



Fighting for Voting Rights and a Democratic United States

DEMOCRATIC LAW BRIEFS

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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.

WHITE HOUSE VOLUNTEERS

The White House Office of Presidential Correspondence is looking for new volunteers to maintain a vital link between the President and the American people. This office is actively recruiting volunteers to help the President by reading mail, answering phones, addressing envelopes, and entering data. Please send an email to Correspondencevols@who.eop.gov for more information. Please include your full name, time availability, and, if possible, attach a resume.

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

SPECIAL ELECTION

Boston, MA - Gov. Deval Patrick (D) must set the date of the general election for not more than 160 days, but not less than 145 days after a vacancy occurs, according to Michelle Tassinari, director and legal counsel to the election division of the Massachusetts secretary of state's office. The primary election will be held six weeks before the general election, meaning the identity of Kennedy's likely successor will be known in less than four months. Massachusetts is one of the nation's most formidable Democratic strongholds, so the winner of the Democratic nomination will be virtually assured of solid front-runner status for the general election. Read the more here:

<http://www.cqpolitics.com/wmspage.cfm?parm1=5&docID=news-000003194284>

MILITARY VOTING

Michigan - A bill that will help ensure the votes of overseas troops make it back to Michigan in time to be counted was introduced today in the State Legislature. The county clerks for Oakland, Macomb and Wayne Counties, who had joined forces to push for the legislation initially, applauded the move and urged lawmakers to support House Bill 5279.

<http://www.michnews.org/2009/08/legislation-introduced-today-to-fix-michigans-broken-military-voting-system-house-bill-5279-will-help-ensure-overseas-troops-votes-count-on-election-day/>

STUDENT VOTING

Virginia - The Virginia State Board of Elections moved Saturday to remove barriers that have made it hard for college students to vote and streamline inconsistent local policies for establishing residency. The proposal, which awaits a nod from the U.S. Justice Department, won unanimous approval from the three-member board after months of deliberation by the Virginia Residency Task Force. Under the new guidelines, local registrars would be barred from refusing a student's voter registration simply because that student listed a dorm as his address. A person would be allowed to register if he planned to remain in the area, barring a change in circumstances that could cause him to leave.

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/local/Virginia-seeks-to-ease-student-voting-8173851-56254157.html>

EX-FELONS VOTING

Wisconsin - A bill to grant voting rights to people on parole or probation got a hearing in the state legislature on August 27th. If approved, the bill would enfranchise approximately 40,000 people, many of them African-Americans. It would repeal restrictions enacted in the 1960's denying voting rights to parolees.

<http://www.fox21online.com/news/wisconsin-voting-bill-would-grant-voting-privilege-ex-felons>

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 law school did Senator Edward Moore Kennedy attend?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

On what date did President Eisenhower sign the papers to admit the 50th State?
Bonus: Name the one commodity/crop only this state can grow?

ANSWER

Hawai'i became a state on August 21, 1959. The one commodity/crop (the hint was commodity) that only Hawai'i can grow is coffee. Other fun facts: Hawai'i is the only state of the United States that is not geographically located in North America, is completely surrounded by water, is entirely an archipelago, has a royal palace and does not have a straight line in its state boundary. We had partially correct answers from Marlyn Aguilar, Eleanor LeCain, and Paul Richard, who knew that Hawai'i became a state officially on August 21, 1959. Congratulations! 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).

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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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