



The VOTER

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The Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Kent

August 2007

League Immigration Study Committee Continues to Monitor Local, National Immigration Issues

Some of the latest news about immigration indicates that the number of persons illegally crossing the border between the United States and Mexico is de-



Staff of the Akron International Institute spent several hours talking with Kent League of Women Voters Immigration Study Committee members in August about the laws that govern the immigration system. Meeting with Kent League members Jane Preston Rose, seated left, and Amie Cajka, standing left, are seated, Sherry Thomas Prichard; standing center, Rebecca Jenkins and Pat Barger.

creasing. The reports attribute the reduction to increased border patrols and enforcement of immigration laws.

Federal pressure has been mounting with increased raids on companies that hire undocumented immigrant workers. The recent close scrutiny of the proposed unsuccessful national legislation by many sectors of the U.S. population is indicative

of Americans' increased consciousness about the complexity of immigration issues.

For those Americans who want stricter controls, this is generally good news. For those in the business sector who count on immigrant workers, these events portend a change "in business as usual" that could mean an increase in expenses to ensure hiring of properly documented workers. The resulting lack of approved immigrant laborers could mean the end of some businesses. For many who want to keep America's doors open to diverse populations, the issues of environment

and the impact on community sustainability are impacting how many people view nearly a million new neighbors—documented and undocumented—each year.

The Kent League of Women Voters' Immigration Study Committee has been reading and talking to sources in the community: a teen who walked from Central America to Ohio with his mother,

a member of the Kent community who volunteers for an organization that works with immigrants, and an Akron area immigration lawyer who walked the committee members through some of the immigration laws. This month, the committee met with immigration counselors at the Akron International Institute to talk about how these laws impact their work.

A program meeting on immigration is set for for October 18 at 7 p.m. at the Kent Free Library. A consensus meeting is set for

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LWVK Events Alert . . .

Thursday, October 18, 7 p.m.

Panel presentation on "Immigration in the 21st Century"; Kent Free Library, 312 W. Main Street, Kent.

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From the President's Desk:

Networking... Elections ... Voters' Guide ... Immigration Study...

Dear members of the best League in Ohio! We have had record turnouts at two great recent events—the Birthday Bash at Viking Vineyards and the Night at the Races at Northfield Park. Congratulations to the committee members and all who attended (or meant to attend)!

It's a sign that we love to socialize, and perhaps we'll have to do some more of that this year to attract members. We have been thinking about hosting League meet-and-greet events with some elected officials or just a networking dutchtreat social hour after work. There could be a little plug for the League, some comments by a member and maybe a raffle for a free gift from the business cards that participants put in a jar.

But it is an election year. Portage County hosts an off-year election on November 6. The biggest race is the Streetsboro mayor's contest. We have been asked to host a debate. If you would like to be the host for the event, call Barb Hipsman at 330/678-0681, Vicki Kline at 330/842-2782 or Terrie Nielsen at 330/274-0864, and we will include you in the loop. We will need some timekeepers and some question reviewers. More details to come later. The off-year election will be a large one also because school board and township candidates will be on the ballot, which means that we will

be putting out a big *Voters' Guide*.

After that, we will move on to the Ohio primary in the spring. That said, we will have many candidates from throughout the area. And there will be some city and school issues, no doubt. So, please give Barb or Vicki a call about helping with the *Voters' Guide* we will be issuing just before the elections (as we have done for more than 50 years).

Our big topic this year will be immigration and the very thorough and interesting study being run by Amie Cajka, joined by Roberta and Lloyd O'Keefe, Jane Rose, Deb Newberry and Kathy Mansor. They will be asking us to form a consensus to share with the U.S. League at some future date.

Christmas isn't far away, either. We would love to host another fun brunch as we have done in previous years. A volunteer (or two) is needed to help find a meeting location, plan a menu and carry out other tasks. Again, call Barb or Vicki if you can help. We love you all!

Remember: All meetings, including board meetings, are open to everyone—members and nonmembers. We welcome any ideas for future meetings and will work with you to make them happen.

- Barb & VICKI

The **VOTER** is published eight to 10 times a year by the League of Women Voters of Kent. The newsletter is available both in print and online at the League's Web site: <http://www.kent.oh.lwvnet.org/>.

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Call the co-presidents to volunteer to help with program meetings or committees or to get information about the League's activities and policies.

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Directors set policy and make financial decisions and are involved in programs, voter service and organizational activities of the League.

Off-Board Leaders

Nancy Adams, Land-Use Programs
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Audrey Cielinski Kessler, Voter & Web Site
330/677-8598

Jan Rusnack, Voter Registration
330/678-1261

LWVK Cleans Up at Horse-Races Night

The Kent League of Women Voters' Night at the Races fund-raiser at Northfield Park netted a total of \$927.10. The large total is thanks to a little horse named Fly Fly Noser—a 70-to-1 shot who won. The payoff of \$146.50 for three lucky winners was the cause for much celebration for the 28 League members and guests who attended the annual event. Thanks to Pat Sattler for "picking" those tickets.

Local League Members Volunteer for LWVO Committee Updating Position on State Taxes and Finances

Two members of the Kent League of Women Voters—Nena Hankins Vicki Kline—have joined the Ohio League of Women Voters committee studying an update of the state League's position on state taxes and finances.

During the 2007 LWVO Convention, the membership approved a motion to update the state League's positions on the issues. These positions cover taxation, finance, criteria, corporate franchise tax, income tax, property tax, sales tax and tax mix.

The update will be con-

ducted over the next year. The results will be sent to local Leagues for recommendations in early 2009.

Volunteers from other Ohio Leagues include Don Mottley (chair) from Dayton; Vivienne Himmell and Rita Peterson from Dayton; Scott Britton of Columbus; Chris Moran from Cincinnati; and Joan Callecod from Bowling Green.

Interested in joining the committee? If so, contact Dayton League member Vivienne Himmell at 937/223-8780 or viv.himmell@sbcglobal.net.

IMMIGRATION

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December 4 at 6:30 p.m. at the Mental Health & Recovery Board, 155 E. Main Street, Kent. Committee members also will help to promote a panel presentation on immigration issues arranged by the Hudson League on November 15 in Hudson.

Kent League members are urged to go to the national League's Web site at www.lwv.org to see the proposed consensus questions and to read the background materials. If you would like a copy sent to you, call Amie Cajka at 330/688-9545.

Upon reviewing the materials available, you will see that the questions are among the most complex that anyone has seen in the last 20 years. They deal with how to handle changes (or not) to laws and the administration of laws that govern immigration. The consensus will be challenging, and the committee has found the education process to be highly rewarding.

LWVO Receives Grant Funding for Voter Protection Project

The League of Women Voters of Ohio is one of a handful of state Leagues to receive an \$8,000 pass-through Public Advocacy for Voter Protec-

tion grant from the U.S. League's Education Fund.

The project focuses on working with minority and low-income communities in major metropolitan areas to remind voters to check their registration and provide information about the new voter identification requirements. Another project component is advocating for a functional, searchable state-



wide voter registration database. Project partners include Common Cause Ohio, the Coalition on Homeless and Housing in Ohio, and OhioVOTES.

While the Kent League could not "sign on" to help with the project statewide, it does have copies of the project's brochure, *Make Your Vote Count*, which details what identification documents are needed to register and to vote. The Kent League has used the brochure at many forums and will continue to look for ways to help register underrepresented populations. If you are interested in setting up some voter registration drives, contact Barb Hipsman at 330/678-0681 or Nena Hankins at 330/673-0128.

LWVK Membership Reaches 72

The Kent League now has a total of 72 members, including six new members: Carole Beaty, Shirley Fitzgerald, Melissa Long, Cathy Mansor, Christy Schjeldahl and Sandra Strauss. Four local members chose not to renew this year, and a couple of the nationally recruited members did not renew either.

Dues of \$50 for the 2007-2008 fiscal year (July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008) are still being accepted. Of that \$50, \$25.80 goes to the national League and \$22 to the state League.

Of the \$22 state League dues, the local League pays one-quarter of that amount from its Education Fund balance. If you have not paid your dues, Let Nena Hankins know whether or not you plan to renew. She can be reached at nhankins@att.net, nhankins1950@aol.com or 330-673-0128.

Bar Offering Program on 'Least Understood Branch'

The Ohio State Bar Association is offering an informative program on the importance of fair and impartial courts called "The Least Understood Branch."

The presentation includes a brief DVD and speakers who can discuss the significance of the judiciary, answer questions and facilitate meaningful discussions on the importance of preserving fair and impartial courts.

The judiciary typically is the least understood branch of government, yet it is the branch charged with protecting access to justice for all. As local League's town hall meetings on judicial reform have shown, special interests and partisan politics threaten the rule of law and the perception that courts are fair and impartial. The program presentations can be tailored to meet individual League meeting agendas.

To help make this the topic of a spring meeting for the Kent League, call Barb Hipsman at 330/678-0681.

The VOTER

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LWVK

Coming
Attractions . . .

October

18 Program on Immigration

Panel presentation on "Immigration Policy in the 21st Century"; Kent Free Library, 312 W. Main Street, Kent; 7 p.m.

27 Candidates' Meetings

Franklin Township Wards 1 and 2 trustees; Franklin Township school board candidates; county candidates; time (morning) and location to be announced.

November

1 The Gerald H. Read Lecture Series at Kent State University

Topic: Immigration; Speaker: Don Bartletti, the *Los Angeles Times* photographer who contributed the photos for the book *Enrique's Journey*; KSU Kiva; 7 p.m.

6 General Election

Be sure to vote! Polls open 6:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m.

15 Panel on Immigration

Presentation cosponsored by the Kent and Hudson Leagues of Women Voters; Hudson Library, 96 Library Street, Hudson; 7 p.m.

December

4 Consensus Meeting on Immigration Position

Mental Health & Recovery Board, 155 E. Main Street, Kent; 6:30 p.m.; bring your favorite salad.