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serving South Santa Barbara County

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA BARBARA, INC. • 328 A East Carrillo St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101

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SPECIAL EDITION ON IMMIGRATION

Financed by the LWVSB Education Fund

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This special edition of *The Channel Voter* is intended to provide additional background information on the topic of our current LWVUS study on Immigration. It includes summaries of several articles written by members of the national League's study committee and a summary of the findings of the most recent (2006-2007) Santa Barbara Grand Jury report on immigration.

You are encouraged to bring this special edition of the *Voter* with you to the discussion units that will be held in October and November (see the calendar on the back page). The consensus questions that we will be answering may be found on pages 6 and 7.

The results of our discussions will be compiled, reviewed by the LWVSB board of directors, and sent to the national League office in Washington by February 1. The nationwide results will then be compiled. The Immigration Study Committee expects to complete their formulation of the League's position by March 20.

The members of the LWVSB Immigration Study Committee are: Jessica Dean, Chair; Carmela Galvez; Janet Graham; Anne Heck; Sheila Kamhi; Bev King; Susan Shank; Pat Shewczyk. We look forward to seeing you at our units!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- LWVUS Web site www.lwv.org (includes the complete versions of the articles summarized here)
- *The National Voter*, February 2007 (article on "Immigration: A Historical Perspective")
- *The National Voter*, June 2007 (summaries of two LWVUS study committee briefs on "Global Interdependence and Migration" and "Immigration: Impact on U.S. Economy")
- Santa Barbara Grand Jury Web site www.sbcgj.org



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SUMMARY OF “EFFECTS OF IMMIGRATION IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY”

A Report by the 2006-2007 Civil Grand Jury, Summary by Susan Shank

The Grand Jury investigated immigration in Santa Barbara County, trying to ascertain the benefits and liabilities created by immigrants. The labor and skills of immigrants contribute to several areas of the county economy. Most immigrants work in farming, construction, the hospitality industries, and as maids, gardeners, and handymen. Most of these workers perform low paying jobs, and many of these individuals remain in marginal economic circumstances and use county services for their housing, health, and schooling.

The county has limited ability to assess the contributions and needs of illegal immigrants. One major problem is uncertainty about the size of this population. Credible figures range from 25,000 to 75,000. This uncertainty presents a major challenge in planning county infrastructure and public services. County officials reported that the county as a whole can cope with the present state of immigration. However, illegal immigration presents challenges in parts of the county.

Population

Most immigrants in Santa Barbara County are Hispanic; they arrive from Mexico and Central and South America and do not speak English. In 2000, the Hispanic population was 138,000, a jump of 39% from 1990. In the previous 20 years (1970-1990) this population in the county tripled. This substantial growth will continue, and by 2020 Hispanics are projected to be the largest ethnic group in the county.

Between 1990 and 2005, about 27,000 legal immigrants moved into Santa Barbara County, the vast majority of them probably Hispanic. However, projections call for most of the future increase to come from fertility rather than migration. If the projected slowing of total population growth and net migration is realized, it will ease the pressures on county government services.

According to the 2000 census, there were 85,000 foreign-born persons in Santa Barbara county, or 21% of the total population. These numbers may be low, due to undercounting, but even if the levels are somewhat low, it is clear that the rate of growth of the immigrant population has slowed. Between 1990 and 2000 the number of immigrants in the county rose by about 36%, only half the growth rate of the previous decade (74%).

Housing

Because of the lack of alternatives, most immigrant laborers are housed in high-density neighborhoods in urban areas where overcrowding is typical. When

affordable housing is not available, extended families and even unrelated individuals live together. Crowding can cause traffic congestion, parking saturation, deterioration of the buildings, and children playing on the street under unsafe conditions. The crowding often raises objections from surrounding neighborhoods.

The adverse impacts are not due solely to immigration; they can be expected for any low-income residents. The influx of immigrants willing to work at low wages, however, has encouraged the use of labor-intensive agriculture and has discouraged the use of automated equipment. One reason growers elect to raise labor-intensive crops such as strawberries is because of the ready supply of low-wage immigrant labor.

