



The VOTER

VOLUME 47 NUMBER 1

January 2008

Calendar (League activities in bold)

DATE	DAY	TIME	LOCATION	DETAILS
Jan 15	Tu	All Day		Last day to <u>register to vote</u> in the Presidential Primary
Jan 15	Tu	6 p.m.	16th floor, Courthouse	Freeholder caucus meeting
Jan 17	Th	7 p.m.	W. Kershaw School, Mt. Ephraim	Freeholder public meeting
Jan 23	W	6:30 p.m.	Vogelson Library, Voorhees	Immigration Consensus Meeting
Jan 30	W	6:30 p.m.	Vogelson Library, Voorhees	SNOW DATE for Immigration Consensus Meeting
Feb 5	Tu	6 a.m.- 8 p.m.		Presidential Primary Election: VOTE!
Feb 12	Tu	8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Haddon Township High School	Running & Winning workshop. See note on page 3. SNOW DATE 2-19.
Feb 13	W	7 p.m.	Vogelson Library, Voorhees	LWVCC Board Meeting New date!
Feb 19	Tu	6 p.m.	16th floor, Courthouse	Freeholder caucus meeting
Feb 21	Th	7 p.m.	Bryant Center, Lawnside	Freeholder public meeting

At its Jan 2 meeting, the LWVCC board:

1. Decided to order 100 member directories.
2. Approved the summary of the LWVUS program planning meeting provided.
3. Discussed the program planning meeting, with suggestions for how it might be improved.

4. Agreed to invite nearby members-at-large to our Immigration Consensus meeting

Member note:

Long-time member Helen Libbey is now at:
 CareOne at Evesham
 870 E Route 70
 Marlton, NJ 08053
 856-797-4294

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CAMDEN COUNTY



President's Message:

On December 5, 2007, the LWVCC held its annual program planning meeting and holiday party. The food was worth coming out for! And, of course, the company can't be beat. . . After chowing down and chatting, we got into the real work of the evening, LWVUS program planning. We broke into 4 groups, one for each of the major national position areas, with a group leader selected in advance: Representative Government (Phyllis Black), Natural Resources (Lisa Castellani), International Relations (Renee Robbins), and Social Policy (me). Ed Gracely coordinated the whole process.

We discussed in our small groups, then came back to the plenary to present recommendations. The Representative Government group was happy with the existing positions. Each of the others had at least one suggestion. But after much thoughtful discussion, we decided to recommend a complete re-study of the health care policy position, originally adopted in 1993, and a review of the violence prevention position from a public health perspective.

These suggestions will be passed along to the LWVUS, which will consider them in light of the other recommendations by local Leagues around the country. The delegates at national convention in June will have the final say over what new studies or reviews/updates are actually undertaken.

After Ed finished his part of the program, I took over to lead the group in choosing a local study we might undertake. As a local issue for the League to study we chose pay-to-play and the significant loopholes that still allow people who consult on redevelopment projects to make campaign donations while they are negotiating for the job or performing the work. A ban on this practice would impact projects planned for Camden and Pennsauken. Key firms donate millions directly or indirectly to officials with oversight responsibility. As a League we have decided to look more closely at these practices at the local level and make recommendations that would curb them.

Ann Saunders, President

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

The League of Women Voters of Camden County, LWVCC Voice Mail Line: (856) 795-7878

President: Ann Saunders (856) 232-1041 Voter Editor: Ed Gracely (856) 629-2869
1st Vice President: Lisa Castellani (609) 239-4947 Voter Distributor: Barbara Sielaff
2nd Vice President: Phyllis Black (856) 428-1247

e-mail: lwwcc@hotmail.com



Visit our web site: <http://www.lwvnj.org/camdencounty>

The VOTER is published ten times a year to keep the membership and public informed of the activities of the League of Women Voters of Camden County. For subscription or membership information call (856) 795-7878.



Getting there - Directions!

Camden County Courthouse: Take 676 north to Mickle Blvd. Flow right at the fork (don't go on Campbell Place), then turn right onto 5th street in a few blocks. The courthouse is at 5th and Federal, a block up from Mickle.

Camden, Federal Courthouse: 4th and Cooper, but we generally car pool. Call 856-795-7878 if you're interested. *About 3-4 blocks from the City Hall PATCO station.*

Camden: Ferry Avenue Library: 852 Ferry Avenue. Take 295 to Route 168 north. In about 2 miles, pass Route 130. In another mile or so, turn left onto Ferry Avenue. Pass 9th Street. The library is in the block between Phillips Street (just past 9th) and 8th Street.

