

Making Ends Meet:

How Much Does It Cost to Raise a Family in California?

(From the California Budget Project – www.cbp.org)

A NEW REPORT by the CBP, *Making Ends Meet: How Much Does It Cost to Raise a Family in California?*, estimates the costs of housing, utilities, child care, transportation, food, health coverage, taxes, and other necessities for families with two children and for single adults. The study reports these basic budgets for the state as a whole and for 10 regions throughout the state.

The study finds that families need to earn incomes that are much higher than the federal poverty line to afford to make ends meet. Approximately half of California's workers earn less than the hourly wage needed to support a family of four with two working parents at the level estimated by the CBP basic family budget.

The CBP analysis estimates that in order to pay basic bills in California:

- ● A single-parent family needs an annual income of \$59,732, equivalent to an hourly wage of \$28.72.
- ● A two-parent family with one employed parent needs an annual income of \$50,383, equivalent to an hourly wage of \$24.22.
- ● A family with two working parents needs an annual income of \$72,343, equivalent to each parent working full-time for an hourly wage of \$17.39.
- ● A single adult needs an annual income of \$28,336, equivalent to an hourly wage of \$13.62.

In contrast, the state's minimum wage provides a full-time worker with an annual income of \$15,600, and the federal poverty line for a family of four was \$20,444 in 2006.

November 2007

Calendar

Wednesday
November 14
7pm

**Immigration Study
Consensus Meeting II**
Community Room
Burbank Fire and Police
Headquarters
200 North Third Street
Burbank

Thursday
evening
December 6
Holiday Party
Ocean View Grille
Montrose

Monica Marquez Speaks at Glendale Homeowners Coordinating Council

By Anna Rundle



On October 1, President Monica Marquez was a guest speaker at the monthly meeting of the Glendale Homeowners Coordinating Council. Monica described our League's advocacy position on local Campaign Finance Reform, which promotes the adoption of reasonable campaign spending limits for candidates for local offices. She also discussed the possibility of requiring that applications for absentee ballots for local elections be sent directly to the voter, not to the candidate.

Although the Glendale City Council received a similar presentation from our League last June, no further discussion or action has been taken by the Council relative to any campaign finance reform.

Background Information LWV-US Immigration Study Consensus Meeting

IMMIGRATION is an extremely complex subject—and this complexity is reflected in the number and length of the consensus questions developed for this study by LWV-US. So that we can adequately address and reach consensus on all six questions, the LWVGB Board of Directors decided that we should hold two consensus meetings. The six questions were broken up into two groups of three questions, so that a different group will be presented, discussed and consensus reached at each of the meetings.

The second consensus meeting will be 7-9 PM on Wednesday, November 14th, at the Burbank Police Department headquarters at the corner of Orange Grove and Third Street (there is public

parking on Orange Grove between Third Street and San Fernando Road). **Please RSVP to Tom Carson at tjcarson@att.net by Sunday, November 11th so we can properly plan the meeting and its logistics. We must start the meeting very promptly at 7 PM as there is so much material to cover during our discussion.**

At this meeting we will be addressing Questions 2, 4 and 5, which are set forth below. Due to time constraints, during the meeting we will not be presenting much if any background information for these questions, so it **is very important that you do your own reading and research in advance and come well prepared to participate in the discussions.**

READING AND RESEARCH MATERIALS:

The LWV-US Immigration Study Committee has very useful information including articles and a listing of additional resources on the **LWV-US web site (www.lwv.org)**. See also the **October issue of the *National Voter magazine***, which features Immigration Study Brief # 3 – Border Enforcement, and Immigration Study Brief # 4 – Family Reunification and Diversity Policies.

CONCENSUS QUESTIONS continued on page 3

LWV-US Immigration Study

Consensus Questions

QUESTION 2: Unauthorized immigrants currently in the U.S. should be treated as follows:

Approximately 12 million immigrants currently live in the U.S. without authorization or have overstayed their visas. The question of giving these unauthorized immigrants some type of amnesty is dividing Congress and the country.

a. Deport unauthorized immigrants

high priority lower priority disagree

Many feel that because unauthorized immigrants broke the law to come here, deportation appropriately reverses the process. Others argue that unauthorized immigrants are here because the U.S. government does not issue a sufficient number of visas to meet labor demands, and that it would be unfair to plan mass arrests and deportation of millions of unauthorized immigrants.

b. Some deported/some allowed to earn legal adjustment of status based on length of residence in the U.S.

high priority lower priority disagree

As precedent, the 1986 immigration law's amnesty provisions were based on length of residency. Immigrants who could show ability to support themselves were allowed to stay in this country. Others might argue that it is not fair to give someone priority status in the legalization process because they have been in violation of U.S. laws for a longer period of time.

c. Some deported/some allowed to earn legal adjustment of status based on needs of U.S. employers

high priority lower priority disagree

The U.S. has an expanding economy requiring a larger labor force than Americans can supply. Providing jobs for immigrants, even low-skilled jobs, serves the U.S. economy well, but some feel that unauthorized immigrants, working for low salaries, drive salaries down for some low-income American workers.

d. All allowed to earn legal adjustment of status by doing things such as paying taxes, learning English, studying civics, etc

high priority lower priority disagree

Immigrants who gain English proficiency and assimilate quickly in other ways will qualify for better jobs and pay higher taxes. But many feel that all immigrants are expected to assimilate and unauthorized immigrants who have learned English, studied civics and paid taxes should not be rewarded with legal adjustment of status.

e. If deported, assess fines before possible re-entry

high priority lower priority disagree

Fines would help compensate the U.S. for deportation costs as well as for any advantages/benefits unauthorized immigrants received while living in this country. Others maintain that most unauthorized immigrants have been paying taxes and fees for services they cannot access, which would compensate for deportation and legalization costs.

f. Assess fines before allowed to earn legal adjustment of status

high priority lower priority disagree

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes and fees for services they cannot access, which would compensate the U.S. for legalization costs. Others feel that unauthorized immigrants should be penalized in some way for breaking the law when they entered the country illegally.

