



Fighting for Voting Rights and a Democratic United States

DEMOCRATIC LAW BRIEFS

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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.

VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

MASSACHUSETTS SPECIAL ELECTION

Boston, MA - Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley is now the Democratic nominee to fill the seat left vacant by the passing of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy. Many might wonder how this happened. Even registered voters in Massachusetts seemed unaware there was a campaign going on, never mind an actual Election Day. About 600,000 of the commonwealth's 4.1 million eligible voters went to the polls (in the Democrat primary, about 200,000 in the republican primary). In Boston, only about 17 percent voted. Ms. Coakley will face state Sen. Scott Brown who won the Republican primary on January 19, 2010. Read the details here:
<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/thefix/morning-fix/morning-fix-27.html?wprss=thefix>

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

December 6, 1884 marked the completion of this DC feature?

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

Sixty-eight years ago on December 7, 1941 Japan Attacked the US Naval base in Pearl Harbor, HI. Which of the following is true?

- a. All Hawaii based battleships were sunk in the attack as they lay at anchor around Ford island.
- b. The US declared war on the Axis Powers on December 8, 1941.
- c. The December 8, 1941 vote in Congress was unanimous.
- d. The official ship of the state of Utah, the USS Utah, rests on Ford Island, in Pearl Harbor.
- e. Chief Watertender PeterTomich from the USS Utah received the *Medal of Honor* posthumously for his selfless act in ensuring the safety of others.

ANSWER

D and E are true. While the attack on the US Naval Station resulted in heavy damage only four battleships based there were sunk. In fact the USS Nevada was able to steam from its berth. The US declared war on Japan on December 8, 1941. Germany and Italy declared war on the US on December 11, 1941. Montanan Jeanette Rankin, the first woman elected to Congress and a dedicated lifelong pacifist, casts the sole Congressional vote against the U.S. declaration of war on Japan. She was the only member of Congress to vote against U.S. involvement in both World Wars, having been among those who voted against American entry into World War I nearly a quarter of a century earlier. The USS Utah, the official ship of the State of Utah, was originally commissioned as a battleship in 1911 she had declined in usefulness and had even served for a while as a mobile target for gunnery practice, being redesignated **AG-16**. In 1941, however, she had been refitted and was in use for training purposes when sunk by a torpedo in the Japanese attack. She rests on the northwest shore of Ford Island along with 6 officers and 52 men. In the wake of the attack, 16 Medals of Honor, 51 Navy Crosses, 53 Silver Crosses, four Navy and Marine Corps Medals, one Distinguished Flying Cross, four Distinguished Service Crosses, one Distinguished Service Medal, and three Bronze Stars were awarded to the American servicemen who distinguished themselves in combat at Pearl Harbor. As *Utah* began to capsize, Chief Watertender PeterTomich remained below, securing the boilers and making certain that other men escaped, and so lost his life. For this action he was awarded the Medal of Honor, posthumously. We did not have any correct answers last week. 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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