous lawsuits aimed at making it harder for voters to register and vote. In a state plagued by voter intimidation and that John Kerry lost by an average of nine votes per precinct, observers can make the critical difference in delivering this election for Barack Obama on November 4th.

Help protect voter rights and serve as an Observer:

1) Volunteer on Election Day!

Go to <http://my.barackobama.com/page/s/ohvolunteerlaw> to sign up to help our voter protection team on November 3 and 4 (Monday and Tuesday). If you can take off November 1st and 2nd as well, even better! You must arrive by the morning of November 3rd for training.

2) Recruit others! Bring four to five friends from your firm with you to come to Ohio

TRANSLATORS: YOU CAN HELP PROTECT THE VOTE!

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

Tuesdays: Join DC Young Democrats on Tuesdays, October 14th 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) 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*)

EVENTS

DEVELOPMENT, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Who: Join YLFO and Foreign Policy Professionals for Obama for an exceptional panel with Gayle Smith (former NSC Special Assist. to the President), Eric Schwartz (former NSC Senior Director), and Tom Malinowski (Human Rights Watch).

Where: SEIU, 1800 Massachusetts Ave. NW

When: Tuesday, October 21, 7 p.m.; VIP Reception with speakers (6:15-7 p.m.)

Contribution: Ticket - \$150; VIP - \$300; Hosts - raise or write \$600 (to host email harrisbeck@gmail.com). To RSVP and donate, click [here](#).

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

VOTER SUPPRESSION

Washington, DC - On October 17, 2008, the United States Supreme Court issued a stay in *Republican Party of Ohio v. Brunner*. The Ohio Republican Party sued Ohio's Secretary of State, alleging that various policies adopted by the Secretary, Ohio's chief election officer, violated federal and state law. Among the claims was that Ohio was not in compliance with provisions of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, which requires states to attempt to "match" information provided by citizens who apply to register to vote with the motor vehicle and Social Security databases. Read more here:

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

Ohio - In the last presidential debate, Joe the Plumber was mentioned some 26 times, but until the USSC ruling on the 17th, the ability of thousands like Joe to have their votes counted was threatened. According to the *Toledo Blade*, Joe the Plumber is Joe Wurzelbacher of Shrewsbury Street in Springfield Township in Lucas County, Ohio. As the *Blade* notes, many thought Joe was not a registered voter. Turns out there was likely a misspelling in the Lucas County Board of Elections database. From the *Blade*: "Linda Howe, executive director of the Lucas County Board of Elections, said a Samuel Joseph Worzelbacher, whose address and age match Joe the Plumber's, registered in Lucas County on Sept. 10, 1992. He voted in his first primary on March 4, 2008, registering as a Republican. Ms. Howe said that the name may be misspelled in the database." Read the details here:

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

VOTER REGISTRATION

New York, NY - In a *New York Times* editorial, John McCain's accusations against ACORN were discussed. In recent weeks, the McCain campaign has accused the group of perpetrating voter fraud by intentionally submitting invalid registration forms, including some with fictional names like Mickey Mouse and others for voters who are already registered. Based on the information that has come to light so far, the charges appear to be wildly overblown – and intended to hobble Acorn's efforts. Read the Editorial here:

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/17/opinion/17fri1.html?_r=2&ref=opinion&oref=&oref=slogin

HEAVY VOTER TURNOUT EXPECTED

National - Election officials around the country are bracing for huge voter turnout and a big spike in early voting may not be enough to prevent long lines at the polls come November 4. A number of key swing states around the country are reporting significant increases in voter registrations, an early indicator of how many people are likely to vote come Election Day. Among battleground states with the biggest gains in voter registration are Nevada, up 30 percent, Virginia, up 11 percent and North Carolina, up 9 percent. Read the details here:

<http://www.cqpolitics.com/wmspage.cfm?docID=news-000002976666>

ILLEGAL VOTER PURGE/BLOCKAGE

National - Tens of thousands of eligible voters in at least six swing states have been removed from the rolls or have been blocked from registering in ways that appear to violate federal law, according to a review of state records and Social Security data by the *New York Times*. The six swing states seem to be in violation of federal law in two ways. Michigan and Colorado are removing voters from the rolls within 90 days of a federal election, which is not allowed except when voters die, notify the authorities that they have moved out of state, or have been declared unfit to vote. Indiana, Nevada, North Carolina and Ohio seem to be improperly using Social Security data to verify registration applications for new voters. Read the details here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/09/us/politics/09voting.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

Who was Al Smith's Republican opponent in his run for President?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

Who was the first President born in the twentieth century?

ANSWER

JFK was the first President born in the twentieth century. 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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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), 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](mailto:editors@democraticlawyers.org). We reserve the right to use, not use, edit, paraphrase, or otherwise play with your submissions.

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