Health Care Services

Changes in welfare laws in 1996 limited access to most programs for new immigrants. Undocumented immigrants receive certain restricted medical services, however, including prenatal care, breast and cervical cancer treatment, and pregnancy and life-threatening emergency care. Children born in the United States are United States citizens and automatically qualify for Medi-Cal and other needs-based services if the family meets the income/resource criteria.

There were close to 5,700 births in the county in 2006. About one-fourth of these births occur in public clinics; county officials estimate that up to three-fourths of these clients are undocumented. This represents just over 1,000 births to undocumented mothers in our public clinics.

Santa Barbara County has the second highest percentage of uninsured children in the state - 14%, or over 16,000. Health authorities attribute this to the high number of agricultural and service workers, whose children are not eligible for state programs. County officials have been working to insure all children through a Healthy Kids program.

There are seven public clinics in the county that provide primary care to more than 30,000 individuals each year, one-third of whom are undocumented. Most patients are low-income, uninsured and underinsured, and non-English-speaking. The county and other public clinics have sliding scale fees to accommodate low-income clients.

Certain health risks are found particularly among immigrants, including the highly-publicized incidence of

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SUMMARY OF “EFFECTS OF IMMIGRATION IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY”

Continued from Page 2

tuberculosis (TB). In Santa Barbara County there were 15 cases of active TB in 2006, down from 26 cases in 2005. Of the 15 cases reported by Public Health in 2006, 11 cases were in foreign-born residents. Hepatitis C became an issue with farm workers in California in 2006, but screening for hepatitis is the responsibility of employers, outside the jurisdiction of Public Health.

Social Services

All applicants for social services such as Food Stamps, General Relief, or CalWORKS (formerly AFDC) must be U.S. citizens or immigrants “lawfully admitted for permanent residence.” They must provide a birth certificate or a resident alien card. Documents are sent to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and verified within a few days, before the application process is completed.

Children born in the U.S. to immigrant parents have the right to receive aid. Any calculation of family benefits such as food stamps would consider only the legal children of the family and not their undocumented parents. In California, the Department of Social Services is

obligated by law to help abused children regardless of immigrant status. Low economic status is more of a factor than immigration status at the Department of Social Services.

Schools

Schools may not deny enrollment based on citizenship status, but students entering school must show proof of age to allow grade placement. In the 2005-2006 school year there were about 66,000 students in the county’s public schools. Of these 18,000 were identified as English Learners, meaning students who have not passed the California English Language Development Test. The great majority (95%) of English Learners are Spanish-speakers.

Nearly all students entering our schools were born in the United States; however, many of them are not proficient in English when they start school. Cultural as well as academic integration is needed to fully support new language learning. School administrators see poverty and social environment as other challenges to academic success.

The full Grand Jury report is available at www.sbcgj.org.

SB COUNTY IMMIGRATION GRAND JURY REPORT

**Table 1. Santa Barbara County Population Estimates and Projections
By Ethnicity 1970 - 2030 (in thousands)**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Total	265.8	300.0	370.9	400.8	440.3	464.0	467.3
White	216.6	225.9	245.0	228.9	219.0	182.7	135.7
Hispanic	33.0	56.3	99.1	137.9	178.8	229.0	278.9
Others*	16.2	17.9	26.8	34.1	42.5	52.4	57.7

**Other races include Asians, Pacific Islanders, Blacks, American Indians, and those who are multi-race. About half of the total is Asian.*

Table 2. Employment by Sector* (in thousands)

	2000	2005	Projected 2010
Agriculture	14.9	16.3	18.5
Construction and Mining	9.3	11.0	12.1
Manufacturing	15.9	13.6	13.6
Services			
Transportation, Warehousing, etc.	2.9	3.0	3.3
Wholesale Trade	5.2	4.7	5.2
Retail Trade	21.0	20.1	22.3
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	8.4	8.6	9.4
Professional & Technical Services	20.2	23.0	26.7
Education & Health Services	18.4	19.5	22.4
Leisure & Hospitality	20.8	22.3	23.7
Other Services	9.9	9.8	10.5
Government	32.8	36.4	38.4
Total, All Industries	179.5	188.1	206.2

**California Employment Development Department. Past data are based on surveys of employer payrolls.*

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SB COUNTY IMMIGRATION GRAND JURY REPORT *Continued from*

Findings:

Finding 1

In Santa Barbara County, there is no effective system to measure the effects of immigration and, more specifically, illegal immigration.

