



# Oakland Voter

The League of Women Voters Oakland Area  
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2007-2008 Issue 2

October 2007

## IMMIGRATION ISSUES STUDY AND CONSENSUS MEETINGS COMING UP!

**PART I - MONDAY, OCTOBER 29, 7:00 PM  
COSTICK CENTER, DUNMORE ROOM  
28600 ELEVEN MILE ROAD, FARMINGTON HILLS**

**PART II - SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 9:30 AM  
ST. ANDREWS LUTHERAN CHURCH,  
6255 TELEGRAPH ROAD, BLOOMFIELD TWP.**

The purpose of these two general meetings is to educate our League members about a variety of aspects and perspectives on the immigration issue and the impact of immigration on our communities. **During each meeting we will be taking Consensus on a subset of questions on these crucial issues.** The committee felt addressing all the questions at one meeting would be overwhelming and very rushed.

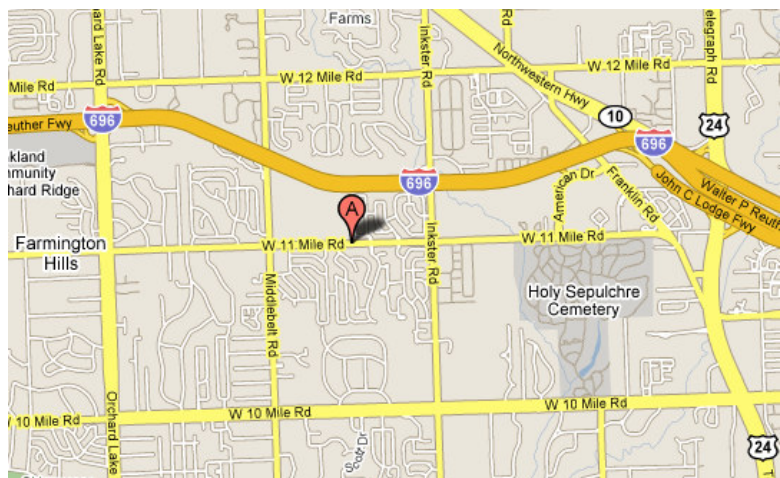
The Immigration Committee members will help provide an overview of the issue. Although immigration is regulated at the federal level, the impact is local. Learning about immigration at the local level will help our League members understand the relationship between federal law and the local impact. Immigration has an impact on various aspects of our lives, including economic, cultural, environmental, family, health and education. Immigration is a vital issue. I encourage our entire membership to attend these two important meetings.

The LWVUS Immigration Study Consensus Kit with background papers and the Consensus Questions is available online at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).

*Bernadette Najor, Program Vice-president*

How Much Do You Know About Immigrants in Michigan? See page 5.

What You Need to Know About the New Voter ID Requirement! See page 3.



Note: There are two entrances to the Costick Center, one says Sisters of Mercy, the other says Costick Center.

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

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THE OAKLAND VOTER is the official publication of the League of Women Voters. It is published eight times a year by the LWVOA. Articles and Letters to the Editor, with writer's name, address and phone number may be sent to the LWVOA office.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *by Eva Packard*

**Immigration** is the first new **national study** in quite some time that members have had an opportunity to participate in. It is a timely one with meaty issues. This year we will have had two meetings with the Detroit Metropolitan Area Inter-League Organization on the topic.

There are eight background papers and a video of speakers from the LWV National Council meeting on the U.S. website ([www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)) and articles have appeared in the National VOTER. Also available online are the Consensus Questions with some background and discussion questions embedded.

Oakland Area's Immigration Committee felt that rushing through the six questions in one meeting would not do the topic justice. So we have scheduled two meetings, each covering three questions, at which the committee members will provide background and be resources for the consensus question discussions.

Consensus does not mean a majority nor does it mean unanimity; instead it is the overall sense of the group. We are looking for your views. The goal is to identify the issues on which members can find common ground. Leagues throughout the country will be providing their input and the resulting position will be a consensus of all Leagues participating.

We will also be doing Consensus this League year on the **State Local Government study** which deals with County and Township government. Background information and questions about Counties can be found on Pages 6-7. Info for Townships will follow next month.

In the **Voter Service** area, we are known for our **Voter Guides** and **Candidate Forums** and this will be an active Fall for both of those with most Oakland County cities and six school districts having elections.

But we are also focusing on increasing voter registration and getting more people to vote with two projects that especially target our youth

Our **Youth PSA Contest** will challenge high school students to use their communication skills and creativity to develop Public Service Announcements to motivate others to register, to vote, and to get into the habit of participating in civic activities. See our website for details about it.

