



The Voter

May 2014
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The League of Women Voters of Tacoma - Pierce County

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Immigration Reform: Will Too Many Immigrants Mean We Lose Our American Identity?

by Stella Jones, Betty Devereux, and Lucinda Wingard, committee

We are fond of saying that being “American” means we help our neighbors in need (notice the flag-waving pride in responding to the slide disaster in Oso). On the other hand, however, the threat of a landslide of foreigners moving into our neighborhood puts us on the defensive. Even as this country was growing, immigrants were not always welcomed with open arms—especially those who didn’t speak like us, didn’t eat like us, and didn’t look like us. We thought of America as a “melting pot” where the newly arrived were on notice to become like “us” as fast as possible.

Now, in the 21st century, our American identity is becoming increasingly diverse. We live beside communities dedicated to maintaining some of their “foreign” characteristics. Are they going to ask me to change? Could I lose my advantage of seniority in my own country?

This is by way of explaining why “Immigration Reform” is so hard to do. The May Unit meetings will open a discussion on elements of a humane immigration policy for the 21st century.

To help us sort through the tangle of issues, guest speakers include Lua Pritchard of the Asian Pacific Cultural Center, Alexis Krell of the Tacoma News

in Detention Northwest, and a staff member from Adam Smith’s office. They will help us see into the practices of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency and through the gates of the for-profit Northwest Detention Center where nonviolent, undocumented adults can find themselves languishing for months and years.

Reading the two other immigration Voter articles will help you keep up with this crammed agenda: 1) The US League’s consensus position on immigration policy, and 2) excerpts from the summary of the Senate’s very long and complex bill. (Using the link in the article will find the full summary of “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act.”)

Also, the committee suggests a series produced by the news source Al Jazeera: “Borderland” (<http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/al-jazeera-america-presents-borderland.html>) “an original series in which average Americans are confronted with the realities of illegal immigration while retracing the footsteps of dead border runners.” This series has run on cable through April and will undoubtedly be rebroadcast. We hope it will continue to be available online in May.

Hope to see you May 8th, 9th, or 10th!

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The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

What Is the US League's Position on Immigration?

In 2007, LWVT-PC participated in the nationwide consensus process on national immigration policy. Our feedback and that of local Leagues across the nation resulted in the [Statement of Position on Immigration, as Announced by National Board, April 2008](http://www.lwv.org/content/immigration): <http://www.lwv.org/content/immigration>

The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the United States on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.

The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the United States.

To complement these goals the League supports federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations.

In transition to a reformed system, the League supports provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.

The League supports federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

Criteria for Legal Admission to the United States

The League supports the following criteria for legal admission of persons into the United States:

- Family reunification of spouses or minor

children with authorized immigrants or citizens;

- Flight from persecution or response to humanitarian crises in home countries;
- Economic, business and employment needs in the United States;
- Education and training needs of the United States;
- Educational program opportunities; and
- Lack of a history of serious criminal activity.

Administration and Enforcement

The League supports due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment.

The League supports:

- Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee status;
- Verification documents, such as status cards and work permits, with secure identifiers;
- Significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers;
- Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies;
- More effective tracking of individuals who enter the United States; and
- Increased personnel at borders.

The League also supports programs allowing foreign workers to enter and leave the United States to meet seasonal or sporadic labor needs.

Unauthorized Immigrants Already in the United States

In achieving overall policy goals, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria. While policy reforms, including a path to legal status, remain unachieved, the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

Excerpts from Library of Congress Summary of Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act Passed by the US Senate June 27, 2013

Section 2 - States that passage of this Act recognizes that the primary tenets of its success depend on securing U.S. sovereignty and establishing a coherent and just system for

integrating those who seek to join American society.

Title II - Immigrant Visas

Subtitle A - Registration and Adjustment of

Registered Provisional Immigrants (RPI) Section 2101 - Authorizes the Secretary, after conducting the required national security and law enforcement clearances, to grant RPI status to an alien unlawfully in the United States who: (1) meets specified eligibility requirements, (2) applies before the end of the application period, (3) has paid the required fee and penalty if applicable, and (4) has

been physically present in the United States since December 31, 2011, and maintains such presence until RPI status has been granted.

