

THE FRESNO VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, FRESNO
1345 BULLDOG LANE, SUITE 4
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JANUARY 2008
Vol. 66: 9

JANUARY

- Sa 12 9 AM-Noon **IMMIGRATION STUDY PANEL: Perspectives—How Can We Enforce Immigration Law?** Stone Soup, 1345 Bulldog Lane at Sixth Street. See insert.
- W 16 5 PM **LWVF Board Meeting.** League office. All members are welcome.
- Sa 26 9 AM–Noon **IMMIGRATION CONSENSUS MEETING.** All members are encouraged to attend. Only members in good standing may discuss and vote on the position.

Dates to Save:

- Feb. 2 9 AM-Noon **LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEAGUE PROGRAM PLANNING.**
- Feb. 5 7 AM – 8 PM **PRIMARY ELECTION, STATE BALLOT ISSUES.** See page 3 and insert.
- Feb. 6 Noon – 1 **Lunch'n'Learn. Local Mental Health Perspectives: Current Issues, Future Advocacy.** Bring your lunch and we'll provide the beverages. Guests are welcome.
- April 26 9:30 AM **LWVF ANNUAL MEETING: Fresno Bee Columnist Bill McEwen is our featured speaker!** Save the date now. Guests are welcome!



USE SMART VOTER
AS YOUR HOTLINE!

<http://www.smartvoter.org>

Voters can find their polling places quickly and efficiently, at <http://www.smartvoter.org>. Enter the voter's address and zip code, and presto! **Polling locations made easy!**

The February 5, 2008 Primary Election is the vote to determine the U.S. presidential candidates that California's delegates will support at their respective party conventions. The February ballot includes seven statewide ballot initiatives. Your ballot may also include one or more local issues.

Locating the polling place and sample ballot for your address on Smart Voter does not mean that you are registered to vote. **If you wish to check your registration or re-register to change your name, address or party preference, or if you think you are registered to vote, but you do not receive your sample ballot by January 17 (about 2 1/2 weeks before Election Day) call the Elections Department, 488-3246 to check your registration status.** The last day to register to vote in California is January 22 (15 days before the election).

The Fresno County Elections Department, 2221 Kern Street, is open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day. Please call the Elections Department, 488-3246, if you have any questions about voting.

SAVE YOUR SAMPLE BALLOT. A sample ballot will be mailed to you by January 15. The back of the sample ballot has the address of your polling place (unless you are in a "Mail-in Only" precinct). Your polling place may be different from where you voted the last time.

Immigration Study Panel: How Can We Enforce Immigration Laws?

The LWVFresno has scheduled the final public educational panel, "How Can We Enforce Immigration Laws?" for January 12, from 9 a.m. to noon, at the League office in the Stone Soup facility, 1345 Bulldog Lane at Sixth Street. Speakers include **Kevin Rooney**, assistant U.S. attorney in Fresno, and **Tom Bohigian**, chief of staff for Barbara Boxer.

This community event is free and parking is provided in the gated lot (enter from Sixth Street on the driveway south of the County Health Care offices). The lot and buildings are handicapped accessible. Refreshments will be served.

Consensus Meeting: Saturday, January 26, 9 a.m. to noon at Stone Soup. As the Immigration Study winds down, local Leagues meet to reach consensus on the Immigration Study questions and send their recommendations to the LWVUS. Only the LWVF members in good standing may participate in Consensus meeting. Information and details of the meetings are provided in the center insert in this *VOTER*.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
Francine Farber, 226-5455

Dear Friends,

It seems inescapable to review to review the past year's achievements as we prepare to focus on the League's Program plans for the coming year, so here goes!

We have had a productive year, both in services for our members and for the public. Some of us have taken leadership roles in housing, mental health, transportation, education, regional planning and healthy dairies. With a modest grant we put on a successful workshop on Constitution Education, which itself led to a generous bequest to promote Constitution Education throughout Fresno County. You'll see more about this exciting venture on page 6.

We received public commendation for our role in holding the Fresno Unified Board of Education to the spirit and letter of the Brown Act as well as for leading the way toward voluntary universal preschool in Fresno County.

We hosted a new and prospective member brunch for the first time and it promises to become an annual event. We ran a Regional Workshop for Central Valley leagues and received a commendation from the LWVC President for our efforts. We presented two Lunch & Learn seminars for our members and the public on Education topics and will hold our third Immigration workshop this month. Along the way we had a worthwhile visitation to the new Juvenile Justice Campus. We set program priorities in the local and state League Program Planning meeting, and at our annual meeting Assemblyman Juan Arambula was our guest speaker. Oh yes, don't forget those fund-raising watches.