At the same time our **Voter Registration project** will also target areas of low voter turnout and work with school districts and local clerks in such areas.

In the area of **Advocacy**, the Oakland Area Board voted to support a local proposal, the Novi Library Bond Proposal based on our Local Library Services position.

 [pres@lwvoa.org](mailto:pres@lwvoa.org)

## Voter Identification Requirement Calls for Picture Identification



Due to a recent Michigan Supreme Court ruling, every Michigan voter who wants to vote at the polls must show a picture identification or sign an affidavit that he or she is not in possession of picture identification. This statute was originally passed by the Legislature in 1996 but never took effect because the Attorney General declared the provision unconstitutional. Due to recent US Supreme Court decisions, the Legislature enacted the provision again and requested that the Supreme Court issue an advisory opinion on its constitutionality. That July 18, 2007, ruling is the reason photo ID will be requested of voters beginning with this November election.

People who do not have a picture ID will still be able to vote by signing a statement that they do not have one, and they will then be able to vote as usual. This includes people who have a photo ID but do not bring it with them to the polls.

However, a person who has an ID and refuses to show it will not be able to vote. Similarly, someone who does not have an ID, and refuses to sign the affidavit indicating that they do not, will not be given a ballot.

We hope that you will alert your friends and co-workers about this change in voting procedures. While most people carry their ID with them, and there is a process for voters who do not have an ID or do not have their ID with them, it is still a change, which has the potential for causing both confusion and bad feelings on election day.

While the League of Women Voters would like to see this provision repealed, it is likely to be with us at least through the 2008 Presidential election, and the more people are aware that it applies to everyone, the smoother things will proceed at the polls.

In addition, we hope you'll help us monitor the administration of this new requirement. Everyone should be treated equally, whether they are well-known voters or new residents. Every ID should be checked against the name on the Application to Vote. The Secretary of State has told election workers "consistent application is important to avoid any appearance that the requirement is being selectively enforced." We agree.

### **Things you need to know:** *(Answers from the Secretary of State information bulletin)*

A Michigan driver's license or state-issued personal identification card will satisfy this requirement. Those who do not possess either may show a current US Passport, military ID card with photo, a student ID with photo or a tribal ID with photo.

An ID does not have to show the voter's residential address, and the requirement does not apply to those who get an absentee ballot.

What if the names are different on the ID and the voter registration list? Differences are OK as long as the names are similar enough to verify the voter's identity. What if the photo does not resemble the voter closely enough to verify the voter's identity? Then the election inspector should take into account the age of the photo and reasons the voter may offer on why the photo is different. If there are still questions, a voter may be issued a provisional ballot so that the clerk can verify the voter's identity after the election.

Whether or not a voter is well known to the poll workers, they must still ask for the photo ID.

## **Busy Fall Schedule of Candidate Forums** by Eva Packard

CANDIDATE FORUMS arranged for the **November 6 General Election** include **Birmingham Schools** (10/25) and **Rochester Schools** (10/16) plus the following cities: **Birmingham** (10/23), **Berkley** (10/11), **Ferndale** (10/28), **Keego Harbor** (9/26), **Madison Hts** (10/24), **Rochester** (10/18), **Rochester Hills** (10/4), **Royal Oak** (10/23), **Southfield** (10/16), **Sylvan Lake** (9/26), **Wixom** (10/15) and, if there is a contest, **Huntington Woods** (10/24).

"**Voter League scrambles to set candidate forum**" read the headline in the *Daily Tribune* newspaper which covers Southeast Oakland County. Judy Bateman explained how the community center was too noisy due to fitness classes there and how, working with the Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce, we found a church to host the forum. The main point of the article was that, in other communities covered by the paper (Berkley, Ferndale, Madison Hts, Huntington Woods), LWVOA is able to hold our candidate forums free of charge at City Hall, but not in Royal Oak. The city will tape and replay our forum on the city channel because they recognize that the League is nonpartisan and includes all candidates and uses a fair format so we wonder why the City Hall, which is wired for cable, cannot be used.

**See the Calendar of Events on the last page** for details on those forums that have been arranged. Also **check the Candidate Forum Calendar on our website** ([www.LWVOA.org](http://www.LWVOA.org)) as we will post forums there as soon as they are planned. Cable rerun times of forums will also be posted as soon as they are known to us.

