



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

PROGRESSIVE POLITICAL CAREER BOOTCAMP

Who: *Democratic GAIN* and the *George Washington Graduate School of Political Management* are teaming up to bring you a half-day of panel discussions with senior progressive political professionals from all areas of politics who will share their stories while providing information, insights and advice on how you can begin or continue your own successful political career.

When: Friday, July 17th, Noon - 6 p.m.

Where: George Washington University
Jack Morton Auditorium
805 21st St NW Washington DC

Cost: \$10 for non-dues-paying members of GAIN, and free for current dues-paying members.

RSVP: Space is limited, so [register today](#) to guarantee your spot at this great event

Register here:

<http://www.democraticgain.org/link.asp?ymlink=57308&finalurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Edemocraticgain%2Eorg%2Fevent%2Fcareerbootcamp>

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

IT'S OFFICIAL: DEMO'S AT 60

Washington, D.C. - Al Franken was sworn-in on July 7th giving the Democrats 60 votes in the U.S. Senate. Senator Franken was accompanied by former VP (and U.S. Senator) Walter Mondale. Senator Amy Klobuchar (D) introduced her new colleague and VP Joe Biden administered the oath of office. In case you missed it read the details here:

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-franken8-2009jul08,0,6145636.story>

HEARINGS OPEN ON SOTOMAYOR CONFIRMATION

Washington, DC— The Senate Judiciary Committee quickly split along partisan lines Monday as it began a weeklong debate on the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court, with Democrats and Republicans presenting starkly different views of the candidate and the confirmation process. For her part, Judge Sonia Sotomayor pledged to serve the "larger interest of impartial justice" rather than any narrower cause if she becomes the first Hispanic on the Supreme Court. For more on the hearings go here:

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/31887698/ns/politics-white_house

VOTE BY MAIL

New Jersey - Under a new law approved by both houses of the state legislature and signed into law June 30 by Governor Jon Corzine, voters are provided with several alternative procedures for casting their votes in future elections. They can continue to visit their local polling sites on election day, but they also can elect to vote by mail. <http://www.shorenwstoday.com/news.php?id=2889>

VOTING CASE

Mississippi - A federal appeals court will hear arguments Aug. 3 on whether the counting of university students in Hattiesburg's population restricted minority participation on the city council. The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans has been asked to overturn U.S. District Judge Keith Starrett's ruling that the city did not violate the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by including dormitory students in population calculations used to draw the city's wards.

<http://www.clarionledger.com/article/20090713/NEWS/907130320/1001/news>

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

On July 4, 1827, what state marked the occasion by emancipating its slaves?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

True or False: The first public reading of the Declaration of Independence was in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776, by Col. John Nixon.

ANSWER

False. The first public reading of the Declaration of Independence was in Philadelphia on July 8, 1776 by Col. John Nixon. 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

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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