



The Voter

IMMIGRATION CONSENSUS MEETING JANUARY 12TH

Thank you!

LWVSJC thanks Jeanne Morando for her generous donation to the League Ed Fund to support our voter education activities in 2008. Thank you, Jeanne!

The final event of our participation in the LWVUS Immigration Study—the Consensus Meeting—will take place on Saturday, January 12th, from 10:00—noon at Hospice. All League members are urged to attend.

Groups discussion that allows an exchange of ideas and opinions is the League’s preferred way to achieve consensus. Although non-members may attend as observers or visitors, only League members may participate in the con-

WHEN: Saturday
January 12, 2008
10:00-noon

WHERE: Hospice of San Joaquin, 3888 Pacific Ave., Stockton

Note: Hospice is immediately north of Central Methodist Church. It has a separate parking lot which can only be accessed when going north on Pacific.

Refreshments will be provided.

Join us!

sensus process.

The Committee hopes that many LWVSJC members will attend this final opportunity for input into the League’s position. Your participation in the consensus meeting will help the League to be an effective advocate for sound policy in the ongoing immigration debate.

The values discussion set the standard for a vigorous discussion. We anticipate another lively exchange on January 12th.

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Pros and Cons with AAUW

It’s our favorite season once again: the election season! And that means Speakers Bureau will be getting into full gear to present the pros and cons on the statewide ballot measures that will be included in the February 5th Primary Election.

Vickie Markarian and Dee Matteucci will present the Pros and Cons in a joint meeting with AAUW. on Thursday, January 10,

WHEN:
Thursday,
January 10, 2008
6:00 p.m. refreshments
6:30 Pros and Cons

WHERE:
Hospice of San Joaquin,
3888 Pacific Avenue
Stockton

See Note above on access to Hospice parking lot.

2008 at Hospice of San Joaquin, (next to the Methodist Church and across from UOP). We’ll have copies of the LWV “Pros & Cons” newsletter to distribute.

The measures cover such issues as earmarking fuel taxes for transportation purposes, term limits on state legislators, and giving the nod to Indian gaming. Come join us for this really interesting evening!

President's Message — Ann Pentecost

Happy New Year! Hope your holidays were enjoyable and you all had great times with friends and family.

It was great to see so many members attend the Christmas Party. As usual, Dee was such a gracious hostess and we had plenty of yummy food and great conversations. It is always so nice to have a chance to visit. As always, the white elephant gift exchange was so much fun. I especially enjoyed the reappearance of the asparagus vase, which added the nice touch of bringing the memory of Joan Darrah (the original donor) to the party.

It was also very gratifying to see a good turn out at the Immigration Study Values discussion. The committee had done a great job of preparation and some excellent background presentations. For instance, Sally Miller covered the history of immigration within her allotted time of 5 minutes! Wow! The discussion was lively and everyone there brought good

ideas to the table. We actually managed to reach one area of consensus, finding value in keeping families together. However, we never reached a clear definition of what is a family.

With the League Immigration Study, I seem to see an awful lot of articles on the subject. A recent article that I found particularly interesting was a column by Michael Kinsley in the December 17th issue of Time. It is located on page 30, or is available online at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1692059,00.html>

I do hope those who were at the Values discussion and other members will be able to join us on January 12, again at the Hospice of San Joaquin. Also join us on January 10, again at Hospice of San Joaquin, for a joint meeting with AAUW as we kick off a very busy election year.

LWVSJC on Health Care Reform

LWVSJC President Ann Pentecost sent the following article to The Record voicing League concerns about proposed health care reform legislation:

“The League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County joins the League of Women Voters of California in opposing ABX1, an amended version of SB 8.

Every Californian should have affordable, quality, comprehensive health care. In their attempts to pass a reform bill this fall, legislators and the Governor have not succeeded in offering a system that will provide adequate, affordable coverage to all Californians.

