

# Your VOTER

(GUIDE TO LWV SAN BERNARDINO ISSUES, ACTION, & INFO)

## EXAMINING IMMIGRATION & FORMING CONSENSUS JANUARY 16 –Susan Nieblas

Don't miss this very important meeting when LWVSB agrees on consensus for the immigration study. *You will not have another opportunity to be heard because individual members need to register their votes at a consensus meeting where all sides of an issue are explored.* Sounds a bit like the Iowa primaries.

When: Wednesday, January 16, 2008, 6 to 9 p.m.

Where: Ruth Petrucci's home, 5276 Sepulveda Ave., SBdno; 883-5991 for directions

Pizza and salad will be served.

LWV is attempting what Congress, the Administration, political candidates and the American public have not been able to do -- reach consensus on U.S. immigration law and policy. Because LWV requires that we study and agree on a position before taking action, local Leagues throughout the nation are recording the consensus they reach during their deliberations. LWVSB committee members ([Anne Brennan](#), [Mickey Cruz](#), [Marion Vassilakos](#), [Doti Garcia](#) and [Susan Nieblas](#)) have been working and studying for several months to present the facts we will need to discuss, consider, and decide about this controversial and important topic. We think that League members have the right stuff to sort through the facts, opinions, and conflicts of the issues and reach a rational and useful consensus on what our government should do about immigration in these troubled times. Don't prove us wrong.

Here are the study questions. You can read up on these issues by accessing the LWVUS web site and reading, talking with friends/family, and exercising your brains so that you will be prepared to present your ideas during the discussion.

1. Federal immigration laws should take into consideration criteria such as: (Rate each one.)
  - A. Ethnic and cultural diversity
  - B. Economic, business and service employment needs in the U.S.
  - C. Environmental impact/sustainability.
  - D. Family reunification of authorized immigrants and naturalized citizens with spouses and minor children.
  - E. History of criminal activity.
  - F. Humanitarian crises/political persecution in home countries.
  - G. Immigrant characteristics.(health and age)
  - H. Rights of all workers to safe working conditions and livable wage.
  - I. Rights of families to remain together.
  - J. Rights of all individuals in U.S. to fair treatment under the law. (fair hearing, right to counsel, right to appeal and humane treatment)
  - K. Education and training.
  
2. Unauthorized immigrants currently in the U.S. should be treated as follows:
  - A. Deport unauthorized immigrants.
  - B. Some deported/some allowed to earn legal adjustment of status based on length of residence in the U.S.
  - C. Some deported/some allowed to earn legal adjustment of status based on needs of U.S. employers.
  - D. All allowed to earn legal adjustment of status by doing things such as paying taxes, learning English, studying civics, etc.
  - E. If deported, assess fines before possible re-entry.
  - F. Assess fines before allowed to earn legal adjustment of status.
  
3. Federal immigration law should provide an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry into the U.S. for immigrants who are:
  - A. Immediate family members, joining family members already admitted for legal permanent residence in the U.S.
  - B. Entering the U.S. to meet labor needs.
  - C. Entering the U.S. as students.
  - D. Entering the U.S. because of persecution in home country.
  
- 4.a. In order to deal more effectively with unauthorized immigrants, Federal immigration law should include:
 

Social Security card or other national identification card with secure identifiers for all persons residing in the U.S.
- 4b. Federal immigration law dealing with unauthorized immigrants should be enforced by including: (rate each one)
  - i. Physical barriers (such as fences) and surveillance at borders.
  - ii. Increased personnel at land, air and sea entry points.



- iii. More effective tracking of persons with non-immigrant visas until they leave the country.
- iv. Verification documents, such as green cards and work permits with secure identifiers.
- v. Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee visa status.
- vi. Improved technology for sharing information among Federal agencies.
- vii. A program to allow immigrant workers to go in and out of the U.S. to meet seasonal and sporadic labor needs.
- viii. Significant fines proportionate to revenue for employers who fail to take adequate steps to verify work authorization of employees.



