

## LWV-LFLB Consensus Report on Immigration Policy

The LF/LB League discussed and made our response to the national LWV questions on immigration in the U.S. We met in two sessions, totaling over 5 hours. These meetings, which were announced ahead and were open to all members, were held on Nov. 1 and Dec. 6, 2007. The results are to be sent to National by or before Feb. 1 2008, and the complete report will be shared at the national convention in June. Questions 1-4 were to be rated as follows: High Priority—Lower Priority—Disagree—No Consensus. Questions 5 and 6 were either Consensus or No Consensus.

The seven questions, with sub-questions for five of them, were available online at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org), and copies were and are available for anyone wanting to examine the background information and considerations for each of the seven. The results are as follows for our local League:

- I. Federal immigration laws should take into consideration criteria such as:
  - A. Ethnic and cultural diversity---Disagree
  - B. Economic, business and service employment needs in the U.S.---High Priority
  - C. Environmental impact/sustainability---No Consensus
  - D. Family reunification of authorized immigrants and naturalized citizens with spouses and minor children---High Priority
  - E. History of criminal activity---High Priority
  - F. Humanitarian crises/political persecution in home countries---High Priority
  - G. Immigrant characteristics (health and age)---Disagree (there is no system in place at present. However, we felt that setting a policy should have High Priority.)
  - H. Rights of all workers to safe working conditions and livable wage---High Priority
  - I. Rights of families to remain together---High Priority
  - J. Rights of all individuals in the U.S. To fair treatment under the law (fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal, and humane treatment)---High Priority
  - K. Education and training---Low Priority (depends upon the needs of the U.S. work force, and would be provided by the respective businesses.
  
- II. Unauthorized immigrants currently in the U.S. should be treated as follows:
  - A. Deport unauthorized immigrants---Disagree
  - B. Some deported/some allowed to earn legal adjustment of status based on length of residence in the U.S.---High Priority
  - C. Some deported(by the federal govt.)/some allowed to earn legal adjustment of status based on needs of U.S. employers---Low Priority
  - D. All allowed to earn adjustment of status by doing things such as paying taxes, learning English, studying civics, etc.---High Priority
  - E. If deported, assess fines before possible re-entry---Disagree
  - F. Assess fines before allowed to earn legal adjustment of status---Disagree

- III. 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
- A. Immediate family members, joining family members already admitted for legal permanent residence in the U.S.---High Priority
  - B. Entering the U.S. to meet labor needs---High Priority
  - C. Entering the U.S. as students---Low Priority
  - D. Entering the U.S. because of persecution in home country---High Priority

IVa. In order to deal more effectively with unauthorized immigrants, federal immigration law should include: social security card or other national identification card with secure identifiers for ALL persons residing in the U.S.---Disagree (this refers to the Real ID act, which was passed a year ago last May. Both Illinois senators oppose this act for two major reasons: it limits individual security and personal privacy. The expense to change from our present driver's licenses will cost the states millions (about 180 million for Illinois).

IVb. Federal immigration law dealing with unauthorized immigrants should be enforced by including:

- A. Physical barriers (such as fences and surveillance of borders)---Disagree
- B. Increased personnel at land, air and sea entry points---High Priority
- C. More effective tracking of persons with non-immigrant visas until they leave the country---High Priority
- D. Verification documents, such as green cards and work permits with secure identifiers---High Priority
- E. Improved technology to facilitate verification of employee visa stature---High Priority
- F. Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies---High Priority
- G. A program to allow immigrant workers to go in and out of the U.S. to meet seasonal and sporadic labor needs---High Priority
- H. Significant fines proportionate to revenue for employers who fail to take adequate steps to verify work authorization of employees---High Priority

V. Federal immigration law should address and balance the long-term financial benefit from immigrants with the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations---Consensus

VI. Federal immigration law should be coordinated with U.S. foreign policy to proactively help improve economics, education and job opportunities, and living conditions of nations with large emigrating populations---Consensus

VII. Comments:

- A. Aid should go to local agencies to support education, health care, etc. at the grass roots (private/public)

- B. Real ID – perhaps a required temporary driver’s permit would serve as identification for those undocumented immigrants already here and thus make unnecessary the real id for people already citizens. The driver’s permit would require a driver’s test, etc., But it would not be the equivalent of a citizen’s driver’s test. With such a permit, driver’s insurance could be required (insurance companies are not allowed to issue insurance to anyone without a driver’s license). There should be two tiers: 1) for immigrants already here and 2) for immigrants who are coming.
- C. Need federal INS oversight and responsibility for determining the status of immigrants (both documented and undocumented) and carrying out necessary action (such as deportation of felons, etc.).
- D. Need more legal points of entry.
- E. Need more transparency (so that immigrants don’t live in the shadows, etc.).
- F. Need businesses to be responsible for the legality of their work force (including temporary work visas).

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