ABX1 has several flaws which prevent it

from being the measure Californians need. These include the following

- An individual mandate will saddle some Californians with expensive, inadequate coverage. An exemption for people who would be forced by the mandate to spend too much of their income will simply "free" them from any coverage at all.
- Inadequate cost controls, both on the system as a whole and on the cost of coverage to consumers and employers.
- A range of employer contribution rates will encourage em-

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Nominating Committee

Dee Matteucci, Chair; Tandy Gotschall, Sally Miller and two Board members to be appointed

Helen Pearson Award Committee

Vickie Markarian, Chair; Fran Abbott, Sylvia Kothe

LWVUS Immigration Study Consensus Questions

The Immigration Study Consensus questions are provided here to inform League members of the topics that will be discussed at our meeting on January 12, 2008, at Hospice.

CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

Federal immigration laws should take into consideration criteria such as:
(Rate each one)

a. Ethnic and cultural diversity

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.



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

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

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.

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

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.

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e. History of criminal activity

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

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)

Background Information

Federal law has historically included provisions for medical examinations to identify immigration applicants with inadmissible health-related conditions. The law require medical examinations for all refugees and prospective immigrants. 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 of a minor in order to accompany a parent.

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

Background Information

Many feel that ensuring safe working conditions and a livable 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.

Because most major environmental issues have global impact, how will curtailing immigration lessen environmental impact on the U.S.?

i. Rights of families to remain together

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 the U.S. to fair treatment under the

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LWVUS Immigration Study Consensus Questions

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law (fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and humane treatment)

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

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

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.

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

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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

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

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

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LWVUS Immigration Study Consensus Questions

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persecution in home country

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.

QUESTION 4

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.

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

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 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

Background Information

Many argue that more personnel might reduce vigilante efforts, which are problematic, 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

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

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

Background Information

To verify employee eligibility, employers must maintain a record (I-9 forms) 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 who have been unable to verify quickly and reliably the authenticity of workers' identity documents.

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

Background Information

Under current immigration law, temporary immigration visas are used to meet seasonal and sporadic labor needs for low-income work-

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Should Federal immigration policy make the annual legal intake of workers more or less equal to the flow generated by supply and demand?

LWVUS Immigration Study Consensus Questions

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ers. 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 workforce, 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. The current system fails to meet employers' labor market needs.

Attitudes toward guest worker programs do not split along pro-or anti-immigrant lines. Some who believe there are too many immigrants in the U.S. support guest/seasonal worker programs as a means of bringing in short term workers who will not stay to become permanent residents. Conversely, some pro-immigrant advocates oppose guest worker/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



Background Information

Under current law, unchanged since 1986, employer fines for failure to verify work authorization of employees range from \$100-\$1,000 per im-

migrant 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.

Background Information

The federal government currently realizes a significant financial benefit from Social Security revenues, federal income taxes and Medicare taxes withheld from the wages of authorized and unauthorized immigrants. Some states and localities incur unreimbursed costs for the provision of education, health and social services to immigrants.

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.

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,

LWVSJC on Health Care Reform

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employers who currently pay more to reduce benefits or shift more costs to employees.

- A lack of information about proposed funding mechanisms, in-

cluding new revenue sources. Details of an initiative planned to contain financing provisions are unknown.

ABX1 is not the answer to the need for health coverage for Californians. The Legislature can and should do better.

Please join the League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County in urging our legislators to oppose ABX1 and work for a better solution."

Letters to your State Senator on this topic are still needed.

VALUES Discussion Lively and Thoughtful

On December 1st, seventeen League members participated in a lively discussion of what values we thought should underlay immigration *policy*.

Before the discussion, committee member Sally Miller, Professor Emeritus in History at the University of the Pacific and an expert in U.S. immigration, presented an immensely helpful history of US immigration law.

Immigration Law

There was no immigration law for the first 100 years of our country's history.

Immigration law from 1880-World War II favored certain groups, generally those from the UK and Germany, and restricted other groups, e.g., Asians.

