

Conference Schedule

10:00am – 10:30am

OPENING REMARKS DR. RUBENS MEDINA, *Law Librarian of Congress*
DEAN CLAUDIO GROSSMAN, *American University Washington College of Law*

INTRODUCTION **State of the Right to Vote and Democracy in the U.S.: An Overview of Challenges and Prospects in the New Century** – PROF. JAMIN RASKIN

Applied International Standards – HADAR HARRIS, Esq., *Executive Director, WCL Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law*

10:30am – 12:30pm

PANEL I **International Standards – How They Apply to the Right to Vote**

- HRAIR BALIAN, *Head of the Elections Division, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, OSCE (invited)*
- PAT MERLOE, *Director of Programs on Elections and Political Processes, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs*
- PAULA NEWBERG, *International Consultant*
- DR. ROBERT PASTOR, *Director, American University Center for Democracy and Election Management*
- DR. EDUARDO STEIN, *former Foreign Minister of Guatemala and head of the 2000 and 2001 Election Observation Missions to Peru for the Organization of American States (OAS) (invited)*
- HADAR HARRIS, Esq., *Moderator*

12:45pm – 2:00pm

LUNCHEON

KEYNOTE ADDRESS **American Perspectives on the Right to Vote Internationally**
LORNE W. CRANER, *United States Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (invited)*

2:00pm – 4:00pm

PANEL II: **Bringing it Home: Strategies to Bring International Law to Bear on Domestic Electoral Reform**

- TIM COOPER, *Executive Director, Democracy First*
- WADE HENDERSON, *Executive Director, The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights*
- MARC MAURER, *Executive Director, The Sentencing Project*
- ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, *Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives from Washington, D.C. (invited)*
- PROF. ALEXANDER KEYSAR, *Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University*
- PROF. JAMIN RASKIN, *Moderator*

4:15pm – 6:00pm

Tour of the Thomas Jefferson Building in The Library of Congress

6:00pm

Reception in the Great Hall



In this exciting conference, international experts, law professors, civil rights activists, and historians will explore the continually unfolding project of American political democracy. What do international law and the international movement toward democracy – to which the United States is a central contributor – have to teach us about domestic political institutions in the U.S. and abroad?

Is the requirement of “universal suffrage” met in the absence of an affirmative constitutional right to vote in national elections? Can the “will of the People” be freely expressed when certain political parties do not have equal access to the ballot or to participation in public and private candidate debates? Is there “equal access to public service” when substantial numbers of people are disenfranchised, either directly or structurally, in the political process?

The United States has been the pioneer and primary proselytizer of democratic values for over two hundred years. Since the 18th century, America has presented the world an important – and evolving – model of popular democratic self-government. As its own democratic franchise has expanded, the United States has become a standard-bearer of the democratic idea, promoting the principle of “one person, one vote” that was born out of the American

Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. These core values have captured the imagination of mass popular movements around the world, from South Africa to Poland. As democracy has spread, international standards for free and fair elections have begun to emerge. Various bodies have promulgated norms and best practices that provide guidelines to countries developing democratic process. The international community has determined that concepts such as “universal suffrage,” “genuine and periodic ballots,” and results which “express the free will of the people” are critically important to the legitimate exercise of democracy.

The United States has participated in creating the new democratic standards. American academics and activists have been deeply involved in drafting new constitutions, promoting legal reform, and promulgating standards for citizen participation in emerging democracies. Do these international standards have relevance to the United States?

Please join us for a day of discussion with top experts in the field to contemplate the ways in which America can both learn and teach about the practice of democracy in the 21st century.



REGISTRATION FORM

International Law Perspectives on the Right to Vote and Political Democracy in America

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Conference and Reception \$15.00 Students: No Charge
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Complimentary registration for members of the Myers Society, Executive Leadership Council and G.O.L.D Circle. For more information about the Myers Society please contact David McMullen at 202.274.4392

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You may also register online at: www.wcl.american.edu/secl

Special Needs

Any person with disabilities attending the conference who believes he or she might need a reasonable accommodation to participate should contact us at least two weeks in advance at: 202.274.4075 or via e-mail at secl@wcl.american.edu

article 21.

- 1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.**
- 2. Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.**
- 3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)



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International Law
Perspectives on the
Right to Vote and
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in America
March 20, 2003

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