- 5. Federal immigration law should address and balance the long-term financial benefit from immigrants with the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.
- 6. Federal immigration law should be coordinated with U.S. foreign policy to proactively help improve economies, education and job opportunities, and living conditions of nations with large emigrating populations.
- 7. Comments (must be limited to 150 words)

If you've never participated in a consensus process, you will not want to miss this opportunity to find out how the League arrives at its positions. If you have been through a consensus process, we can use your insight and experience. If you have any questions, please call or e-mail Susan Nieblas, (909)338-8260; snieb0818@aol.com. Although an RSVP is not necessary, we will appreciate your letting us know if you are planning to attend so that we can order enough pizza for everyone. While non-members are welcome, only members will be permitted to participate in the consensus discussion.

## LOCAL LWV MEMBERS SHARE OPOSING VIEWS ON IMMIGRATION

### Reasons to Legalize Undocumented

#### Immigrants: by Ann Brennan

**Economics:** The US economy could not sustain current level of growth without employing undocumented workers, nor could it grow at the expected rate of 56M workers needed by 2012. The current level of legal immigrants allowed (1M per Year) falls far short of the number needed to meet the needs of the past decade (1.8M per yr)



**Social:** Our (The U.S.) country has thrived socially because of its diversity. We are a country of immigrants. Few of us can claim Native American ancestry. Many of our earliest immigrants came fleeing persecution by invading powers and for reasons which we have written into our bill of rights; freedom of religion, etc.

**Justice:** Our own laws have been unenforced many years to gild the

pockets of unethical corporations. We benefit from this illegal and immoral commerce which undermines the highest standards of our country

**Moral:** We are our brothers' keepers. Our statue of liberty welcomes "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breath free." How can we, who grew up and thrived here after the immense sacrifice of our ancestors, deny a life to those who come now? Many immigrants are lured to this country by the deceptive promise of great wealth which is impossible to achieve.

**Legal:** If our government makes and enforces just laws, we will be able to control the growth of the immigration into this "land of opportunity." We can influence the votes of our representatives be paying attention to the bills being debated in the congress and letting our voices and our votes count

### Reasons to Control Immigration and Prevent Illegal Immigration by Marion Vassilakos

Although humanitarian concerns for illegal immigrants are universal, people understand ILLEGAL means unlawful. Respect for law is a prerequisite for civilized society. Respect for law is eroded as people choose among the laws they will obey and those they will ignore. It is estimated that 12 million "unauthorized" immigrants reside in the U.S. with an influx of 500,000 per year. In 2000 it was estimated that 7 to 8.5 million ILLEGAL immigrants were present in the U.S. with 3.9 to 4.5 million of that number Mexican. The U.S. admits more LEGAL immigrants than the rest of the world's nations combined.

Studies show that the American citizen tax payers support an education, health, and service network available to all "persons" under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. The supposition that Illegal immigrants pay their own way in taxes has been challenged in recent studies that show illegal immigrants earn less and decrease salaries for poorer workers, especially the unskilled



and high school dropouts, whose wages have dropped as much as 8%.

When discussing "a pathway to citizenship" for the illegal aliens now in the country, declaring amnesty is vastly unfair to those awaiting legal citizenship as the U.S. did in 1986 after passing the Immigration Reform and Control Act that granted amnesty to approximately 2.7 million illegal immigrants. As predicted at the time, amnesty encouraged illegal immigration to continue. Today the estimate the World Bank provides is 275,000 to 300,000 per year. Amnesty is not the answer. Border enforcement is the first step. Then a process needs to be developed that would be fair to those already in line awaiting legal immigration status and/or naturalization. I would favor a guest worker program with adequate monitoring and enforcement of visa windows. The world needs to address the problems inherent in free trade so that developing countries can compete for industrial capability and business in order to provide jobs for their population.

## IMMIGRATION PANEL DISCUSSION STIRS AUDIENCE

At least twenty-five members and guests actively listened and questioned presenters at the League's Nov. 10 general meeting that focused on our immigration study.

Dr. Michael Kohout, CSUSB professor who has been studying the border issue of immigration since the mid-'90s, described the maquiladora\* boom of the '80s and increased boom after NAFTA (1994). Developments in Mexican politics drove the immigrations boom. The Latin American debt crisis in the early '80s resulted in an exodus of emigrants, comparable to what was happening in Europe. Prevailing at that time in Mexico was an economic model espoused by advisors and consultants trained at U.S. universities: that economic is an objective science. And this idea nurtured graduates who were to become the leading Mexican politicians, institutional leaders, financial leaders, etc. in Mexico.

Thus, the prevailing theory promoted free trade and open markets. The eliminations of subsidies for workers resulted in government suppression of workers' wages and formed a social pact between the Mexican government and unions. The cost of living for workers increased.

Mexico's proximity to the U.S. and its attraction to industrialists because of the depressed wages became a magnet for foreign companies to build factories in Mexico.

U.S. wages in Mexico seemed higher to Mexican workers, and the maquiladora programs grew. However, wages never caught up to productivity with real wages having fallen 40%. The result was and is immigration became a safety valve. Mexican farmers could not compete with agribusinesses. The technocrats' economic model had failed the Mexican people. Yet their candidates are re-elected. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund rule; and as a result, rural poverty in Mexican is pushing farmers to emigrate.



• A maquiladora is a factory that imports materials and equipment on a duty-free and tariff-free basis for assembly or manufacturing and then re-exports the assembled product, usually back to the originating country. The term "maquiladora", in the Spanish language, refers to the practice of millers charging a "maquila", or "miller's portion" for processing other people's grain.

Concepcion Powell, an immigrant from Mexico who is a successful business leader and was one of 15 advisors to President Vicente Fox, described an economic program called "New Beginnings" that was implemented in 2004. This model sought to create job opportunities for Mexicans in their own country. Because the men had emigrated, 62% of wage earners were women who would be paid \$6/day. Professional women made up 27% of the total. Powell emphasized the Mexican government must be accountable to their citizens. To further the healing process, people must be educated and able to find gainful employment. When that happens, the undocumented will come home.

Powell said President Jose Calderon agrees that Mexican workers in the U.S. should be documented. He thinks many of Mexico's professionals could contribute to the U.S. economy. Powell described the diverse small businesses her company has established in Mexico, where environmental and social structures are suitable to meet the needs of each business. The idea, which in this case is funded also by the government, though also by grants and investors, has been successful in other countries. League members may have encountered the concept in 2006, when Muhammad Yunus received the Nobel Peace Prize for the mini credit system, a similar concept of financing mini industries in emerging economies. In Mexico's demonstration sites, workers' pay has increased from \$3.50/day to \$9.50/day.

Following her presentation, she was challenged by Kohout who claims the Mexican government is controlled by 20 families (Group of 20) who make it their business to keep wages low in order to attract foreign industrial investment. Both Kohout and Powell agreed wealthy Mexicans seem to control the government; 38% of economic activity is not involved in the formal economy but in an underground economy (illegal activity?)

Jeanette Arnquist of the local Catholic Diocese described the Catholic Church's position on illegal immigrants. She listed the rights to which all humans are entitled, according to the Catholic Church:

*Opportunity to support themselves and their families in their homeland*

*Sovereign nations have the right to control their borders*

*Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection*

*Human dignity and human rights of undocumented persons should be respected*

"Undocumented" is a civil, not criminal, offense. The Catholic Church provides sanctuary for the undocumented, not inside the church but in moveable locations in order to hide from arrest. Arnquist said a fence will not fix the problem. The undocumented must be legalized. Family unity is paramount. A properly constructed guest worker program is an option.



Dr. Jim Mulvihill, professor of urban planning at CSUSB and a League member, pointed out that there is no other border in the world where the economic disparity is so great as the U.S./Mexican border. NAFTA (1994) is an attempt to equalize the disparity. How can the U.S. cope with 11,000,000 undocumented persons? But, though many of audience agreed that a path to citizenship should be provided, there was no unanimity on details of such a path.

Powell said there are rules, and all countries must follow the law. There must be order in the business community. The undocumented are an unstable workforce. Mobility in education is a problem. No Child Left Behind includes a provision for non-English speaking testing.

Shirley Harlan asked about China and other nations with cheap labor and their impact on the Mexican economy as less expensive manufacturing processes and sites are developed.

Powell cited the small business models begun in Mexico. Already 15 have been developed. The sites developed in several states grow and process coffee, avocados, chilies, citrus or other. Ten more states will be participating by 2008. She added the U.S. spends \$466,000,000,000 on the war against terror and about 1/7 of that on foreign aid. At the turn of this century the U.S. and IMF began to relieve foreign debt (debt forgiveness) which she cited as a huge step in the right direction.