The current immigration law dates from 1965. It emphasizes

- Family reunification, including extended family
- Professions, e.g., scientists and agricultural laborers
- Student visas
- Refugees, initially from Communist countries; humanitarian protection and sometimes escape from natural disasters have been added recently

This immigration law changed the population base in the United States and made the country more cosmopolitan. Today, one-third of the US population is non-white, mainly from Southeast Asia, Mexico and Latin America.

In 1986, there was a major 'tinkering' of the 1965 law. The Immigrant Reform Act addressed illegal immigration and mandated that employers must check the eligibility of employees—though this has never been fully implemented. A one-time amnesty for immigrants in this country illegally was part of this 1986 law.

Committee member Bea Lingenfelter gave a brief summary of the motivating factors behind immigration. The "push" factors (why people leave) include search for religious freedom, freedom from oppression and search for a better standard of living. The "pull" factors (what's appealing about the new country) include freedom of thought and expression and economic factors.



It was also noted that family reunification can take up to *a decade* to entry the US legally if you are talking about a spouse or a child—and up to *a generation*

for siblings. Jobs and economic opportunity have increased in importance as mass communication has made the US life style more well known throughout the world. It is anticipated that the "pull" factors will have more emphasis in the 21st century than it has in the past.

A brief quote from the Emma Lazarus poem *The New Colossus*, engraved on a tablet on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty raised the question: are we still a country that is accepting of "your tired, your hungry, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

Committee member Barbara Walker did a great job in moderating the discussion of values.



Several issues were raised but relatively few were agreed upon. We did find some areas of common ground:

- Family Reunification should be a priority in immigration policy. However, we were not able to agree on a definition of "family."
- There should be a limit on the number of immigrants allowed into the country.
- Process to become a legal immigrant should be **timely**.

- There is an economic impact on the country related to the influx of immigrants: population increases the impact on the environment, infrastructure and density of population in certain areas of the country

Many other issues were discussed but no firm agreement was reached on them. For instance, it was generally agreed that people with criminal records should not be allowed to immigrate—but should a person labeled 'seditious' by a repressive government be considered a criminal if they have been arrested for speaking out in their native country?

Should people in chronic poor health be allowed to immigrate and burden our health system? Do we have an obligation for asylum to petitioners who may have been put in danger in their native land due to US action, e.g., Vietnam?



Do we need to import agricultural workers or is there ample native supply?

Several areas of concern were noted:

- Destruction of the middle class via cheap labor and substandard wages
- Disrespect for law: laws that are not enforced lead to overall disrespect for law
- Dual wage system is not equitable
- There should be consistency in policies and implementation. It is not good when immigration law conflicts with economic or foreign policy.

America seems to be of two minds regarding immigration: both welcoming and denying. This duality was reflected in this meeting.

Immigration Study Spurs Dialogue

The meeting to discuss values that should underlay immigration policy was spirited and involved nearly a quarter of our membership. It also spurred dialogue in subsequent emails. Excerpts are quoted below:

League member Nan Ballot urges consideration of broad resource issues as part of the immigration discussion:

“The topic of immigration continues to be treated much the same as it was in 1900 when the population of the US was not yet 100,000,000 and the population of the world was not yet 2 billion. The last 100 years have changed dramatically for now the population of the world is approaching 7 billion and that of the US is greater than 300 million. The US is the 3rd most populous country in the world following China and India each well over 1 billion. League members discussing immigration need to be aware that this country could experience serious degradation of resources by continuing the policy of more people. Careful consideration of the issue of population growth must be considered.”

Nan goes on to quote from a May 2007 speech by President Clinton: “I think it is highly likely that before we see the worst consequences of climate change, we will reap the consequences of the combined impact of resource depletion and population explosion. ...nobody's really talking about the resource depletion issue.”

