

A LOOK AHEAD...

GUESTS are always welcome at League meetings!

Friday, Sept. 7, 2007 *12:00 noon* (lunch
available beginning at 11:30 AM)

First Friday Sons of Norway, 722 2nd Ave. N., Fargo.

Topic: League Immigration Study, Information session Part I—Discussion of the History of Immigration in the United States, U.S. Federal Immigration Policy & the Economic Impact of Immigration on the United States.

Read more about the LWV-US Immigration Study on pages 2 & 3 of this Voter, including links to resources available on the Web.

Friday, Oct. 5, 2007 *12:00 noon*
(lunch available beginning at 11:30 AM)

First Friday, Sons of Norway, 722 2nd Ave. N., Fargo

Topic: Proper Parliamentary Procedure, questions & examples

MOORHEAD CITY COUNCIL ELECTION: CANDIDATES' FORUM

There will be a City of Moorhead General Election on November 6, 2007 for the following positions:

- 1st Ward Council Member (4-year term)
- 2nd Ward Council Member (4-year term)
- 3rd Ward Council Member (4-year term)
- 4th Ward Council Member (4-year term)

The LWVRRV will be holding a Candidates' Forum for these races, but the date & location of this forum has not yet been determined. We will publish this information in the local media as soon as it is available.

If you are interested in helping with this Forum, please contact Amy Jacobson at ajacobson@ppmns.org or 701-261-4858.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

What's going on?

Curious about something new going on in Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo – or Dilworth, Horace, Harwood, or anywhere in the region?

Let us know – we'll work on a First Friday meeting topic. This is our opportunity to inform ourselves, and the public, about what's going on in our cities and region. Is there a nonprofit doing work that you're interested in? Is there a city initiative that you'd like to know more about? That's a good idea for a First Friday speaker. We can also work ideas that are happening at the state level, North Dakota and Minnesota. Or initiatives that businesses are involved in – they're an integral part of the health of our communities, also.

On a national level, we're going to immerse ourselves more fully in the immigration debate. Check out the information on the League of Women Voters home page, lwv.org, under "Projects" – click Immigration Study. We'll have First Friday topics and meetings this fall, and we'll meet to develop a consensus in January. This is another way that we are involved in our communities – we're facing some important decisions, and the more informed we are, the better we can participate.

Let me know what topics you'd like to hear about – cherylbergian@cableone.net, or (701) 793-2002 (Fargo cell).

—Cheryl Bergian, President
LWVRRV

The following **Immigration Study Brief** comes from the LWV-US website, www.lwv.org. Many other papers are available on this site, discussing a variety of aspects of the subject. There is also a very interesting and informative podcast of a panel discussion on Immigration Policy in the 21st Century from the LWV-US Council 2007 Annual Meeting in Washington DC.

If you are planning on joining us at the September 7th First Friday meeting, you might like to read some of these papers ahead of time. We are planning on studying information on three aspects of the U.S. immigration question at that meeting. At the November 2nd First Friday, we will get information on a different group of immigration concerns. Then at a meeting on Saturday, January 12, local League members will work to reach **Consensus** on a number of questions and then submit our results to the national League of Women Voters. The LWV-US will then formulate a **Position** on this issue as a basis for **Action**.

The terms **Consensus** and **Position** and **Action** have specific meanings in League terminology, These definitions are listed below.

Consensus: Collective opinion of a substantial number of League members, representative of the membership as a whole, after objective study of an issue.

Position: A statement of the League's point of view on an issue, arrived at through member study and agreement (consensus or concurrence), approved by the appropriate board and used as a basis for League action.

Action: Promoting the League's positions on local, state and national public policy issues to government officials, the media and the public.

IMMIGRATION: IMPACT ON U.S. ECONOMY IMMIGRATION STUDY BRIEF

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 *PR Newswire* 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

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.

MEET SOME MEMBERS OF THE LEAGUE BOARD

Hello! I am a senior at North Dakota State University majoring in Psychology with a minor in Women's Studies. I am a member of the Air National Guard located here in Fargo and am excited to have almost four years in. I am very interested in politics and am interning for Senator Conrad in his Fargo office this semester. I am excited about joining the League and hope to learn a lot from these very influential women!

—*Jessica Clark*

I joined in the League of Women Voters in 1999 after being recruited by the famous Mary Davies. This is my second stint on the board. I served previously from 2000 – 2004 including serving as a vice-president. I am an associate professor of political science at Minnesota State University Moorhead and am currently serving as department chair.

—*Barbara Headrick*

BOARD BRIEFS

Several new members have recently been appointed to join the LWVRRV Board. Two names will be very familiar to most of you, Lois Altenburg & Alice Hauan. Lois & Alice bring much experience to the Board, and will make sure that we stay on track as we work on our Immigration Study consensus.

We are happy to also welcome Jessica Clark. Jessica has indicated that she may be interested in taking over the job of editing this newsletter.

Our next board meeting will be Saturday, September 15, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., at the North Town Grille, 3500 12th Ave. N.W., Fargo.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy

The League of Women Voters values diversity in its members. In principle and in practice, the League knows no barriers on the basis of age, creed, disability, gender, national origin, race or sexual orientation, and encourages full participation in and contribution to the organization by all its members.

League Vision, Beliefs and Intentions:

The goal of the League of Women Voters is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political membership organization which:

Acts after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels.

Builds citizen participation in the democratic process

Engages communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy.

Join the League!

Individual — \$45.00; Household— \$67.50

Student— \$15.00

Send your check to:

*League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley
PO Box 295, Fargo, ND 58107*

Include your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address.

2007-2008 LWVRRV Officers

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