To read the rest please visit <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s744#summary>

Let's Talk: There are already legal paths to immigration. Why is "reform" needed?

by *Lucinda Wingard*

A. What's the problem?

- 11 million "unauthorized" residents live in the U.S., easily exploited and living in fear of deportation.
- More immigrants dream of employment, education, and family reunification in the US, but face huge backlogs of visa applications and bureaucratic mazes.
- Refugees from around the world are hoping for asylum from violent families, communities, and sweeping wars.
- US immigration courts are overwhelmed, understaffed.
- Natural disasters are displacing ever more numbers of people.

B. What are the roadblocks to solving the problem?

- Fear of losing our national character with uncontrolled numbers of immigrants;

- Worry that new immigrants will be a financial burden to communities and our nation;
- Belief that changing the status of any undocumented residents would be unfair to those who gained entry legally, and that 'amnesty' rewards law-breakers.

C. What's the impetus to solve this problem?

- Maintaining our US ideal of social justice and universal human rights;
- Recognizing our heritage as a "nation of immigrants," made stronger by diversity;
- Divesting our economy from economic exploitation and human trafficking;
- Creating a vital workforce in areas shunned by many native-born Americans (agriculture laborers and hotel/motel cleaning, for example);
- Empathy.

From the Co-President

by *Ruth Ann Hatchett*



As we come to our last unit meetings of the year, I want to congratulate everyone who worked with the unit leaders to present informative and interesting topics. The coordinators spent many hours researching and preparing for the meetings.

Often there were speakers recruited to present on the topic. Thank you to coordinators Paula

Eismann, Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow, Lucinda Wingard, Bobbie Fletcher, Sharon Peace Doane, Susan Eidenschink, and Ann Williams. You did terrific work!

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the annual meeting on June 14 at Merrill Gardens as we look back at what we have accomplished and look forward to 2014-2015.

April Units Discuss Gun Violence, Responsibility and Legislation

by Paula Eismann

Gun violence in America continues to be a terrible scar on the face of our democratic society as daily fatalities and occasional multiple shooting make the news and affect the sensibility of our families and neighborhoods. The April unit meetings heard an overview of federal and state firearm laws and their inconsistencies. Members also discussed the possibilities of reducing firearm deaths through safer and more responsible gun ownership.

Laws at the National Level

The Brady Act of 1993 established the National Instant Background Check System, which requires criminal and public safety background checks before purchasing a firearm from a federally licensed dealer. The Brady Act allowed the states to voluntarily submit additional information for the checks, which caused incomplete records resulting in gaps in the system. The Act did not require background checks on private sales.

Gun rights organizations have been highly successful in lobbying against passing of gun control and gun safety measures in recent years. These same groups have influenced Congress in passing a law in 1997 that prohibited the Center for Disease Control and Prevention from researching gun violence and methods of prevention. Because of this, there has been little research on the impact of firearms' fatalities for several years and, as a consequence, we have little data to establish prevention measures in firearm deaths and injuries.

Current Wa State Initiatives

In the past, the LWVUS has supported efforts in passing gun control legislation including banning assault weapons, requiring gun safety classes with gun purchases and closing gun show loopholes, among other gun control legislation. The LWVWA supports the upcoming ballot issue I -594, which requires background checks on gun sale transactions through private sales and federally license dealers. The limited studies on this issue say that additional background checks do have a positive effect the reduction of fatalities. Our neighbor, Canada, has much tighter restrictions and tighter background checks. When comparing the two countries, Canada has a rate of .5 deaths per 100,000 while the U.S. rate is 3.2 deaths per 100,000.

A recent poll in our state found that while most people favored 1-594, some of those voters also favored I-591, which states, "It is unlawful for any government agency to require background checks on the recipient of a firearm unless a uniform national standard is required." Obviously, education of the public is needed to clearly understand why 1-594 should be implemented. The passage of HB 1840 in 2014 requires those with protection orders against them to surrender all firearms if, under court review, they pose a credible threat. Prior to that, Washington State has not had a gun control measure enacted since 1997. It's time to take a step in the right direction to reduce gun fatalities.

What will you do to help?

Excellent suggestions from members at the meetings included more than a ballot issue discussion during a fall unit meeting. They are:

- Hold an educational forum for the public with a non-confrontational focus on public health and safety regarding firearms.
- Join with another organizations to educate the public on the differences between the two initiatives.
- Have a forum with both sides represented to discuss the differences between the two initiatives.

