



Bulletin

" . . . we are going to be a semi-political body. In that body we have got to be non-partisan and all-partisan."
~Carrie Chapman Catt, 1920

League of Women Voters of Indianapolis
January 2008
Volume 89, Number 3

Notes from LWV-US:

Immigration Study Materials

Want more information on the immigration consensus? Study materials and background papers are available at the LWVUS.ORG website. Click on "Projects" then drop down to "Immigration Study".

Presidential Candidate Voters' Guide

The 2008 Presidential Primary Voters' Guide is now available. We have responses from: Biden, Clinton, Edwards, Obama, and Richardson on the Democratic side and Giuliani, McCain, Paul, Tancredo, and Thompson on the Republican side.

You can download a complete pdf of the Voters' Guide from VOTE411.ORG.

Newsletter Submissions may be sent to the editor, Carol Fowler, c/o LWV-Indianapolis

LWV-Indianapolis:
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Email: LWVIndy@att.net
www.indygov.org/lwv

Meeting and Event Information

Lunch with LWV

Friday 18 January Speaker: Erin Kelley, HAPA Representative
Noon Double Eagle Cafeteria,
 Scottish Rite Cathedral, 650 N. Meridian

General Meeting: Immigration Consensus

Saturday 26 January LWVUS Immigration Consensus Meeting
10:00 AM North UMC, 3808 N. Meridian
 See pages 2 and 4-7 for information.

LWV-Indy Evening Coffee Klatch

Monday 28 January Marian College Library
7:00 PM 3200 Cold Spring Road

General Meeting: Program Planning

Saturday 23 February National and Local Program Planning
10:00 AM NUMC, 3808 N. Meridian

Collaboration Lunch – With AAUW and Church Women United

Thursday 13 March NUMC, 3808 N. Meridian,
 Watch for more details in upcoming newsletters

LWV-Indianapolis Annual Meeting

Saturday 3 May MCL Cafeteria Northwest,
10:00 AM 86th and Township Line Road

Future Lunches with LWV

Fridays, Noon: 15 February, 18 April, 16 May

Future LWV Evening Coffee Klatches

Mondays, 7 PM: 25 February, 24 March, 28 April

Future LWV-Indianapolis Board Meetings

Wednesday 6 Feb. 7 P.M. NUMC, 3808 N. Meridian
Wednesday 5 Mar.

The League of Women Voters is a time-tested nonpartisan, nonprofit, volunteer political organization, dedicated to promoting active and informed participation in government -- from the school district to the nation, and from voter registration to public service. Although LWV sometimes advocates for or against issues, it never supports or opposes particular candidates.

LWV-Indianapolis General Meetings:

Saturday, 26 January 2008, 10:00 am

**Consensus Discussion and Soup Lunch
LWV-US Immigration Position**

Saturday, 23 February 2008, 10:00 am

National and Local Program Planning

North United Methodist Church, 3808 North Meridian Street

General Meeting: Immigration Consensus

Over the past 16 months, the LWVUS Immigration Study Committee has been providing League members with articles and information addressing the scope of this national study. The study has now reached the member agreement phase, the time when our local League prepares to take consensus. Grassroots agreement on positions is one of the League's greatest strengths. Preparing for and taking consensus is hard work, but worthwhile. The resulting position will allow the organization to affect national policy for years to come, just as we have been doing in other areas for 87 years – it's part of the organization's history.

At our General Meeting on Saturday 26 January, we will gather and discuss the wide-ranging questions that have been posed to us by LWVUS. The questions and some background information provided by National are included on pages 4 – 7 of this *Bulletin*. Our responses will be submitted as one report from our League.

After our consensus discussion, the Board is providing a soup lunch to take the chill out of this January morning!

Program Planning Meeting (Rescheduled)

This is the year when we review our National and Local League positions. We will have our program planning meeting on Saturday 23 February at North United Methodist Church. The Board is planning to provide some breakfast snacks to keep our energy up as we review and recommend National and Local programs and priorities for the upcoming year.

Tracy Goes to Washington!

As you've heard either in this newsletter or from the local and national media, the Indiana Voter ID law is being heard by the U.S. Supreme Court this session. A more detailed article on the lawsuit and the League's participation will be included in the LWV-Indiana newsletter that you will receive in January.

