



For Immediate Release

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YOU CAN PUT LIPSTICK ON IT--BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOUR VOTE WILL BE COUNTED

Dirty Tricks, Disenfranchised Students and Vets, Questionable Machines: First-Ever Weeklong Virtual Town Hall Will Explore How to Protect Your Vote

COLUMBUS, OH— Ohio has become a national staging ground for issues of voter disenfranchisement and election protection. As the presidential election looms only 45 days away, a nationally broadcast investigation week and "virtual town hall" will expose voter suppression tactics, feature voter protection organizing and connect citizens to voting experts.

Live From Main Street Columbus: Will Your Vote Count? (www.livefrommainstreet.org) is a week-long virtual town hall series, hosted by radio personality Laura Flanders, that kicks-off on September 29. Each day, Live From Main Street's virtual town hall will broadcast Ohio-based news on election protection issues to a national audience via television segments, articles, blogs, live chats, radio pieces, short investigative documentaries, panel discussions, one-on-one interviews and a statewide conference call with local leaders. **Topics include: fights around voter registration, youth organizing, voter suppression, unreliable electronic voting machines and how not to get turned away at the polls.**

"Given the controversy surrounding the last two elections, election protection and voting rights should be central to any conversation about the '08 vote. But a lot of the tough questions are getting lost in horse-race coverage. And a lot of potential voters are doubting their votes will count," said Laura Flanders, host of Live From Main Street and GRITtv.org. "Live From Main Street will ask the tough questions, get answers from experts and give the nation a chance to hear what Ohioans have learned. Then a one-of-a-kind media collaboration across a multitude of platforms will spread the word: 'We the voters need to take responsibility for the counting of our votes.'"

New content will be distributed online daily at LiveFromMainStreet.org, GRITtv.org and across the web in partnership with national media outlets and with engagement from non-partisan citizen groups like The League of Young Voters Education Fund, Progress Ohio Education Fund and Video the Vote.

"We all know record numbers of voters will turn out this November. The question is how will the nation's patchwork of local laws and different voting machinery accommodate those voters. From bad management, to bad technology, to bad partisan tactics, there is a lot that can suppress the vote and sully vote counts," said Steven Rosenfeld, author of *Count My Vote: A Citizen's Guide to Voting* and a featured guest on Live From Main Street. "We don't have to wait until Election Day to see problems or find solutions."

***Live From Main Street Columbus: Will Your Vote Be Counted?* is the fourth in a series of five town halls produced by The Media Consortium- a network of 50 leading independent media outlets. For more information, visit www.livefrommainstreet.org or www.themediaconsortium.com.**



The following participants in *Live From Main Street Columbus* are available for interview:

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Steven Rosenfeld, author of *Count My Vote: A Citizen's Guide to Voting*

www.alternet.org/books/11/Count+My+Vote:+A+Citizen%27s+Guide+to+Voting/

Steven Rosenfeld is a Senior Fellow at AlterNet.org, where he reports on elections from a voting rights perspective. He is author of *Count My Vote: A Citizens Guide to Voting* (AlterNet Books, 2008), co-author of *What Happened in Ohio: A Documentary Record of Theft and Fraud in the 2004 Election* (The New Press, 2006), and author of *Making History in Vermont: The Election of a Socialist to Congress*, (Hollowbrook Publishing, 1992). He has been a staff reporter at National Public Radio, Monitor Radio, TomPaine.com, and at many Vermont newspapers, and an executive producer at Air America Radio.

Wendy Weiser, Deputy Director of Democracy Program at NYU Law's Brennan Center

www.brennancenter.org/

Ms. Weiser directs the Brennan Center's work on voting rights and elections. During the run-up to the 2004 and 2006 elections, she masterminded litigation and advocacy efforts that kept hundreds of thousands of voters from being disenfranchised. She has authored a number of reports and papers on election reform; litigated ground-breaking voting rights lawsuits; and provided policy and legislative drafting assistance to federal and state legislators and administrators across the country. She is a frequent public speaker and media contributor on election reform issues. She is also an Adjunct Professor of Law at NYU School of Law.

Ian Inaba, Founder of Video the Vote

www.videothetvote.org/about.htm

Video the Vote organizes citizen journalists to document voter disenfranchisement and uses their footage to raise awareness about the challenges facing American voters. Launched just months before the 2006 election, Video the Vote recruited 1,300 volunteers from 48 states and quickly became an integral part of the national Election Protection movement. The project was covered widely by national and local media, including CNN, ABC, CBS, and NPR.

Laura Flanders, Host of GRITtv and Live From Main Street

www.GRITtv.org

Laura Flanders is the host of "GRIT TV" a brand new news and discussion program aired daily on Free Speech TV (Dish Network ch. 9415) and online at the popular blog site Firedoglake.com. For years, she has hosted RadioNation, the nationally-syndicated weekly radio program of the *Nation* Magazine. She is also the author of *Blue Grit: Making Impossible, Improbable and Inspirational Change in America* (Penguin Books, 2008), an investigation into what people at the grassroots know that Democratic party leaders need to learn, and *BUSHWOMEN: Tales of a Cynical Species* (Verso, 2004), an expose of women in George W. Bush's Cabinet. Flanders was founding director of the Women's Desk at the media watch group, FAIR and for more than ten years she produced and hosted CounterSpin. For more information and to contribute video to GRIT TV go to www.grittv.org.

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