The League would like to provide this education in the fall of 2014. Please be a part of the planning by calling the League's office – 253-272-1495; or emailing the office and sharing your interest. lwvtacomapierce@gmail.com

Check out the Following Websites for More Information

- Mayors Against Illegal Guns (mayorsagainstillegalguns.org)
- Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence (smartgunlaws.org)
- National Rifle Association: www.nraila.org
- Following the Gun-ATF <https://www.atf.gov>
- Seattle Town Hall <http://crosscut.com/2013/02/04/law-justice/112776/gunviolence-town-hall-seattle/>
- Archives on Gun Issues on Frontline-www.pbs.org/wnet/after-newtown/tag/guns/
- www.pbs.org/wnet/after-newtown/tag/guns/
- kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/data/gunviolence.aspx
- www.handgunlaw.us

Tacoma Charter Review Update

by Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow

The Tacoma Charter Review Committee wants to change the form of Tacoma's government to sort of a strong mayor system. The mayor would be the executive, the council would have more power than it does now, and there would be a chief administrative officer. Some of us do not think this would be a great idea. Our League position supports the Council-Manager system, which we've had since 1952, (with some help from the League).

They were proposing changing to a council with seven council members, all elected by district – none at-large, as we have now. They have been convinced to give that up. As of now, they would leave our five districts and elect two at-large councilmembers. (We currently have three.)

They will be presenting two versions of the charter to the Council of May 6th: one with the changes that would be made if they don't change the form of government; the other with all the changes that would go with a change of governmental form.

At the second public meeting, I was among those testifying. (Fourteen of the sixteen who testified were against the government change.) At their meeting following, most of them expressed little to no interest in what had been said. Unfortunately for them, it was still an open meeting! The following week, there was a telephone call-in,

which was well-presented, and people got many questions answered.

I participated in a panel discussion at UW-T last week, as a League representative. It was very interesting. About 80 people were in attendance, which is great! The panelists certainly didn't convince each other to change their views – who knows about the public!

Our Co-Presidents have sent letters to the Committee and the Council about League's position. It's not too late to contact the Charter Review Committee with your views. Go to www.cityoftacoma.org/charterreview to find out how to reach them – and to get information about what they're doing. Our own Terri Baker is on the committee – so you can also contact her with your questions.

Letters to the City Council members are appropriate, and will get more appropriate as they decide which of the suggestions to send along to the voters. The Committee, unlike Pierce County Charter Review Committees, does not decide what to send to the voters; they simply report to the Council, who decide. We would prefer that the change in the form of government NOT be sent to the voters.

Keep reading and listening – and get active!

Taking the Lead: Creating Partnerships for Inclusive Communities

On **May 22nd** the 28th Annual **Fair Housing Conference** will be held in Tacoma at the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center, 1500 Broadway. The conference will highlight how to take the lead, at all levels from community member to housing provider to government official, in promoting and ensuring fair housing for all. This is the only annual conference dedicated to fair housing held in Western Washington. It is organized by the Human Rights section of the City of Tacoma Neighborhood and Community Services Department in partnership with the Fair Housing Partners of Washington (Washington State Human Rights Commission, Seattle Office for Civil Rights, King County Office of Civil Rights, Fair Housing Center of Washington and Northwest Fair Housing Alliance). For more information see <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FairHousingConference2014>.

Board of Directors

Voter Volunteers:
 Connie Ozmer
 Marie Cameron
 Susan Eidenschink

Please send comments or suggestions for The Voter to lwvtaco-mapierce@gmail.com

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Join the Tacoma – Pierce County League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma – Pierce County invites you to join us!
 Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a Member.

Yes, I'd like to become a Member of the League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County.

This application ALSO entitles me to full membership in and mailings of the Washington State and National League of Women Voters (LWVWA and LWVUS)!

Membership for one year is \$60 (for two Members of a household - \$90). Student membership is \$30 but we are currently offering it at half-price, and even have scholarships available at this time! Membership dues are NOT tax deductible. Contributions to the Education Fund (by separate check, and they are tax deductible) and/or the General Fund are welcome.

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Comments: _____

Mail to: League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County
 702 Broadway, Suite #105 / Tacoma, WA 98402-3710

Get Involved!!!