Meanwhile, our LWV-Indianapolis president, Tracy Heaton de Martinez, has been provided with a ticket to attend the Supreme Court arguments. She'll be in Washington DC for them on January 9th. We look forward to hearing about this unique and exciting experience from Tracy at future League events!

Lunch With LWV

Purpose:

to inform us as citizens and voters

Place:

Double Eagle Café
inside Scottish Rite Cathedral
650 N Meridian St, Indianapolis

Date:

3rd Fridays

Time:

12 NOON – 1 P.M.

Parking:

Free in the lot west of the building, accessed from North Street

Plan:

Come through the cafeteria line any time after 11:30, buy your meal, and join us in the Truman Room to eat, listen, and discuss.

Friday, 18 January Lunch with LWV

Erin Kelley, Indy LWV board member and state co-representative for the Health Access & Privacy Alliance (HAPA), will be the next Lunch with the League speaker on Friday, January 18 at the Scottish Rite Cathedral. Erin will discuss HAPA's mission and goals, the League's role within HAPA as well as the League's support of four bills known as "Prevention First." She'll also discuss how you can become more involved in monitoring legislation related to women's health and reproductive rights.

Lunch with LWV Wrap-Up

We hosted two state representatives at our October and November Lunches with League. We asked Representative Cindy Noe (District 87) in October and Representative David Orentlicher (District 86) in November to share with us their expectations for the upcoming legislative session. Both spoke about their positions and ideas for dealing with the complicated property tax issues.

LWV Evening Coffee Klatch

For the New Year, we will be changing the focus of our informal conversation with members and friends from immigration to the upcoming state legislative session. So mark your calendar and join the discussion on Monday, 28 January at 7:00 PM.

Come discuss League and personal political interests for 60-90 minutes, inside Marian College's library, 3200 Cold Spring Rd, Indianapolis. There is free parking in the lot south of the library. Purchase your favorite warm beverage from the library coffee shop just inside the west entrance door and then join us upstairs, where the furniture is more comfortable! (A map and directions can be found at www.marian.edu.)

Please contact Carol Fowler (767-4187 or LWVIndy@att.net) if you have any questions.

Observer Corps

A new year. A new mayor. Lots of new faces on the City-County Council. New committee chairs. And that's only Indianapolis/Marion County government.

Lawrence also has new office holders, and Speedway is facing new issues. Faced with elimination in the recommendations from the governor's commission, township advisory boards may provide interesting discussions in coming months.

It's time for us to have League observers present at as many meetings as possible. We need to let the new administration and the new Council, as well as other governmental units, know that the League is monitoring their work.

If you're interested in joining our observation efforts, please contact Harriet Wilkins or Karen Kay Leonard (767-4187 or LWVIndy@att.net).

LWVUS Immigration Study Consensus Questions and Background Information

Below are the consensus questions and background information provided by the National League to help us prepare for the upcoming consensus. Please review the information and bring this *Bulletin* with you to our meeting on Saturday, January 26, at 10:00 am. The Board will be providing a soup lunch.

Question 1: Federal immigration laws should take into consideration criteria such as:

(Rate each one)

a. Ethnic and cultural diversity

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

From its founding, this country has been made up of a mixture of ethnic groups. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 denied entrance by race for the first time, while a 1924 law incorporated a quota system to limit immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. This system was broadly followed until 1965 when the quota system was eliminated. In recent years, large numbers of unauthorized/undocumented and authorized/documentated immigrants have come to the U.S., especially from Mexico and Central America, to work and live, changing the demographics of large parts of the country.

b. Economic, business and service employment needs in the United States.

