



Fighting for Voting Rights and a Democratic United States

DEMOCRATIC LAW BRIEFS

A Publication of the DC Chapter of the National Lawyers Council

Volume 6 Issue 7 February 23, 2010

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

THE DC FEDERATION OF DEMOCRATIC WOMEN FIRST ANNUAL DC STATE CONVENTION AND FORUM

Mark your calendar to attend the DC Federation of Democratic Women's first annual DC State Convention and Forum on Saturday, February 27 from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm in the John Wilson Building's Fourth Floor Council Chamber at 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

When: Saturday, February 27, 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

What: "Evolving Legislative Priorities for Women and Families in the District of Columbia." The forum will feature expert speakers who will present hot topics under four broad issue areas: Health Care, Housing Incentives, Employment and Education. Following the presentations, the attendees will have an opportunity to indicate those issues which they consider as most critical to pursue through legislative action.

Where: John Wilson Building's Fourth Floor Council Chamber at 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Please come out and be a part of setting a progressive legislative agenda for women and families in the District of Columbia. For more information, contact the convention chair at: (202) 297-2381 or at staconv@gmail.com.

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC LAW STUDENTS' COUNCIL 5TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

The George Washington University Law Dems will host NDLS's 5th annual convention with support from The Columbus School of Law at The Catholic University of America and the assistance of Young Lawyers for Obama (YLFO).

YES, lawyers are welcome!

When: Friday March 12, to Sunday March 14, 2010
7:30 PM Friday - 1:30 PM Sunday

What: 11 Panels & Multiple speakers at GW and Catholic University Law Schools

Where: George Washington University

To register visit: <http://www.lawschooldems.org/index.php/home/166-convention-2010>

Government / Non-profit lawyers: \$40 (early registration); \$60 otherwise
Private Firm lawyers: \$75 pre-registration; \$100 at the door

This Program will include the following panelists:

- Douglas F. Gansler, Maryland Attorney General; Co-Chair, Democratic Attorneys General Association
- Dahlia Lithwick, Senior Editor, Slate; Contributor, Newsweek
- Dean Alan Morrison, Public Interest Dean, GWU Law; Co-Founder with Ralph Nader and Former Director, Public Citizen Litigation Group
- Robby Mook, Political Director, DCCC
- Lawrence Noble, Adjunct Professor of Law, GWU Law; Former FEC General Counsel; Former Executive Director and General Counsel, Center for Responsive Politics
- Mary Cheh, DC Councilwoman
- David Waldman, DailyKos.com
- Joe Sandler, Principal, Sandler, Reiff & Young LLC; Former DNC General Counsel
- Gray Brooks, New Media Ombudsman, Obama for America; Federal Communications Commission New Media Project
- Tom Goldstein, Co-founder & Publisher, SCOTUSblog

For a complete working schedule, see:

<http://www.lawschooldems.org/images/convention2010/jan11draft.pdf>

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

BALLOT CHANGES

Binghamton, NY - The Binghamton City Council was urged by some former members Tuesday night to participate in a proposed pilot program run by the state where selected municipalities would be allowed to institute Instant Runoff Voting in races with more than 2 candidates. The State legislature has not yet approved the pilot program. Read more here:

<http://www.wbng.com/news/local/84529012.html>

POLLING PLACE GAMES

Philadelphia, PA - In a *Philadelphia Inquirer* editorial the action in 2008 by the three-member Chester County Board of Commissioners (sitting in their capacity as the Election Board) to shift the polling place (now the subject of a recently filed lawsuit claiming that the Board had unlawfully deprived Lincoln students of their right to vote), is decried. Calling the action of the Board “a disgrace” the editorial calls the vote a republican ploy which was success by preventing high voter turnout. Read the editorial here:

http://www.philly.com/inquirer/columnists/mark_bowden/20100221_The_Point__In_defensible.html

STUDENT VOTING

Norfolk, VA - The Advancement Project and Project Vote have joined forces by filing suit in federal court seeking to overturn a Virginia law prohibiting full access to voter records. The suit arose from the high number of rejected voting applications from students at Norfolk State University, and efforts to review the voting application records of those applicants. Virginia's laws on access to voter records are among the most restrictive in the country. Read the details here:

<http://hamptonroads.com/2010/02/groups-file-suit-over-rejected-nsu-voter-applications>

ABSENTEE VOTING BILL

Richmond, VA - Absentee voting bill passed the VA State House last week. The bill says that absentee ballots shall be available not later than 45 before an election, and that once the ballots are available, local electoral boards would have to mail them to certain voters within three business days. Those voters are: service members, those in the merchant marine, state residents out of the country, or the spouses or dependents of any of those voters. These folks would be able to vote by writing in the

office up for election and the name of a candidate on a blank ballot and returning that ballot to a local voter registrar's office. The measure would also allow that kind of "write-in" ballot to be counted even if the person hadn't applied to vote absentee as long as it was received by the deadline for absentee voting. Additionally, this "write-in" type of ballot would be considered valid even if the individual wasn't registered to vote in Virginia, so long as he or she was eligible to be. Read more here: http://www2.insidenova.com/isn/news/politics/article/absentee_voting_bill_passes_house/52445/

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 Secret Service was formed on July 5, 1865 just months after Lincoln's assassination. When did the Secret Service begin protecting the President full time?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

Who was the first President to face an assassination attempt?

ANSWER

Richard Lawrence attempted to assassinate Andrew Jackson on January 30, 1835. Luckily for Jackson the pistols used in the attempt misfired. Thus, Jackson became the first president to face an assassination attempt. We had a correct answer from Kevin Kingston. 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).

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.

* * *

Democratic Law Briefs, E-Mail Edition, Volume 6 Number 7

Copyright 2010 DC DLC, 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.