

What is the Answer to the Timely Issue of Immigration?

Attend January Consensus Meeting to Help Decide

"Few subjects in the U.S. are as controversial as immigration or have as contentious a history. Immigration scholars...suggest that Americans view immigration with 'rose-colored glasses turned backwards,' with positive attitudes toward earlier groups of immigrants, and negative ones about those who enter today."

So begins the excellent article, "U.S. Immigration, A Historical Perspective", in the February 2007 LWVUS VOTER. This article and "Immigration Study Briefs" one and two in the June issue of *The National Voter* and briefs three and four in the October issue are must reads for members attending the January 23 League meeting on immigration (7p.m., Room B, Iowa City Public Library). The briefs, as well as eight background papers on immigration, are also available on the League web site, www.lwv.org.

After two years of study, the League has reached the member agreement phase of the LWVUS Immigration Study -- discussion

and consensus. As it has been 15 years since consensus was last taken on a national level issue (health care), many League members may not have taken part in a consensus—the process the League uses to reach member agreement on study issues. It is neither a simple majority nor unanimity; instead it is an overall sense of the group. Consensus results from answers to questions on which members can find common ground and agreement. Discussion that allows an exchange of ideas and opinions will lead us to achieving consensus or not.

The immigration questions members will be asked are comprehensive and complex; discussion and consensus will take two hours. Your local board has decided that each member should have the questions in full prior to the meeting, so they will be sent to you after the first of the year. In the interim, following -- in truncated form -- are the six questions that will be asked: four with numerous responses and two with "concurring" statements.

The first four questions ask that we select ratings of "High Priority", "Lower Priority", "Disagree", or "No Consensus" to each of the possible criteria or answers. These four follow:

Question 1: Federal immigration laws should take into consideration criteria such as the following: a) ethnic and cultural diversity; b) economic, business and service employment needs; c) environmental impact/sustainability; d) family reunification of authorized immigrants and citizens with spouses and minor children; e) history of criminal activity; f) humanitarian crisis/political persecution in home countries; g) immigrant characteristics (health and age); h) rights of workers to safe working

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President's letter



By the time our newsletter comes out we will have met with our legislators about the LWVIA's legislative priorities. We will meet our legislators in Des Moines on Lobby Day (*see below*) and find out what progress is being made on our priorities. Lobby Day is a wonderful learning experience. Yes, it takes a whole day during the worst driving conditions of the year (we won't go if there's another ice storm or blizzard that day), but it's a great way to learn more about the legislative process and see where the work is being done. Lunch with the legislators will remind you of your school cafeteria! Judie Hoffman, the LWVIA lobbyist, always finds excellent speakers to tell us about new

issues coming before the legislature. Please join us for a great day.

Another way to learn what is going on in Des Moines is by attending our legislative forums. We learn about others' priorities from our cosponsors, and that is interesting too. So much to accomplish. Fortunately, most of our Johnson County legislators support our priorities.

And, of course, the caucuses will be on January 3rd. I hope you attend your precinct caucus to make your candidate choice and to submit state and national resolutions on issues important to you.

Barbara Beaumont 626-6227

Join the League Lobby Day/Birthday

February 14th is the LWV birthday and the state Lobby Day in Des Moines. We will meet with legislators to discuss the legislative priorities of the LWVIA for 2008. Our priorities include:

1. Campaign finance reform to improve financing political campaigns.
2. Water quality and concentrated animal feeding operations.
3. Predatory lending.
4. Help for special needs offenders.
5. Bottle bill.

We will meet in the parking lot of Barnes and Noble at 8:00 AM TO carpool to Des Moines. If you plan to attend, please call Barbara Beaumont, 626-6227 or Pat Jensen, 338-8123

Legislative Forums

The League of Women Voters of Johnson County will again sponsor Legislative Forums during the 2008 Legislative Session. On Saturday, January 26, February 23, March 29 and April 26, the League will host the local legislators at the Emma Harvat Hall in the Iowa City City Hall from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

The University of Iowa AAUP and University Relations Government Committee will co-sponsor the February 23 forum. We anticipate having co-sponsors for each of the forums.

We will need timers and moderators for each forum. If you plan to attend the forum and are willing to serve in one of these capacities, please contact Julie Pulkrabek at 354-6633 or via e-mail juliepulk@aol.com.

