



# VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CUPERTINO-SUNNYVALE

November 2007

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## The Cupertino-Sunnyvale VOTER

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## MEMBER MEETINGS

### Immigration Consensus Meetings Part II

Monday November 5, 7 – 9 pm

Program repeated on

Wednesday November 7, 10 am – 12 noon

Hollimon's

11155 La Paloma Drive, Cupertino

Choose the meeting that fits your schedule.  
Join fellow League members for this conclusion to the Immigration Study.

See pages 3 through 6 for background information.

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## ELECTION DAY - NOVEMBER 6

For complete nonpartisan election information on local contests in Cupertino and Sunnyvale visit:

[www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org)

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## SAVE THE DATE

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15  
LEAGUE HOLIDAY LUNCH**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our League has hosted the Candidate's Forum for both the Sunnyvale and Cupertino City Council Candidate Forums this election season. Each city cable station is replaying a Forum in case you missed the live version. Please spread the word and help your friends and neighbors by encouraging them to vote on Nov 6th. I want to thank all of the people that helped with this, especially Marilyn Howard, who is our Master Coordinator.

On another topic, our Immigration Study team is continuing to pull information together for our Consensus Meetings. When I found out the laws regarding Immigration are longer than the tax code, I knew we had a challenge. We have spent many hours researching this and have developed an organized way to go through the different facets. We hope you'll join us at the meetings. Our Consensus has 6 questions. We will have one set of meetings for questions 1 and 2 on the evening of October 29th and morning of October 31st. The second set of meetings is for questions 3-6. Those meetings will be held on the evening of November 5 and repeated on the morning of November 7th. It is an important issue and we need your input. Please join us and help us with the Consensus.

Last but not least, please come to our League lunch at the Del Monte restaurant on Dec 15th. They are opening the restaurant just for us. We plan to have a speaker come in to talk about the details of the creation of the Downtown area in Sunnyvale. It will be festive and informative. Please rsvp to Elaine at [elaine.manley@comcast.net](mailto:elaine.manley@comcast.net) or 408-230-9928.

*Elaine Manley*

### Board Briefs

At its October meeting your board:

- Heard that we registered voters at the Cupertino Jubilee.
- Learned that the Cupertino City Council Candidate Forum will be held Monday, October 8 and that it will be televised.
- Set dates for holding consensus meetings for the Immigration Study.

### Membership News

Welcome new member Lois Schulz.

Thank you for renewing your membership: Pat Castillo, Sara Cordell, Joan Coston, Linda Davis, Jack and Elsie Hasling, Sherry Howd, Elaine and Scott Manley, and Serge Rudaz

## DO WE HAVE YOUR E-MAIL?

The League uses an elist to notify members of League events, calls to action and other matters of interest to the members. If your e-mail address is not on the roster or is incorrect, and you would like to participate, please send an e-mail to Roberta Hollimon, [rhollimon2@cs.com](mailto:rhollimon2@cs.com). You can always unsubscribe at any time.

## IMMIGRATION STUDY

The League of Women Voters of Cupertino-Sunnyvale is concluding the Immigration Study which is aimed at helping communities understand the implications of immigration at the local, state, and federal level. As part of this project, League members and leaders have been exploring the underlying values and principles regarding immigration, reasons for immigration, current federal immigration policy, and the impact of immigration in American society. Other topics covered have included:

- business and economic effects and impact
- diversity
- effects of global interdependence on migration
- motivation of refugees, asylees and other immigrants
- identifying things that need to be a part of the law for those entering the country
- how we handle those that are already here but undocumented

The Cupertino Sunnyvale Immigration Study Committee has prepared background information to help members understand this very complex issue. Articles have appeared in the VOTER in preparation for consensus meetings. Save these VOTERS and bring them with you to the meetings.