Mount Ephraim - W Kershaw School. 125 S Black Horse Pike. On Route 168, about 2 blocks south of Kings Highway, and about 8 blocks north of the 295 interchange.

Voorhees: Vogelson Regional Library: Driving south on 30, turn left onto Somerdale Road, just above the Echelon Mall. Go under the train bridge in about a half mile, then turn right onto Burnt Mill. Soon turn left onto Laurel Road. The library is on your right. Burnt Mill Road also crosses 544 (Evesham Road) north of the library and White Horse Road (an extension of Springdale) south of it. If you know where the Echelon Mall is, you're home!

Running & Winning Workshop, February 12, 2008

Call for Volunteers

Phyllis Black



The Camden County League of Women Voters is holding its ninth annual Running and Winning Workshop **Tuesday, February 12th in the Library of the Haddon Township High School** from 8:00 am to 2:30 pm. Teenage girls from the sophomore, junior, and senior classes will interview female elected officials to find out about the challenges and rewards of holding public office.

The girls will meet in small groups of four in order to run for office as a U. S. Senator, write a speech, prepare a slogan to promote their candidate, and deliver

... "to volunteer for this workshop, please call Phyllis Black at (856) 428-1247 ... You will find the experience exciting and inspirational."

a speech to all of the participants. The issue for the candidates is Illegal Immigration, an interesting and timely topic.

If you would like to volunteer for this workshop, please call Phyllis Black at (856) 428-1247. You can help with registration, assist with taking photos of the students, or act as a facilitator for the small groups. The teenage girls are enthusiastic and do an amazing job. You will find the experience exciting and inspirational.

Immigration Consensus January 23, 2008



The League of Women Voters of the United States has been studying Immigration Policy and is now asking all Leagues to reach consensus on seven main consensus questions with sub-topics that concern Immigration Reform and Enforcement. Consensus is the collective opinion of League members all across the U. S. who will discuss and reach agreement. These League decisions will then be compiled into a national consensus to form program which allows Leagues to act on these positions.

Our Consensus Meeting on Immigration Policy will be **Wednesday, January 23rd at the Vogelson Library. 3rd floor meeting room at 6:30 pm.** Snow date is Wednesday, January 30th. Your opinion and input does make a difference, so make every effort to come to express your views, and learn new information about this controversial topic.

Have you checked out the material on the LWVUS web site www.lwv.org?

Please read the background sheet and review the consensus questions and sub-topics below in order to be prepared for the consensus meeting. Further information on the consensus questions can be found on the Internet at www.LWV.org. Additional factual material will be available at the consensus meeting.

Immigration: Background Information

(from Running & Winning, thanks to Anne Maiese)

Immigration has been an emotional issue almost from the beginning of our country. Each new group of immigrants has been viewed as a threat to the prosperity and culture of the people who came before them. They looked down on newcomers with different languages and cultures and often passed laws that limited the number of immigrants from certain countries or regions. The Chinese were excluded for 10 years in the early 1880's, the number of Japanese limited in the early 1900's. The Immigration Act of 1921 limited immigrants from any country to 3% of those in the US in 1910, thus giving relatively large quotas to Northern European countries like England and Germany and small quotas to



Southern and Eastern European countries like Italy and Russia.

Although the quota system was abolished in 1965, the overall number of visas issued has been reduced to 1 million /year, with those joining family members or having special skills given preference. About 0.8 million additional immigrants enter the country without visas each year, and it is estimated that 12 to 23 million of these illegal, undocumented immigrants now live in various parts of the country. Many have children who were born here, American citizens by law.

Our long border with Mexico has presented particular problems. After WWII ended in 1945, extra workers were needed, so the government began a guest worker, or "Bracero," program to bring Mexican workers and their families to work here temporarily. It ended in 1964, after labor

unions objected, citing a negative effect on Americans' wages. Illegal immigration from Mexico, always occurring to some extent, has increased each year since then.

In 1986 Congress made it illegal for employers to knowingly hire illegal immigrants, and it gave amnesty and legal papers to about 1.5 undocumented workers here, mostly from Mexico. In 1996, it beefed up the border patrol at heavily crossed areas near major border cities. Neither solution has been effective in stopping the flow. Employers can accept many forms of ID, fake ID's can be bought, and desperate people are willing to pay smugglers, known as "coyotes," to help them cross through the desert, risking death by dehydration and exposure. Illegal immigration has continued to soar, and those caught and deported often try again.