Considering that we are an all-volunteer organization we accomplished amazing things. We look forward to another rewarding year in 2008. We will need each and every one of you to keep our track record going, so please continue with your gratifying support.

Francine

**MENTAL HEALTH PANEL IS
FEBRUARY 6 LUNCH'N'LEARN**

Helen Siporin, Vice President, NAMI Fresno, Curt Thornton, Secretary, Mental Health Advisory Board, and David Weikel, Director, Mental Health America of the Central Valley, will present a grounding in current mental health issues and discuss future advocacy efforts. might be focused discuss a broad range of mental health topics: current issues in our local Children's Mental Health and Adult Behavioral Health Departments, implications of upcoming budget shortages, the Mental Health Services Act and new directions for service delivery. Mental health is one of LWVF's four priorities for the year, so please come.



**LWVUS HONORS
ROSELLEN KERSHAW
WITH A LIFE MEMBERSHIP**

Rosellen Kershaw, who holds the current record for longevity as a member of LWVF, has received recognition from the LWVUS for her many years of service. Appointed an Honorary Life Member of the League, Rosellen received a certificate and letter signed by Mary G. Wilson, LWVUS President. President Wilson noted, "It is the generous gift of time and other personal resources you've given that creates meaningful change in communities here and throughout the world."

Warmest congratulations and best wishes to Rosellen, our valued member who has served the League in so many significant ways, notably as president from 1958-60 and 1988-89.

~~~~~  
~\*~ **MEMBERSHIP** ~\*~  
**Sue Sheragy, 435-1807**

**Many thanks** to members whose dues are current, especially those who have sent an extra donation this year! If you are not sure when your dues are due, please look at the upper right hand corner of your VOTER address label. If the year is 2008 on your label, your dues are due next April or October; if the year is 2007, you owe dues for last year.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT**  
Terri Figgs, 431-7274



**REDISTRICTING!**  
Help Put the New  
"Voters FIRST Initiative"  
On the November 2008 Ballot

California Voters FIRST, a potential redistricting initiative for the November 2008 ballot, has been endorsed by the League of Women Voters California, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, AARP, and Common Cause among other supporters. The initiative would set up a process to redraw district boundaries for State Senate, State Assembly, and Board of Equalization representation using constitutional criteria. Redistricting would be carried out by a 14-person Commission consisting of five Democrats, five Republicans and four others not registered as members of either major party. The main points of the initiative can be found in the enclosed flyer. A detailed description is available at <http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/redistrict/votersfirstinitiative.pdf>

On December 15<sup>th</sup> Christina Lokke and LaToya Jarrett from Common Cause met with local League members and representatives from AARP, the Democratic Party, and the Green Party at Stone Soup to provide information and answer questions on the initiative. Following the meeting a majority of LWVF Board members endorsed the initiative by electronic vote so that the information could be included in the January issue of the *Voter*. The Initiative process requires gathering sufficient signatures of registered voters to have the proposition placed on the ballot. Mid-April is the proposed deadline for submitting the signatures so that the Secretary of State is able to verify their validity in time for the November 2008 ballot.

**How you can help: We need volunteers - lots!** - to start in January for the first phase, gathering signatures to qualify this measure for the November 2008 ballot. You can make a difference! If you'd like to join in this effort, e-mail Advocacy Assistant Maggie Young, at [myoung@lwvc.org](mailto:myoung@lwvc.org) or call 916-442-7215. Sign on now for this reform effort to make democracy work!

Chris Carson, Government Director  
[govt@lwvc.org](mailto:govt@lwvc.org)

**Redistricting Is Top On LWVF's Reform List!**

Gathering signatures can be a great voter education project that's easy and fun. Start collecting signatures from family, friends and colleagues who are interested. A sign-up sheet is enclosed or can be downloaded from the Web sites below: <http://www.commoncause.org/atf/cf/{FB3C17E2-CDD1-4DF6-92BE-BD4429893665}/CA%20VOTES%20FIRST%20ENDORSEMENT%20FORM%20GRAVSCALE.PDF>

The LWVC has redistricting information on the Web at <http://ca.lwvc.org/lwvc/action/redistrict/>

For information about other LWVC action on health-care or bill status reports, please visit the links below:

1. <http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/healthcare/index.html>
2. <http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/bsr/index.html>

**VOTER SERVICES REPORT**  
Liz Shields, 298-5183

**Speakers Bureau**

Speaking on the pros and cons of the ballot propositions is an excellent way to educate yourself, well before the election. Call Liz Shields at 298-5183 to volunteer. Currently, there are 7 statewide propositions as well as some local measures on the Fresno County ballots.

**Election Department Volunteers**

**Please save some time to volunteer on the days around the 2008 elections:** February 5 presidential primary election, the state and local primaries on June 3 and the general election on November 2. Various jobs are available to suit your time and abilities.

**Election Resources**

The League of Women Voters of California Education Fund offers many educational resources for the three elections in 2008, including the Smart Voter Web site at <http://www.smartvoter.org/> and the *Easy Voter Guide*, at <http://www.easyvoter.org/site/evguide/>.

Visit the Smart Voter site, to look up your polling place and your personalized ballot, and to find comprehensive information about local elections, plus links to other helpful sites. The *Easy Voter Guide* is a quick guide to statewide elections for the new and busy voter.

~~~~~ NATURAL RESOURCES ~~~~~  
Mary Savala 431-1227

JESSE MORROW MOUNTAIN PROPOSAL

An application for a conditional use permit to mine aggregate, manufacture concrete and asphalt, and recycle used road building materials at Jesse Morrow Mountain, a southeastern Fresno County site adjacent to SR 180 East and the Friant Kern Canal, was filed in Fresno County in March, 2005. The applicant, RMC Pacific Material, Inc. has since been acquired by Cemex, a Mexican corporation which owns most of the Mountain and proposes to do hard rock mining at the site over decades, reducing parts of the Mountain by several hundred feet. Opponents to the application have organized themselves as Friends of Jesse Morrow Mountain. They have specified their objections in detailed prepared comments to community groups as well as the government bodies involved in the permitting process.

Background. Aggregate resources on the San Joaquin River and other areas in the Central Valley have been depleted, and the mining industry is looking to the Kings River for new sources of sand and gravel to meet the burgeoning growth of the Central Valley for new roads, highways, airport expansions, public facilities, and private commercial and residential development. A big part of the cost of building materials is in transporting the heavy materials, and Cemex argues that the Jessie Morrow site is key to providing these building materials to public and private development at a reasonable cost.

The California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology produced an update of information related to aggregate production in the Fresno Region in 1999. The update report concluded that 93 million tons of aggregate resources, primarily in the San Joaquin River, would supply the region's demand only until 2011. The report also estimated that there were almost two billion tons of such resources in the Kings River area, where some mining already exists and more is proposed.

Arguments. The applicant proposes Jesse Morrow Mountain as a new source of mineral aggregates to avoid additional use of the Kings River Resources, loss of agricultural lands, disruption of the Kings River environment and mining in the Kings River aquifer. The applicant

claims that the Jesse Morrow Mountain site will not be situated in environmentally sensitive river basins or on prime farmland

The opponents claim that the application describes a heavy industrial operation with significant and unmitigable impacts on the geography, water, air, traffic, noise and agricultural land use. Further, the mountain is a scenic landmark and a sacred Native American ceremonial and burial site.

Everyone believes that the application for a conditional use permit requires an environmental impact report.

Complicating the discussion has been an unforeseen consequence of the Measure C Extension passed in November 2006. The extension includes the rural project to widen SR 180 East from Clovis Avenue to Frankwood. Proponents of the project argued that widening SR 180 East would be necessary for moving agricultural product from the orange orchards of Southeast Fresno to Highway 99 north and south; reducing congestion caused by development in Orange Cove, Reedley, and Sanger; and providing easier access via this scenic tourist route to Kings Canyon National Park. However, many of the supporters of that taxpayer funded widening project are opponents of the Kings River and Jessie Morrow Mountain mining operations. Those voters now realize that a wider, straighter SR 180 East will also be cited to mitigate the impacts of the mining truck traffic.

EIR Progress. The Fresno County planning staff has been bogged down. The Department has experienced an eightfold increase in preparing Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) over the last several years, without any additional staff for planning and analysis. The County is presently working on three EIRs for Conditional Use Permits to allow aggregate mining: CMI and Vulcan on the Kings River and Jessie Morrow Mountain. Recently the County has hired a coordinating consultant for the three EIRs and hopes to make the draft EIR for Jessie Morrow Mountain available for comment early in 2008. An additional benefit of the coordinating consultant is that the cumulative effects of the three new mining operations in the same vicinity will be considered.

League members will be analyzing and commenting on the EIR. Readers' comments and questions are welcome and should be directed to Mary Savala 431-1227. ~

MEGA DAIRIES

Despite overwhelming public support for strict regulations controlling air pollution emissions from new mega dairies, the majority of the Board of supervisors voted October 23, 2007 to pass a weak regulating ordinance for siting these new dairies and permitting large expansions of existing dairies in Fresno County.