Articles on the pages three through six have been taken from the LWVUS website. For more in depth study of the issue visit [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). Click on "For Members" and then "Immigration Study" in the blue box

## IDENTIFYING VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH IMMIGRATION POLICY ISSUES

If we were to design a new Immigration Act what are the most important criteria to include? At the meeting, for questions 3 and 4, you will be asked to decide if you would rate the following criteria as "high priority," "lower priority," or "disagree" meaning that you don't think that should be a priority at all in federal immigration laws. For questions 5 and 6 you will be asked if you agree or disagree.

**Question 3:** 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: (rate each one)

- Immediate Family Members Joining Family Member Already Admitted for Legal Permanent Residence in the U.S
- Entering the U.S. to Meet Labor Needs
- Entering the U.S. as Students

**Question 4a:** 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.

**Question 4b:** Federal immigration law dealing with unauthorized immigrants should be enforced by including: (rate each one)

- Physical Barriers (such as Fences) and Surveillance at Borders
- Increased Personnel at Land, Air, and Sea Entry Points
- More Effective Tracking of Persons with Non-Immigrant Visas Until They Leave the Country
- Verification Documents, such as Green Cards and Work Permits with Secure Identifiers.
- Improved Technology to Facilitate Employer Verification of Employee Visa Status
- Improved Technology for Sharing Information Among Federal Agencies
- A Program to Allow Immigrant Workers to Go In and Out of the U.S. to Meet Seasonal and Sporadic Labor Needs
- Significant Fines Proportionate to Revenue for Employers Who Fail to Take Adequate Steps to Verify Work Authorization of Employees

**Question 5:** Federal immigration law should address and balance the long-term federal financial benefit from immigrants with the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

**Question 6:** Federal immigration law should be coordinated with U.S. foreign policy to pro-actively help improve economies, education and job opportunities, and living conditions of nations with large emigrating populations.

# FAMILY REUNIFICATION AND DIVERSITY POLICIES

## Family Reunification Policies

U.S. immigration laws have always included provisions designating persons eligible or ineligible to enter the country based on the perceived common good. Originally, paupers, those engaged in immoral activities and the physically handicapped were banned. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act restricted entry for immigrants from China. It wasn't until 1924 that the first quota act affecting non-Asians was passed; it set limits on immigrants from the southern and eastern portions of Europe.

The current policy originated with the Immigration Act of 1965. The new law eliminated the national origin quota system that had favored immigrants from Europe to the exclusion of those from other parts of the world. It created a system favoring diversity of country of birth. The 1965 Act also provided a "family preference" quota framework that systematized the sponsorship of relatives of legal immigrants, emphasizing the reunification of immigrant families.

Among current immigrants, family unity is one of the most powerful motivators. Since 1965, between 50 and 70 percent of U.S. immigrant visas distributed annually have been allotted to close family members of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents. During the past ten years, more than 200,000 persons per year have been admitted to the U.S. as beneficiaries of family preference visas.

How effective is the current policy in reuniting immigrant families? For spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens, the wait to reunite is often less than a year. However, many legal permanent residents ("green card holders") are not so fortunate. These individuals, who themselves have waited many years to enter the U.S. legally, often precede their spouses and children to the U.S. in order to find work and housing and save money for air tickets for the rest of the family. They soon learn that family preference category visa quotas and processing backlogs can delay the legal reunification of their family in the U.S. for many years. For example, the spouse or minor child of a legal permanent resident from Mexico can expect to wait more than a decade to receive a visa to enter the U.S.

These deficiencies in the system force many families to resort to illegal immigration rather than wait for years for permission to enter legally. The result is that a significant percentage of the estimated 11 million unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. are the spouses and minor children of legal permanent residents who have

been approved for family-based visas but are caught in the years-long preference category logjam.

Clearly, the current family reunification system is not working well for many legal permanent residents and their immediate family members. Furthermore, the lack of a reasonably timely family reunification option within the legal system is contributing to the breakdown of the integrity of the U.S. immigration system.

There are no easy fixes for our family based immigration system. However, unless our nation finds the political courage to come to grips with the short- and long-term implications of our current untenable policy, tens of thousands of families desperate to be together rather than face interminable separation are likely to continue resorting to unauthorized immigration.

