



THE

VOTER

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Berea & Madison County

Immigration



*Can LWV
find a
national
policy
solution?*

Photo illustration by Libby Fraas

Jan. 17 set for study conclusion

In this issue of the VOTER, you can read the LWV's consensus questions on immigration and prepare for the task facing us at our consensus meeting in January.

It is important that as many League members as possible participate in our consensus meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 17 at the Berea City Hall Conference Room, 212 Chestnut St. in Berea.

Taking all that we have learned and discussed this fall—from the “big picture” to what we are experiencing here in Madison County—and fitting that into the set of consensus questions will indeed be a challenge.

However if we give our best guidance to national League, we will feel confident that we've done a great service to our organization, our commu-

nity and our nation.

Be sure to bring this issue of the Voter with you to the meeting.

What is “consensus?”

“Consensus” is a key word in the decision making of the League of Women Voters so let's take a minute to figure out what it means and the process by which it is obtained. The last national study conducted by LWV was in 1992 on health care so many of us are new to the process.

Consensus is not a vote — rather, consensus is mutual agreement of League members arrived at through discussion. During discussion, everyone has the opportunity to express their viewpoints, and the issue is examined from all sides. Consensus questions provide structure

for the meeting, as members discuss the pros and cons until it becomes apparent whether or not consensus has been reached on each question.

Although non-members may attend as observers or visitors, only LWV members may participate in the consensus process.

Ultimately, members must come to some sort of broad agreement on the values they hold related to immigration. The League calls this consensus.

At our Jan. 17 meeting, we will need to designate a recorder to take notes and record participants' responses to questions. LWVUS has demanded a minimum of two hours for the consensus meeting and suggested an allotted amount of time for each question.

As you preview the questions you will see that our responses involve making choices among suggested strategies and criteria and ranking them as high

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Holiday respite before busy January

We have survived a busy fall with our immigration study, our judicial candidates forum, our voter registration drives and more!

Board members had tentatively planned a holiday party for early December in what was becoming a wonderful League tradition to celebrate the season.

However we encountered some problems with scheduling and finding a meeting space. (If a member would like to volunteer to plan the 2008 Holiday Party, we welcome your leadership.)

We made a decision to cancel the December party and instead focus on concluding our immigration study with a consensus membership meeting in January. That meeting will be on Thursday, Jan. 17 so please mark your calendars!

When our League first approached the issue of immigration this past fall, I felt truly overwhelmed at the enormity of the task: to study and reach a consensus on immigration issues and report to national so that LWVUS can develop a policy position on this important issue facing our nation.

I'm still feeling overwhelmed, but thanks to a wonderful team of speakers, presenters, League and community members who enriched the conversation, I think we all have a better understanding of the root problems of immigration and the principles that can lead us to solutions.

Sincere thanks goes out to Berea College Professor **Billy Wooten** and students in his political communication class who spent countless hours researching the immigration issue, creating poster displays in the community, participating in and helping facilitate our group discussions, and bringing the voices of our young people into this important process. Thanks also to **June**



Widman and **Karen McClain Wright** for helping with small group facilitation.

Also a reminder that January is the month when LWV members visit local government meetings. This VOTER has a schedule of those meetings, and we ask you to pick one or two to attend with other LWV members.

It is a great way to see local government in action and remind our community leaders that LWV is here to watch, serve and promote civic engagement. It's also a wonderful opportunity for you to invite a friend, neighbor or co-worker to go to one of the meetings with you and introduce them to their representatives in local government.

So...please do check out this VOTER for the immigration meeting summary, the immigration consensus questions, and January government schedule. If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail or call me or any of the Board members.

Looking ahead to 2008, we will be addressing the issue of population and land use/development; getting updates on restoration of felon's voting rights; organizing a fund raiser with beautiful prints donated by African-American artist Margaret Burroughs.

We have potential partnerships with local and state organizations on economic and energy issues. If we all work together, LWV can have a powerful, positive impact on our communities!

All of us on the Board wish you a wonderful holiday season and a blessed New Year. Recharge your batteries, and we'll see you in January '08!