For the Sept. 11 **Village** elections, we held candidate forums in Franklin, Milford, Ortonville, and Oxford. Thank you to our Coordinators **Judy Bateman, Jerry Burden, Lisa Bauer** and **Don McHarness**, our Moderators **Neil Zechman, Jerry, and Emory Bauer (2)** and those who screened, timed or picked up questions: Judy, Jerry, Lisa, Don, **Ruth Hathaway, John Magary, Andrea** and **Paul Zalewski**.

## **Voter Guides in Process for November 6 election**

By October 9, Voter Guides are scheduled to be posted on our website ([www.LWVOA.org](http://www.LWVOA.org)) for six school districts and 16 cities with earlier filing dates. Later filing cities beginning with Farmington Hills, Lake Angelus, and Royal Oak should be available by Oct. 16, with Birmingham, South Lyon, and Walled Lake following next, then Pleasant Ridge and Huntington Woods, and finally, Clawson, Orchard Lake Village, and Northville last. Check the website and click on REFRESH if your community is not yet posted to assure that you are viewing the latest Voter Guide index webpage.

## **Elections at the Italian-American Club and Fundraising** by Eva Packard

Two years ago, LWVOA facilitated the election of officers for the Italian-American Club and earned funds for the League. We have been asked to do so again – on Wed., October 17. The Club's bylaws require that an outside organization manage the election and count the ballots. The polls are open from 11:30 am to 7:00 pm, and the ballots must be counted and the results announced to the membership about 7:30 pm. Seven offices are on the ballot, but only two are contested this year. Not surprisingly, the busiest time for voting is from 4:30-7 pm when people are done with work and come to the Club for dinner.

**Our plans are to have two people work from 11:30 to 3:30 p.m. and then four help from 3:30 to 7:30. We are looking for volunteers to help.** While experience working the polls for communities is an asset, it is not a requirement. Linda and Doug DePoorter, who were involved last time, noted that it is an easy way to earn money for the League and that our workers were offered lunch and dinner at meal times. **To volunteer, contact Andrea Zalewski at 248/855-2293.**

## **Volunteer for Voter Registration** *by Donna Sklar, Voter Registration Chair*

The **Voter Registration Committee** has been meeting to develop strategies to increase voter registration. Productive ideas have emerged. Anyone interested in participating is encouraged to **call Donna R. Sklar** (see membership directory) **or email her** at [TWODOLARS@mi.rr.com](mailto:TWODOLARS@mi.rr.com). In the Subject box write LWV or Voter Registration. Donna will contact you and will fill you in on the committee's work.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**FACTS ABOUT MICHIGAN'S IMMIGRANTS**



The foreign-born population of Michigan increased by 18.5 percent between 2000 and 2005, from 510,966 to 605,656. This represents 6.1 percent of Michigan's total population. *At the national level, the foreign-born population grew from 30,760,065 to 35,689,842, (16%) between 2000 and 2005.*

The largest share of the foreign-born population in Michigan in 2005 were from Asia (42.4%), then Europe (24.5%), Latin America (19.8%), Northern America (7.8%), Africa (5.1%), and Oceania (0.05%). *At the national level, the order was Latin America (53.3%), Asia (26.7%), Europe (13.6%), Africa (3.5%), Northern America (2.3%), and Oceania (0.5%).*

The top three countries of birth of the foreign-born in Michigan were Mexico (14.1%), India (8.6%), Canada (7.7%). *For the U.S., it was Mexico (30.7%), China (4.9%), Philippines (4.5%).*

In Michigan, 46.9 percent of the foreign-born were citizens in 2005.

The average household size of the foreign-born population in Michigan in 2005 was 2.44 persons for those who owned their own homes and 2.19 persons for those who rented.

Between 2000 and 2005, the number of foreign-born civilian employed workers age 16 and older in Michigan grew from 256,848 to 311,465, representing a change of 21.3 percent.

In 2005, the foreign born represented 6.9 percent of Michigan's civilian employed workforce.

The largest share of foreign-born workers in Michigan were from Asia.

The top three occupations of foreign-born workers in Michigan were management, professional and related; production, transportation and material moving; and sales and office occupations.

In 2005, 16.2 percent of Michigan's foreign born population lived below the poverty threshold. *Meanwhile, 13.0 percent of the native-born population in Michigan lived below the poverty threshold in 2005.*

In Michigan in 2005, 27.3 percent of foreign-born workers earned less than \$25,000 a year, and 42.2 percent earned \$50,000 or more.

In 2005, 37.7 percent of foreign-born persons in Michigan had a college degree, while 24.6 percent never completed high school. *In comparison, 23.6 percent of native-born persons above the age of 25 had a bachelor's or higher degree in 2005, and 12.0 percent lacked a high school diploma.*

There were 49,005 minors in Michigan in 2005 who were LEP (Limited English Proficiency), representing 2.6 percent of all minors in the state.

For more statistics, go to the Migration Policy Institute, [www.migrationinformation.org/datahub](http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub) and click on the picture of Michigan

## **LWVOA Supports the Novi Library Bond Proposal**

*The following letter was sent to the Novi News, Detroit Free Press, Detroit News and Oakland Press.*

Letter to the Editor:

The League of Women Voters Oakland Area (which includes the city of Novi) urges residents to support the Library Bond Proposal on the November 6<sup>th</sup> ballot in Novi based on our position dealing with Local Library Services.

The bond funding for a new Novi library is necessary to meet population and circulation demand which have grown significantly since the current library was built. Novi's population is forecast to grow by another 25,000 residents by 2030. The current library facilities are straining to meet the needs of residents, and a new building to handle user demand is critical to provide quality library services for Novi residents.

Eva Packard, President  
League of Women Voters Oakland Area

## **LWVMI Study of Local Government**

**The scope of the study is, "How can the delivery of services at the local level be made more efficient and more effective?" This study focuses on counties and townships**, not on other local units of government, because the study is a revision of a current state position on Intergovernmental Relations. The current position addresses counties and townships, not other local units of government. [Note: Township information will be included in the next *Oakland Voter*.]

### **MICHIGAN COUNTIES**

**Michigan has 83 counties.** They range in size from 316 square miles in Benzie County to 1,828 square miles in Marquette County, and from a population of 1,700 in Keweenaw County to more than two million in Wayne County.

County governments operate under the authority of the state of Michigan. They are a subdivision of state government and are closely regulated by the State. They are responsible for collecting taxes, keeping track of property ownership through the register of deeds, conducting elections, and supporting the sheriff and the courts.

### **Board of Commissioners**

The major policy-making and governing body in county government is the **Board of Commissioners**. It has both a legislative and an executive function. The Board may have from five to 25 members depending on the county's population and the decisions of the commissioners. The commissioners are elected to two-year terms in partisan elections from single member districts. The districts are redrawn every 10 years after the census. The Board elects its own chair and vice-chair, and sets up committees at its own discretion. The County Clerk, who is elected by residents of the county, is secretary of the Board.

The Board adopts the county budget and sets the property tax rate as well as county service fees. It also establishes county policies within the limits of the law. It may create boards and commissions, buy and sell land, build facilities, borrow money, enter into cooperative agreements with other units of government, and set salaries for itself and most county employees.

Many county functions are administered by commission-appointed boards and authorities. Functions such as mental health, public health, social services, solid waste disposal and the county park system, if there is one, are usually governed in this manner.

In addition, the county Board of Commissioners may establish any number of committees to help in the governance and oversight of the many diverse functions of counties. Because of the complexity in overseeing such a large enterprise, about half of the counties in the state have chosen to appoint some kind of chief executive officer. Some have opted for a controller who keeps records and reports to the commission. Others have opted for an appointed executive or elected administrator who carries out day-to-day operations of the county.

Elected administrators are chosen on a partisan ballot for a four-year term. The County Executive has veto power and may operate somewhat independently of the Board. Bay and Oakland Counties have adopted

*continued on page 7*

the county executive option. Wayne County is a home-rule county, having written its own charter for county governance.

### **Elected Officers**

In addition to electing members of the Board of Commissioners, county residents also elect county officers in partisan elections for a four-year term. The Michigan Constitution requires that the following offices be elected positions: Sheriff, Prosecuting Attorney, Clerk, Register of Deeds and Treasurer. Other positions, Road Commissioners and Drain Commissioner, may be appointed or elected at the discretion of the county.

The **Sheriff** has both civil and criminal jurisdiction throughout the county. S/he has responsibility for executing orders of the courts, managing the department and operating the county jail. The Sheriff is responsible for enforcing state and county laws. S/he provides support to other law enforcement agencies, particularly for road patrols, and is financed by the county Board of Commissioners.

The **Prosecuting Attorney** is the chief law enforcement officer for the county, and prosecutes criminal cases within the county. S/he must be licensed to practice law in Michigan.

The **County Clerk** maintains county records, serves as the chief election officer for the county, records statistics on births, deaths, marriages, military discharges, applications for citizenship and concealed weapons permits, as well as serving as Clerk of the Board of Commissioners, the Tax Allocation Board, the Board of Canvassers, and Clerk of the Circuit Court. In the absence of a county finance officer, the Clerk administers accounts payable.