Kohout and Powell disagreed on the longevity and effectiveness of small farm subsidies versus the clout of agribusiness. (see "Mexican farmers fear tariffs' end," PRESS ENTERPRISE, 12/29,07)

## FAMILY REUNIFICATION AS A PART OF IMMIGRATION

The Immigration Act of 1965 eliminated the national origin quota system that had favored immigrants from Europe to the exclusion of those from other parts of the world. That system was replaced by a "family preference" quota framework that systematized the sponsorship of relatives by legal immigrants. Since 1965, between 50 and 70 percent of U.S. immigrant visas distributed annually have been allotted to close family members of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents. Annual ceilings do limit the number of family visas that can be awarded, both by country of origin and by preference (qualifying relationship) category.

Family immigration currently accounts for the majority of immigrant petitions filed and visas granted each year. Hence, the fairness, orderliness and timeliness of the family immigration

process – or lack thereof—have major implications for the success or failure of the entire U.S. immigration policy.

Spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens, as well as parents of adult U.S. citizens, are granted visas without regard to numerical quotas... If all goes smoothly during the processing of paperwork and there are no administrative delays, these particular applicants may be allowed to immigrate within a year of the filing of an immigrant petition on their behalf by their U.S. citizen spouse, parent or adult child.

The "family preference" framework is a hierarchy of categories with more remotely related family members having a longer wait for citizenship.

## WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR CITIZENSHIP?

Besides being born in America or being the child of an American citizen, how does one become an American citizen? First is a residency requirement. Over 90% of those applying for naturalization fall into the first category: permanent resident for 5 years. The next category is an applicant who has been married to and has been living with an American citizen in the U.S. for the past 3 years. Another category includes those who have served for at least 1 year in the U.S. military.

You have probably heard of the redesign of the Citizenship Test. An attempt has been made, effective for all applicants after Oct. 2008, to provide more meaningful test questions. The revised test, according to the USCIS, emphasizes the fundamental concepts of American democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and is aimed to encourage



citizenship applicants to learn and identify with the basic values we all share as Americans. For example, instead of: "What colors are in the American flag?" or "In what city is the national capital?" Questions might be: "What is the Bill of Rights?" "What work does Congress perform?" "What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?" These questions may seem tough to you, but keep in mind the entire test is available online and as a pamphlet with good answers for each question.

Applicants are also interviewed, their shots must be up to date, and they must be able to communicate in English.

The fees for applicants have recently increased 80%. Application to replace a Permanent Resident Card has gone from \$190 to \$290; Petition for Alien Fiance from \$170 to \$455; to Register Permanent Status from \$325 to \$905; and Application for Naturalization from \$330 to \$595.

READ IMMIGRATION STUDY RESOURCES AT <[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)>

## PREZ SEZ

The new year is upon us and it will be a busy one for Leagues all over the country. There are two ways that you can be involved. Not only do we have voter education to do for three elections in 2008, but we will also be meeting on our national immigration study and trying to reach agreement on what we think should be the basis of a League position on this very vital issue. Be sure to join us on January 16. We want your opinions!

The February presidential primary is not far off. We have received 500 LWVC *Pros and Cons* on the ballot measures that you can help us distribute. Please let me know how many you can take. We will also be distributing English and Spanish *Easy Voter Guides*, primarily through the Social Justice Coalition in areas of the city targeted for getting out the vote. Here's to a great 2008! -- Gloria

## LWVC JOINS CAMPAIGN FOR REDISTRICTING INITIATIVE

At a press conference in Sacramento on December 3, the League of Women Voters of California joined the Governor, Common Cause, AARP, and the LA Chamber of Commerce in launching a campaign to place a redistricting initiative on the November 2008 ballot. The California Voters FIRST initiative will reform the process for redrawing district lines for the state Senate, Assembly, and Board of Equalization following each census. The proposal meets the criteria that the League wants to see:

- An independent citizens commission that has members who are qualified, balanced among the major parties while providing for others to participate, and representative of the diversity of our state's population.
- Clear criteria, in priority order, for establishing districts - not only abiding by the U.S. Constitution and federal Voting Rights Act, but also recognizing communities of interest and the political boundaries of cities and counties.
- An open and public process.

We will need volunteers to help with the first phase of the project --- gathering signatures to qualify the initiative. If you are interested, email or call Gloria Anderson.



