

VOTER

League of Women Voters of
Indiana County, Pennsylvania
www.palwv.org/indiana



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2008

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SAVE THE DATE! January 19, 2008, 9 AM SHARP

IMMIGRATION STUDY CONSENSUS MEETING

All League members are invited to participate in this important meeting
Fire Mountain Restaurant, 575 Ben Franklin Rd, Indiana, BYOB*
RSVP appreciated but not required.

Call Susan McClure, Committee Chair, at 724-463-8252

(Buy Your Own Breakfast!)

Immigration and Consensus

When we are discussing the issue, following an outline provided by the national League, we will keep in mind values rather than solutions.

For example, what do we regard as human rights? Do we believe people have the right earn a living and support a family? Should that family be together? If these are values our local League supports, then we have to agree upon them as a group and report our consensus to the national League. If nationalism is primary, then we need to convey that too. Do we believe in obeying laws? Is

diversity a part of American life? These may be values that affect a national immigration policy.

Think about your personal values over the next couple of weeks, what you have read in the national and local Voters about the role immigrants have played in the United States, and come to Fire Mountain for breakfast so we can be part of the grass roots decision making of the League of Women Voters.

The meeting will take 2 hours. Participants may feel free to exit the meeting early if attendance for the entire discussion is not possible.

FAMILY VALUES? LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENTS SEPARATED FROM FAMILIES

Many Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) are living in the U.S. separated from their families. a 1965 act established a 'family preference' quota framework for sponsorship of relatives, and theoretically LPRs can file visa petitions for spouse and children and expect their arrival within five years. In reality, visa applicants face a much longer wait, due to processing delays and a mind-boggling backlog. at the current pace it could take as long as 20 years for spouses and minor children of LPRs to join

them legally in the U.S. And by then, the minor children have 'aged out' and must begin the process all over again. Meanwhile, family separation causes emotional turmoil. Even five years is an incredibly long time in a child's life. Long-distance relationships can cause break-ups of otherwise normal happy families. Many immigrants are here illegally because current policy makes it so difficult, if not impossible, to bring families here legally. Non-citizens here on a workers visa (non-immigrant) can

get non-immigrant visas for their families in a month or two. Family members of certain categories of non-immigrants can adjust to permanent resident status. It seems likely that parents here under a non-immigrant visa would bring their spouses and children to the U.S. and find some way to keep the family together, even if it means being in the U.S. illegally. For more information on LPRs and family separation see www.unitefamilies.org.

—submitted by Nancy Fricke

BUS IDLING CONTINUES TO BE AN ISSUE

LWVIC's Air Quality Committee continues to work on idling reduction issues, with a special focus on improving the environment around our county's schools. We'll be distributing a new book, "**The Magic School Bus Gets Cleaned Up**," to area schools, libraries, etc. This publication was created through a partnership between the EPA's Clean School Bus USA program and Scholastic Inc. (publisher of the popular

"Magic School Bus" children's series). It is available free-of-charge to eligible non-profit organizations and promises to be a fun way for children to learn how their community can help reduce the health risks from diesel exhaust.



LWVIC's Letter of Public Comment on the proposed Idling Reduction Regulation

In 1971, the LWVUS reached a position in support of federal air pollution controls on industrial production, on government installations, on fuels and on vehicles, notwithstanding the higher prices and taxes that might result. The position opened the way for LWV action at the federal, state, regional and local levels. Although the 1990 Clean Air Act is a federal law covering the entire country, the states do much of the work to carry

The League of Women Voters of Indiana County strongly supports the proposed Idling Reduction Regulation proposed by the Environmental Quality Board for three major reasons.

Health Issues:

Diesel engines emit nitrogen oxide, volatile organic compounds and fine particulate matter, pollutants that cause and/or exacerbate breathing problems such as asthma, bronchitis and emphysema¹. Over a lifetime, health risks include increased cancer, reduced heart health and arteriosclerosis². Furthermore, children's health is more at risk, because they have more lung surface area compared to body weight, and have higher respiratory rates. Health risks for children include slowed lung function growth, increased asthma attacks, respiratory infections, and coughing, and increased allergic reactions. Pennsylvania has many diesel emission hot spots in both Eastern and Western Pennsylvania placing residents at more risk for breathing and other health disorders.³

Environmental Issues:

The League of Women Voters believes that "global climate change is one of the most serious threats to the environment." In February, the United Nations sponsored International Panel on Climate Change reported that there is

90% likelihood that human activity is influencing the warming of the planet. Pennsylvania contributes one percent of the world's greenhouse gases. Reduction in diesel emissions along with other pollution decreasing policies will contribute to improved air and water quality and an improved state economy. The League believes negative impacts of global warming on PA include:

- Loss of State's ski industry and other winter recreation
- Loss of breeding areas of many species of songbirds
- Severe heat waves
- Crop yield change by as much as 39%
- Decline in forested areas
- Lower stream and river flows and lake levels
- Increased storm related property damage

In addition, sportsmen are reporting disease typically found in warmer climates is appearing in the Southern Pennsylvania deer herd suggesting that Pennsylvania is indeed experiencing warmer weather.

Economy:

Pennsylvania's large and heavily used interstate highway system includes some 260 truck stops and 47 public rest areas, which provide convenient areas

for heavy duty diesel vehicles to idle. The Commonwealth's highway emission's consultant, Michael Baker, Jr. estimates that total statewide idling related to truck travel rest is more than 21 million annual hours. Use of an alternate method to heat/cool their cabs during idling would reduce fuel use by 20 million gallons a year. Baker estimates this would save nearly \$67 million per year at current fuel prices. In addition, any reduction of air pollutants could impact health costs and the environmental issues that impact water supply, hunting, recreation and agriculture. These economic issues are significant and provide a strong basis for implementing the proposed rule.

The Department of Environmental Protection has made practical exemptions and timetables for implementing the regulations. The League of Women Voters of Indiana County applauds the Environmental Quality Board, the Department of Environmental Protection for this proposed regulation and urge its immediate adoption.

1. www.epa.gov/otag/schoolbus/basicinfo.htm/
2. *Schneider, C.G. & Hill, L.B., (Feb., 2005), Diesel and Health in America: The Linger-ing Threat*, www.catf.us/publications/reports/Diesel_Health_in_America.pdf
3. *Ibid*

THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION RAIDS ON FAMILIES

There are approximately 11 million undocumented immigrants in the country at risk of arrest and deportation, and about five million children—more than three million of whom are U.S. citizens. As Congress turns its focus to immigration enforcement, including arrests of undocumented immigrants in workplaces, large numbers of children are affected. Most are young children and many are the youngest and most vulnerable in our society—infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Immigration raids separate children and parents for long periods of time and children cannot understand why this separation occurs. Families are suddenly thrown into poverty and are afraid to ask government or other institutions for support. some children witness the

arrest of their parents. Fear leads to trauma for children, who experience symptoms of depression, separation anxiety, and, in extreme cases, post traumatic stress disorder. States and local communities have to bear the responsibility for these children, just as they bear the consequences of many other U.S. immigration policies. the federal government has largely been silent about the impact of these raids on children.

Information for this article came from *Paying the Price: The Impact of Immigration Raids on America's Children*, by Randolph Capps, Rosa Maria Castaneda, Ajay Chaudry, and Robert Santos, Urban Institute, 2007. Available at www.urban.org

—submitted by Nancy Fricke

IMMIGRANT ASSIMILATION

The United States does not have an official language. Yet, native born Americans consider English to the “the” American language and worry when we see so much Spanish on packaging or have to request English as the preferred language when calling a utility company.