Most immigrants are motivated by the lack of jobs in their own countries and the need for workers here. Mexico's unemployment rate often climbs to 25%, and the countries south of it are just as poor. By contrast, the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that between 2002 and 2012, 56 million new jobs will be created in the U.S., 75 million U.S. workers will retire, and our native-born population will be near replacement level (one child born per person dying). Half the new jobs will require no more than a high school education, and American workers are becoming

more educated every decade. "Low-paying" jobs here also pay much better than those in Mexico.

It is unclear what effect immigrants have on the economic prospects of American workers. Some research shows that poorly educated immigrants hurt the economic prospects of poorer Americans, especially African Americans. Other studies have shown that immigrants have little effect on wages or on unemployment rates of less-skilled workers. We do know that immigrants are less likely than Americans to be unemployed. Legal immigrants, about 2/3 of the total influx, are not eligible for welfare during their first 5-10 years, and illegal immigrants are never eligible.

The effect of immigrants on their home economies is huge. The money they send home (remittances) to various Latin American countries from countries all over the world amounts to \$60 billion annually, more than they receive in foreign aid from the US and from the World Bank.

One new law has recently been signed by the President, but a major bill died last summer when the House and Senate could not agree on the details. The proposals contained in the bills, and several other proposals, along with their pro and con arguments, follow on the next two pages. *What do think are the right solutions?*

What are some possible approaches to illegal immigration?

1. Intercept undocumented immigrants at the border.

President Bush signed the Secure Fence Act in 2006. It provides funding for increasing the Border Patrol from 9,000 to 12,000 and using the National Guard to assist. It also adds hundreds of miles of fencing, more vehicle barriers, checkpoints and lighting along our southern border and requires the Dept. of Homeland Security to increase use of cameras, radar, satellites and unmanned drones.

PRO:

- ◆ These measures will decrease the number of illegal immigrants entering our country and keep out gang members, drug dealers and terrorists.

CON:

- ◆ It will cost a small fortune to try to seal the border, and people will always find a way to cross.
- ◆ Tighter borders keep illegals here longer, since it's too dangerous to go back and forth.

2. Stop employers from hiring illegal (undocumented) immigrants.

Proposals have been made to design new Social Security cards with a biometric chip (iris ID or fingerprint), require that employers check them to verify workers' status and increase the penalties for hiring undocumented workers. These fines would pay for hiring thousands of investigators to enforce long-standing laws against employing undocumented workers.

PRO:

- ♦ If people know they cannot work without a valid I.D., they will be less likely to come illegally.
- ♦ Employers who break the law should be penalized.
- ♦ It's an equitable way to identify everyone.

CON:

- ♦ Punishing employers would hurt several sectors of the economy (construction, restaurants, farming) and lead to discrimination against anyone "foreign" looking or sounding.
- ♦ This would infringe on our privacy rights and be a boon to identity thieves.

3. Grant amnesty with a path to citizenship.

Proposals have been made to allow the 11 to 23 million illegal immigrants who have already worked here for six years to pay a \$4,500 fine and back taxes, have a clean record, learn English and civics, then return home and apply for permanent resident status.

PRO:

- ♦ Allowing illegal immigrants to become permanent residents (and perhaps citizens later) would benefit our country.
- ♦ Deporting all illegal immigrants would mean breaking up millions of families, since their children who are born here are automatically American citizens.

CON:

- ♦ Granting amnesty has been tried before—more illegal immigration just followed it.
- ♦ This program would reward law breakers and disrespect those waiting for visas to enter legally.
- ♦ It would cost billions to set up the program

4. Establish a guest worker program.

Proposals have been made to increase the number of guest workers from Mexico who could come for specific jobs and then return home each year.

PRO:

- ♦ This would allow a limited number of immigrants to enter legally and work in jobs U.S. workers are reluctant to take, such as farm, restaurant and construction work.
- ♦ It will be easier to enforce immigration laws and also protect immigrant workers if we have a legal procedure for letting in temporary workers.

CON:

- ♦ The "Bracero" program that allowed guest workers and their families to come here led to more illegal immigration and much exploitation of those workers.
- ♦ Gangs control the guest worker lists and extort money from those wanting to get on them.
- ♦ Employers often don't get the workers when they need them, with lost crops resulting.

5. Expand the number of visas granted so legal immigrants could match the job market.

The number could be increased or decreased depending on employment needs.

PRO:

- ◆ People enter the U.S. illegally because there are many job opportunities here, and there are not enough people entering legally or already residing here to fill them.
- ◆ The construction industry, farms and restaurants need immigrant labor.

