



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

ORGANIZING FOR AMERICA KICKOFF CELEBRATION

What: OFA's Kickoff Celebration Fundraiser

When: Thursday, Feb. 26, 6:30-9:30 pm

Where: Lima Restaurant and Lounge, 1401 K Street, NW

RSVP and pay [here](#). VIP ticket-holders enjoy a 1-hour open bar. \$250 VIP Reception, \$44 General Admission.

Join young professionals, Members of Congress and other VIP guests as we kick off Organizing for America, a project of the DNC that will build upon the work of Obama for America. Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Congressman Patrick Murphy will attend, with more guests to come. Learn how you can get involved in helping to pass the President's agenda in this critical time.

ELECTION PROTECTION REVIEW: A CASE STUDY OF VIRGINIA IN 2008 AND PREPARING FOR 2010

Who: The Washington D.C. Lawyer Chapter and the George Mason University School of Law Student Chapter of the American Constitution Society

When: March 5, 2009

Where: George Mason University School of Law, Room 332

3301 Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA

Price: Free/ Please RSVP [here](#).

Editor's note: This panel event is decidedly a non-political discussion bringing together representatives from interest groups and election officials. We have received many e-mails and calls from those of you who tirelessly volunteered in the most amazing and successful voter protection effort in Virginia's history. Again, we thank you and look forward to working together again on future elections.

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

VOTER IDENTIFICATION

New Mexico - A piece of voter identification legislation, *HB 591*, was tabled last Thursday along party lines in the House Voters and Elections Committee. The bill would have required voters to provide one of six pieces of identification: a state driver's license; a state-issued "photo identification card"; a U.S. passport; a debit or credit card; a military ID; or a public assistance ID card. For more on this legislation read here:

<http://newmexicoindependent.com/19332/new-gop-voter-id-measure-tabled-in-the-legislature>

Oklahoma - Voters in the next election may be required to bring a driver's license or a voter registration card to legally cast a vote. House Bill 1037, filed by Rep. Sue Tibbs, R-Tulsa, and Senate Bill 4, filed by Sen. John Ford, R-Bartlesville, would require voters to bring identification with them to the polls. House and Senate committees passed both bills. Read the details here:

http://www.newsok.com/bills-see-identification-for-oklahoma-voters-at-the-polls/article/3347722?custom_click=lead_story_title

ELECTION REFORM REPORT

National- While many election reformers tend to focus on developing new solutions to problems, administrators nationwide also examine existing programs to determine how well they are working. Both the EAC and state chief election officers have recently undertaken this process, looking back at their successes from 2008 and identifying areas for improvement. Read the report here:

<http://www.electionreformproject.org/Features/5930a242-25f2-4be0-b9f4-274a6019d0e6/r1/Detail.aspx>

PRIMARY VOTING

Texas - State Rep. Hubert Vo (D) liked the huge voter turnout everywhere and now he wants to make it even easier for young people to get involved in the political process. The Houston Democrat is the author of House Bill 513, which would allow 17-year-old Texans to vote in the primaries, which are usually in March, if they will turn 18 before the first Tuesday of November, the day of the general election. Details can be found here:

http://lubbockonline.com/stories/022209/loc_396587443.shtml

MILITARY VOTING

Colorado - HB1205, introduced by Rep. Marsha Looper (R-Colorado Springs) and Assistant House Minority Leader David Balmer (R-Centennial), aims to improve the voting system in two ways. It would require mail-in ballots requested 35 days before the election to be issued to overseas military personnel at least 30 days prior to election. The deadline to receive and count military mail-in ballots would be extended eight days after the election. Details can be found here:

<http://coloradostatesman.com/content/99802-bill-aims-re-enfranchise-military>

DC VOTING RIGHTS

Washington, DC - Good news for long-suffering Washington residents: Before the Senate recessed for the Presidents Day holiday, Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) scheduled a cloture vote on a bill by Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman (I-CT) to give DC voting rights in the House of Representatives. The bill, also sponsored by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch (R-UT), would give Utah another seat in the House as well, bringing the number of House members to 437. Read more here:

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0209/18923.html>

MINNESOTA SENATE RACE

St. Paul, MN - The judges in Minnesota's Senate election trial dealt a blow but not a knockout to Republican Norm Coleman's (R) hopes, by tossing out most of the 19 categories of rejected absentee ballots they were considering for a second look, making it clear that they won't open and count any ballots that don't comply with state law. Read about more about the Friday the 13th ruling here:

http://www.startribune.com/politics/national/senate/39574697.html?elr=KArks8c7PaP3E77K_3c::D3aDhUxWoW_oD:EaDUiacyKUnaciaec807EyUr

ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION

LINCOLN, NE - Supporters of plans to let Nebraskans register to vote on Election Day told lawmakers it could boost voter turnout. But opponents, including Secretary of State John Gale, said that Election Day registrations could overload election offices with work on their busiest day of the year. He said the additional work would create a "great potential for problems" on Election Day. The state Republican Party also opposed the Election Day registration plan. The complete story here:
http://www.nebraska.tv/Global/story.asp?S=9867968&nav=menu605_1

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 two Presidents are related as Grandfather - Grandson?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

True or False? Every President has been sworn into office with a Bible.

ANSWER

False. Although most Presidents have opted to use a Bible (or two in the case of Truman), John Quincy Adams was sworn in on a book of US laws and while it is not clear what Teddy Roosevelt used when he first became President, it was noted that he did not use a Bible. We had a correct answer from Christine Pelosi. Congratulations Christine!! 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 @ 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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