

# Wave Lengths

A publication of the League of Women Voters of Lincoln County

November 2007

## US Immigration Policy: November consensus discussion

Our November general meeting topic is US immigration policy. After we hear from our speaker, Jorge Hernandez of Centro de Ayuda, we will divide ourselves into small groups to discuss aspects of the complex and controversial immigration issues. Then we will hear from each group, providing an opportunity for all members present to discuss the various aspects of the issue, and address the LWVUS consensus questions.

Many of our members have followed the national LWV immigration study and read the study briefs and background papers on the LWV website, [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). Our October general meeting featured a presentation and conversation on immigration. Now, in preparation for our November meeting, we're sending you a brief overview and discussion questions (copied in part from LWV Lane County's "Everymember Material").

## Brief Overview:

Almost 12% of the US population of 300 million are foreign born. About one-third of this number are citizens, one-third are authorized immigrants, and one-third are unauthorized immigrants. Of all immigrants, about 53% are from Latin America (mostly Mexico), and 27% are from Asia. 1970 saw the historic low in the percentage of foreign-born in the US population; since then increased immigration has brought the percentage of foreign-born in the US population back to the levels of the late 1800s and early 1900s. About 1.8 million immigrants now come annually. Approximately 800,000 of them are unauthorized and are widely dispersed, living in areas that did not previously have large numbers of immigrants. In Oregon, the percentage of the population that is foreign born more than doubled in the period 1990-2005.

Current US immigration policy does not reflect this reality, nor does it meet our nation's crucial economic and social priorities. LWVUS would like to take an active role in changing this policy. Our local league members' education and responses to the consensus questions will contribute to that effort.

## Discussion Questions:

### 1. Criteria for authorized immigrant entry to US

Family reunification and employment have been the reasons for most visas that have been issued by the US government under current law.

What relative importance should US immigration policy give to these and other criteria (for and against issuance) when issuing visas?

Discuss possible criteria listed below and feel free to add others: (Space for notes)

- Family reunification
- Need for workers by US employers
- Need for employment, freedom of religion,
- freedom from political oppression, by

- Benefits to US society of cultural and racial diversity  
Immigrant characteristics, e.g., education, health, age, criminal history
- Impact on job security, wages, and working conditions of US workers

**2. How should the 10-12 million unauthorized immigrants currently in the US be treated? Should any/all of them be allowed to earn legal status based on some combination of the criteria below?**

- Length of residence in the U.S.
- Needs of US employers
- Immediate family members of legal residents
- Payment of fines

**3. What are the costs and benefits of Immigration to our society at large, the Federal government, state and local governments, employers, Immigrant workers, and low-skilled and high-skilled citizen workers?**

**4. Can we (and do we want to) support employer verification of eligibility to work?**

Current US Immigration policy requires employers to verify legal status of workers. However, the system is ineffective. Those who have studied this issue (e.g. Migration Policy Institute) conclude that an effective system would require all individuals, US citizens as well as non-citizens, to provide secure biometric documentation of their eligibility to work. It would also require new massive data bases and the commitment of sustained resources to support, update and maintain the privacy of these databases.

**5. What should be the key elements of Immigration law enforcement?**

How important are the following?  
 Physical barriers and border surveillance  
 Increased personnel at ports of entry  
 Effectiveness for those with non-immigrant visas until they leave the county  
 Significant fines for employers who fail to adequately verify employee work authorization  
 A "guest-worker" program.

## President's Message

### Ruth Kistler

The November special election is over. The airwaves, the US mail, my email, have been filled with pleas to vote for or against the November ballot measures. I've spent a lot of time printing and distributing Voters' Guides, checking and replenishing my stacks of Voters' Guides in Newport, Toledo, and Siletz, and talking up the necessity of a "Yes on 49" to all who might, willingly or unwillingly, be listening. The election results, with the passage of Measure 49, have helped make all that effort so worthwhile. My thanks and congratulations to all of you who have worked so successfully on this effort.

Looking ahead, along with the presidential and other candidate choices on the November 2008 ballot will come a slew of ballot initiatives. It's not too early to remind ourselves, "Think before you ink."

The initiative petitions are already being circulated. The initiative process is part of our Oregon democratic system, but read the petition and think hard before you sign an initiative petition. Consider whether the particular issue is best addressed by a popular vote. Do your part to hold down ballot clutter.

One last thought on the topic of elections and Voters' Services -- Did you know that you can write a check to the Education Fund, LWVOREF, and send it to our local treasurer, Jamie Auburn (P.O. Box 1577, Waldport OR)? Such a contribution is tax deductible to you. And our local league can use the funds to pay our state league assessment (PMP) or to pay Voters' Services expenses, our largest expenses. It's a real Win-Win situation. Irresistible!



The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government. It influences public policy through education and advocacy.

### LWVLC Officers

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Secretary	Suzanne Maxson	563-5231
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## Membership

There are many reasons for being a member in the League of Women Voters. For me it meant being part of the decision process, rather than being a passive citizen ... being a person who is doing something, rather than having things done to me ... having direct input to what is important, not just waiting to see what will happen.

Over the years it has been challenging to be part of this process. Generally, I agree with the Leagues positions, and that has made it a satisfying activity. But where I have disagreed, it has been just as rewarding to be able to express my position and have my right to do so acknowledged. There are few organizations that offer this acceptance.

There is so much good about our community, our State and our Nation, but also much that needs to be done. One person, alone, cannot accomplish a whole lot, but working together we can make a difference.

Each and every member is important. Your continuing participation as a member, attending meetings, speaking out, are invaluable.

Together we have made and can continue to make a difference.

Sue Krein  
Membership Chair

**And a reminder, have you sent your membership dues for this year to Treasurer Jamie Aubourn?**



**Martha Holmberg, Grapefruit Chair, reminds everyone to get orders in by November 16th.**

**Members may bring their order information to the League Meeting on Thursday, November 15<sup>th</sup>.**

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**If any of this information is  
not correct, please contact  
Sue Krein.**

If you have not yet paid your 07-08 dues:

the time is

**now!**

League of Women Voters  
of Lincoln County



## Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

	Individual	Household
_____ I am a new member	Annual Membership Dues (Circle one) \$50	\$75

\_\_\_\_\_ I am renewing my membership

The membership year begins October 1.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in working with the League.

Please make checks payable to: LWV of Lincoln County

\_\_\_\_\_ Please call me.

Dues are not tax deductible.

**Contributions to LWV Oregon and LWV United States Education Fund are tax deductible.**

**I wish to contribute an additional amount to the LWV Oregon Education Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**I wish to contribute to LWV Lincoln County \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**These contributions assist LWV Voter Service activities and education projects.**

*(Contributions to Educational Funds and payment of dues must be on separate checks.)*

**Please mail to: Jamie Auburn, Treasurer, P. O. Box 1557, Waldport, OR 97394**

Information & checks to:

Sue Krein, POBox 1, Depot Bay 97341