



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 36 October 13, 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. We'll happily add you to the list.

LAWYERS NEEDED IN VIRGINIA!!!



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.

DC TO VA: VIRTUAL PHONE BANK

[Please see note below from the ED of the DC Democratic Party]

Dear DC Democrats,

I have always believed that one person can make positive change and together we can change the world. That is why I am writing about the urgency for you to assist our neighbors in Virginia's crucial November 3rd election by canvassing door to door, volunteering at a campaign headquarters or by placing calls to VA voters from the comforts of your home.

The Virginia Coordinated Campaign, VAVictory09 has created a virtual online phone bank operation where you can support the Democratic ticket. By identifying supporters, we can guarantee a strong Democratic turnout.

<http://portal.vavictory09.org/>

Your participation can help "keep Virginia Blue" and ensure that President Barack Obama will continue to have partners to advance his plans to bring change to our Nation.

Each person interested in making calls must first have a user name and password assigned to them to access the website. Please contact me for this information.

Contact: David Meadows
Phone: 202-714-3368
Email: dcdemocrats@verizon.net

EVENTS

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

AMERICAN CONSITUTION SOCIETY CAREER PANEL

- Who:** ACS's Washington D.C. Lawyer Chapter
- What:** "Annual Progressive Career Panel and Networking Reception"
Panelists from the private and public sector will provide advice on surviving and thriving in the current legal job market
- Where:** Center for American Progress
1333 H Street, N.W., 10th Floor
- When:** Monday, October 19, 6:30 p.m.

Register for the career panel here:
<http://www.acslaw.org/chapters/lawyer/dc/rsvp/3>

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

DEMOCRACY RESTORATION ACT

Washington, DC - On October 6th, the D.C. Council gave tentative approval to a measure that would allow same-day voter registration as well as early voting in the District starting next year. The measure, sponsored by council member Mary M. Cheh (D-Ward 3), would also require the city Board of Elections and Ethics to implement a verifiable paper trail. Cheh's proposal, which won unanimous support Tuesday, would make the District a national leader in efforts to reform the elections process. The proposal would allow unregistered people to register at their polling precinct on Election Day. They then would be allowed to vote that same day. Residents who are

already registered will be able to vote early, either through no-fault absentee balloting or at an early voting location.

Critics of Cheh's proposal are raising concerns it could lead to voter fraud. But Cheh noted Milwaukee and several other big cities allow same-day registration. Read the news here: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/06/AR2009100602091.html>

VOTER REGISTRATION REFORM

National - Making sense of the debate over voter registration reform requires comparisons of state-level policies on maintaining updated voter lists and an increased understanding of the current research on this topic. The first report, published by Project Vote, surveys the academic literature on implementation of the National Voter Registration Act and the second, compiled by the National Association of Secretaries of State, summarizes each state's procedures for voter registration list maintenance. Read the reports here:

<http://projectvote.org/images/publications/NVRA/NVRA%20Literature%20Review%20FINAL.pdf>

<http://www.hss.caltech.edu/~rma/nass-report-voter-reg-maintenance-sept09.pdf>

SPECIAL ELECTION

New York- Democrat Bill Owens scored an endorsement from the labor-backed Working Families Party in the race to succeed former Republican Rep. John M. McHugh in upstate New York. The nod means Owens will be running on the WFP line as well as the Democratic party line in the special election to be held Nov. 3. In the mean time, Moderate Republicans in the House are trying to convince their colleagues that they can keep the seat vacated by New York's John M. McHugh if only they'll help the GOP nominee, Dede Scozzafava, who's being pressed from both the left and right. Read more here:

<http://www.cqpolitics.com/wmspage.cfm?docID=news-000003219826>

NATIVE AMERICAN VOTING RIGHTS

National - Calls to improve voting rights for Native Americans have grown louder since the release of a new report by the American Civil Liberties Union, which concludes that American Indians continue to face discriminatory policies and actions that deny them their constitutional right to vote. The report, titled "Voting Rights in Indian Country," provides a historical overview of systemic discrimination against Native American that has limited their ability to participate in local, state and national elections. Read the report here:

<http://www.aclu.org/pdfs/votingrights/indiancountryreport.pdf>

YOUTH VOTING BILL

California - A Youth Voting bill, A 30 was signed by the governor. This bill was amended to allow 17-year-old citizens to pre-register to vote. The registrant would be permitted to cast a ballot in the election after he or she turns 18 years of age. More here:

http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/09-10/bill/asm/ab_0001-0050/ab_30_bill_20090921_enrolled.pdf

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

The Nobel Peace Prize is generally awarded to someone or some group that "*during the preceding year ... shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses*".

What famous American General was award the Nobel Peace Prize?
Bonus: What year did he receive the award?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

Which President spent the longest time in retirement?

ANSWER

Herbert Hoover left office on March 4, 1933 and died October 20, 1964, thus he spent only 11,553 days in retirement (31 years, 7 months and 16 days), the longest time in retirement of any President. Kevin Kingston knew that Hoover had been retired the longest. Congratulations Kevin!! 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. We reserve the right to use, not use, edit, paraphrase, or otherwise play with your submissions.

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Democratic Law Briefs, E-Mail Edition, Volume 5 Number 36

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