—Elizabeth Crowe
LWV BMC president
lwvbmc@yahoo.com

LWV_EVENTS

8:30 a.m. Jan. 8
Board Meeting.
Breakfast at Berea
Coffee & Tea

7 p.m. Jan. 17
Member Meeting:
Finding consensus on
US Immigration Policy
Berea City Hall
Conference Room

February Board
Meeting TBA

February Mem-
ber Meeting TBA

March Board Meeting
TBA

March Member
Meeting TBA

April Board Meet-
ing TBA

Annual Meeting TBA

VOTER DEADLINES

Feb. 1 for February Voter
March 1 for March Voter
April 1 for April Voter
May 1 for May Voter

The Voter is published monthly
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<http://lwvbmc.iclub.org>

LWV to take position on perplexing issue

Continued from Page one

priority, low priority, disagree or, in the case we cannot come to an agreement on the ranking, no consensus.

The recorder will record responses on a copy of the preview consensus questions which are included in this Voter. A delegate from our League will then log in to the LWVUS Web site and submit our responses electronically. The Consensus Form will accept only one set of responses per League.

The responses that our league makes on Jan. 17 are not a final LWVUS position and as a result, should not be publicized as such. Our “consensus” is only part of the process. The national study committee analyzes the consensus responses and using this information, creates a position statement.

Once approved by the national Board, the statement immediately becomes the League’s position and is the basis for action on the issue. Members have the oppor-

tunity at each annual meeting or convention to decide whether or not to re-adopt these positions.

Deadline for submission to LWVUS is February 1.

How to prepare

The League Web site has a wonderful set of background papers on immigration.

There are links to LWVUS background papers and to other organizations and media information sources on our Web site at <<http://lwvbmc.iclub.org>>.

When
7 p.m.
Thursday
Jan. 17

Where
Berea City Hall
Conference
Room

Reminder
Bring this Voter!

Searching for a just immigration policy — a review

BY ELIZABETH CROWE

To prepare us to respond to questions about U.S. immigration policy, LWVUS had us approach our study with an emphasis on values and principles.

At each meeting, we posed the questions: What are our principles in regard to immigration? How do these principles relate to government policy on immigration?

Some of the responses consistently focused on these values:

- upholding the declaration on human rights
- the rights of people vs the rights of corporations, particularly when it comes to trade agreements
- the right to provide for one’s family/children
- the right to fair/equitable treatment from government

Following is a summary of the group discussion items from two of the three meetings LWV held this fall on immigration. The first meeting on Sept. 27 was covered in the October issue of the Voter.

Our goal in the meetings was to try to separate myth from fact and to have genuine discussion on our values and principles on immigration, believing that from those core values and principles, we could better assess govern-

ment immigration proposals. It is impossible to capture all of the thoughtful comments and questions from these meetings, but these are some of the key points.

October 23, Berea

In October we heard from Juan Paras, an immigrant now working with the Kentucky Human Rights Commission; Marilyn Daniel, director of the Maxwell Street Legal Clinic in Lexington; and Dorothy Chao, a Berea resident who worked for several months on the U.S./Mexico border in Arizona.

These presenters helped us understand some of the realities of the process to become a legal/documented citizen and the perils and pitfalls of border control/border justice. We heard that many immigrants in the United States want to go home, but cannot survive given the economic situation in their homelands.

We heard again about the complicated legal process for citizenship, and the economic and human rights consequences for people who aren’t given an opportunity to become citizens.

We heard about the life-threatening risks taken by families every day to cross the border into the U.S. and the number of women, men and children who die each year trying. We also

looked at population estimates for the U.S. and Mexico through 2050, to look at needs in the labor force in the coming years.

November 13, Berea

We watched a thought-provoking video called “Morristown,” which focused on the town of Morristown, Tenn. and the way in which its employees relied on immigrant labor. The movie made clearer the link between global trade agreements and the global market and its impact on immigration. It also advocated for the rights of workers to organize for fair treatment.

We discussed the role that undocumented workers play in U.S. consumer cycles and what would happen if that cycle were stopped.

Many people in the United States, including here in our community believe that immigrants are taking jobs away from U.S. citizens. But some employers state that they can’t find anyone else willing to work hard jobs. Worker rights organizations often point out that no one but immigrants are willing to work with the low pay and poor conditions that some employers offer. This video was helpful in pointing out the experiences of people on “both sides” of the economic fence.

