



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

The official website of the Presidential Inaugural Committee is <http://www.pic2009.org/>. This website will list official events as they are organized and announced.

National Conference of State Societies inauguration events website:
<http://ncss.typepad.com/>

2009 DC LATINO PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURAL GALA RECEPTION

What: This 2009 DC Latino Inaugural Gala Celebration will be hosted at the Carlos Rosario International Charter School, and is a formal Dinner Gala that seeks to bring Influential figures, both local and national, to the heart of the community

When: Saturday, January 17, 7 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.

Where: Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School, 1100 Harvard St, NW

\$125 per person. Visit <http://www.latinoinauguralgala.com/index.html>

RED GOES BLUE INAUGURAL BASH

What: Our chance to celebrate our hard work with YLFO! Featuring two great live bands (Jackie Greene; Grace Potter and the Nocturnals), open bar and appetizers

- When:** Sunday January 18, 10 pm to 1 am
- Where:** Old Ebbitt Grill, 75 15th Street, NW
- Tickets:** \$100 per person. Visit <http://www.redgoesblue.com/>

DC PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURAL GALA

What: This ticketed affair features participation by our local elected officials, live entertainment by the O’Jays, dinner, drinks, dancing, hospitality and festivities in celebration of the inauguration of Barack Obama, 44th President of the United States

Net proceeds to benefit voting rights efforts for the District of Columbia.

- When:** Monday, January 19, 8 p.m. - midnight
- Where:** U.S. Department of Transportation Atrium, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
- Tickets:** \$144 per person. Visit www.dcpresidentialgala.com

AAPI GRASSROOTS GALA AND BOLLYWOOD AFTERPARTY

Who: Asian Pacific Americans for Progress, Asian Americans for Obama, Filipinos for Obama and South Asians for Obama

What: Commemorate this historic inauguration in one of the most elegant private party venues in D.C.— Perry’s Restaurant in the heart of Adams Morgan. Come join your fellow grassroots activists and organizers as we celebrate our achievements, recognize our leaders and look towards the future!

Where: Perry’s Restaurant, 1811 Columbia Road, Washington, D.C. 20009

When: January 20, 2009

Grassroots Gala (8:00 - 11:00 p.m.)

Celebrating the Grassroots! Guests attending this distinctively stylish gala celebration will enjoy a five-star selection of sushi, hors d’oeuvres, desserts, and a partial open bar while listening to live jazz performed by world-class musicians.

Bollywood Afterparty (midnight to closing)

Featuring Ashu Rai and DJ Bobby, Resident DJs for the NYC-based Desilicious parties. A cash bar will be available for revelers until closing.

Tickets: Discounted tickets available through the DC AAPI Caucus for \$100 (otherwise \$150) and discounted all-access passes for \$250 (otherwise \$350). The all-access pass covers the entire evening (VIP cocktail reception with elected officials and community leaders from 5:00-7:30 p.m., Grassroots Gala, and Bollywood Afterparty).

If you are interested, please email moritsugu@gmail.com and indicate how many tickets you want AND sign up and pay at <http://www.actblue.com/page/apap-grassroots-group>

"NOT ANOTHER BALL" INAUGURATION PARTY

What: A ticketed party featuring open bar from 7 p.m. to midnight, dinner buffet from 8 to 10 p.m., and great company.

When: Tuesday, January 20, 7 p.m. to close

Where: Local 16, 1602 U St NW

Tickets: \$50 per person. Visit <http://localsixteen.com/inaugurationparty.html>

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

MINNESOTA SENATE RACE

Minnesota – As expected, Norm Coleman (R) filed suit to stop the Minnesota Canvassing Board from certifying the results which would have sent Al Franken (DFL) to the U.S. Senate. State election laws prevent the Canvassing Board from finalizing an election result so long as any law suit is pending. Read more here: http://www.startribune.com/politics/national/senate/37148069.html?elr=KArksLckD8EQDUoaEyqyP4O:DW3ckUiD3aPc:_Yyc:aUac8HEaDiaMDCinchO7DU&loc=interstitialskip

ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION

Columbus, OH – As expected, Gov. Ted Strickland (D) on Tuesday vetoed Republican-backed election legislation. The election “reform” bill would have closed a same-day registration/voting window, allowed multiple early voting sites in counties, prohibited

absentee ballots from being counted if identification envelopes were not completed, and required the secretary of state to provide database information to elections boards concerning mismatched voter registrations. In his veto message, Strickland said he supports "a deliberative, bipartisan process to craft meaningful improvements to Ohio's elections system. Ohio voters deserve the thoughtful administrative and legislative changes that can come out of such a process." Read about the veto here: <http://www.times-gazette.com/news/article/4500255>

Nebraska - Nebraska State Sen. Bill Avery (D) is taking another stab at trying to get Nebraska voters the opportunity to register on Election Day. Avery, from Lincoln, introduced LB125 Friday in the Nebraska Legislature. The measure would allow previously unregistered residents, and persons who moved and failed to change their registration, to be eligible to vote, provided they bring identification such as a driver's license or even a utility bill. Currently, Nebraska cuts off voter registration 10 days before the election. Details can be found here: <http://nebraska.statepaper.com/vnews/display.v/ART/2009/01/09/4967a3166874a>