## Diversity Policies

Diversity of country of birth is integral to who we are, and what our country is, but not everyone agrees about how much value to place on diversity. The U.S. both caps the number of immigrants from a given country and allows for a "diversity lottery" to ensure at least some possibility of entry from all countries. Despite these policies, Mexican born immigrants composed a predominant segment of the entire U.S. foreign-born population in 2000, and are predominant to an even greater degree today.

Critics argue that today's immigrants are too different—they hang on to their culture, stay connected to their native countries and continue to speak their native languages. Proponents of the diversity policy say these connections have always been a part of immigrants' lives, and that today's immigrants own their homes, intermarry with other Americans and are learning English at rates as high, or higher, than was true for earlier ethnic groups.

The differing viewpoints may result from the larger numbers of immigrants living in communities that have never had immigrant populations before. Change can be difficult to manage, particularly such sudden change as many communities have experienced with respect to immigration and diversity. Generally, and over time, change, immigration and diversity have been embraced in this country's communities more frequently than they have been rejected.

*Article based on LWVUS Immigration Study Committee papers, "Immigration Policy: Family Reunification" and "What Motivates Immigration to America?" by Patricia Hatch and "Immigration: Diversity and Inclusion" by Deborah Macmillan. These papers (including full citations of sources) are available at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).*

# BORDER ENFORCEMENT

## Brief History

Border control received growing attention in the 1970s after the United States terminated the U.S.-Mexico *bracero* program and implemented per-country limits on legal immigration. The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) greatly increased Border Patrol funding.

Ten years later, Congress passed the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA), drastically increasing full-time active-duty Border Patrol agents in areas with the most illegal crossings, adding more barriers and expanding IDENT, the existing automated fingerprint system. IIRIRA also mandated a system for tracking entries and exits of students and foreign-born visitors to be fully operational by 2003.

After September 11, 2001, immigration functions became a key element of national security in the U.S.A. PATRIOT Act. This law required greater information sharing at all levels of government, took steps to bring visa issuance and documentation requirements at home and abroad under tighter control, and mandated the inclusion of biometric technology and tamper-resistant machine-readable entry-exit documents.

In 2003, the Immigration and Naturalization Service was abolished; its functions were transferred to the newly created Department of Homeland Security (DHS). In 2006, Congress passed the Secure Fence Act authorizing 700 miles of fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border at an estimated cost of \$9 billion (about \$2.5 billion more than the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's FY 2005 budget).

## Employer Sanctions

Employer sanctions have been an important, but not very effective, element of border enforcement since 1986. Although most employers consistently require necessary documentation, unauthorized immigrants increasingly use falsified documents. Unless the documents are obvious forgeries, they must be accepted by employers, who must also verify Social Security numbers with the Social Security Administration—a process that can take months.

Basic Pilot, a federal online document verification system, is available. But few employers are registered, largely because questioning documents or asking for further documentation can lead to problems as illustrated by the Swift and Company “catch 22” experience. The company has participated in the Basic Pilot system since 1997. However, it was sued in 2001 by the Justice Department for discrimination against immigrant workers. Subsequently, Swift and Company has been careful not to inquire too deeply into job applicants’ “paper work.” Result: Immigration agents raided the company’s meatpacking plants in mid-December 2006.

## Enforcement Cost and Benefits

Total immigration enforcement spending increased fivefold between 1985 and 2002—from \$1 billion to almost \$5 billion. During this period, the southwest border consistently received the biggest share. Since the DHS took over, funding increases have largely gone to border enforcement, the only component of immigration funding that consistently wins bipartisan political support.

Construction of San Diego’s triple fencing in 1993–94 resulted in a drop in that sector’s undocumented immigrant apprehensions (450,152 in FY 1994 vs. 100,000 in FY 2002). However, during that same period, the Tucson sector’s apprehensions soared 342 percent, making the Tucson sector the most popular crossing point for migrants along the entire border.