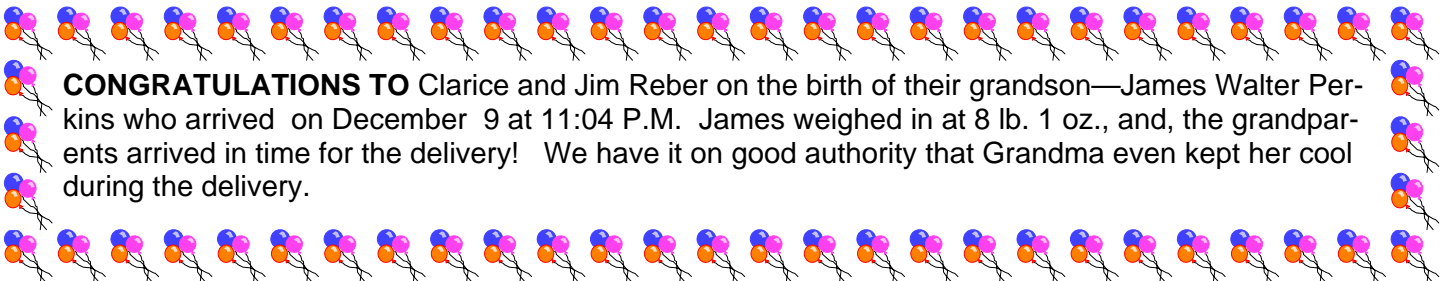
According to a Pew Hispanic Center/Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation survey of Hispanic immigrants, by the third generation no one speaks

only Spanish at home.

In a telephone survey of values held by Hispanics (people from Central American and the Caribbean), the respondents chose the language in which to converse. Nearly three in four of the first generation chose Spanish. Seven per cent of the second generation respondents chose Spanish. None of the third generation respondents chose Spanish.

To determine if values were shared, the survey used four populations, Spanish speaking, bilingual, English speaking, and native born. With the exception of the importance of family, the values of the English speaking immigrants and the native born were similar. The authors concluded that as immigrants learned English, they adopted the values of mainstream Americans.

—submitted by Susan McClure



CONGRATULATIONS TO Clarice and Jim Reber on the birth of their grandson—James Walter Perkins who arrived on December 9 at 11:04 P.M. James weighed in at 8 lb. 1 oz., and, the grandparents arrived in time for the delivery! We have it on good authority that Grandma even kept her cool during the delivery.

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF INDIANA COUNTY, PA
NONPARTISANSHIP POLICY (Revised October 2006)**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization. The League neither supports nor opposes political parties or candidates for office at any level of government. At the same time, we work to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

All members are expected to respect the League's nonpartisan stance when they are speaking for or representing the League, but every member is expected to be active in the party of her/his choice. Since the nonpartisan character of the League of Women Voters is essential to its effectiveness in achieving full community support, we hereby adopt the following criteria which **apply only to board members during their term of office**:

1. No board member may engage in partisan politics by serving as a candidate or by actively supporting candidates for public office. Specifically, actively supporting a candidate is considered to mean:
 - A. Sponsoring a social event in honor of a candidate;
 - B. Circulating an endorsement petition. However signing a petition is encouraged.
 - C. Placing a candidate's campaign signs or your property;
 - D. Participating in a voter registration drive sponsored by a party or candidate;
 - E. Adding your name to any political endorsement or advertisement in print, radio, TV, or on the Internet;
 - F. Filling a visible role in a candidate's campaign;
 - G. Donating money to a political party or a candidate beyond the limit where your name must be listed as a contributor.
2. When a board member anticipates becoming active in support of a political party or a candidate s/he should present a letter of resignation to the board. The member shall remain off the board from the time of the candidate's filing until the election is over. Another member may be appointed by the board to fill the resigning member's position, or that person may be reappointed to the board after the election is over. A news release should be issued at the time a board member resigns under these circumstances.
3. When situations occur which are not covered by this policy the board member should bring the question before the board. If an answer is required before the next board meeting a decision should be made by the president in consultation with the other officers.