ABSENTEE BALLOTING

Richmond, VA - Gov. Tim Kaine (D) (the new Chair of the Democratic National Committee) on January 7 backed legislation to open up absentee voting to all registered Virginia voters. The push comes months after a historic presidential election in which concerns over horrendous lines at the polls prompted a record number of Virginians to vote absentee. But only those who met at least one of 17 criteria--including being disabled or ill, pregnant, away on election day or caring for an ill family member qualified to cast an absentee ballot. The two bills Kaine supports would allow absentee voting in person for any reason. Voters still would have to meet one of the criteria to cast a mail-in ballot. Read the complete story here: <http://www.dailypress.com/news/local/virginia/dp-va--absenteevoting0107jan07,0,2889612.story>

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

National - Days before the first black president takes office, the Supreme Court agreed Friday to consider overturning a key feature of the main federal law that ensures access to the polls by minorities. The justices said they will review a lower court ruling upholding a provision of the Voting Rights Act that requires all or parts of 16 states with a history of racial discrimination, most in the South, to get approval before implementing any changes in the way elections are held. Read the details here: <http://www.law.com/jsp/article.jsp?id=1202427350895>

ABSENTEE BALLOTING

New York, NY - A *New York Times* editorial discusses a case that is sitting quietly in the Supreme Court's in-basket. The *Times* editorial predicts that the case will tell us more than almost any other about John G. Roberts, Jr. and his evolution from spear carrier in the Reagan revolution to chief justice of the United States while showing the process set the direction of the debate over race and politics for years to come. The question is whether Congress acted within its constitutional authority two years ago when it extended a central provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 for 25 years. An appeal challenging the act's reauthorized Section 5, a provision that requires certain states and localities to receive federal permission before making any change in election procedures, awaits the justices when they return today from a holiday recess. Read the editorial here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/09/opinion/09greenhouse.html?partner=permalink&exprod=permalink>

Read more here:

<http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2009/01/09/preclearance-clarence-scotus-to-review-big-part-of-voting-rights-act/>

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE TRACKING

NEW BILLS

S.CON.RES. 1 : A concurrent resolution to provide for the counting on January 8, 2009, of the electoral votes for President and Vice President of the United States.

Sponsor: *Sen Reid, Harry* [NV] (introduced 1/6/2009) *Cosponsors* (1)

Latest Major Action: 1/6/2009 Passed/agreed to in Senate. Status: Submitted in the Senate, considered, and agreed to without amendment by Unanimous Consent.

S.48 : A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to require new voting systems to provide a voter-verified permanent record, to develop better accessible voting machines for individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: *Sen Ensign, John* [NV] (introduced 1/6/2009) *Cosponsors* (None)

Committees: Senate Rules and Administration

Latest Major Action: 1/6/2009 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

S.149 : A bill to change the date for regularly scheduled Federal elections and establish polling place hours.

Sponsor: *Sen Kohl, Herb* [WI] (introduced 1/6/2009) *Cosponsors* (None)

Committees: Senate Rules and Administration

Latest Major Action: 1/6/2009 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Read twice and

referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

S. 160 : A bill to provide the District of Columbia a voting seat and the State of Utah an additional seat in the House of Representatives.

Sponsor: *Sen Lieberman, Joseph I.* [CT] (introduced 1/6/2009) *Cosponsors* (9)

Committees: Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Latest Major Action: 1/6/2009 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.J.RES.2 : Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States regarding presidential election voting rights for residents of all United States territories and commonwealths.

Sponsor: *Rep Christensen, Donna M.* [VI] (introduced 1/6/2009) *Cosponsors* (2)

Committees: House Judiciary

Latest Major Action: 1/6/2009 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R.97 : To amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit certain deceptive practices in Federal elections, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: *Rep Conyers, John, Jr.* [MI-14] (introduced 1/6/2009) *Cosponsors* (15)

Committees: House Judiciary

Latest Major Action: 1/6/2009 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R.103 : To amend title 18, United States Code, to prevent the election practice known as caging, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: *Rep Conyers, John, Jr.* [MI-14] (introduced 1/6/2009) *Cosponsors* (9)

Committees: House Judiciary

Latest Major Action: 1/6/2009 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R.105 : To protect voting rights and to improve the administration of Federal elections, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: *Rep Conyers, John, Jr.* [MI-14] (introduced 1/6/2009) *Cosponsors* (4)

Committees: House Judiciary; House Administration; House Oversight and Government Reform

Latest Major Action: 1/6/2009 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on House Administration, and Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

H.R.157 : To provide for the treatment of the District of Columbia as a Congressional district for purposes of representation in the House of Representatives, and for other

purposes.

Sponsor: *Rep Norton, Eleanor Holmes* [DC] (introduced 1/6/2009) *Cosponsors* (None)

Committees: House Judiciary

Latest Major Action: 1/6/2009 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.

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

Name three ways that President-elect Obama inauguration is attempting to honor the last President from Illinois?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

The Twentieth Amendment affected this event and which President first?

ANSWER

In 1937, the day of inauguration was changed by the Twentieth Amendment from March 4 to noon on January 20, beginning with Franklin D. Roosevelt's second term in 1937. 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).

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

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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 @ 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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