Boardmember Jane Wagner-Tyack had these thoughts following our December 1st discussion:

We need to question the wisdom of trying to achieve a one-size-fits-all immigration policy.

There didn't seem to be any place in the values discussion for something as mundane as food. ...

Spanish-American culture is a daily influence on life in this part of the country. The southwestern portion of North America has been an economic community since hundreds of years before NAFTA, with people of indigenous backgrounds historically doing the work that people of European backgrounds didn't want to do, beginning with the Spanish colonists and the mission system. This continues today with U.S. citizens retiring to Mexico and Central and South America, where people who have never had domestic help can easily afford it. Americans have been establishing residences along the Mexican Rivi-



era and in parts of central Mexico since early in the 20th century. Today, a place like San Miguel de Allende, first discovered by the Beat Generation, is full of shops, restaurants, and prices reminiscent of Carmel. Communities targeting U.S. retirees are rising around the Sea of Cortez.

The border between the U.S. and Mexico is perennially indefensible. So it makes sense to separate immigration issues related to that border from immigration issues related to places like Cambodia, India, Pakistan, or Iran, with which the U.S. shares neither a border nor a historical cultural connection.

I think the public dialog will also be more rational if we recognize that people's fears of immigrants from south of the U.S. border are qualitatively different from their fears of immigrants from the Middle East (Islamic terrorists) or Southeast Asia (a threat to middle-class jobs).

Nan Ballot's comments on overpopulation prompted the following thoughts

from Boardmember Cate White:

During the recent values discussion held as part of our participation in the LWV national immigration study, the concern was raised that immigration exacerbates problems of overpopulation, putting undue strain on our environmental resources. I feel it is best to see immigration and overpopulation as separate issues. Each issue is complex and important on its own, and I think joining them diverts us from thinking clearly about them.

In the United States, there are good demographic reasons that fear of overpopulation should not be used in conjunction with discussions on immigration policy. Firstly, while there are some densely populated areas in the United States, our overall population density is below average in comparison with most of the world, including the European countries. Secondly, while many immigrants come from poor developing countries where birth rates are high, studies show that as people grow more affluent, subsequent generations have fewer children. In addition, our population is aging, and we need an influx of young people to provide labor and contribute to Social Security and Medicare. Lastly, concerns about overpopulation in relation to immigration could be seen as way of saying we feel threatened by immigrants bringing with them different cultures than our own. Overpopulation is a worldwide problem with global environmental ramifications that must be addressed. Immigration is also a problem in many areas of the world and deserves thoughtful and compassionate consideration. Linking these issues together seems to me to lead us away from the positive solutions we seek.

Other Views on Immigration

Philanthropy News Digest Reports on Economic Impact of Immigrants

A posting on the Web page of the Philanthropy News Digest, A Service of the Foundation Center, says that “Immigrants Create Nearly a Quarter of New York State’s Economic Output”.

Citing a new report from the Fiscal Policy Institute, the December 3, 2007 posting stated that “immigrants contributed \$229 billion, or 22.4 percent of New York State’s gross domestic product, to the State’s economy in 2006.

Funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the New York Community Trust and the Horace Hagedorn Foundation, the report, *Working for a Better Life: A Profile of Immigrants in the New York State Economy* (121 pages) analyzes immigrants’ economic contributions in New York City, the downstate suburbs, upstate New York and the state as a whole. Foreign-born New Yorkers make up 21 percent of people living in the state—37% in New York City, 18% in the downstate suburbs and 5% upstate in 2005—and their contribution to the economy is roughly the same as their share of



the population.

The report also finds that New York immigrants participate in jobs across the entire economic spectrum and that immigrant low-wage workers are subject to the same challenges as U.S.-born low-wage workers. The number of Hispanic- and Asian-owned businesses is growing rapidly, a rough indication of immigrant entrepreneurship. In addition, two-thirds of immigrants in the upstate and downstate suburbs own their own homes. Twenty-four percent of New York children have at least one foreign-born adult in their family.”