All members: Any member who has a prominent political affiliation in the community, or a close family member prominently identified with a political party or candidate should not represent the League before the public at candidate forums in the role of moderator, question screener or time-keeper.

ADOPTED : October 10, 2006

GREAT DECISIONS PROGRAM

The Great Decisions Lecture/Discussion Series will be held on Tuesday mornings from 9:30 to 11:30 during February and March.

Expert speakers from IUP present on selected topics in the St. Andrews Village Community Room. A briefing book on the issues and questions is available through the non-partisan Foreign Policy Association (www.fpa.org). This year's topics include: Iraq End-game; European Union at 50; Talking to our enemies; Russia; U.S. defense and security policy; Latin America: shift to the left? and Private Philanthropy.

For further information, contact Kathy Evanko at IUP Continuing Education (724-357-2227)

Where We Stand on Global Warming—League of Women Voters of PA

As our League becomes active on local environmental issues, we should keep in mind that the State League of Women Voters is also acting on the state level. One of the most controversial environmental questions involves global climate change. Here is a summary of the position of the LWVPA.

Recent Scientific Studies show that global warming is already causing environmental changes that will have significant global economic and social impacts. The League believes that now is the time to act on global climate change. We should use existing technologies to make power plants and factories more efficient, make cars more fuel efficient, and shift to cleaner technologies. The solutions will also reduce our dependence on oil, reduce air pollution and protect pristine places from oil drilling and mining.

The LWVPA is supporting Governor Rendell's "**Energy Independence**" initiative which would:

- Offer a \$100 rebate for replacing old inefficient air conditioners and refrigerators with new Energy Star rated appliances.
- Pay up to half of the cost of installations of solar electric-generating panels.
- Fund the development of an alternative fuels infrastructure.
- Require that gasoline sold in PA contains 10% ethanol and diesel fuel contains 15% biodiesel within 10 years.

The League also supports HB 110 and SB 266 which would require DEP to conduct an annual inventory of greenhouse gas emissions in PA, prepare a GHG action plan to set target goals for reducing emissions, and establish a voluntary GHG registry.

LWVPA also supports HB 334 which would provide grants to local governments to develop and implement plans to reduce their global-warming gas emissions.

Sign up for eNotice for DEP Environmental Actions

If you are interested in receiving notice from the department of Environmental Protection when a public comment period starts for any rule makings or notices about other actions DEP is about to take, sign up at:
<http://www.dep.state.pa.us/enotice/default.asp>.
 The mailings will contain notices from the time a

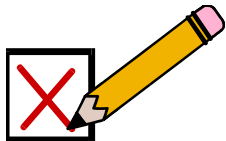
regulation is initially developed until it is published as a final rulemaking.

9th annual Martin Luther King Freedom March

March starts at 10:15 at Trinity United Methodist Church, 398 Church St. Celebration Service at Grace United Methodist Church on 7th and Church at 11:00 A/M, Luncheon to follow. Contact Edwina Vold at 349-5038 for more information.

A newsletter of the
League of Women Voters
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CALENDAR of UPCOMING EVENTS

Know someone who may be interested in membership? Let Olga Platt know at 724-465-2073 and she will send a brochure & short letter describing LWVIC's activities.

January 19, 2008—Immigration Study Consensus meeting. Breakfast meeting at Fire Mountain, 9:00 am.

January 19 - 9th annual Martin Luther King Freedom March (see inside for details)

February, 2008—Legislative Interviews. More information next month!

February 14, 2008—11:30 a.m. Board Meeting at Diane Duntley's

March 1—Annual Family Fun Fest. 10:00 a.m. Indiana Mall

April 22—General Primary (Last day to register: March 24-pass it on!)

May 3—League Garage Sale. Save your stuff for this Spring fundraiser.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership is open to men and women of voting age.