



Fighting for Voting Rights and a Democratic United States

DEMOCRATIC LAW BRIEFS

A Publication of the DC Chapter of the National Lawyers Council

Volume 5 Issue 28 August 11, 2009

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

YLFO STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

With the summer drawing to a close and the new year upon us, YLFO is going to be re-engaging lawyers and law students in a variety of efforts on behalf of the Administration and the Party, and will be planning a series of free events. Find out how you can get involved in what we're building: an ongoing organization of Democratic lawyers and law students.

Who: YLFO

When: Wednesday, August 12, 8 a.m.

Where: Corner Bakery at 14th and F Streets, NW

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT

Washington, DC - Two reports review the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993 and state-level election reform across the United States. The first report, released by Project Vote, examines the implementation of the NVRA, focusing on registration methods and the progress that has yet to be made. In the second report, from the Center for Democracy and Election Management at American University, researchers review the election process across the United States. Read the reports [here](#):

<http://www.electionreformproject.org/?emc=lm&m=228660&l=22&v=421197>

ON-LINE VOTING

Salem, OR - Oregon Governor Ted Kulongosky has signed into law a bill that will give Oregonians the ability to register to vote on-line. Also signed into law were bills allowing military voters to cast votes by fax and to allow pre-Election Day tabulation of mailed in ballots. Read more about the signings here:

<http://news.opb.org/article/5573-oregon-offer-online-voter-registration/>

EX-FELON VOTING RIGHTS

Boston, MA – A federal court has ruled that Massachusetts has the right to prevent incarcerated felons from voting. The ruling stems from a lawsuit filed after Massachusetts voters in 2000 approved a measure to disqualify currently jailed felons from voting in certain elections. Lawmakers later extended that to all elections. In 2001, several jailed felons challenged the law, arguing it violated the federal Voting Rights Act because the percentage of imprisoned felons who are black or Hispanic is higher than the percentage in the state as a whole. Read more on the ruling here:

http://news.bostonherald.com/news/regional/view/20090801court_mass_can_deny_jailed_felons_right_to_vote/srv=home&position=recent

New York, NY - In a New York Times editorial, felon disenfranchisement laws in court are discussed. As noted above, the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, in Boston, became the latest federal court to uphold a ban on voting by convicted felons. The editorial declared that the cause was important and that voting rights advocates should keep fighting in the courts, state legislatures and Congress.

Read the editorial here here:

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/05/opinion/05wed3.html?_r=1&ref=opinion

COMMENTARY: THE REAL BATTLE FOR THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY

Washington, DC - In *Law.com*, one of our DLC members discusses the impact that President Obama can have on the federal judiciary is discussed. Read the commentary here:

<http://www.law.com/jsp/article.jsp?id=1202432541517&thepage=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](mailto: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 was the first federal building authorized by Congress?
(Hint: It was located in Philadelphia and it still exists in Philadelphia but not at its original location.)

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

How many men have served on the Supreme Court?

ANSWER

One hundred and eight men have served on the Supreme Court (plus three women).
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).

[READING SOMEONE ELSE'S COPY???](#)

To get your own copy of Democratic Law Briefs, please visit <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).

[TO UNSUBSCRIBE](#)

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ASK - If you want off the distribution list, just send a request, with all your possible e-mail addresses (a lot of you have your mail forwarded) to [editors @ democraticlawyers.org](mailto:editors@democraticlawyers.org). Put "Unsubscribe" in the subject of the message.

[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.

* * *

Copyright 2009 DCDLC, Paul Roath, Ph.D., Esq., Arielle Harry-Bess, Esq. and Erika Moritsugu, Esq.

This material is intended for personal use only. For other than personal use, it is illegal to make copies or faxes of the information or to store it in a database without permission. All material herein is copyrighted and is intended for the sole personal use of members of the Democratic Lawyers Council. While copies for personal use are permitted, the information otherwise may not be reproduced, republished or downloaded to a local area network without written permission. Violators risk penalties and \$100,000 in damages per offense.