CON:

- ◆ Immigrants are willing to work for less, and they take jobs away from Americans.
- ◆ Without tracking, visa holders will overstay and become illegal immigrants.

6. Streamline the legal immigration process and increase the numbers allowed.**PRO:**

- ◆ The current system is extremely backlogged and difficult to navigate.
- ◆ Immigrants benefit our country through their entrepreneurship and culture. They can balance an aging population with younger people.

CON:

- ◆ Since Sept. 11, 2001, our borders need greater security, and immigration officials have to carefully check everyone entering the country, so speeding things up is not wise.

7. Withhold government services (education and health care) to illegal immigrants.

Illegal immigrants pay more in payroll taxes (income tax and Social Security) than these services cost, but they are collected by the Federal government, while education and indigent health care are largely supported by local and state taxes. They also pay some local taxes like sales taxes and property taxes, either directly or by way of rent payments.

PRO:

- ◆ Illegal immigrants are a burden on local governments. The Federal Government collects taxes and does not return them to local and state governments.

CON:

- ◆ Depriving children of education was declared unconstitutional in 1982 (*Plyler v. Doe*), and depriving people of emergency medical care is inhumane.

CONSENSUS QUESTIONS ON IMMIGRATION POLICY

Rate the following questions by circling one number:

1. (high priority); 2. (lower priority); 3. (disagree) ; 4. (no response)

I. Federal immigration laws should take into consideration criteria such as the following:

- a. Ethnic and cultural diversity 1 2 3 4
- b. Economic business and service 1 2 3 4
employment needs:
- c. Environmental impact/sustain - 1 2 3 4
ability:
- d. Family reunification of authorized 1 2 3 4
immigrants and citizens with spouses
and minor children:
- e. History of criminal activity: 1 2 3 4
- f. Humanitarian crises/political 1 2 3 4
persecution in home countries:
- g. Immigration characteristics 1 2 2 4
(health and age);
- h. Rights of all workers to safe 1 2 3 4
working conditions & livable wage:
- i. Rights of families to remain 1 2 3 4
together:
- j. Rights of all individuals in U. S. 1 2 3 4
to fair treatment under law (fair 1 2 3 4
hearing, right to counsel, right of
appeal, and humane treatment:
- k. Education and training: 1 2 3 4

Select the 3 most important criteria above and list them in order with 1 as most important (write in the letters). 1_____ 2_____ 3_____

II. Unauthorized immigrants currently in the U. S. should be treated as follows:

- a. Deport unauthorized immigrants: 1 2 3 4
- b. Some deported/some allowed to 1 2 3 4
earn legal adjustment of status
based on length of residence in the U. S.
- c. Some deported/some allowed to 1 2 3 4
earn legal adjustment of status
based on needs of U. S. employers:
- d. All allowed to earn legal adjust- 1 2 3 4
ment of status by doing things
like paying taxes, learning English,
studying civics
- e. If deported, assess fines before 1 2 3 4
possible re-entry:
- f. Assess fines before allowed to 1 2 3 4
to earn legal adjustment of status:

III. 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 already admitted for legal permanent residence in the U. S. 1 2 3 4
- b. Entering the U. S. to meet labor needs 1 2 3 4
- c. Entering the U. S. as students: 1 2 3 4
- d. Entering the U. S. because of persecution in home country: 1 2 3 4

IV. 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. 1 2 3 4

IV. b. Federal immigration law dealing with unauthorized immigrants should be enforced by:

- i. Physical barriers (such as fences) and surveillance at the borders: 1 2 3 4
- ii. Increased personnel at land, air, and sea entry points: 1 2 3 4
- iii. More effective tracking of persons with non-immigrant visas until they leave the country: 1 2 3 4
- iv. Verification documents such as green cards and work permits with secure identifiers: 1 2 3 4
- v. Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employees visa status: 1 2 3 4
- vi. Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies: 1 2 3 4
- vii. A program to allow immigrant workers to go in and out of the U. S. to meet seasonal and sporadic labor needs: 1 2 3 4
- viii. Significant fines proportionate to revenue for employers who fail to take adequate steps to verify work authorization of employees. 1 2 3 4

V. Federal immigration law should address and balance the long-term federal financial benefit from immigrants with the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations. Consensus No consensus

VI. Federal immigration law should be coordinated with U. S. foreign policy to pro-actively help improve economies, education and job opportunities, and living conditions of nations with large emigrating populations. Consensus No consensus