Attend a Unit Meeting

BRING A FRIEND OR TWO

TACOMA

Day/Time: 2nd Thursdays, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Place: N. Tacoma Police Substation, 5140 N. 26th St.

Unit leader: Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow,
lyzkurnitz@harbornet.com

LAKWOOD AND NEIGHBORS

Day/Time: 2nd Fridays, 10:00 a.m. - noon

Place: Steilacoom Community Center
2301 Worthington St., Steilacoom

Unit leader: Ann Elliston, 253-564-4102

EAST PIERCE

Day/Time: 2nd Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. - noon

Place: Puyallup Library, 324 S. Meridian, Puy.

Unit leader: Ellen Zulauf, See Membership Directory

GIG HARBOR-KEY PENINSULA

Day/Time: 2nd Saturdays, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Place: Harbor History Museum, 4121 Harborview Dr., Gig Harbor

Unit leader: Sharon Peace-Doane, 253-265-0841

Project Homeless Connect

On **Wednesday, May 7**, the third Project Homeless Connect of 2013-2014 will be held at **The Puyallup Fair Grounds (WA State Fair Grounds) from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm**. If you want to **help register voters and help inform felons of their right to register to vote** for one or two hours at this important event, please contact Susan Eidenschink, susaneiden@harbornet.com.

THIS MONTH - MAY:

Undocumented Immigrants – Economic Impact and Proposed Solutions – Unit members will be hearing about and discussing this subject. See background information articles in this Voter.

Unit members will be asked to bring contents for Baskets of Delights to be raffled off at the June 14 Annual Meeting.

NEXT MONTH - JUNE:

Attend the Saturday, **June 14 Annual Meeting** with pot-luck brunch at Merrill Gardens, 7290 Rosemount Circle, Tacoma, with social hour at 9:30, meeting starting at 10 a.m.

There will be no unit meetings in June. They will resume in September.

**League of Women Voters of
Tacoma-Pierce County
educates the electorate in essential ways.**

**You can help get the word out.
With a click of a mouse,
LIKE our LWVT-PC Facebook Page
then SHARE our meeting and event notices.**

Thanks.

Community Fundraising

We're gearing up for a concerted effort to establish relationships with Pierce County businesses that will potentially donate to the League to support our work (and accomplishments)! We discussed this initiative in the March Units, but in the meantime, please think about contacts you have in area businesses that could help open doors and your willingness to join the outreach effort. Also needed is someone to coordinate this effort with John Thurlow and others.

LWVT-PC Calendar 2013 – 2014

- May 7** – 9:00 am – 3:00 pm – Project Homeless Connect, Puyallup Fair Grounds, Register Voters
- May 8** – 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm – Tacoma Unit Meeting (Subject: Undocumented Immigrants – Economic Impact & Proposed Solutions)
- May 9** – 10:00 am – noon – Lakewood & Neighbors Unit Meeting (Subject: Undocumented Immigrants – Economic Impact & Proposed Solutions)
- May 10** – 10:00 am – noon – East Pierce Unit Meeting (Subject: Undocumented Immigrants – Economic Impact & Proposed Solutions)
- May 10** – 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm – Gig Harbor Unit Meeting (Subject: Undocumented Immigrants – Economic Impact & Proposed Solutions)
- May 17** – 11:00 am – 1:00 pm – New Member Orientation – Nancy Pearson’s home
- May 20** – 4:30 pm – 6:00 pm – LWVT-PC Board Meeting
- May 22** – 8:30 am – 4:00 pm – Western Washington Fair Housing Conference – Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center, 1500 Broadway, Tacoma
- June 14** – 10:00 am – 1:00 pm - Annual Meeting – Merrill Gardens, 7290 Rosemount Circle, Tacoma
- June 20** – Deadline for June/July Voter articles

Reminder

LWV WASHINGTON COUNCIL, MAY 30-JUNE 1 IN LYNNWOOD

This Council, which occurs every two years, runs from Friday evening to Sunday noon. Council is not a meeting where any votes are taken, but there will be several workshops related to the work of local Leagues, as well as speakers at Saturday lunch and dinner, and an update from the 2013 State League Convention. Each League sends only two official representatives, but other members are welcome.

Saturday lunch speaker is Tim O’Brien, who is a LWVUS staff member specializing in public advocacy for voter protection. Dinner speaker is State Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles, speaking on Human Trafficking in Washington: From the Historic Mercer Maids to Sexual Exploitation in Internet Ads.