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Historically, large numbers of immigrants have come to this country for economic opportunity, and the U.S. economy has accommodated the expanding labor supply that today encompasses 1.5 million immigrants per year. With Americans retiring at increased rates, economists expect this expansion to continue. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 56 million new jobs will be created between 2002 and 2012. By 2010, nearly 43 percent of all job openings will require only minimal education.

c. Environmental impact/sustainability

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Any increase in the population of the U.S. helps accelerate the continued expansion of the economy, which frequently creates conditions harmful to local environments. On the other hand, most major environmental impact issues have global impact and are not limited by borders.

d. Family reunification of authorized immigrants and naturalized citizens with spouses and minor children

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Many believe that policies that facilitate the stability of families are in the best interest of both the immigrant families and the U.S. Naturalized citizens and legal permanent residents are more productive workers and more invested in their communities if their spouses and minor children are allowed to join them in the U.S. in a timely manner. However, this must be balanced against admitting persons with skills needed by U.S. businesses. Some people think that meeting the needs of the economy is more beneficial to the country as a whole than indirect benefits from family reunification.

e. History of criminal activity

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

History of criminal activity generally indicates a propensity for crime, and crime is already a costly social and economic problem in the U.S. However, data show lower crime rates among immigrants than among native born.

f. Humanitarian crises/political persecution in home countries

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Historically, Americans have prided themselves on providing safety to those fleeing persecution in their homelands. However, refugees rarely bring financial resources when they flee their homelands and may become financial burdens on their communities.

g. Immigrant characteristics (health and age)

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Federal law has historically included provisions for medical examinations to identify immigration applicants with inadmissible health-related conditions. The law requires medical examinations for all refugees and applicants applying for immigrant visas from outside the U.S. The list of communicable diseases that can make an applicant inadmissible include, among others, tuberculosis, HIV infections, Hansen's Disease and several sexually transmitted diseases. Age, on the other hand, has not been regulated, except to determine eligibility for a child as a minor in order to accompany a parent.

h. Rights of all workers to safe working conditions and liveable wage

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Many feel that ensuring safe working conditions and a liveable wage for all workers improves the country as a whole. Others are concerned that these improved conditions would make unauthorized immigration more appealing and exacerbate current border control problems.

i. Rights of families to remain together

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

The pull of family ties is one of the most powerful motivations for immigration. Keeping families intact reflects a core American value. Many believe that immigration policies that ignore this motivation unintentionally promote unauthorized immigration. Others believe that immigrants are aware of the possibility of a lengthy separation when they decide to emigrate.

j. Rights of all individuals in U.S. to fair treatment under the law (fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and humane treatment)

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

The Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution forbids depriving any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law and denying any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. Non-citizens must be accorded these constitutional rights, but many would not receive even these rights in their home countries.

k. Education and training

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Studies have shown that high skilled immigrants contribute more to the U.S. economy. However, while education and training are important, the U.S. badly needs workers with little or no education and training to fill jobs in manufacturing, service industries, agriculture, construction, and restaurants.

Question 2: Unauthorized immigrants currently in the U.S. should be treated as follows:Background Information

Approximately 12 million immigrants currently live in the U.S. without authorization or have overstayed their visas. The question of giving these unauthorized immigrants some type of amnesty is dividing Congress and the country.

a. Deport unauthorized immigrants

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Many feel that because unauthorized immigrants broke the law to come here, deportation appropriately reverses the process. Others argue that unauthorized immigrants are here because the U.S. government does not issue a sufficient number of visas to meet labor demands.

b. Some deported/some allowed to earn legal adjustment of status based on length of residence in the U.S.

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

As precedent, the 1986 law's amnesty provisions were based on length of residency. Immigrants who could show ability to support themselves were allowed to stay in this country.

c. Some deported/some allowed to earn legal adjustment of status based on needs of U.S. employers

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

The U.S. has an expanding economy requiring a larger labor force than Americans can supply. Providing jobs for immigrants, even low-skilled jobs, serves the U.S. economy well, but many feel that unauthorized immigrants, working for low salaries, drive salaries down for some low-income American workers.

d. All allowed to earn legal adjustment of status by doing things such as paying taxes, learning English, studying civics, etc.

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Immigrants who gain English proficiency and assimilate quickly in other ways will qualify for better jobs and pay higher taxes. But many feel that all immigrants are expected to assimilate and unauthorized immigrants who have learned English, studied civics and paid taxes should not be rewarded with legal adjustment of status.

e. If deported, assess fines before possible re-entry

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Fines would help compensate the U.S. for deportation costs as well as for any advantages/benefits unauthorized immigrants received while living in this country. Others maintain that most unauthorized immigrants have been paying taxes and fees for services they cannot access, which would compensate for deportation and legalization costs.

f. Assess fines before allowed to earn legal adjustment of status

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes and fees for services they cannot access, which would compensate the U.S. for legalization costs. Others feel that unauthorized immigrants should be penalized in some way for breaking the law when they entered the country illegally.