The **Register of Deeds** is the custodian of property-related documents, deeds, titles, land contracts, descriptions, loans, mortgages, etc. The Register is also the Chair of the County Plat Board. In a small county these duties may be performed by the County Clerk. [In Oakland County, Clerk and Register of Deeds are merged.]

The **County Treasurer** is the custodian of all county financial resources, and the collector of taxes. S/he receives all revenues, invests reserve funds, collects delinquent property taxes and sells real estate that has unpaid taxes.

State law requires the following county positions, in addition to those mandated by the Constitution, (see above): Drain Commissioner and Road Commissioner. They may be elected by county residents or appointed by the Board of Commissioners.

The **Drain Commissioner** is usually not appointed, but elected on a partisan ballot and serves for a four-year term. S/he administers the Michigan drain codes in the county, provides for construction of new storm drains when petitioned by a local unit of government, is responsible for all natural water courses, sewers and drains in the county, and all water treatment plants established under the drain codes. In addition, the Drain Commissioner implements some state environmental laws, including those dealing with soil erosion and lake levels.

The **three-member county Road Commission** may be either appointed or elected, and is responsible for the construction and maintenance of all county roads. It may contract with the state to maintain state roads within the county. Because it is funded directly from state funds, the Road Commission operates independently of the Board of Commissioners.

### **There are two Consensus Questions dealing specifically with Counties:**

1. Should the State Constitution be changed to require:
  - A. Counties to transfer the functions of the following elected officials to either appointive positions or to departments established by the county?
    - a. County Clerk
    - b. Register of Deeds
    - c. Drain Commissioner
    - d. Treasurer
    - e. Sheriff
    - f. Prosecuting Attorney
    - g. Board of Road Commissioners
  - B. And, if so, should a County be required to empower its manager or executive officer to supervise and coordinate administrative departments, board and commissions?
2. Should the State Constitution be changed to require county elections to be nonpartisan?



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## Time Dated Material Enclosed

### Calendar of Events

- |             |                |             |  |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|--|
| Thur.       | Oct. 4         | 7 pm        | Rochester Hills Mayor & Council Candidate Forum (CF) @ City Hall   |
| Thurs.      | Oct. 11        | 7 pm        | Berkley Council CF @ City Hall   |
| Mon.        | Oct. 15        | 7 pm        | Wixom Mayor & Council CF<br>@ Community Center, 49015 Pontiac Trail, Wixom 48393   |
| Tues.       | Oct. 16        | 7 pm        | Rochester SCHOOLS Board of Education CF<br>@ School Administration Bldg, 501 W. University, Rochester 48307                              |
| Tues.       | Oct. 16        | 7 pm        | Southfield Council CF @ Southfield Library   |
| Thur.       | Oct. 18        | 7:30 pm     | Rochester Council CF @ City Hall   |
| Tues.       | Oct. 23        | 7 pm        | Royal Oak Mayor & Commission CF @ First Congregational Church of R.O.<br>1314 Northwood Blvd. (corner Crooks & Webster), Royal Oak 48073 |
| Tues.       | Oct. 23        | 7:30 pm     | Birmingham Commission CF @ The Community House, 380 S. Bates, 48009  |
| Wed.        | Oct. 24        | 7 pm        | Madison Heights Council CF @ City Hall (tentative - check website)   |
| Thur.       | Oct. 25        | 7 pm        | Birmingham SCHOOLS Board of Education CF<br>@ School Administration Bldg, 550 W. Merrill, Birmingham 48009                               |
| Sun.        | Oct. 28        | 2 pm        | Ferndale Mayor & Council CF @ City Hall  |
| <b>Mon.</b> | <b>Oct. 29</b> | <b>7 pm</b> | <b>Immigration Consensus General Meeting - Part 1</b><br>Costick Center, Dunmore Room, 28600 W. Eleven Mile Rd., Farmington Hills 48336  |
| Tue.        | Nov. 6         | 7am-8pm     | <b>Local GENERAL Election</b> for 27 cities, 6 school districts.   |
| Sat.        | Dec. 1         | 9:30 am     | <b>Immigration Consensus General Meeting - Part 2</b><br>St. Andrews Lutheran Church, 6255 Telegraph Rd, Bloomfield Twp. 48301           |
| Mon.        | Dec. 3         | 7 pm        | LWVOA Board Meeting, Residence Inn, 27477 Cabaret Dr, Novi 48377   |