**LWV OPPOSES TWO MEASURES ON FEB. 5 BALLOT**

**OPPOSE Proposition 91:** Transportation Fund (Initiative Constitutional Amendment)

This position reflects the continuing concern about funding earmarks in the state constitution, despite our support for the importance of transportation funding. (Note: The original authors of this measure now oppose it and are urging a "No" vote. See *Pros and Cons*.)

**OPPOSE Proposition 92:** Community Colleges: Funding, Governance, Fees (Initiative Constitutional Amendment & Statute)  
This position was a difficult one, as we truly want to see reform of the community college system on the basis of our position adopted in 2003. However, we continue to have concerns about changes to the constitution that would further restrict the ability of the state to continue other important programs in the future. Prop. 92 would set up a designated funding structure without providing new funds and its provisions would be difficult to modify.

**NEUTRAL: Proposition 93:** Limits on Legislators' Terms in Office (Initiative Constitutional Amendment)  
This initiative, by itself, makes relatively minor changes to the current term limit structure, and without redistricting reform as part of a government reform package, does not achieve meaningful reform. Moreover, it is involved in an increasingly partisan campaign.

**NO POSITION Propositions 94-97:** Referenda on Amendments to Indian Gaming Compacts  
The League has not studied the issues concerning Indian gaming compacts and therefore has taken no position on these measures. The compacts are between the state and Pechanga, Morongo, Sycuan, and Agua Caliente Bands of Indians. (Information is on the Secretary of State's and Smart Voter web sites.)  
(The League's Where We Stand flyer is posted as a PDF on the LWVC web site [www.lwvc.org](http://www.lwvc.org).)

## SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE SESSION ON HEALTH CARE STALLED

In mid-November, the LWVC mounted a Call to Action to oppose ABX1 1 (Nunez) in the special session on health care. The Speaker's previous employer-based health care coverage bill was amended to include an individual mandate. We objected to the bill because it does not offer adequate, affordable health care coverage and in fact, would worsen the situation for many Californians. (Visit the LWVC web site for more information )



## LWVSB DIRECTOR TO COORDINATE MOCK ELECTIONS

Our League is planning to participate in "MyVote California", a new mock election program launched by California Secretary of State Debra Bowen and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell. LWVSB Voter Service Director John Longville will coordinate this program with local high schools. MyVote is aimed at high school students and is intended to encourage teen civic engagement. MyVote will culminate in a mock election on January 28 and 29, 2008, when students will cast votes for presidential candidates and several initiatives. Results will be tabulated by the Secretary's office and released on January 30.

**Membership in LWV is a bargain and a statement. You will be saying that you are committed to the ballot as a means for change and to providing non biased information to voters. The issues your League follows are those that affect every resident's family and community. Get involved in the League of Women Voters.**



- \* \$50 One Year individual membership, \$75 household membership, \$40 student membership
- \* Please send me more Information.

NAME/NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to League of Women Voters and return with this application form to:  
League of Women Voters, San Bernardino, 568 No. Mountain View #150, San Bernardino, CA 92401-1218**

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- Senator Barbara Boxer, 201 No. E St., San Bdo 92401, (909) 888-8525
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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. LWV does not support or oppose any political party or any candidate. It does, however, take action on selected government issues in the public interest.

### CALENDAR

Jan. 9 (Wed.) Immigration study committee, 2 – 4 p.m., Feldheim Library, San Bdn  
Jan 16 (Wed.) Immigration consensus mtng/buffet, 6 p.m., Ruth Petrucci's, 5276 Sepulveda, SBdn (909) 883-5991  
Jan 17 (Thurs.) Board mtng, 10 a.m., Krueper Bldg. boardroom, 568 Mtn. View Ave., San Bdn  
Feb. 5 (Tues.) Vote in the California Primary election, 7 a.m. – 8 p.m., your designated polling place3  
June 7 (Sat.) LWVSB Annual meeting, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
June 13 – 17 (Fri.-Tues.) LWVUS Convention, Portland, OR

**LWVSB THANKS HARPER'S PRINTING  
FOR HELP IN REPRODUCING THIS 'VOTER'  
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**League of Women Voters of San Bernardino  
568 No. Mountain View Ave.  
San Bernardino, CA 92401**

**JANUARY 2008**

**Dated Material**

**YOUR VOTER**