LWVUS Immigration Study Consensus Questions

QUESTION 1: (45 minutes)

Part a: Federal immigration laws should take into consideration criteria such as the following: Rate each *High Priority, Lower Priority, Disagree, No Consensus*

- 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 Crises/ Political Persecution in Home Countries
- g. Immigrant Characteristics (health and age)
- h. Rights of All Workers to Safe Working Conditions and Liveable 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 of Appeal, and Humane Treatment)
- k. Education and Training

Part b: Of the “High Priority” rated items , select the three most important and list them in order of importance. 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

QUESTION 2 (25 minutes)

Unauthorized immigrants currently in the U.S. should be treated as follows: Rate each *High Priority, Lower Priority, Disagree, No Consensus*

- 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 US 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
- f. Assess Fines Before Allowed To Earn Legal Adjustment Of Status

QUESTION 3 (5 minutes)

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: Rate *High Priority, Lower Priority, Disagree, No Consensus*

- 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 (5 minutes)

In order to deal more effectively with unauthorized immigrants, Federal immigration law should include a Social Security Card or Other National Identification Card with Secure Identifiers for All Persons Residing in the U.S. *High Priority, Lower Priority, Disagree, No Consensus*

QUESTION 4b: (25 minutes)

Federal immigration law dealing with unauthorized immigrants should be enforced by including: Rate each *High Priority, Lower Priority, Disagree, No Consensus*

- i. Physical Barriers (such as fences) and Surveillance at Borders
- ii. Increased Personnel at Land, Air, and Sea Entry Points
- iii. More effective tracking of persons with non-immigrant visas until they leave the country
- iv. Verification Documents, such as Green Cards and Work Permits with Secure Identifiers.
- v. Improved technology to facilitate employee verification of employee visa status
- vi. improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies
- vii. A Program to Allow Immigrant Workers to Go in and Out of the U.S. to Meet Seasonal and Sporadic Labor Needs
- viii. Significant Fines Proportionate to Revenue for Employers Who Fail to Take Adequate Steps to Verify Work Authorization of Employees

QUESTION 5: (5 minutes) **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 “

QUESTION 6: (10 minutes) **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.**

__Consensus __No Consensus

QUESTION 7: Add brief Comments (150 words limit)

LWV greets local govt. in January

BY LIBBY FRAAS

Go ahead and mark up your new calendar with these meeting dates. Our magistrates, mayors and planning commissioners say they look forward to our New Year visits to their first meetings of the year.

This year we hope to briefly thank them for their service and remind them of LWV efforts to encourage citizen education and voter participation.

Remember we need to get on the agenda of these meetings IN ADVANCE if we plan to present a brief statement, especially at Richmond City Commission where being on the agenda for those who want to talk at a meeting was an important issue this past year.

Contact a board member if you can cover one or more of these meetings.

A year-end checklist

As you may remember, during our 2007 visits to government meetings, we read a list of New Year's resolutions which included accessibility, transparency and openness. One of our recommendations was to encourage the govt. bodies to post their meeting times and agendas on their Web sites.

Once again Berea leads the way with timely posting of the meeting times of its city council and planning and zoning meetings and agendas on the home page of the city site at <<http://www.cityofbera.com>>. The site also has links to the e-mail addresses of its city councilmen.

Richmond's Web site is also exemplary with the most com-

JANUARY 2008 MEETING DATES

Check your calendar and try to attend one or more of these eight local government meetings. Ask a friend, co-worker or neighbor to join you. At the meeting, league members introduce themselves to the officials and make a statement about what the league's mission is. We would like to print a brief report about each meeting in the February Voter so please volunteer to write up the report and e-mail to Voter editor Libby Fraas <libby.fraas@eku.edu>.