Public concerns expressed at two public meetings and in large numbers of written comments to staff, as well as phone calls, emails and letters to Board members, supported meaningful restrictions on air pollution emissions, protection of ground water resources, meaningful buffers between dairies, and between dairies and sensitive areas such as schools, residences, parks and open space.

Supervisors Judy Case, Phil Larson, and Bob Waterston voted to approve an ordinance with no air quality regulation, reduced buffers, and minimal protection for ground water from dairy sewage lagoons. The Board approved a negative declaration for environmental review, in essence saying that thousands more cattle in Fresno County had no significant environmental impact and an environmental impact report (EIR) was not necessary. The Board discussed the probability of a lawsuit against the County on the basis of no EIR for the project, but the majority dismissed that probability as incidental to the matter.

In fact, a lawsuit was filed on November 15, 2007 in the Fresno County Superior Court by Medical Advocates for Healthy Air, represented by attorney Patience Milrod, and a rural west Fresno County resident represented by California Rural Legal Assistance. A mandatory settlement conference is required 90 days from filing to see if the parties can come to an agreement out of court. Possibilities might be that the County agrees to the preparation of an EIR without further ado, or the County might agree to amendments to the ordinance mitigating the environmental impacts, making an EIR unnecessary, or the parties might be unable to come to agreement, and the matter will go to a judicial decision.

In the meantime, Supervisors Susan Anderson and Henry Perea have not given up and are working to ascertain if the Board would be willing to revisit the ordinance and consider amendments addressing air pollution emissions, ground water protections, and buffers.

FRESNO TO HOST THE FIRST SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY HOUSING SYMPOSIUM

Sara Hedgpeth-Harris, 251-3236

The City of Fresno has proudly announced the first San Joaquin Valley Housing Symposium. The event will host housing professionals statewide in a full day of networking, discussions and exchange of ideas about "land use topics that are vital to the future of California's new frontier." The event will be held on **Thursday, January 10, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Fresno Convention Center, 848 "M" Street.**

The symposium focus is sustainable growth strategies, including educational tracks on regionalism, compact development and affordable housing. Lynn Jacobs, Director of the California Department of Housing and Community Development, is the keynote speaker for the morning plenary session. Renowned California author William Fulton, President and CEO of the Solimar Research Group, is the lunchtime keynote speaker. Registration includes a catered lunch, and a networking reception hosted by the Urban Land Institute follows the event.

The symposium is being presented by the City of Fresno's Housing and Community Development Division, in collaboration with the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, the San Joaquin Valley Regional Blueprint, and the Greater Fresno Chamber of Commerce.

Details and registration forms (\$50.00 per person) are available online at www.sjvhousing.com. For information, call Rhonda Jorn, Public Affairs Manager 621-7777 or Patti Miller, Public Affairs Administrator 621-7795

PROGRAM PLANNING REPORT **Georgia Sisson, 439-5410**

On December 8th the Touyas hosted our League Holiday Party with food provided by the League Board. Thirty-some guests enjoyed the delicious buffet of hors d'oeuvres, desserts and beverages. Musical entertainment was provided by Francine Farber, Patsy Anderson, John Donaldson, Ward and Georgia Sisson and the attending League singers. We learned that day that Clara had broken her elbow, and Mary Savala stood in for her. Fortunately, the house had been decorated and the tables were out, just awaiting lading.

Heal fast, Clara! And many thanks to you and Juan for your hospitality!

EDUCATION
Kay Bertken, 226-2720

**Community Effort Can Keep Kids in School:
Accurate Data, Mentoring, Support for Family**

A Lunch 'n Learn meeting with Pete Summers, Director of FUSD's Intervention and Prevention Program, and Dave Calhoun, the FUSD Director of Research, Evaluation and Assessment, was held at the League's Stone Soup office on October 29, 2007. Calhoun opened the meeting with data on high school drop out rates, noting the complexity in measuring that rate. Fresno Unified in 2005-06 had a one year high school drop out rate of 4.6%: that is, 4.6% of students in grades 9 through 12 who were previously enrolled or were anticipated to enroll were *not known to be enrolled* in any school district as of the date for October-mandated enrollment reports to the state [emphasis added – Ed.]. The extrapolated four year drop out rate for grades 9 through 12 for 2005-06 was 17.5%. Those rates were above the state averages of 3.5% for one year and 14.3% for four. Nevertheless, FUSD's 2005-06 rates were much closer to the state average--and had declined since 2002-03, when Fresno's single year rate was 6.2% and the state's was 3.1%. When Fresno's charter schools were not included, the overall one year drop out rate for all students in grades 9 -12 was 3.8%; slightly higher among its Hispanic (3.9%) and African American (4.6%) students. Moreover, these numbers did not count the approximately 25% of each high school graduating cohort which leaves the District prior to graduation. **Current state efforts to improve student tracking across Districts are a necessary and positive step in understanding the drop out figures.**

