



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.

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

MINNESOTA SENATE RACE

St. Paul, MN - Democratic candidate Al Franken has expanded his lead in that state's months-old Senate race, *USA Today*' reports. Franken's lead over Republican Norm Coleman has grown to 312 votes after a court counted 351 absentee ballots that had been incorrectly rejected. Franken had held a 225-vote lead heading into Tuesday's count. Details can be found here:

<http://blogs.usatoday.com/onpolitics/2009/04/frankens-lead-in-minnesota-senate-race-grows-.html>

St. Paul, MN - A Minnesota court confirmed Monday that Al Franken (D) won the most votes in his 2008 Senate race against Norm Coleman (R). Franken actually gained more votes from the election challenge than Coleman, who brought the legal action in the first place. Coleman immediately announced plans to appeal. His petition could further delay the seating of Minnesota's second senator for weeks. Read more here:

http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/2009/04/14/2009-04-14_al_frankens_minn_victor_court_rules.html

MONTANA MAIL-IN BALLOT

Helena, MT - Voters in Montana are used to mailing in their ballots for school and local government elections. But it doesn't look like voters will have that option in federal elections. A bill that would have allowed counties the ability to choose the mail ballot option has stalled in the House State Administration Committee, and that has local election officials rethinking their options. The failure of Senate Bill 394 has

county election officials looking at reducing the number of polling places, because of escalating costs. Read more here:

<http://www.montanastation.com/Global/story.asp?S=10166378>

ALL-PAPER ELECTION

Denver, CO - State lawmakers have introduced a bill that would push Colorado toward an all-paper election system, but the measure doesn't contain a hard deadline for achieving such a system. Instead, if the bill passes, the legislature would merely declare its intent that every voter in Colorado cast their vote on paper. It would be up to the secretary of state to actually effect that change through a provision in the bill requiring that office to approve counties' purchases of new voting machines. Secretary of State Bernie Buescher said recently that if the bill passes, he likely would not approve large-scale purchases of electronic voting machines. Follow this story here:

http://www.denverpost.com/statehouse08/ci_12129224

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

Many Presidents kept unusual pets in the White House. What President kept a pet alligator?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

A future President gave a eulogy at the funeral of this President, who were the two Presidents? Hint: Both Presidents died in office.

ANSWER

Zachary Taylor who died July 9, 1850 was eulogized by Abe Lincoln. 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), Curtis LeGeyt (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

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

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