



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.

EVENTS

OBAMA-BIDEN TRANSITION PROJECT FUNDRAISER

Typically, transitions have been funded by corporations, lobbyists, and PACs. But for the first time, the Obama-Biden Transition Project - a nonpartisan entity whose purpose is to facilitate the transition and prepare for the next administration - has pledged not to accept these donations. As a result, the transition needs our help to fund its important work assessing the state of the federal agencies, preparing our agenda, and staffing key positions in the new administration.

Who: Obama-Biden Transition Project

What: A fundraiser to support the transition.

We will be joined by Chris Lu, the newly appointed Cabinet Secretary and Executive Director of the transition, and Lisa Brown, the newly appointed Staff Secretary and Co-Director of Agency Review for the transition. Chris and Lisa will share their thoughts on the transition and what we can expect when President-Elect Obama is sworn in.

Where: K St. Lounge, 1301 K St NW

When: Wednesday, December 17, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Contribution: \$250 - Ticket
\$150 - Young Professionals/ Government/ Nonprofit
\$2,500 (raise or write) - Includes a ticket to a transition fundraiser with David Plouffe on Jan. 6 (same price as ticket to the event)

Please donate here:

<https://donate.obamabidentransitionproject.org/page/contribute/ylindc>

If you have any questions, contact Jamie at ylfodc@gmail.com.

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

EARLY VOTING

Michigan - In a move to enable more Michigan residents to exercise their constitutional right to vote and encourage them to do so, the State House of Representatives this week passed a plan proposed by State Rep. Aldo Vagnozzi (D-Farmington/Farmington Hills) to allow voters to cast their ballots on the Friday, Saturday and Monday before Election Day.

<http://www.hometownlife.com/article/20081214/NEWS06/812140414>

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Vermont- The federal government has dropped a lawsuit claiming Vermont had improperly tallied absentee ballots from overseas residents. The U.S. Justice Department filed the suit against the Vermont's Secretary of State three months ago. But Friday, the feds acknowledged that Vermont had actually done a better job of accounting for the ballots than most other states.

<http://www.wcax.com/Global/story.asp?S=9513767>

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

What important formal vote occurred today, December 15, 2008?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

In what other Presidential election did Florida republicans play a role in placing a republican in the White House?

ANSWER

In 1876 Republicans ruled three southern states: Florida, South Carolina and Louisiana. The popular vote had Democrat Samuel Tilden and Republican Rutherford Hayes in virtual dead heat. The Republican-controlled southern states created a 15-member Electoral Commission consisting of five members from the Senate and the House plus five members appointed by the US Supreme Court to resolve the issue. When independent Justice David Davis of Illinois resigned and was replaced by a Republican the commission quickly declared Hayes the winner. Thus, Florida was involved in placing a republican in the White House. Kevin Kingston submitted a correct answer - Congrats Kevin! Good luck to all 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).

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???](#)

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[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 @](mailto:editors@democraticlawyers.org)

democraticlawyers.org. We reserve the right to use, not use, edit, paraphrase, or otherwise play with your submissions.

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