



*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](mailto:signup@democraticlawyers.org). We'll happily add you to the list.

## **EVENTS**

### **SAVE THE DATE: NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC LAWYERS COUNCIL**

**\*\*\* April 24 in Washington, D.C. \*\*\***

The 2010 meeting of the National Democratic Lawyers Council will be held on Saturday, April 24th in Washington, D.C., to discuss the DNC's voter protection program and ways in which the NDLC can engage with the Party - including on advocacy, volunteer recruitment, and fundraising - as we proceed toward the 2010 elections.

**Watch this space: More information to come!**

### **"MEETAREP" WITH U.S. REP. DONNA EDWARDS - MAR. 24**

Join Young Lawyers for Obama for drinks and discussion with Rep. Donna Edwards. Rep. Edwards was elected in 2008 to Maryland's Fourth Congressional District. Prior to her election, she co-founded and served as the first executive director of the National Network to End Domestic Violence. She also was the executive director of the Arca Foundation, working to ensure the independence of the federal judiciary, among other causes.

**When:** Wednesday, March 24, 6:30-8:00 pm

**Where:** Hawk N Dove, Upstairs Lounge (329 Pennsylvania Ave SE)

# VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

## PROTECT VOTER GAINS OF “BLOODY SUNDAY”

Washington, DC – Donna Brazile, the DNC Vice Chair of Voter Registration and Participation, while commemorating the 45th anniversary of Bloody Sunday (March 7, 1965 march on Selma AL) outlined some of the obstacles that minority voters still face today when trying to vote. Read the commentary here:

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/OPINION/03/07/brazile.bloody.sunday/index.html>

## ANTITRUST AND YOUR VOTE

New York, NY - In a *New York Times* editorial, the plans of the Justice Department to block certain parts of the deal between Election Systems and Software and Diebold's voting machine division, on antitrust grounds are discussed. Calling the plans “a very welcome step” the editorial asks both the DOJ and Congress to do more to protect the vote. Read the Editorial here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/11/opinion/11thu3.html?ref=opinion>

## VOTER ID BILL

Natchez, MS - Using their old boggy man of voter fraud, the GOP of Mississippi have obtained more than enough signatures to put the issue of voter ID on the ballot for 2011. Read the details here:

<http://www.natchezdemocrat.com/news/2010/mar/09/voter-id-gets-signatures-needed-vote/>

## ABSENTEE BALLOTING

St. Paul, MN - Republicans and DFLers in the House and Senate overwhelmingly approved a measure to make the state's absentee ballot process more transparent and more uniform. The bill, which would require elections officials to let voters know if their ballots were rejected, likely will head to Gov. Tim Pawlenty's desk next week.

Read the details here:

[http://www.startribune.com/politics/state/87008962.html?elr=KArksLckD8EQDUoaEyqyP40:DW3ckUiD3aPc:\\_Yyc:aUUss](http://www.startribune.com/politics/state/87008962.html?elr=KArksLckD8EQDUoaEyqyP40:DW3ckUiD3aPc:_Yyc:aUUss)

Fairbanks, AK - A 1-time application could replace an annual hassle for Alaska voters who regularly vote absentee. Under a bill the House Judiciary Committee considered Wednesday, voters could apply for permanent absentee status in state-run elections. After verification by the Division of Elections, those voters would automatically be

mailed absentee ballots. Read more here:  
<http://www.ktuu.com/Global/story.asp?S=12120530>

## SPANISH LANGUAGE BALLOTS

**Florida** - A federal trial this month will decide whether Volusia County must provide Spanish language ballots after some Puerto Rican residents sued, saying they were denied their right to vote. The Volusia County Hispanic Association and four Puerto Rican residents -- Crimilda Perez-Santiago, Carmen Fortis, Edwin Fortis and Madelyn Perez -- are suing Volusia County demanding that Supervisor of Elections Ann McFall provide ballots in Spanish. Read more here: <http://www.news-journalonline.com/news/local/west-volusia/2010/03/14/group-sues-for-spanish-ballots.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 made three unsuccessful bids for re-election?

### LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

Which President was arrested for running over an old lady?

### ANSWER

Franklin Pierce was arrested while in office for running over an old woman with his horse, but his case was dropped due to insufficient evidence in 1853.

## 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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