Kidding Ourselves About Immigration

As President Ann Pentecost mentioned in her column, a column by Michael Kinsley in the December 17th issue of *Time* adds an interesting comment on this sticky issue. A few of his comments are excerpted below:

“What you are supposed to say about immigration--what most of the presidential candidates say, what the radio talk jocks say--is that you are not against immigration. Not at all. You salute the hard work and noble aspirations of those who are lining up at American consulates around the world.

But that is legal immigration. What you oppose is illegal immigration.

This formula is not very helpful. We all oppose breaking the law, or we ought to. Saying that you oppose illegal immigration is like saying you oppose illegal drug use or illegal speeding. Of course you do, or should. The question is whether you think the law draws the line in the right place. Should using marijuana be illegal? Should the speed limit be raised--or lowered? The fact that you believe in obeying the law reveals nothing about what you think the law ought to be, or why.

If your view is that legal immigration is good and illegal immigration is bad, how about increasing legal immigration? How about doubling it? Any takers? So in the end, this is not really a debate about illegal immigration. This is a debate about immigration.

...It’s true that we can’t let in everyone who wants to come. There is some number that is too many. I don’t believe we’re past that point but maybe we are. In any event, a democracy has the right to decide that it has reached such a point. *There is no obligation to be fair to foreigners.*” [emphasis added]

Read the whole article—then come to the 1/12 Consensus Meeting.

OP Ed Piece Extols LWV Non-partisanship/activism

- by Marcia A. Merrins, president of the League of Women Voters, Chautauqua County

It seems that modern campaigns have turned off citizens. Long tedious campaigns that do not address the issues have taken their toll. Too many citizens feel it is futile to even try to make their voices heard.

I felt the same way just a few years

ago. Then [I joined] the League of Women Voters and I discovered [that]... the League of Women Voters is where hands-on work ... leads to civic improvement. As an LWV member, you can be a part of an organization where thoughtful, active leaders work to create change in their communities.

Let’s remember that this system of government is not about the parties, it’s about the citizens. Joining the League is a nonpartisan way for citizens to band together to work for the better government we all want and deserve.

Physicians Recommend Single Payer Health Care System

The following recommendations are from the Annals of Internal Medicine January 1, 2008 Position Paper: Achieving a High-Performance Health Care System with Universal Access: What the United States Can Learn from Other Countries published by the American College of Physicians

This issue contains a 3-part article about improving health care in the United States. Unlike previous highly focused policy papers by the American College of Physicians, this article takes a comprehensive approach to improving access, quality, and efficiency of care. The first part describes health care in the United States. The second compares it to health care in other countries. The concluding section—cited here—proposes lessons that the U.S. can learn from these countries and recommendations for achieving a high-performance health care system in the United States.



Lessons from Other Countries and ACP Recommendations for Redesigning the U.S. Health Care System

Recommendation 1a:

Provide universal health insurance coverage to assure that all people within the United States have equitable access to appropriate health care without unreasonable financial barriers.

Health insurance coverage and benefits should be continuous and not dependent on place of residence or employment status. The ACP further recommends that the federal and state governments consider adopting one or the other of the following pathways to achieving universal coverage:

1. Single-payer financing models, in

which one government entity is the sole third-party payer of health care costs, can achieve universal access to health care without barriers based on ability to pay. Single-payer systems generally have the advantage of being more equitable, with lower administrative costs than systems using private health insurance, lower per capita health care expenditures, high levels of consumer and patient satisfaction, and high performance on measures of quality and access. They may require a higher tax burden to support and maintain such systems, particularly as demographic changes reduce the number of younger workers paying into the system. Such systems typically rely on global budgets and price negotiation to help restrain health care expenditures, which may result in shortages of services and delays in obtaining elective procedures and limit individuals' freedom to make their own health care choices.