Workshops (all on Saturday, May 31) are: (1) Boldly Growing Your League, (2) Small, but Boldly Growing, (3) Candidate Forums That Really Work, (4) Innovations for Fundraising, (5) Innovations in Educational Forums, and (6) How Can We Improve? -- Going Boldly into the Future.

The main day for these program items is Saturday, so you could go just for that day. An agenda, registration and room reservation information can be found on the LWVWA website: www.lwvwa.org

LWVT-PC Board Meeting Summary: April 15, 2014

by John Thurlow

A quorum of the Board discussed:

- Memberships: A raffle for renewing membership on time was discussed. Limited-cost associate membership idea was shelved, since state and national dues remain the same.
- Annual Meeting June 14, Merrill Gardens: To meet the required time for members to review proposals, a due date of May 10 was set for submittal of material for the Annual Meeting book. The May units will be solicited for contents for baskets to be auctioned. A small speaker stipend was approved.
- Tacoma Charter Review: Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow will draft letters to the committee and Tacoma City Council members for the Co-Presidents to sign.
- Voter: Profiles of members will be added to the Voter, starting with Board members to establish a style and tone. New member profiles also expect to be added.
- Units: March, April and May units were discussed, including the idea of a September general meeting to inform voters of the two ballot initiatives.
- Bylaws: The Board accepted the recommended change to the Bylaws to limit membership privileges of those found to have misrepresented the League in a public way. This change will be voted on at the Annual Meeting.
- 2014-15 Budget: The Budget Committee's report was accepted, and the budget will be approved at the Annual Meeting. There are no major changes, although the leased office copier/printer will likely be replaced by a purchased unit when the lease expires in 2015.
- LWV Posters: The Board approved a proposal to store and mail League posters nationwide, in return for a monthly fee and mailing expense reimbursement from LWVWA. LWVT-PC will collect the poster charges and remit to LWVWA.
- LWVWA Council: May 30-June 1 in Lynnwood. Interested members can view the program and register to participate at www.lwvwa.org. The program content is mainly on Saturday, May 31st.

Anne Jacobson Memorial

Anne Jacobson, long time member of the LWVT-PC died at the age of 85 on April 3, 2014. Anne earned the title of Honorary member for being a League member for over 50 years, faithfully doing voter registration at every opportunity, distributing TRYs throughout Pierce County, serving as recorder for her unit, and supporting many of the Leagues' events and issues. She was devoted to many other service organizations including the Congress of Racial Equality, American Association of University Women, American Civil Liberties Union and was very active on several political campaigns.

Among other careers, Anne worked as an industrial chemist, judicial assistant, jail commissary manager, and she raised a family. She was a part of the WSU Master Gardener Program, and enjoyed oil painting, the guitar, and traveling other countries with her husband.

Anne will be remembered by many of us in League as a role model who worked tirelessly for the betterment of a good and just society and for her strength and dedication to serve her entire life. She will be missed.

A memorial service is being planned. In lieu of flowers, donations to the ACLU, LWVT-PC, Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action or the WSU Master Gardener program are suggested.

League of Women Voters of Tacoma-PierceCounty
702 Broadway, Suite 105
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Phone: (253) 272-1495 Email: lwvtacomapierce@gmail.com Web: www.lwwa.org/tacoma

**SAVE THE DATE -- ANNUAL MEETING (POTLUCK),
SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 2014**

Where: Merrill Gardens, 7290 Rosemount Circle, Tacoma.
*Located off South 19th, between S. Mildred St. and S. Jackson Ave.
Entrance is through the gate off South 19th, across from Sunset
Terrace Park. Parking is available in front of the building's main
entrance.*

Social hour begins at 9:30 a.m.; the meeting starts at 10:00 a.m.

We will be electing some new leaders, voting on next year's budget, bylaws change, and a proposed new study on Mental Health. Full information and agenda will be in the Annual Meeting booklet mailed to all members before May 25. If you want to bring up something for discussion, contact one of the co-presidents to get on the agenda – Ruth Ann Hatchett or Paula Eismann.

Please plan on coming -- bring a friend and a potluck dish for brunch.

Welcome New Members!

**Evonne Agnello
Lauren Walker**

Thank you to our Donors!

**Nancy Davis
Patricia Morse
Robert Bennett**