Date & Time	Government body	Place
Tuesday, Jan. 8 9:30 a.m.	Madison County Fiscal Court	Berea Police & Municipal Bldg. 314 Chestnut St.
Tuesday, Jan. 8 6 p.m.	Richmond City Commission	Richmond City Hall Commission Chambers
Tuesday, Jan. 8 6:30 p.m.	Berea Planning & Zoning (work session)	Berea City Hall 212 Chestnut St.
Thursday, Jan. 10 6 p.m.	Madison Co. School Board	Madison Co. Board Office 550 S. Keeneland Drive
Tuesday, Jan. 15 6:30 p.m..	Berea City Council	Berea Police & Municipal Bldg. 314 Chestnut St.
Monday, Jan. 21 7 p.m.	Berea School Board	Berea Community School Theater
Tuesday, Jan. 22 6 p.m.	Madison Co. Planning Commission (business session)	Madison Co. Courthouse Fiscal Court Room
Wed., Jan. 23 5:30 p.m.	Richmond Planning & Zoning Commission (business session)	Richmond City Hall

prehensive listing of all its commission and committee meetings for weeks in advance. It also provides access to each elected official including cell phone numbers and e-mail links. We encourage Richmond to add their city commission agendas to the main page meeting schedule as planning director Mike Roberts has done on the P&Z page: <http://www.richmond.ky.us/departments/Planning%20&%20Zoning/>

The county site still needs to update its meeting schedule on a more timely basis and it would be helpful to provide e-mail links to the magistrates.

And we urge both school boards to add specific meeting

information on the home pages of their Web sites as well as ways to contact school board members.

CHANGE HAPPENS....

**Changing your address or e-mail?
Be sure to let LWV know if you have a change of address, a new phone number or e-mail address.**

Fed up with 'robo calls'?

Pardon the interruption...

If you are like me, you get turned off by "robo-calls" during campaigns. My answering machine was treated to automated phone calls from Ed Worley, Wendell Ford, and Joe B. Hall among others. I missed the call from the old crooner Pat Boone ("a fellow Kentuckian by descent of old Dan'l Boone"), who warned that "ultra-liberal Beshear" might make Kentucky another "San Francisco." The message was paid for by the Republican Party of Kentucky.

A Republican legislator must be fed up also. Rep. Jimmy Higdon, R-Lebanon, has pre-filed a bill that would ban automated or recorded political telephone messages. Those violating the ban could be fined up to \$1,000. It's probably not constitutional, but it could become a popular notion among those of us who thought getting on a "no-call" list freed us from such interruptions in our homes.

Thoughtful forums

Thumbs up to members Cecile Schubert, Jeanne Hibberd, Joe Gershtenson and others who produced the judicial candidate forums this year. Many commented on the depth and quality of the two forums. The questions were well thought out and relevant and the format should provide a model for judicial campaign conduct in the future. Thanks also to the candidates who were well prepared, provoking us to consider important matters pertaining to local justice and the courts.

Big Blue Turnout?

Just a note on the election: Voter turnout in Madison County was around 37.5

percent with only 18,000 participating in the governor's race out of almost 50,000 registered. Beshear received 9,840 votes to 8,849 for Fletcher in our county.

In the two-person race for the 25th District Judge, Earl Ray Neal beat David Perdue 2 to 1 in Madison County. The two-county (Clark and Madison) total for Neal was 13,922 to Perdue's 10,799. However, the candidate who got the most votes from Madison Countians was Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer, who garnered almost 13,000 votes. Go Big Blue!

Right-to-vote deja vu?

The 2008 session of the General Assembly starts up Jan. 8 with a new governor and the usually gloomy news of budget shortfalls. That and the fact that casino gambling was the main plank in the platform of Gov. Steve Beshear will place casinos high on legislators' agendas. Sen. David Boswell, a Democrat from Owensboro, has already introduced a bill to implement casino gambling including at horse racing venues.

Another issue also requiring voter ratification if passed is the restoration of voting rights to felons — a position supported by LWV and affiliated groups. Democrats Jesse Crenshaw of Lexington and Darryl Owens of Louisville have pre-filed a bill to revise the Kentucky Constitution to automatically restore the right to vote to felons when their sentence expires or at the expiration of probation or parole.

— Libby Fraas

Please submit your thoughts on local issues to libby.fraas@eku.edu

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We need you!

Members are needed to help with fund raising, voter registration drives and meetings. Contact LWV by phone number listed above or by sending an e-mail to lwvbmc@yahoo.com to volunteer.



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Immigration study to conclude with Jan. 17 consensus meeting. Bring this Voter!