Pete Summers summarized the District's intervention efforts to improve attendance and prevent dropping out. He indicated that traditional punitive approaches simply do not work when the responsible parent of the involved student is frequently a single mother barely holding her family together. He emphasized that the problem of school attendance and dropping out is not just a school issue: It is a community problem that requires community support for at-risk families. **One-on-one attention and encouragement are found to help students stay focused on an education or career goal. Call Pete Summers, 457-3340 to ask how you can help a young person reach that goal.**

Preschool Planning Web Site

The consultant for the Fresno County Preschool Plan has set up a Web site for information on pre-school planning throughout the state. Plan 4 Pre-school, contains information about recent studies, dates for upcoming events (some in Fresno) and reports from activity on this topic in the last several years. If you click on at <http://www.plan4preschool.org/>, then Fresno County in the right hand panel, you can see all of the material from the Community Conversations sponsored by LWVF.

Minigrants for Education Projects!

A plan to expend a \$10,000 bequest from the **Billings I & R Foundation** was set in motion when representatives from the LWVF, the Fresno County Office of Education, Fresno Unified School District and Judge Hilary Chittick met recently. **LWVF member Betty Peterson, widow of Bob Billings, made the generous donation** to the League after reading about our Constitution Day activities in a *Fresno Bee* Op-Ed piece written by Board member Liz Shields. **Betty has earmarked the donation for education about the U.S. Constitution for Fresno County middle and high school students.**

Plans are to establish a minigrant program for social studies teachers in middle and high schools. Interested teachers will complete short applications for grants to sponsor **projects involving hands-on creative activities to teach students about the various facets of the Constitution.** Applications will be screened by League members initially, then sent to a committee comprised of Judge Chittick, an attorney, school representatives, League representatives and one or more students. They will select up to 20 winners to receive \$500 each.

Forms and procedures are currently being prepared. The process will be kicked off on Constitution Day, September 17, 2008, when teachers may request applications at their school. Awards will be made before the end of 2008 and projects will be underway January through April, 2009. **A minigrant expo to demonstrate the projects is planned for May, 2009,** possibly in the lobby of the Fresno County Office of Education. Boards of Education and local media will receive information about the availability of the awards and the nature of the projects.

**We are grateful to our sponsors for their support in "Making Democracy Work."
League members who wish to be sponsors or to secure sponsorships for us,
may contact Francine Farber at 226-5455**

PLACE ADS HERE



JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS!
Men and Women of Voting Age Making Democracy Work

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Liz Shields, 298-5183
VOTER Editors
Patsy Anderson, 439-2377
Liz Shields, 298-5183

MISSION: The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through voter education and advocacy on issues.

NONPARTISANSHIP: The League does not support or oppose any candidate or political party.

DIVERSITY POLICY: There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the LWVF on the basis of race, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or socio-economic level.

TO PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS: For more information, please leave your name and phone number on the League message phone, 226-8683, or contact our Membership Chair, Sue Sheragy, at 304-1650. Prospective members receive an issue of *The Fresno Voter* at no cost.

JOIN US! Members receive newsletters national, state and local Leagues, may access local, state and national League websites and list-serves, and may participate in League studies of issues. Yearly Dues: ~ Individual - \$60 ~ Family - \$90 (2 members, same address) ~ Student - \$30 Please send your check payable to the League of Women Voters, Fresno, with your registration form (below), to: LWVF, 1345 Bulldog Lane, Suite 4, Fresno, CA 93710.

Name: _____ Ph. _____ E-mail _____

Address: _____

- - - - - Reminder, cut and turn the section below so fold is on bottom - - - - -

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- 6. Education
- 7. Support our Sponsors in the Business Community!

Inserts: Immigration Study Information

LWVC Stands on the Propositions/2008 Election Calendar
Redistricting Initiative for November 2008 Ballot

IMMIGRATION STUDY – BACKGROUND

Dolores O’Neal, 435-1185

Members are encouraged to study periodical articles, read from the bibliography provided by LWVUS, attend the panel discussion on January 12, and bring comments and questions on immigration issues to the Study Committee’s presentation and discussion at the Consensus Meeting on January 26. All members in good standing may participate in this grassroots consensus process.