January 3, 2008 Caucus Sites

Iowa Republicans and Democrats have released their Caucus Site locations. These locations often change so even if you've been to a recent caucus you need to check ahead.

You can find your Precinct name and

caucus site locations by turning to the Johnson County Auditor's website:

<http://www.johnson-county.com/auditor/>

click on "Find Your Polling Place", and then fill out your address.

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conditions and livable wage; **i)** rights of families to remain together; **j)** rights of all individuals in U.S. to fair treatment under the law (fair hearing, right to counsel, right to appeal and humane treatment; and education and training).

Question 2: Unauthorized immigrants currently in the U.S. should be treated as follows: **a)** deport unauthorized immigrants; **b)** some deported/ some allowed to earn legal adjustment of status based on length of residence in U.S.; **c)** some deported/ some allowed to earn legal adjustment of status based on needs of U.S. employers; **d)** all allowed to earn legal adjustment of status by doing things such as paying taxes, learning English, studying civics, etc.; **e)** if deported, assess fines before possible re-entry; and, **f)** access fines before allowed to earn legal adjustment of status.

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 member already admitted for legal permanent residence in the U.S.; **b)** entering the U.S. to meet labor needs; **c)** entering the U.S. as students; **d)** entering the U.S. because of persecution in home country.

Question 4a: In order to deal more effectively with unauthorized immigrants, federal immigration law should include: Social Security Card or other national identification cards with secure identifiers for *all* persons residing in the U.S.

Question 4b: Federal immigration law dealing with unauthorized immigrants should be enforced including: **a)** physical barriers (such as fences) and surveillance at borders; **b)** increased personnel at land, air, and sea entry points; **c)** more effective tracking of persons with non-immigrant visas until they leave the country; **d)** verification documents, such as green cards and work permits with secure identifiers; **e)** improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee visa status; **f)** improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies; **g)** a program to allow immigrant workers to go in and out of the U.S. to meet seasonal sporadic labor needs; and, **h)** significant fines proportionate to revenue for employers who fail to take adequate steps to verify work authorization of employees.

Questions five and six ask if we agree with the following statements:

Question 5: “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.”

Question 6: “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.

The January meeting gives all League members the opportunity to study and discuss the important, timely, and controversial issue of immigration. Each member is encouraged to do your homework: read, discuss, ruminate, and review the consensus questions, then attend the meeting and make your voice heard.

Pat Jense

League Members Invited to New Member Orientation February 2

The League of Women Voters of Johnson County has been fortunate in the past several years to welcome a number of new members. So, the LWVJC Board is offering a League orientation to these new folks ("seasoned" members are welcome, too) on Saturday, February 2, at 10 a.m. The orientation will be hosted by Judy Pfohl, League Secretary, at her home, 2229 Abbey Lane, Iowa City. Long-time League member Pat Jensen will provide the orientation which will include discussion of League history, processes, policies, and maybe a few stories as well.

RSVP to Judy Pfohl at 351-1694 or jpfohl@hotmail.com.

Pat Jensen

LWVJC CALENDAR January—June 2008

JANUARY

- 3 Caucuses—in precincts @ 6:30 PM
- 7 Board Meeting—ICPL Room E @4 PM
- 23 Members only: Consensus meeting for LWVUS immigration study—ICPL Room B @ 7:00 PM
- 26 Legislative forum—IC Council Emma Harvat Hall 9:30-11:30 AM

FEBRUARY

- 2 Orientation for new members , 10 AM until noon.
- 4 Board Meeting—ICPL Room E @4 PM
- 14 Lobby Day in Des Moines
- 23 Legislative forum, IC Council Emma Harvat Hall @ 9:30-11:30 AM

MARCH

- 3 Board Meeting—ICPL Room E @ 4 PM
- 12 General Meeting "*An Understanding of U.S. Media*" ICPL Room A, 7:00 PM
- 29 Legislative forum—IC Council Emma Harvat Hall @ 9:30 to 11:30 AM

APRIL

- 7 Board Meeting—ICPL Room E @ 4 PM
- 23 Regional Study Committee Report, North Liberty Community Building, Rm B @7:00 PM
- 26 Legislative forum, IC Council Emma Harvat Hall @ 9:30 to 11:30 AM

MAY

- 5 Board Meeting—ICPL Room E @ 4 PM
- 21 Spring Annual Meeting