Question 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.

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Many believe that policies that facilitate the stability of families are in the best interest of both the immigrant families and the U.S. Naturalized citizens and legal permanent residents are more productive workers and more invested in their communities if their spouses and minor children are allowed to join them in the U.S. in a timely manner. However, this must be balanced against admitting persons with skills required to meet this country's labor needs. Others think that meeting the needs of the economy is more beneficial to the country as a whole than indirect benefits from family reunification.

b. Entering the U.S. to meet labor needs

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

For the past decade, market forces have attracted 1.5 - 1.8 million skilled and unskilled immigrants to work in the U.S. each year. However, annual legal quotas admitted only about a million immigrants, resulting in a significant imbalance.

c. Entering the U.S. as students

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Students come to this country on non-immigrant visas with expiration dates. They are here temporarily and for a specific purpose – to attend school. These students are a major part of the life of most American universities, especially at the graduate level in science and technology, and academia competes for them.

d. Entering the U.S. because of persecution in home country.

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Historically, Americans have prided themselves on providing safety to those fleeing persecution in their homelands. However, refugees rarely bring financial resources when they flee their homelands and may become financial burdens on their communities.

4a. 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.

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

The national identification card debate became more intense after 9/11 and has gone far beyond the Social Security card. The Real ID law, enacted on May 11, 2005, requires states to issue drivers licenses based on all of the following sources of verifiable information – a photo ID, documentation of birth and current address, and proof that a Social Security number is legitimate. These drivers' licenses will be required as primary identification for the Social Security Administration, airline travel, entering national parks, and opening bank accounts, for instance. Provisions are to become effective in December 2009.

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

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Beginning with the Immigration Act of 1990, immigration legislation increasingly focused on unauthorized immigration and border enforcement issues. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) initiated a series of strategies designed to stop immigrants from crossing the U.S. - Mexico border without authorization – "Operation Hold the Line" in the El Paso, TX, area and "Operation Gatekeeper" in California. These systems were a combination of physical barriers such as fencing, as well as high power light systems, and movement sensors. In 2006, Congress passed the Secure Fence Act, with the primary purpose of building 700 miles of new fencing and enhancing the technology to make the U.S.-Mexico border more secure. The cost of building the fence is estimated at \$9 billion.

The northern border has received little attention, primarily because immigrants trying to enter from Canada without authorization generally present false papers at border stations instead of crossing in unregulated areas, as they do from Mexico.

ii. Increased personnel at land, air and sea entry points

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Many argue that more personnel might reduce vigilante efforts, which are problematical, and also reduce the financial burden on state and local police and government. However, increasing the size of the Border Patrol is difficult and takes time. Retention rates are poor because of low pay relative to other law enforcement jobs, poor working conditions and few opportunities for advancement.

iii. More effective tracking of persons with non-immigrant visas until they leave the country

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

While 60 percent of unauthorized immigrants enter this country at the southern border, 40 percent come in legally through ports of entry – airports, seaports, northern and southern borders, and overseas consulates - and then overstay their visas. In 1996, Congress defined enforcement more broadly to reflect the need to cover air and land ports of entry and mandated a system for tracking entries and exits of students and foreign-born visitors be fully operational by 2003.

iv. Verification documents, such as green cards and work permits with secure identifiers.