2. Pluralistic systems, which involve government entities as well as multiple for-profit or not-for-profit private organizations, can assure universal access, while allowing individuals the freedom to purchase private supplemental coverage, but are more likely to result in inequities in coverage and higher administrative costs (Australia and New Zealand). Pluralistic financing models must provide

- 1) a legal guarantee that all individuals have access to coverage and
- 2) sufficient government subsidies and funded coverage for those who cannot afford to purchase coverage through the private sector.

California Health Care Legislation Update

Health Care legislation has been moving forward in the Assembly.

The Schwarzenegger/Nunez Health Care bill, ABX1, has been passed in the State Assembly and is on its way to the State Senate. If it passes there, it must go before voters in November 2008 to approve the measure's funding mechanisms. State Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata has questioned the plan's impact on the state budget and may no longer support it, so passage in the State Senate is not assured.

The LWVC has stated its opposition to the bill in a letter from LWVC President Janet Hirohama. In her letter to Speaker Nunez, she stated that "Health care is too important an issue to pass reform legislation while it still needs improvement and development." She pointed out four major failings in the bill, including the individual mandate to purchase insurance, lack of adequate cost controls, a lower standard of employer payments, and incomplete details regarding funding mechanisms. The latest hurdle is an Appeals Court Judge's ruling Dec. 27th, stating that it violates Federal Law for the state to regulate employees' benefits.

The LWVC remains a strong supporter of SB840, the Single Payer bill, which is still before the State Legislature. We need to continue lobbying Sen. Machado to support SB840 and oppose ABX1 1.

Our League is continuing to work for SB840 and will be following actions in the Legislature closely.

Cate White, Advocacy Chair

Stockton City Council Ignores General Plan Input

Boardmember Testifies

LWVSJC Boardmember Colleen Foster spoke on behalf of our League before the Stockton City Council on 12/3/07 regarding the proposed update to Stockton's General Plan. After thanking the City for including Smart Growth elements in their transportation plan and for encouraging energy efficiency and conservation in their building standards, Foster went on to discuss public participation, growth and water issues. Excerpts of her remarks are below:

"The League strongly supports actions that facilitate citizen participation in government decision-making. The Planning Commission recommended enhanced public participation elements be included in the General Plan which we heartily support. I hope the Council will adopt their recommendations.

I am aware that there are those who do not favor increased public participation. I think they are misguided on two fronts:

1. It is the public's responsibility to participate in their government! A government "of the people, by the people and for the people" is not a cliché; it is a *standard* that I hope the City of Stockton will embrace.
2. Secondly, it has been implied by some that 'the public' is, in effect, ignorant – and will slow the process unnecessarily. The GPU hearings have shown otherwise.

Groups such as those representing Morada residents, the Campaign for Common Ground, Stockton 20/20 and others, have demonstrated that the public can be very knowledgeable in matters of community interest. Presentations by these groups and by many individuals have been well researched, articulate, thoughtful and, on occasion, visionary. Public input during these hearings before the Council and Planning Commission have provided viewpoints from *your constituents, people who will live with your decisions*. Their comments, both passionate and informed, have expanded the information available

to the Commission and Council.

Public participation is valuable – in fact, essential, to good local government and should be encouraged by the Council through the adoption of a strong public participation element in the General Plan.



Growth

I am also concerned that the Draft Update is recommending a 2.5% growth rate, rather than the more conservative but adequate 2% growth rate. The report notes that 2.5% is more in line with the 'historical average' between 1970 and the present. However, the San Joaquin Council of Government's estimate, which considered a variety of factors specific to our current situation, recommends the 2% rate.

SJCOG prepares estimates for very practical reasons. They need to be as close to on target as reasonably possible. They have a good history of population projection. The Council would have good grounds to choose their estimate.

By including a larger than needed growth plan, the Council will jeopardize other land uses, such as agricultural uses. The League supports policies that recognize land as a resource as well as a commodity. I would urge the Council to adopt the 2% growth rate as its standard for the General Plan.