In the two decades since passage of IRCA, the Border Patrol’s budget has grown by more than 500 percent and its personnel by more than 200 percent. Despite these increases, it is estimated that 10.3 million unauthorized immigrants now live in the United States, with inflows averaging well over half a million per year.

## The Undocumented Population

Although large numbers of the rising undocumented population cross the U.S.–Mexico border illegally, a significant number enter the country legally, overstay their visas and become illegal. DHS officials concede that they lack the funding and technology to meet their December 2007 deadline for exit-monitoring systems at the 50 busiest crossings.

Large numbers of undocumented Mexican citizens are persuaded by the Border Patrol to return voluntarily to Mexico, but the majority of the increasing number of non-Mexican immigrants caught crossing the border are released and ordered to appear in court at a future date—an appointment few of them keep. The detention system is simply not large enough. In addition, undocumented immigrants who face increased costs and dangers, even death, crossing the border, are no longer crossing as frequently. Fencing and increased Border Patrol activity may be keeping more unauthorized immigrants inside the U.S. than outside it.

## No Simple Answer

According to most assessments, using current single-approach border control programs to deal with protection against terrorists, apprehension of criminals, and the illegal entry of people and goods just may not be effective or efficient.

*Article is based on the LWVUS Immigration Study Committee background paper, “Federal Immigration Policy: Enforcement Issues,” by Barbara Margerum. The paper (including full citations of sources) is available at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).*



## IMMIGRATION: IMPACT ON U.S. ECONOMY

Historically, immigrants have come to this country for a variety of reasons, but economic opportunity has always been a major draw. And, the U.S. economy has not disappointed. It has accommodated an expanding labor supply that today includes 1.5 million immigrants per year whose spending on housing and consumer goods helps stimulate the economy and increase the demand for still more labor.

### Workforce Shortfall

At a time when a “baby boomer” decrease is anticipated in the workforce, economists expect demand to create millions of new jobs. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 56 million new jobs will be created in this country between 2002 and 2012. During this same period, more than 75 million Americans will retire, and declining native-born fertility rates will be approaching replacement level. Various interests consider new immigrants a necessary labor source to meet this shortfall.

### Costs and Benefits

Immigrants have had a profound impact on company creation, economic innovation and market value in the U.S. A *PRNewswire* article (November 15, 2006) reported that over the past 15 years, immigrants founded one of every four U.S. public companies that received venture capital. Forty-seven percent of current venture-backed companies in the U.S. have immigrant founders. Nearly half of the immigrant entrepreneurs surveyed came to the U.S. as students and started their own businesses within 12 years of entering the country. According to a Migration Policy Institute publication, *Immigration and America's Future: A New Chapter*, the number of Hispanic-owned businesses has grown at three times the national average, while the number of Asian-owned businesses has grown at twice the national average.

Furthermore, the negative effect of authorized and unauthorized immigrants on public-sector budgets is small. Immigrant workers pay into social insurance programs, lessening strains on social assistance for the elderly. Many unauthorized workers use false ID numbers and pay Social Security taxes but are ineligible to receive benefits. Less than three percent of immigrants receive food stamps. Unauthorized workers support local school districts through property taxes, indirectly as renters or directly as homeowners.

Taxes paid to the federal government and increased macroeconomic productivity result in a net benefit to the country as a whole from immigrants. However, studies indicate that costs and benefits are not evenly allocated locally. Communities face demands for costly services from immigrants, particularly in education and health

care, which are not offset by tax income. But this type of financial burden is applicable to all low-income, uninsured populations—unauthorized, authorized and native-born. As Tamar Jacoby notes (*Foreign Affairs*, Nov./Dec. 2006), the additional state tax burden per native household is, on average, no more than a couple of hundred dollars a year.

