



Voice

Founded in 1959

Membership representing 15 suburbs

January, 2007

Ground Rules for Immigration Consensus

Our League continues our study on immigration in preparation to participate in a consensus position for the League of Women Voters of Illinois. The educational aspect of the study is critical in forming our opinions on the issue and we will hear more about the issue at our January 13th meeting. Congressman Bobby Rush will be joining us for this discussion. This meeting will help to provide an adequate background for our members to cast votes on the consensus position at our February general meeting. The League practice of presenting the facts on both sides of the issue is very important to our tradition of unbiased study. In doing so, we give all sides a fair chance of being heard.

We hope you will plan to attend both the January and February meetings and help your League to come to consensus. Here are a few ground rules to help everyone understand how this process works.

Consensus is a process in which members participate in a group discussion on the issue and the collective opinion of the membership is reflected by the consensus. Our consensus position must be reported to the League of Women Voters of Illinois by March 1, 2007, so we will be finalizing it at our February meeting. Since the decision was made at the June, 2006 convention to take on the study of immigration, a group of Leagues have served on the LWVIL study committee to do the research and provide the background materials for local member Leagues. This in-

formation is available for all to view on the LWVIL website:http://www.lwvil.org/immigration_study/. We highly recommend taking a look at the comprehensive research put together by this committee. We have provided a very small portion of the information in our last two newsletters.

It is a privilege of League membership to participate in the member agreement process. Non-members are welcome to join us for the education phase but not in the consensus discussion.



We will be addressing all questions at the January meeting and have invited an

Our consensus position will be voted on at the February General Meeting.

experienced facilitator to run the show for us. We will be encouraging all points of view and discourage the domination of any one member or opinion. We ask all participants to stay focused on the task at hand and listen carefully and respectfully to all opinions. In keeping with League tradition, we won't hesitate to remind anyone who might forget this ground rule.

The position statement will articulate the broad areas of agreement including what the group supports and opposes. The position must be broad enough to allow League to initiate, support or oppose a variety of proposals over a period of time. Minority views will not be included and we will not include those areas where agreement is not reached. These ground rules have been provided by the state League.

Immigration Study Continues - Consensus to be taken in February

The January 13, 2007 General Meeting of the League of Women Voters of the Palos-Orland Area will be on Immigration. The goal of this meeting is to prepare our membership to vote in February on a position to be adopted by the League of Women Voters of Illinois.

Congressman Bobby Rush will be joining us for this meeting.

Consensus questions will be printed in the February Voice and are available now on the LWVIL website: http://www.immigration_study/

Convention seeking Volunteers

The 53rd LWVIL convention will be held at the Matteson Holiday Inn in Matteson from June 22nd to the 24th of this year. The Southland Leagues are excited and ready to welcome League members to our region for the very first time. The LWVPO is participating on the host committee and we are looking for League members to volunteer for a shift or two during the convention.

Volunteers are needed to help the convention run smooth. Behind the scenes work is done to assist the convention workshops and plenary sessions. The visitor registration fee will be waived for all volunteers but delegate fees will still apply. We are looking for members to volunteer for various duties including hospitality, registration, credentials, silent auction/pubs and wares, pages and floaters, doorkeepers, microphone monitors, tellers, and audio/visual equipment operators. This is an excellent way to meet people from all across the state and expand our horizons. If you have expertise to share, we are interested in signing you up for this position.

Time slots to fill are as follows:

- Friday, June 22nd from 11 am to 6:30 pm
- Saturday, June 23rd, 7:30 am to noon
- Saturday, June 23rd, noon to 5:00 pm
- Saturday, June 23rd from 5:00 to 7:30 pm
- Sunday, June 24th from 7:30 am to noon

Please consider serving on our local host team by contacting Barbara Pasquinelli to sign up for one of the duties listed above, or let her know if you would be open to assignment as needed. Barbara can be reached at 708-389-2888. We will need our roster of volunteers by May 1st, so give it some thought and be ready to help your League welcome others to the Southland. This is a great way to get to know how League convention operates. It's fun and very informative to attend the convention and we know our members will step up to the task of being gracious hosts.

League receives a Primer on the Circuit Court System at Fireside Dinner

.....By Barbara Pasquinelli

The annual Fireside meeting on December 13th featured great food, sparkling conversation, pleasant weather and an interesting speaker. Judge Stanley Sacks of the Cook County Criminal Court, along with his wife and daughter joined us and provided us with a primer on the Circuit Court system and answered questions from League members.

The Circuit Court system of Cook County, presided over by Judge Timothy Evans, is the largest judicial circuit in the State of Illinois and one of the largest unified systems in the world. Three departments, County, Municipal and Juvenile Justice and Child Protection are served by approximately 400 judges who deal with 2.4 million new cases each year. About half of these judges are Associate Judges and they are not elected directly by the people and do not appear on retention ballots. They apply for vacancies and are selected by sitting full judges from a bar-endorsed list of candidates. They must be reappointed every 4 years by the same panel. This is a distant relative of merit selection and is described as nonpartisan.

Judge Sacks has been an Associate Judge assigned to the Criminal Court at 26th and California since 1988. He clearly enjoys this position and considers it an honor and privilege to serve as a circuit court judge.

At the Fireside Dinner, our League collected lots of loot for the Children's Room at the Markham Courthouse. Thanks to everyone who donated. I attended a luncheon they held in the playroom the next day since I had more donations to deliver and I had a chance to see the operation in action. Clearly this service is needed and much appreciated by everyone who uses it and they have always made it very clear how much our donations help. I pass on their thanks for all the donations our League makes each holiday season.