Water

Finally, the League supports measures that coordinate water resource planning with land use planning and provides for future needs without encouraging growth. The League also supports measures that protect the natural environment in areas of both water origin and water use. Although the Council has received reports that there is sufficient water supply to meet its General Plan projections, this assertion has been challenged by several people with serious concerns about water availability, current – to say nothing of future – ground water over-drafting, termination of exist-

ing water supply contracts, and the lag time between when the City's proposed water project can provide water and the time that water is actually needed. These concerns have not been adequately addressed. One way the Council could begin to address these concerns is to adopt a lower rate of growth, i.e., 2%.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the League supports Sustainable Communities, that is, meeting the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. I recommend this philosophy to Council as a guiding principle during your deliberations."

COUNCIL ACTION

After input from the League, Campaign for Common Ground, the Sierra Club and hundreds of interested citizens who appeared before the Planning Commission and the Council, the City Council "quashed what would have been a landmark revision to the proposed General Plan" (The Record, 12/7/07, p. B5). Councilmember Susan Eggman proposed the elimination of 3.5 villages north of 8 Mile Road east of Davis Road. Councilmember Rebecca Nabors was her sole support for this revision which would have limited sprawl, limited incursion on ag land, and lessened the impact on local water supplies.

The Record article noted that Councilmember Clem Lee "said to alter the proposed General Plan so dramatically would compromise the planning process" and Councilmember Bestolarides "said the plan is the product of five years of work and that to change it would be unfair to landowners who believed their property could be developed."

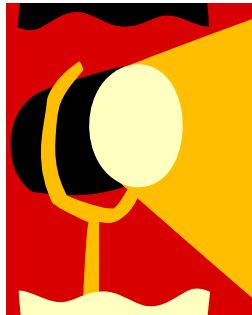
The adopted General Plan projects a 2035 population of 569,000.

Focus on LWVUS and LWVC

LWVC: Redistricting; February Ballot Positions

Redistricting

The LWVC has joined Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, California Common Cause, AARP, and the Los Angeles Area 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.



At a press conference on December 3, LWVC President Janis R. Hirohama said: "This proposal meets all the criteria that the League of Women Voters wants to see:

- An independent citizens commission
- Clear criteria, in priority order, for establishing districts — ... recognizing communities of interest and the political boundaries of cities and counties
- An open and public process.

She concluded, "League of Women Voters members around the state will work enthusiastically to help qualify this initiative and see that it is passed by the voters next November."

Positions on Ballot Measures in February 2008 election:

The LWVC has announced its positions on the February 2008 ballot measures:

Proposition 91: Transportation Funds
OPPOSE

This position reflects the continuing concern about funding earmarks in the state constitution, despite our support for the importance of transportation funding.

Proposition 92: Community Colleges: Funding, Governance, Fees
OPPOSE

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. Proposition 92 would set up a designated funding structure without providing new funds and its provisions would be difficult to modify.

Proposition 93: Limits on Legislators' Terms in Office **NEUTRAL**

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. It is more-over involved in an increasingly partisan campaign.

Propositions 94-97: Referenda on Amendments to Indian Gaming Compacts **NO POSITION**

The League has not studied the issues concerning Indian gaming compacts and therefore has taken no position on these measures.

Pros and Cons for the February 5, 2008 election will be distributed to League members in January.

LWVUS

The LWVs of IL, MI, MN, OH and WI participated in the Midwest Democracy Network (MDN), an informal alliance of 20 civic and public interest groups in those states. MDN invited all presidential candidates to answer a set of questions on federal political reform issues including campaign finance, government ethics, communications policy, election laws, voting rights and redistricting. Only Edwards and Obama took the opportunity to explain their views on issues covering campaign finance, government ethics, communications policy, election laws, voting rights, and redistricting. Their responses can be found at <http://www.midwestdemocracynetwork.org>.

Civil Liberties

Earlier this year, Congress gave sweeping new surveillance powers to the Executive Branch, including widespread warrantless wiretapping of American citizens, in the so-called Protect America Act. Now, the Senate is poised to reconsider the Protect America Act. We must make sure that this legislation reinstates protections for civil liberties and reestablishes checks and balances in government. We need you to contact your Senators to insist that they vote to repeal the Protect America Act and to limit the ability of government agencies to obtain information about American citizens without the appropriate judicial constraints.

Contact your Senators now.

Tell them that widespread warrantless wiretapping of Americans

(Continued on page 13)

Of Interest to Members

Jane Wagner-Tyack's review of Naomi Wolf's book in the December *Voter* prompted a note from long time League member (and Past President) Diane Park:



I enjoyed Jane's review of Naomi Wolf's newest book, *The End of America: Letter of Warning to a Young Patriot*. One omission: Naomi is the granddaughter of long, long time San Joaquin League member Fay Goleman. Her mother,

Deborah Goleman, is the oldest daughter of Fay and Irving Goleman, both distinguished professors at UOP. Irving later taught Humanities at Delta College and the campus named their library in his memory.

Youngest son, Daniel Goleman, is a respected psychologist and a renown author of such books as *Emotional Intelligence*, *Social Intelligence* and more. I graduated from high school with their middle daughter Judith. She is a therapist in Sebastopol and studying to become a Rabbi.

Fay lives in a wonderful old 4-story Stockton home and takes UOP students in as boarders. She is now 94 years old. Our League needs to give her special recognition for her continued LWV support and wise contributions to our community.



Sign of the times!

Another reveler at the Holiday Party!

(Continued from page 12) is unacceptable!

Redistricting also a priority with LWVUS

On November 29, the Campaign Legal Center, the LWVUS and the Council for Excellence in Government named Pam Pryor project director for Americans for Redistricting Reform. Pryor has more than 25 years of experience in government affairs, public relations and communications. The project is scheduled to launch officially in early 2008 and has been guided by a broad coalition of organizations. With initial funding provided by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the new initiative's goal is to build public support and be a resource for state-level redistricting reform efforts throughout the country.

Redistricting reform is an issue that goes to the heart of our democratic system of government. Representative democracy depends on the voters freely choosing their elected officials. When, instead, officials choose their voters, our system cannot work for long.

The problems with unfair and partisan gerrymandering are as old as the Republic. But today, with the advent of modern computers and intensifying partisanship, it is possible to create legislative districts where the results of an election will be known before any votes are cast or tabulated. This is just what is happening across the nation. And it threatens our democracy. Decisions are not made by the electorate, but by politicians manipulating the electorate.

The League plans to continue its focus on this important issue.

Holiday Party Gets Season Off to a Fun Start

Thanks to hostess, Dee Matteucci, for another wonderful evening.



Welcome back, Kathy Casenave!



Past LWVUSJC President Kathy Casenave, second from right, moved back to Stockton. Here she enjoys gift opening with (from left) Diane Park, Colleen Foster and Vickie Markarian

Oh that White Elephant!



Past LWVUSJC Co-President Ronda Sanders, center, shows off the 'best' white elephant of the evening: a large asparagus vase originally brought to the gift exchange by Joan Darrah and 're-gifted' by Kathy Casenave—six years later!



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CALENDAR

Pros and Cons: Joint Meeting with AAUW

Thursday, January 10, 2008 6:00 p.m.

Hospice of San Joaquin: 3888 Pacific Avenue, Stockton

Immigration Study Consensus

Saturday, January 12, 2008 10:00 a.m.—Noon

Hospice of San Joaquin: 3888 Pacific Avenue, Stockton

LWVC Leadership Council is scheduled for May 16-18, 2008 in Sacramento.

LWVUS Convention: June 13-17, 2008, Portland, Oregon

Board Meetings

All League members are welcome to attend Board meetings. Board meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.