



League of Women Voters®
of San Francisco



National League Position on Immigration

At its National Convention in June 2008, the League of Women Voters adopted the following position on Immigration:

The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the U.S. on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.

Activities of the San Francisco League during the Immigration Study:

During the second week of January our local league held two meetings with the intent of arriving at consensus on various immigration issues. Leagues across the nation held similar meetings in order to contribute to the formation of the LWVUS's position.

Approximately forty members attended one of the two meetings to offer their views on the issues. In addition to these league members, many nonmembers, including San Francisco Supervisor Gerardo Sandoval, came to observe the process.

There were some opposing views on the immigration issues but members agreed on a significant number of topics as being high priority. Here is a recap of those issues.

Considering what aspects federal law should take into account, the following were top priority:

- family reunification;
- economic, business and service employment needs;
- humanitarian crisis/political persecution.

Regarding how unauthorized immigrants in the US should be treated, the allowance to earn legal status by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics, and the like was considered important by members.

A timely means for immigration was deemed very important for all immigrating persons, including immediate family members, those filling US labor voids, international students, and those being persecuted.

Many enforcement issues related to managing unauthorized persons were discussed. Among those considered important was verification documents such as green cards and work permits with secure identifiers, although many in attendance expressed concern about privacy and the use of biometrics. Also of importance were the development of a

worker program that would allow seasonal immigrants to enter and exit the US as labor demand waxed and waned, improvement of technology to increase the flow of information between federal agencies as well as to create more accessible employee visa status information for employers, and more effective tracking of persons with non-immigrant visas until they leave the country.

Two additional issues were also of general consensus at the meetings. The first was coordination of federal immigration law with US foreign policy to proactively help improve economies, education and job opportunities, and living conditions of nations with large emigrating populations. The other was that the law should take into account disproportionate costs to local governments and states with greater numbers of immigrants in contrast with long-term federal financial benefits.

The national League has now collected all local League's consensus meeting results. That data will be used to create a position that will be officially adopted late March or early April. Once that is done, the League will use its position to impact US immigration policy.

The Immigration Study Consensus Committee is appreciative of all who participated in the consensus meetings.