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Social Security cards, “green” cards and immigration authorization cards are generally accepted as the best documents to verify work eligibility, but without secure identifiers they are easy to falsify.

v. Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee visa status

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

To verify employee eligibility, employers must maintain a record (I-9 form) showing they have asked for and examined one of more than two dozen specified documents that prove employment eligibility. Employers must also verify Social Security numbers with the Social Security Administration – a process that currently can take months. The result is that roughly half of all unauthorized workers are hired by employers who fully comply with I-9 requirements, but have been unable to verify quickly and reliably the authenticity of workers’ identity documents. In addition, questioning the documents, or asking for further documentation, can lead to discrimination charges. Basic Pilot, a voluntary federal online system, is available to verify job-seekers’ documents. As of 2006, only 3,624 employers were registered with Basic Pilot, less than one-twentieth of 1 per cent of all employers in the U.S.

vi. Improved technology for sharing information among Federal agencies

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

vii. A program to allow immigrant workers to go in and out of the U.S. to meet seasonal and sporadic labor needs

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Under current immigration law, temporary immigration visas are used to meet seasonal and sporadic labor needs for low-income workers. Under the law, only 5,000 visas are available annually for low-skilled workers, but two-thirds of the 500,000 that enter the country without authorization each year enter the work force, mostly in low-wage jobs. Because the system is complex, cumbersome, and slow, employers are unable to get workers when and where they need them, and agree that the current system fails to meet their labor market needs. Attitudes toward guest worker programs do not split on the usual pro-or anti-

immigrant lines. Some individuals who believe that there are too many immigrants in the U.S. support guest worker and seasonal worker programs as a means of bringing in short-term workers who will not stay and who do not become permanent residents or citizens. Conversely, some individuals who are pro-immigrant advocates oppose guest worker and other temporary labor programs because they worry that they create conditions for the exploitation of workers.

viii. Significant fines proportionate to revenue for employers who fail to take adequate steps to verify work authorization of employees

Rate: High Priority/Low Priority/Disagree/No Consensus

Background Information

Under current law, unchanged since 1986, employer fines for failure to verify work authorization of employees range from \$100 - \$1,000 per immigrant for paperwork errors and from \$250 - \$10,000 for substantive violations.

Question 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.

Rate: Consensus/No Consensus

Question 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.

Rate: Consensus/No Consensus

Background Information

Development aid has the potential to reduce some of the attractions of emigration to the United States. In Europe, the lowering of trade barriers within the EU, coupled with targeted economic development has turned countries like Ireland and Spain from net out-migration to in-migration countries. In addition, remittances (the funds sent home by foreign-born workers in the U.S.) act as a form of foreign aid that far exceeds the dollars passed from government to government. To the extent that migration is motivated by poverty and unemployment, aid programs that reduce poverty and create jobs are likely to reduce the pressure to leave the country in search of employment and higher wages.

However, development aid is no panacea. Economic motives are not the only or even the primary reason for migration to the United States. The largest number of immigrants come to be reunited with family members, and smaller, but significant numbers come as refugees fleeing persecution. Furthermore, some forms of aid may actually make it easier for developing country governments to postpone the kinds of economic reforms that will create local jobs and reduce economically motivated out-migration. From a humanitarian perspective, conditioning development aid on policies that limit out-migration could have disastrous consequences if it reduces aid to countries where the need is greatest. To the degree that immigration and foreign policy aims differ, coordination may be very difficult.

Joining the League of Women Voters

Yes, I would like to become a member of the League of Women Voters for an annual fee of \$50.00.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

My annual dues of \$50.00 are enclosed.

I am a new member. Yes _____ No _____

I am a renewing member. Yes _____ No _____

(All members receive the *Bulletin* several times a year as well as other League literature and information.)

Scholarships/reduced dues are available for student memberships please contact the League.

Enclosed is an additional contribution of \$ _____ to help the League of Women Voters make a positive impact on voting, citizenship and democracy.

Enclosed is an additional contribution of \$ _____ to help provide student member scholarships.

Below is the name and address/phone number of a prospective League member.

I expect to be an active member _____, an occasional participant _____ or a supporter _____.

Date: _____

I would like to be contacted to assist with (*circle all preferences*):

National Issues	State Issues	Regional/Local Issues	Lobbying
Health Issues	Letter Writing	Membership	International Issues
Research	Education Issues	Welfare Issues	Environmental Issues
Election Issues	Fundraising	Observer Corps	Ridesharing

For more information about the League of Women Voters, please call (317) 767-4187.

From:

League of Women Voters of Indianapolis

c/o North United Methodist Church

3808 N. Meridian St.

Indianapolis, IN 46208-4019

Forwarding and Address Correction Requested

Join us!

Lunch with LWV Jan. 18

Immigration Consensus Jan. 26