Finding 2

The absence of comprehensive baseline data on immigration makes it difficult to plan for future demands on county infrastructure and public services.

Finding 3

County agencies have the tools to ascertain the immigration status of those who apply for services.

Finding 4

Housing is limited for immigrant workers, especially illegal immigrants.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1

The County Board of Supervisors should measure and

report on the effects of immigration on the county.

Recommendation 2

County Board of Supervisors should consult with experts and develop techniques to obtain better data on the illegal immigrant population.

Recommendation 3a

The County Board of Supervisors should direct county agencies to use all existing government databases to monitor the status of immigrants applying for public services.

Recommendation 3b

The Board of Supervisors should require all county agencies to test the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlement (SAVE) program to perform employment eligibility checks. The Board should also encourage private employers to do the same.

Recommendation 4

County government should investigate housing alternatives for immigrant workers.

WHAT MOTIVATES IMMIGRATION TO AMERICA?

by Patricia Hatch, Summary by Beverly King

HISTORICAL MOTIVATING FACTORS (1609-1945)

Religious Freedom:

- English Pilgrims, Puritans, Quakers, Catholics; French Huguenots, Russian Jews, German Jews, WWII Holocaust survivors

Freedom from Oppression:

- Fleeing oppression or barred from their homelands as enemies of the state because of unpopular stands against their governments, immigrants have sought refuge in the United States.

Economic Motivation:

- From the earliest days, economic opportunity in American has been a “pull” factor, even in the absence of economic hardship in the homeland. The great waves of immigration in the 19th century were made possible by more accessible and cheaper transportation for those seeking economic opportunity.
- Shortages in the labor market gave rise to voluntary and involuntary indentured servants and to the enslavement of Africans in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. There was aggressive recruitment of foreign laborers for the railroads and agriculture in the mid to late 19th century.

- The California Gold Rush brought immigrants from all over the world to the California. Chinese laborers also built the Central Pacific Railroad.

RECENT IMMIGRANTS

Humanitarian Protection:

5% to 10% of yearly admissions are persons seeking humanitarian protection from persecution or well-founded fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. After an interview by a U.S. official abroad, those who meet the above criteria are granted legal refugee status prior to entering the country. Only a small percentage are granted asylum if they apply when they arrive at U.S. borders.

Family Reunification:

- Hart-Cellar Act (1965) allocated 74% of available visas to spouses and adult children of legal permanent residents and adult children and siblings of U.S. citizens. Minor children, spouses and parents of U.S. citizens were exempted from family preference quotas.
- How effective is current policy at reuniting immigrant families? For spouses and minor children, the wait to reunite is often less than a

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year. For “green card” holders the spouse or minor child can wait many years. The spouse or minor child of a Mexican legal permanent resident can wait more than a decade to get a visa.

- Some take desperate measures at great risk to reunite, and end up in a legal limbo (the process is very hard to explain).

Jobs and a Better Standard of Living:

- Mass communication and mass marketing has made U.S. amenities desirable to those in the developing world.
- Internet and social networks provide information about work opportunities.
- One out of every seven workers in US was born elsewhere. The Congressional Budget Office projects a slowdown in total labor force triggered by retirement of native-born baby-boom generation.
- An employer applying for a typical worker without an advanced degree and not in a “shortage occupation” waits a minimum of 4 to 5-½ years after all paperwork is approved successively by the Departments of Labor, Homeland Security, and State before visa processing begins. Causes are quotas and backlogs.