In Memoriam - Wayne Trotter

In sadness, we acknowledge the death of Wayne Trotter in December. Wayne was the loving husband of League member Merna Trotter. He was an avid and skilled outdoorsman and always greeted League members with a cheery welcome. Our condolences to Merna and her family on the loss of her husband and their father.

Membership in the League of Women Voters of the Palos-Orland Area

Founded in 1959, the League of Women Voters of the Palos-Orland Area is a non-partisan organization which encourages citizens to play an active role in government at local, state and national levels. The League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

General Meetings are held on the second Saturday of the month at 9:00 AM with some exceptions

Any person of voting age may join. For membership information, please contact Mary Nebor at 708-479-8309.

The *Voice* is published nine times per year by the League of Women Voters of the Palos Orland Area, P. O. Box 86, Palos Heights, Illinois 60463.

Co-Presidents: Carol Stefan (cbs6819@comcast.net or 708-448-1148) and Barbara Pasquinelli (MSPasq@aol.com or 708-389-2888)

Voice Editor: Chris Slowik (Chrisscope@aol.com or 708-598-5459)

League of Women Voters of the Palos-Orland Area: <http://lwvpo.lwvil.org> / League of Women Voters of Illinois: www.lwvil.org

Illinois Student Vote: www.Illinoisstudentvote.org

Voice of the Co-President

.....by Carol Stefan

Happy New Year to you all. 2006 took its toll on our League with injuries and illnesses of some of our board members along with the passing of Wayne Trotter, Merna's husband. I know I speak from the hearts of our members when I say that all of you will be in our thoughts and good wishes in the new year.

A new year always brings a time of reflection and resolutions and this time is no exception. We are members of a dynamic organization made up of caring men and women interested in issues of local, national and global importance. Our state League has been conducting a two-year study of immigration and its effect in Illinois. They have compiled some really good handouts dealing with facts and myths and have presented credible information on this issue to local Leagues. Our November and December VOICE included just a small portion of the results of their research. Please visit the LWVIL website for more information: http://www.lwvil.org/immigration_study/. The scope of their study was expressed by the question: How should Illinois respond to the challenges and opportunities of immigration in the areas of economic policy, social policy (including education), and government process? The purpose of the study is for our organization to discuss the information and to possibly reach a consensus and to adopt a position on the issue. Once a position is adopted it can be lobbied for and becomes an official League policy.

This is a **very** interesting topic in which many of us hold varied thoughts and opinions. We hope you will all come to the January 13th meeting to discuss this and share your views and educate yourself about this hot topic. Plan also to attend the February 10th meeting for further discussion and participate in reaching a consensus reflecting our discussions.

New Year Resolution.....Be an active League memberjoin us and get involved!

Mercury Pollution Law Passes

The Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR), passed the Illinois Mercury Rule by unanimous approval at the end of last year. This rule will reduce toxins in our atmosphere by reducing mercury pollution as well as sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. At least 94% of the Power plants will have to install control equipment to reduce these pollutants by 2009 with the rest meeting compliance by 2012.

The state worked to get a multi-pollution agreement with Midwest Generation, Ameren and Dynegy, all companies providing electricity in Illinois. Midwest Generation is the largest coal-fired electric generator and has six power plants in the state.

This new rule gives Illinois one

of the most stringent pollution reduction plans in the country and requires a larger percentage of reduction than the Federal guidelines.

In our December *Voice* we heard about how pollutants impact the fish in our waterways. People are exposed to mercury mainly through the consumption of contaminated fish.

The new rule is considered an important step in reducing toxic air pollution in our state and makes Illinois a leader in our nation for reducing power plant pollution. We appreciate the efforts of our Governor, the legislators who supported this and the environmental advocates for this legislation. Special thanks to Senator and League member, Maggie Crotty, chair of the rules committee on this one.

Minimum Wage Increases

On December 18, 2006, legislation was signed to increase the minimum wage in Illinois. It was increased from \$6.50 to \$7.50 per hour. The Governor signed Senate Bill 1268 into law and the legislation will go into effect in July of 2007 with annual increases for the next three years. That means the minimum wage in year two will be \$7.75 in July of 2008, \$8.00 in July of 2009 and \$ 8.25 in 2010.

This is the second time the minimum wage has been increased in Illinois in recent times. The first increase was passed in 2003 and put the Illinois minimum wage at \$6.50 per hour which was higher than the national hourly wage of \$5.15. The national minimum wage has not increased since 1997. The increase is expected to lift wages for an estimated 647,000 full time workers in Illinois to an average annual income of \$17,160 by 2010. Debate on the national minimum wage continues.



January, 2007

Immigration Study Continues

Postage for this newsletter has been underwritten by



LWVPO Upcoming Events - Mark your Calendar

Clip and Save 

2007 HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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| January | 13 | Immigration Presentation - Palos Heights Library - 9:30 AM
Learn the facts and myths about immigration in Illinois
Congressman Bobby Rush will be in attendance |
| | 17 | Board Meeting at Gayle Greenwald's Home - 7:30PM
12200 Cheyenne Drive, Palos Heights |
| February | 3 | LWVIL Annual Issues Briefing - 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM
Loyola University Chicago - Water Tower Campus
Loyola Law Center - Rubloff Auditorium - 25 East Pearson - Chicago
Please see registration form enclosed - RSVP due before January 19, 2007 |
| AM | 10 | Immigration Study Consensus Meeting - Palos Heights Library - 9:30

Final phase of Immigration Study - Forming LWVIL position on the Issue
** We will be voting on our consensus position at this meeting ** |
| | 14 | Board Meeting at Carol Stefan's Home - 7:30 PM
13 Lake Katherine Drive, Palos Heights
HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY |

