



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 40 November 17, 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.

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

VOTING AUDIT

Ithaca, NY - Voters in the City of Ithaca used an optical scan voting system for the first time for the November 3 General Election. On Friday November 6, the Board of Elections conducted an audit to see if the machines tabulated correctly, as per New York State election law. After a random drawing, 5 of the 10 machines were selected to be audited. Two bipartisan teams manually counted the original paper ballots, and the results were compared to the machine's totals. No discrepancies were found.

Read more here:

<http://www.theithacajournal.com/article/20091109/NEWS01/911090339/1001/news/New-voting-system-passes-audit>

ROBOCALLS

Minneapolis, MN - The American Future Fund's political action committee, an Iowa-based group associated with Republicans, has asked the Federal Election Commission to override portions of a 1987 Minnesota law that curb automated campaign calls ("robocalls") saying such laws infringe on Federal laws regulating campaign finance. Minnesota law requires campaigns to use live operators to introduce automated calls and get the consent of the person answering the phone to play them -- conditions that effectively discourage the practice. Read the details here:

<http://www.startribune.com/politics/state/69534552.html>

ELECTION REFORM

Dayton, OH - On a 7-6 party line vote, a House committee has approved a major overhaul of the state's election system last week, setting the stage for a vote by the full House this week. "I really do think we tried to take into consideration cost, common sense (and) streamlining," House Elections and Ethics Committee Chairman Dan Stewart, D-Columbus, said after the vote Tuesday, Nov. 10. Committee Democrats all voted "yes" while Republicans all voted "no." Rep. Seth Morgan, R-Huber Heights, objected to a provision that would authorize online voter registration. Morgan said it could lead to fraud (what a surprise!!). For more on this story go here: <http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/politics/voting-overhaul-bill-advances-house-will-vote-next-week-395422.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](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 received the Navy and Marine Corps Medal?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

True or False: Congress has mandated that all elections be held on the first Tuesday after the First Monday in November?

ANSWER

False. Congress has mandated a uniform date for presidential (3 U.S.C. § 1) and congressional (2 U.S.C. § 1 and 2 U.S.C. § 7) elections (federal elections), though early voting is nonetheless authorized in many states. We had a correct answer from Kevin Kingston and Anonymous Reader. Congratulations to you both! 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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Democratic Law Briefs, E-Mail Edition, Volume 5 Number 40

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