- Frustrated by the lengthy delays in the legal process, many employers hire unauthorized workers outside the law.
- Author Michele Wucker says that the system is inefficient, has little accountability, and is self-contradictory. “Many businesses are forced to choose between breaking the law and closing down.” She states the way to end illegal immigration is to implement a system that allows the people our economy needs to come here legally.

Network-Driven Immigration:

Networks are established between migrants and their kin and friends in countries of origin, but also by their employers. The fit between the need of thousands of US firms for manual labor and the motivations of Mexican and Central American workers to take these jobs to fulfill their life aspiration is so strong as to defy any attempt at repressions.

Conclusion

Congress needs to develop, and Homeland Security needs to implement, an immigration policy that creates orderly, dependable, accountable, and timely channels for acknowledging these strong motivations within the broader context of America’s values,

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF AUTHORIZED & UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRATION

According to Dorrit Marks, U.S. economic growth continues to accommodate an expanding labor supply that includes 1.5 million immigrants per year. Their consumer spending and complementary effect on overall labor productivity generates greater gains for the economy than costs to the social welfare system. Economists expect demand for labor to increase, while at the same time the native-born population is decreasing in its ability to meet this demand for low- and high-skilled positions.

Do immigrants hurt the economic prospects of American workers? When it comes to the question of immigration and its effects on labor supply and wages, research produces competing findings with none of them identified as the definitive study on the issue. Marks puts forth in her summary paper that the negative effect on pay of least-skilled native-born labor is minimal if not arguable; yet it is worth noting that studies exist to both support and contradict this assertion. Immigrants also have had a profound impact on company creation, economic innovation, and market value in the United States — a phenomenon that

generates more labor opportunities for both immigrants and native-born Americans. Ultimately, we must concede that the relationship between immigration and wages is not clear cut and cannot be reduced to a simple one-to-one relationship.

There is also the question regarding the impact on public services, since an increase in immigrants in any given community also increases demand for services. Upon closer inspection, studies show that the burden on native households is small on a national level, but the net cost for native households increases in states that have both generous welfare benefits and large immigrant populations. This is due to the fact that the local level incurs the majority of public service costs, while the state and federal government costs are offset by tax income. Fiscal pressure on local budgets is most prominent in the areas of education and health care, the two most expensive areas for communities impacted by high immigration numbers.

Looking forward, the country is expected to face an increase in the number of authorized and unauthorized

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ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF AUTHORIZED AND UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRATION

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immigrants coming to the U.S. in future years, most of whom come from Latin America and Asia. Immigrants are meeting labor needs at both the low- and high-skilled end of the spectrum, and they are generating net economic contributions. Yet the impact of those costs and contributions on different segments of the native-born population and in different levels of governance need to be examined in order to move forward with a sound immigration policy.

For the full version of the background summary paper, please visit www.lwv.org.

CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

NB: For this special edition of the *Channel Voter*, we have eliminated all but the first set of boxes, to save space. The first set was left in to indicate how the consensus form will be set up.

QUESTION 1: Federal immigration laws should take into consideration criteria such as the following (not listed in any particular order or hierarchy):

Rate each of the following "*High Priority*," "*Lower Priority*," "*Disagree*," or "*No Consensus*."
Check ONLY one box per item.

PART A:

- a. **Ethnic and Cultural Diversity:** High Priority Lower Priority Disagree No Consensus
- b. **Economic, Business and Service Employment Needs**
- c. **Environmental Impact/Sustainability**
- d. **Family Reunification of Authorized Immigrants and Citizens with Spouses and Minor Children**
- e. **History of Criminal Activity**
- f. **Humanitarian Crises/ Political Persecution in Home Countries**
- g. **Immigrant Characteristics (health and age)**
- h. **Rights of All Workers to Safe Working Conditions and Livable Wage**
- i. **Rights of Families to Remain Together**
- j. **Rights of all Individuals in U.S. to Fair Treatment Under the Law (Fair Hearing, Right to Counsel, Right of Appeal, and Humane Treatment)**
- k. **Education and Training**

Instructions for Question 1, Part B:

In Question 1, Part A, you marked items as "High Priority."

