



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. We'll happily add you to the list.

SIGN UP FOR VIRGINIA ELECTIONS!



Are you interested in helping to get Creigh Deeds, Jody Wagner and Steve Shannon elected, as well as local candidates in the 2009 Election in Virginia? Promote & Protect the Vote 2009 (P2TV) is recruiting volunteer attorneys and law students to monitor targeted precinct polling places across the Commonwealth on Election Day, November 3, 2009, and to canvass the vote the day after Election Day, November 4, 2009.

P2TV is a program aimed at promoting fair elections and protecting voters from election law violations in Virginia. Experience has shown that an effective voter protection program and vote canvass can change the outcome of an election.

As a member of the D.C. Democratic Lawyers Council, you can help protect the votes of Virginians and make a meaningful impact in communities around Virginia by volunteering with P2TV on one or both days. Virginia Bar membership is not required to volunteer but it is a plus.

If you are interested in helping, please go to <http://www.vademocrats.org/page/s/promotethevote09> and sign up to volunteer.

If you have questions about the program or volunteer, opportunities please contact Kristina Perry, Promote & Protect the Vote Coordinator, by email at kperry@vavictory09.org or by phone at (804) 644-1966 ext. 241.

P2TV began in Virginia in 2001 and has continued to expand and grow each year. This program is only effective because of the participation of passionate members of the legal community.

Thank you for your support in helping to keep Virginia moving forward.

EVENTS

YLFO'S MEET A REP EVENT - 10/8

To give the Democratic legal community a chance to meet a Democrat making a difference in Congress and an excuse to get together, YLFO is launching its "Meet a Rep" event series. We plan on hosting Members of Congress to speak to our membership and answer questions about public life, running for office, and the events of the day.

- Who:** DC Young Lawyers for Obama
- What:** Inaugural Meet a Rep" event series with Rep. Perriello
- Where:** Hawk N Dove, Upstairs Lounge (329 Pennsylvania Ave SE)
- When:** Thursday, Oct. 8, 6:30-8:00 pm

YLFO's inaugural Meet a Rep event features [Congressman Tom Perriello](#). Tom is a young attorney, recently elected to Virginia's 5th District. He is a dynamic individual, with a strong interest in foreign affairs, social justice, and human rights. He has a long history of working in conflict zones in West Africa and the Middle East.

MAKING DC ELECTIONS ACCESSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE

- Who:** District of Columbia Affairs Section
- What:** Making DC Elections Accessible and Accountable:
Bill 18-345, the "The Omnibus Elections Reform Act of 2009"
- Where:** Wiley Rein, 1776 K Street, NW (Farragut North Metro Station)
- When:** Friday, October 16, 2009 from 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM

Speakers: Mary Cheh (D-Ward 3), Chair, Committee on Government Operations
Eric Marshall, Campaign Manager, National Campaign for Fair Elections,
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law's Voting Rights Project

Cost: Free; Please bring a bag lunch.

RSVP: Sally Kram at skram@consortium.org

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

DEMOCRACY RESTORATION ACT

Washington, DC - On July 24, 2009, Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI) and Representative John Conyers (D-MI) introduced the *Democracy Restoration Act of 2009* (DRA), a bill that seeks to restore voting rights in federal elections to nearly 4 million American citizens with past criminal convictions who are out of prison and living in the community. "The expansion of voting rights to the poor, women, minorities and young people is one of the greatest stories in our country's history. We should continue this legacy by expanding the right to vote to those who have fully paid their debt to society," *stated* Senator Feingold. There is a growing and diverse *coalition* of groups and individuals supporting the legislation. The bill's introduction has garnered some interesting media coverage. Erika Wood recently wrote about the bill on the *Huffington Post* and *The Grio*. Favorable pieces have appeared in *The Daily Kos*, *The American Prospect*, *The Institute for Southern Studies*, and *The Detroit Free Press*. Additional press coverage of the DRA can be found *here*.
http://brennan.3cdn.net/7b2d5429b9fd3921cf_3sm6z6gbv.pdf

PAPER TRAIL

Atlanta, GA --In a unanimous decision, the Georgia Supreme Court upheld the use of electronic voting machines that do not generate a paper trail. Read the decision here:
<http://www.gasupreme.us/sc-op/pdf/s09a1367.pdf>

ABSENTEE VOTING

Georgia - On September 29, two voters filed a federal lawsuit, alleging that that Georgia election law states that absentee ballots can only be mailed to the voter's permanent address, or to a temporary address that is outside the voter's home county or municipality law is unconstitutional as applied to registered voters who happen to

be in jail (in their home town or city) because of a misdemeanor. Ironically, if either of them had been in jail in a city other than their home city, they could have received an absentee ballot. Read more here:

<http://www.ballot-access.org/2009/09/29/aclu-files-lawsuit-against-georgia-restriction-on-absentee-voting/>

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

Which President spent the longest time in retirement?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

Which President spent the shortest time in retirement?

ANSWER

James Polk left office on March 4, 1849 and died June 15, 1849 thus he spent only 103 days in retirement, the shortest time in retirement of any President.

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 @](mailto:editors@democraticlawyers.org)

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