U.S. IMMIGRATION: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE By Katherine Fennelly

(Reprinted from *The National Voter*, February 2007)

Few subjects in the U.S. are as controversial as immigration or have as contentious a history. Immigration scholars Simon and Lynch¹ 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. Yet the notion that earlier waves of European immigrants were welcomed with open arms is false. At the end of the 19th century anti-immigrant backlash toward non-Protestant immigrants was vicious, as shown in this cartoon....² [Cartoon not reproduced here.]

As historian Donna Gabaccia reminds us, the current outrage against “illegal immigrants” also has historical parallels. ***Studying the past reminds us that each restriction of immigration produced its own patterns of illegal entry. These immigration restrictions targeted Chinese laborers after 1882, anarchists after 1902, and Italians after 1924. The illegal immigrants of the past included all three groups—and others, too.***³

Moreover, “assimilation” of earlier waves of immigrants wasn’t as rapid or complete as we might believe through the lenses of our rose-colored glasses. When the *Federalist Papers* were drafted in 1787, many languages besides English were spoken in the United States. German immigrants, for example, lived in German towns with German newspapers, clubs and schools until well into the 20th century.⁴ Although there was tacit agreement that Americans would share the English language, bilingualism was politically protected as one of the rights for which pilgrims had come to America and was considered an advantage for “everyday trading, teaching and spreading the gospel.”⁵

The Chinese Exclusion Act, passed by Congress in 1882, “forever changed Americans’ relationship to immigration” by endorsing definitions of race and

class as criteria to define particular groups as “undesirable aliens,” ineligible for entry or citizenship.⁶

However, non-Asian immigration remained largely unregulated until 1924, when rancorous debates resulted in the passing of the Johnson-Reed Act—a bill that ended open immigration from Europe by enacting a quota system for the purpose of limiting “undesirable immigrants” from southern and eastern Europe. This Act began an era of restriction. It defined “native stock” as descendants of the white population of the country when it was founded. Interestingly, Mexican immigrants were exempted from both the quota and the restrictions on citizenship because the Southwestern states depended upon cheap, abundant Mexican laborers.⁷

Historical Origins of Mexican Immigration

The origin of the contemporary chant, “we didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us” can be found in the terms of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo after the Mexican-American War. The treaty gave the northern half of Mexico to the United States and stipulated that all inhabitants in the ceded area who did not announce their intention to remain Mexican citizens or leave the territory in one year would automatically become U.S. citizens. Those who did not, de facto, became “illegal aliens.”⁷

American policies related to Mexican workers can be defined historically as cycles of recruitment in times of labor shortages, followed by massive restrictions and deportations. During World War I, concern over potential shortages of farm labor led to legislation that explicitly called for the temporary admission of 76,802 Mexican workers. Within six years of war’s end, in 1924, the U.S. Border Patrol was established to secure the country’s borders. In the 1930s, during the Great Depression, thousands of Mexican immigrants and citizens were deported. However, with the onset of World War II at the end of the decade, renewed concern over potential labor shortages led to the creation of the Bracero Program to import Mexican workers.⁸ By 1953, there were over three quarters of a million unauthorized Mexicans in the U.S., prompting the U.S. government to create “Operation Wetback” the following year to arrest and deport them. After 1964, when the Bracero Program was discontinued, tens of thousands of agricultural jobs were still available to Mexicans, but they were no longer able to secure legal entry visas.

Refugees and Asylees

As a result of World War I, millions of individuals became stateless, but the U.S. accepted relatively few refugees until after World War II, and the Displaced Persons Act of 1948. The subsequent arrival of large numbers of war refugees, asylees and the family members who joined them, added richly to the diversity of the country. Contemporary refugees range from the well-to-do, highly educated to those with limited financial resources, with little formal schooling. **Changes in both border policies and the admission of refugees illustrate the ways in which American immigration is tied to the country's political and economic relations with the outside world.**

As sociologist Ruben Rumbaut has described it, "migration patterns are rooted in historical relations established between the U.S. and the principal sending countries...[they are] related to the history of American military, political, economic and cultural involvement in the sending countries."⁹ Examples include the resettlement of Hmong allies of the U.S. in the Vietnam War, the welcoming of thousands of refugees from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s and current restrictions on Middle Easterners related to the politics of homeland security. In Rumbaut's words, "as the U.S. has become more deeply involved in the world, the world has become more deeply involved in America."⁹

Contemporary Legislation

In the Civil Rights era the immigrant quota system that had been in effect since the 1920s was abolished with passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Under the new system, preference was given to the relatives of U.S. citizens, and secondarily to immigrants living in the U.S. and those with special skills needed by American companies. The INA family reunification provision led to a dramatic increase in immigrants from Mexico,¹⁰ and the changes resulting from the Act became the core of the current immigration system.¹¹ Today about two-thirds of all immigrants enter the country under sponsorship by a family member.¹⁰