Of these items, please select the three most important criteria and list them on the following page (with 1 being most important).

PART B:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Instructions for Question 2:

Rate each of the following "*High Priority*," "*Lower Priority*," "*Disagree*," or "*No Consensus*." Check ONLY one box per item.

QUESTION 2: Unauthorized immigrants currently in the U.S. should be treated as follows: (rate each one)

- a. **Deport Unauthorized Immigrants**
- b. **Some Deported/Some Allowed To Earn Legal Adjustment of Status Based on Length of Residence in U.S.**
- c. **Some Deported/Some Allowed to Earn Legal Adjustment of Status Based on Needs of US Employers**
- d. **All Allowed to Earn Legal Adjustment of Status by Doing Things Such as Paying Taxes, Learning English,**

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- Studying Civics, Etc.
- e. If Deported, Assess Fines Before Possible Re-Entry
 - f. Assess Fines Before Allowed To Earn Legal Adjustment Of Status

Instructions for Question 3:

Rate each of the following “*High Priority*,” “*Lower Priority*,” “*Disagree*,” or “*No Consensus*.” Check ONLY one box per item.

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)

- a. Immediate Family Members Joining Family Member Already Admitted for Legal Permanent Residence in the U.S
- b. Entering the U.S. to Meet Labor Needs
- c. Entering the U.S. as Students
- d. Entering the U.S. because of Persecution in Home Country

Instructions for Questions 4a and 4b:

Rate each of the following “*High Priority*,” “*Lower Priority*,” “*Disagree*,” or “*No Consensus*.” Check ONLY one box per item.

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)

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

Instructions for Questions 5 and 6:

Please mark each question as “*Consensus*” or “*No Consensus*”

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.

QUESTION 7: If desired, please add your brief comments. (Limited to 150 words)

LWV VENTURA COUNTY MEETING ON IMMIGRATION

Saturday, October 6

10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Residence Inn by Marriott at River Edge ~ 2101 West Vineyard, Oxnard

Reservations for lunch: call (805)379-2768 by October 2

Open to the public.

No charge if attending the program only.

CALENDAR OF UNIT DISCUSSIONS ON IMMIGRATION

OCTOBER

- 2 **Tuesday** **Dinner Unit:** 5:30 p.m. Madam Lu's Café, 3542 State St. Contact: Lolly Quackenbush.
- 3 **Wednesday** **Carpinteria Unit:** 12:30-2:00 at the Carpinteria Woman's Club at 1059 Vallecito Rd., Carpinteria. **NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE!** Potluck salad luncheon. Contact: Barbara Godley.
- 3 **Wednesday** **Evening Unit:** 7:30 p.m. Home of Sheila Kamhi, 1040 Portesuello.
- 10 **Wednesday** **Afternoon Unit:** 2 p.m. Maravilla Clubhouse, 5486 Calle Real, between Patterson and Kellogg. Contact: Marjorie Nefstead.

NOVEMBER

- 6 **Tuesday** **Dinner Unit:** 5:30 p.m. Madam Lu's Café, 3542 State St. Contact: Lolly Quackenbush.
- 7 **Wednesday** **Carpinteria Unit:** 12:30-2:00 at the Carpinteria Woman's Club at 1059 Vallecito Rd., Carpinteria. Brown bag lunch. Contact: Barbara Godley.
- 7 **Wednesday** **Evening Unit:** 7:30 p.m. Home of Pat Shewczyk, 5044 Walnut Park Dr..
- 14 **Wednesday** **Afternoon Unit:** 2 p.m. Maravilla Clubhouse, 5486 Calle Real, between Patterson and Kellogg. Contact: Marjorie Nefstead.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF SANTA BARBARA, INC.
328 A East Carrillo Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101**

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan 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. If you would like to join the local League, call the League office at 965-2422.

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