



*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**

### **THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC LAWYERS COUNCIL 2010 MEETING**

**\*\*\* 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.

- Who:** National Democratic Lawyers Council  
with DNC Chairman, Governor Tim Kaine, joining us for lunch
- What:** 2010 meeting
- Where:** National Education Association, at 1201 16th Street, NW, Washington DC
- When:** Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup>  
8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

RSVP here no later than Wednesday, April 7th, to secure your spot at the meeting:  
<http://my.democrats.org/ndlc>

# VOTING RIGHTS NEWS

## CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Washington, DC - On March 9, 2010 the Share Holder Protection Act (H.R. 4790) was introduced. The bill echoes much of the Brennan Center for Justice campaign reform recommendations as outlined in it's January 2010 report "Corporate Campaign Spending: Giving Shareholders a Voice". Read the bill here:

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h111-4790>

Read a summary of the report here:

[http://www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/corporate\\_campaign\\_spending\\_giving\\_shareholders\\_a\\_voice/](http://www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/corporate_campaign_spending_giving_shareholders_a_voice/)

Read the report here:

[http://brennan.3cdn.net/54a676e481f019bfb8\\_bvm6ivakn.pdf](http://brennan.3cdn.net/54a676e481f019bfb8_bvm6ivakn.pdf)

## PRISONER CENSUS

**National** - As a part of the 2010 census more than two million prisoners will be counted. Because a cell is not a legal residence there is a danger that these prisoners will be included in the population count where they are incarcerated which could have the effect of enhancing the vote of the district where prisons are located while depressing the vote in prisoner's home districts. This is prison-based gerrymandering. The Prisoners of the Census has released a fifty state guide on the issues and possible solutions. Read the guide here:

<http://www.prisonersofthecensus.org/50states/>

## ABSENTEE BALLOTING

**Boise, ID** - The Idaho Senate approved changes to absentee balloting that would require that ballots be mailed out 45 days prior to an election and end early voting on the Friday before Election Day. The changes to mailing absentee ballots conform to new federal law designed to help Americans serving in the military or living abroad cast their vote. Read more here:

<http://www.idahoreporter.com/2010/senate-approves-changes-to-absentee-voting/>

**St. Paul, MN** - Minnesota has a new law that tightens procedures for absentee voting, less than two years after an extended U.S. Senate election between Democrat Al Franken and Republican Norm Coleman exposed glitches. Gov. Tim Pawlenty's office says he signed the legislation on Wednesday, March 24, 2010. The law establishes special panels to review absentee ballots and a new identification procedure to link ballots to their envelopes, after officials had trouble tracking ballots during the 2008

Senate recount. Election administrators will have to keep closer track of absentee voters to prevent them from voting again on Election Day. Read the details here: <http://wcco.com/local/minnesota.law.absentee.2.1587118.html>

### WASHINGTON DC VOTING MACHINES

Washington, DC - The D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics said Wednesday that it would replace its current machines with 200 iVotronic machines in time for September's mayoral primary. The current machines were purchased in 2002 but do not have a paper trail. Electronic scanners used to count paper ballots are also being replaced. Read more here:

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/breaking/dc-to-replace-electronic-voting-machines-89049127.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

Millard Fillmore appointed the first governor of the Utah Territory. Who was this governor?

### LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

The death of this President made the passage of this group of bills possible. What was the group of bills known as?

### ANSWER

Zachary Taylor's death led to an abrupt political shift as Fillmore appointed his own cabinet. In particular, Fillmore appointed cabinet members, beginning with the appointment of Daniel Webster as Secretary of State, which favored what would become the **Compromise of 1850**. Douglas's strategy in Congress combined with Fillmore's pressure gave impetus to the Compromise movement. Breaking up Clay's single legislative package, Douglas presented five separate bills to the Senate, the

most notorious of which was the Fugitive Slave Act. 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).

## READING SOMEONE ELSE'S COPY???

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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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