



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

NEW DEMOCRAT IN TOWN

California - Ethnicity will be the one obvious difference when California tax board member Judy Chu arrives in Washington shortly to succeed fellow Democrat Hilda Solis. Chu, the easy winner of Tuesday's House special election in the state's 32nd District, will fill the seat Solis vacated in February after she was confirmed as President Obama's secretary of Labor. Read the details here:

<http://www.cqpolitics.com/wmspage.cfm?docID=news-000003166155>

AMERICA ON THE MOVE

New York, NY – What happens when voters move is the subject of a report released recently. As almost 45% of eligible voters in the United States move every five years, states have an understandably difficult time maintaining accurate voter registration lists. By studying how other countries deal with a mobile electorate, the United States may obtain some guidance can manage its own registration rolls. One report this week examines the state-level policies concerning voters who move, while the second report provides an overview of voter registration processes in sixteen other democracies around the world. Read the reports here:

<http://www.electionreformproject.org/Features/88d512c4-a931-4665-ba83-510375e9f8c8/r1/Detail.aspx?emc=lm&m=227698&l=21&v=421197>

http://brennan.3cdn.net/3234b49c4234d92bf3_3km6i2ifu.pdf

MILITARY VOTING

Washington, DC - U.S. Senators Charles E. Schumer (D-NY), Saxby Chambliss (R-GA) and Ben Nelson (D-NE) announced Wednesday that the Senate Rules Committee has unanimously approved their bipartisan legislation to make it easier for U.S. troops to cast ballots from overseas. Calling the issue an urgent priority, the Senators also announced that they plan to offer the bill as an amendment to the Department of Defense authorization bill being debated on the Senate floor this week and next. The bill, called the Military and Overseas Voters Empowerment Act ("MOVE Act"), comes after a Rules Committee survey last May showed that as many as one in four ballots cast by military voters went uncounted in last year's presidential election. Read More here: http://schumer.senate.gov/new_website/record.cfm?id=315837

Washington State - About one million voters in Washington state have used ballots that contained unique bar code identifiers, a violation of the state Constitution's guarantee of "absolute" ballot secrecy, according to a lawsuit filed Tuesday. The suit against Secretary of State Sam Reed was filed directly in the state Supreme Court and seeks an injunction to prohibit the use of such ballots. The suit was brought by the Green Party of San Juan County and four voters. Details can be found here: <http://blog.seattlepi.com/seattlepolitics/archives/173696.asp>

MINORITY VOTING

Washington, DC - Census Bureau data released Monday show the extent to which strong minority-voter turnout in the 2008 election helped President Barack Obama win over swing states and make inroads into Republican strongholds. About five million more people voted for president in November than four years earlier, with minorities accounting for almost the entire increase. About two million more black and Hispanic voters and 600,000 additional Asians went to the polls. While the figures reflect a long-term demographic shift, they also attest to the success of the Democrats' extensive campaign to register their supporters and get them to the polls. Overall, the 64% turnout was unchanged from four years earlier. Follow this story here: http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB124813588601666995-lMyQjAxMDI5NDI4MTEyMzE1Wj.html

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

Which President was born on the 4th of July?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

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

ANSWER

New York emancipated its slaves on July 4, 1827. We did not have any correct answers last week. Good Luck this week.

JOBS

LEGAL DIRECTOR FOR UNIQUE ELECTION REFORM GROUP

National election reform group working to remove barriers to voting for traditionally under participating constituencies seeks an experienced, legal director with a unique combination of skills to implement the organization's programmatic objectives and direct related legal activities. State and federal court litigation and administrative advocacy experience, and familiarity with agency proceedings required. Familiarity with grass roots organizations and organizing experience highly desirable. Fundraising experience helpful.

Primary responsibilities include: 1) working with partner election reform, registration and mobilization groups to identify laws, rules and administrative practices that restrict voter participation, 2) formulating appropriate responses and/or develop legal theories for administrative advocacy or litigation; 3) assigning pertinent legal research and other tasks to in-house legal staff; 4) general supervision of in-house legal staff including review of work product to ensure that it is performed in a timely manner that meets professional standards and is of high quality; 5) ongoing outreach to election officials to discuss pertinent initiatives, and identify opportunities to work collaboratively on pertinent reforms; and 6) activities associated with ongoing recruitment of and collaboration with local election attorneys. Additional responsibilities may include speaking engagements/attendance at meetings and assisting with preparation and review of fundraising documents.

Please send cover letter, resume and salary requirements to:
kneuman@fairelectionsnetwork.com

For more information, please visit www.fairelectionsnetwork.com

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

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