The next significant piece of immigration legislation was the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA). Under IRCA unauthorized immigrants who had been in the U.S. since 1982 were offered permanent resident status. IRCA also proposed monetary sanctions against employers who knowingly hired unauthorized workers.¹⁰ However, few employers were actually sanctioned, and unauthorized immigrants continued to enter the U.S. An unintended result of IRCA was to encourage wage and benefits discrimination, as many employers turned

to labor subcontractors as an alternative to direct employment.¹²

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) enacted in 1994, did not include major provisions addressing immigration policy, but it was characterized as a treaty that would substantially *reduce immigration*. Instead, due to several factors, it served as a stimulus to unauthorized immigration. First, the lowering of trade barriers between the U.S. and Mexico has integrated the two economies without eliminating large wage disparities.

At the same time, the marketing, sale and transport of goods to and from Mexico has encouraged emigration at a time when the commercialization of agriculture in Mexico has pushed farmers off the land. Furthermore, while NAFTA greatly encouraged the free flow of goods and capital, it did not facilitate the free flow of labor.¹³ To the contrary, border controls instituted under IRCA continued, and Congress passed legislation enacting harsh penalties against individuals who overstayed their visas and forbidding authorized and unauthorized non-citizen immigrants from receiving most means-tested federal and state benefits.¹³

In the short term, reducing trade barriers produces "a migration hump—a temporary surge of more emigration as protected local industries are exposed to competition."¹⁴ As Philip Martin has noted, [immigration] reductions may be a long-term outcome of NAFTA, but the translation of investments into jobs takes time. Another outcome of NAFTA that served to stimulate labor emigration was the proliferation of "maquiladoras," predominantly U.S.-owned firms in a free-trade zone on the Mexican side of the border.

High-Skilled Immigrants

While much of the public, legislative and media attention has been focused on low-skilled immigrants, American business leaders have put pressure on Congress and the President to acknowledge the importance of highly skilled foreign-born workers to the U.S. economy. The Immigration Act of 1990 raised the immigration ceiling to 700,000 per year and granted preference to relatives of U.S. residents or citizens and to immigrants with high-level work skills.¹⁰ Stimulated by growing high tech industries and a "knowledge economy," educated foreign-born workers are significantly over-represented in the natural and social sciences, medicine, engineering, and computer-related professions.¹⁵ Today almost half of college educated immigrants come from Asia, particularly India and China.

Scope of Immigration Study

- **Underlying values and principles regarding immigration**
 - **Reasons for migration from other countries**, including but not limited to:
 - Effects of global interdependence on migration
 - Motivation of refugees and asylees
 - Motivation of other immigrants
 - **Current federal immigration policy**, including but not limited to:
 - Overview
 - Effectiveness in uniting families
 - Effectiveness in meeting needs of businesses
 - Effectiveness of enforcement
 - Human rights concerns
- Impact of immigration**, including but not limited to:
- * Economic effects of authorized and unauthorized immigration
 - Diversity
 - Inclusion of immigrants in American society

Immigration and National Security

Before 9/11/01 national security concerns were not generally tied to discussions of immigration policy. In fact, just a few years earlier the *Wall Street Journal* had advocated a constitutional amendment stating "there shall be open borders."¹⁶ However, the 9/11 attacks focused intense scrutiny on border security and the visa process, resulting in a number of restrictions and delays for some individuals attempting legal entry to the U.S. Doris Meisner, former director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, suggests that many of these restrictive policies, particularly the arbitrary arrests and relaxation of due process protections for Arabs and other Middle Easterners, were the result of "initial, panicky responses."¹⁷ Such actions have been decried by civil libertarians in the U.S. and abroad.

Current State of Immigration

Policy Debates

In the past decade, immigration has reached unprecedented levels as the result of a combination of factors, including continued reunification of immigrant families, a strong economy, trade expansion, and the refusal of the government either to authorize sufficient numbers of visas for the legal entry of low-skilled immigrant workers or to enforce employer sanctions. At the same time, Americans are about equally divided in their opinions about current levels, with half saying that the number should be decreased, and another half saying that it

should be maintained or even increased. Most recently in 2006, after failing to get the immigration reform he had sought in the form of a guest worker program, President Bush signed into law a bill authorizing the construction of a 700-mile fence on the 2,000-mile southern border.