### Perceived Problems

Opponents of immigration often suggest that if employers paid American workers more, they could reduce the need for foreign labor. However, many industries cannot pay more, because they would be undercut by imports from abroad. Even in sectors such as construction and hospitality, where the work must be done in the U.S., companies must decide whether it is better to lure Americans to jobs that require lower skills than those that they possess by paying more for less-skilled work. Meanwhile, because they complement rather than compete with most native-born workers (this, in turn, attracts additional capital), immigrant workers are a factor in raising rather than lowering most American wages.

For the past decade, market forces have attracted 1.5-1.8 million skilled and unskilled immigrants to work in the U.S. each year. However, annual legal quotas admitted only about a million immigrants, resulting in a significant imbalance. A realistic immigration system would make the annual legal intake more or less equal to the flow generated by supply and demand. The U.S. currently issues 5,000 visas per year to year-round unskilled workers, while 400,000-500,000 additional such workers are needed to keep the economy growing.

### Disaster or Inconvenience

A legitimate way to assess the role and value of immigrants' contribution to America is to consider what would happen if the influx stopped or if those already here left the country. Proponents of comprehensive reform (“bring in more workers”) believe this would be disastrous. In some regions, they contend, whole sectors of the economy could collapse. Opponents maintain that a cut-off would mean, at most, a temporary inconvenience for a few employers, who would soon wean themselves away from their dependence on foreign workers. Whichever path is chosen, there is one certainty: the consequences will affect everyone.

*This brief is based on two LWVUS Immigration Study Committee background papers, “Immigration and the Economy” by Chris Carson and “Economic Aspects of Authorized and Unauthorized Immigration” by Dorrit Marks. These papers, including full citations of sources, are available at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).*

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Bylaws of the League of Women Voters of Cupertino-Sunnyvale require that the members be given a financial report once a year within five months of the end of the fiscal year. We operate on a fiscal year of July 1 to June 30. Following is a report of the Assets and Liabilities of the League of Women Voters of Cupertino-Sunnyvale ad of June 30, 2007. This financial report has not been reviewed.

### League of Women Voters of Cupertino-Sunnyvale Assets & Liabilities on June 30, 2007

	General Fund	Education Fund	GF&EF
<b><u>ASSETS</u></b>			
General Fund	6,608.96	----.---	6,608.96
Permanent Reserves Fund	2,500.00	----.---	2,500.00
Board Discretionary Fund	1,000.00	----.---	1,000.00
Education Fund	----.---	<u>2,777.85</u>	<u>2,777.85</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$10,108.96</u>	<u>\$2,777.85</u>	<u>\$12,886.81</u>
 <b><u>LIABILITIES</u></b>			
Payments to LWVUS & LWVC	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other Bills	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	0.00	0.00	0.00
 <b><u>NET WORTH</u></b>			
Net Worth on 6/30/2006	10,635.58	2,299.68	12,935.26
Revenue-Expenditures	<u>(526.62)</u>	<u>478.17</u>	<u>(48.45)</u>
CURRENT NET WORTH	\$10,108.96	\$2,777.85	\$12,886.81
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET WORTH</b>	<b>\$10,108.96</b>	<b>\$2,777.85</b>	<b>\$12,886.81</b>

#### Cash in Bank Accounts June 30, 2007

Checking Account	3,458.42	3,458.42
Franklin Money Fund Account	6,540.74	6,540.74
Bulk Mail Account	109.80	109.80
LWVC Education Fund Account	2,777.85	2,777.85

The reduction in net worth from fiscal year 2005-2006 reflects the board's decision to use reserves to fund community activities and to not continue to increase reserves. Questions about the Financial Report should be directed to the Treasurer, Roberta Hollimon, rhollimon2@cs.com

### Join the League of Women Voters

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all men and women of voting age who are U.S. citizens. Others are welcome to join the League as associate members.

Send your check to LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale, P.O. Box 2923, Sunnyvale, CA 94087.

___ \$50 Individual member	Name: _____
___ \$75 Two members in a household	Address: _____
___ Contribution \$ _____	City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____
Telephone: _____	Email: _____

Checks made out to LWVCS are not tax deductible.