At this writing, Democrats have taken control of both the House and the Senate, leaving open the possibility that Congress will enact a bill that includes the regularization of status for unauthorized immigrants, similar to the provisions in a bill passed by the Senate in May of 2006. That bipartisan measure called for a temporary worker program and a path to legalization for undocumented individuals who have been in the U.S. for more than five years, who pay a penalty and who demonstrate payment of back taxes and proficiency in English.¹⁸ Whatever happens, there is no doubt that debates about immigration policy will continue to be at the forefront of the U.S. political scene for years to come.

Endnotes

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18. Under the Senate bill, individuals who have lived in the U.S. for two to five years would have to return to a border entry point to apply for a guest-worker pro-gram, and individuals here less than two years would have to return to their countries of origin. Other provisions called for enhanced border security and the declaration of English as the "national" and the "common and unifying" language of the United States.

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Immigration information generated by the LWVUS Immigration Study Committee is available on the LWVUS Web site, www.lwv.org. Access this material, which includes resource lists and background papers on the various aspects of the study scope, by clicking on "For Members," then "LWVUS Immigration Study," under "Quick Links."

Final Immigration Study Panel: How Can We Enforce Immigration Laws?

The LWVFresno has scheduled the final public educational panel, "How Can We Enforce Immigration Laws?" for January 12, from 9 a.m. to noon, at the League office in the Stone Soup facility, 1345 Bulldog Lane at Sixth Street. This community event is free and parking is provided in the gated lot (enter from Sixth Street on the driveway south of the County Health Care offices. The lot and buildings are handicapped accessible. Refreshments will be served.

Consensus Meeting: Saturday, January 26, 9 a.m. to noon at Stone Soup. As the Immigration Study winds down, local Leagues meet to reach consensus on the immigration issues and send their recommendations to the LWVUS by February 2, 2008. Only members in good standing may participate in the LWVF Consensus meeting.

Questions for consideration at the meeting will be distributed in the next issue of this newsletter. This issue includes background material and a bibliography in a take-out-and- save center section format. Reaching consensus on a study is one of the most important grassroots functions League members undertake.

The adoption of an Immigration Position establishes an LWVUS policy that will be used to carry out a program of education and advocacy on the topic for years to come. Members are encouraged to come to the LWVF's Consensus meeting with information they have gathered and the discussion questions that they will receive prior to the meeting and may accessed now at the LWVC's League-only Web site. The Study Committee will present its findings, answer questions, and report back to LWVUS regarding the LWVF's consensus on the Immigration Study issues.

2008 ELECTION CALENDAR

The LWVC Voters Service presents unbiased, nonpartisan information about elections, the voting process, and issues on the ballot.

| PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY - FEBRUARY 5 2008 | |
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| DATE | EVENT |
| Monday,
January 7 | First day to apply for <u>absentee voter ballot</u> by mail |
| Tuesday,
January 15 | Last day for state to mail Voter Pamphlet |
| Tuesday,
January 15 | Last day for candidates to file for write-in status |
| Tuesday,
January 22 | Last day to <u>register to vote</u>
If you are not sure you are registered to vote, Call the Elections Department, 488-3246. |
| Monday,
January 28 | Last day for counties to mail Sample Ballot |
| Tuesday,
January 29 | Last day to apply for <u>absentee voter ballot</u> by mail |
| Tuesday,
February 5 | ELECTION DAY
Polls are open from 7 AM to 8 PM
Go to smartvoter.org to find your polling location and info about contests (as available). |

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through voter education and advocacy on issues.

The League does not support or oppose any candidate or political party.

The LWVC Positions on the February 5, 2008 State Ballot Measures

OPPOSE Proposition 91: Transportation Funds

This position reflects the League's continuing concern about funding earmarks in the state constitution, despite our support for the importance of transportation funding.

OPPOSE Proposition 92: Community Colleges: Funding, Governance, Fees

This position was a difficult one, as we truly want to see reform of the community college system on the basis of our position adopted in 2003. However, we continue to have concerns about changes to the constitution that would further restrict the ability of the state to continue other important programs in the future. Proposition 92 would set up a designated funding structure without providing new funds, and its provisions would be difficult to modify.

NEUTRAL Proposition 93: Limits on Legislators' Terms in Office

This initiative, by itself, makes relatively minor changes to the current term limit structure, and, without redistricting reform as part of a government reform package, it does not achieve meaningful reform. It is moreover involved in an increasingly partisan campaign.

NO POSITION Propositions 94-97: Referenda on Amendments to Indian Gaming Compacts

The League has not studied the issues concerning Indian gaming compacts and therefore has taken no position on these measures.

The League's *Where We Stand* flyer is now posted as a PDF on our Web site, www.lwv.ca.org along with additional information about the state League's action on ballot measures.