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.

high priority lower priority disagree

CONSENSUS QUESTIONS continued on page 4

The national identification card debate became more intense after 9/11 and has gone far beyond the Social Security card. The Real ID law, enacted on May 11, 2005, requires states to issue drivers licenses based on all of the following sources of verifiable information – a photo ID, documentation of birth and current address, and proof that a Social Security number is legitimate. These drivers’ licenses will be required as primary identification for the Social Security Administration, airline travel, entering national parks, and opening bank accounts, for instance. Provisions are to become effective in December 2009. While the 9/11 Commission recommended a national identification card in order to hinder both terrorists and unauthorized immigrants, as well as to reduce fraud and improve airline security, many people believe that such a card would infringe upon Americans’ privacy and possibly facilitate identity theft.

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

high priority lower priority disagree

Beginning with the Immigration Act of 1990, immigration legislation increasingly focused on unauthorized immigration and border enforcement issues. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) (now the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) initiated a series of strategies designed to stop immigrants from crossing the U.S. - Mexico border without authorization – “Operation Hold the Line” in the El Paso, TX, area and “Operation Gatekeeper” in California. These systems were a combination of physical barriers such as fencing, as well as high power light systems, and movement sensors. In 2006, Congress passed the Secure Fence Act, with the primary purpose of building 700 miles of new fencing and enhancing the technology to make the U.S.-Mexico border more secure. The cost of building the fence is estimated at \$9 billion.

The northern border has received little attention, primarily because immigrants trying to enter from Canada without authorization generally present false papers at border stations instead of crossing in unregulated areas, as they do from Mexico.

ii. Increased personnel at land, air and sea entry points

high priority lower priority disagree

Many argue that more personnel might reduce vigilante efforts, which are problematical, and also reduce the financial burden on state and local police and government. However, increasing the size of the Border Patrol is difficult and takes time. Retention rates are poor because of low pay relative to other law enforcement jobs, poor working conditions and few opportunities for advancement. Further, as expenditures for border security have risen, the number of unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. has increased as well.

iii. More effective tracking of persons with non-immigrant visas until they leave the country

high priority lower priority disagree

While 60 percent of unauthorized immigrants enter this country at the southern border, 40 percent come in legally through ports of entry – airports, seaports, northern and southern borders, and overseas consulates - and then overstay their visas. In 1996, Congress defined enforcement more broadly to reflect the need to cover air and land ports of entry and mandated a system for tracking entries and exits of students and foreign-born visitors be fully operational by 2003. Consideration might be given to increasing funding for existing systems capable of effectively tracking foreign students and temporary foreign workers until they leave the country, or to developing a less costly system of issuing machine readable, tamper resistant visas and other travel and entry documents to all international visitors before they enter the U.S.

iv. Verification documents, such as green cards and work permits with secure identifiers.

high priority lower priority disagree

Social Security cards, “green” cards and immigration authorization cards are generally accepted as the best documents to verify work eligibility, but without secure identifiers they are easy to falsify. They might be improved by new technologies, such as the use of biometrics.

v. Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee visa status

high priority lower priority disagree

To verify employee eligibility, employers must maintain a record (I-9 form) showing they have asked for and examined one of more than two dozen specified documents that prove employment eligibility. Employers must also verify Social Security numbers with the Social Security Administration – a process that currently can take months. The result is that roughly half of all unauthorized workers are hired by employers who fully comply with I-9 requirements, but have been unable to verify quickly and reliably the authenticity of workers' identity documents. In addition, questioning the documents, or asking for further documentation, can lead to discrimination charges. Basic Pilot, a voluntary federal online system, is available to verify job-seekers' documents. As of 2006, only 3,624 employers were registered with Basic Pilot, less than one-twentieth of 1 per cent of all employers in the U.S.

vi. Improved technology for sharing information among Federal agencies

high priority lower priority disagree

It might be possible to improve enforcement of current laws by integrating all immigration-related federal databases, such as Basic Pilot (employee verification), US-VISIT (visa records) and the Social Security system, and making the resulting system available to appropriate users to produce optimal results. But some would believe that a large centralized federal database could raise privacy and accuracy concerns, and be too costly to create and implement.

vii. A program to allow immigrant workers to go in and out of the U.S. to meet seasonal and sporadic labor needs

high priority lower priority disagree

Under current immigration law, temporary immigration visas can be used to meet seasonal and sporadic labor needs for low-income workers. Under the law, only 5,000 visas are available annually for low-skilled workers, but two-thirds of the 500,000 that enter the

country without authorization each year enter the work force, mostly in low-wage jobs. Because the system is complex, cumbersome, and slow, employers are unable to get workers when and where they need them, and agree that the current system fails to meet their labor market needs. Attitudes toward guest worker programs do not split on the usual pro-or anti-immigrant lines. Some individuals who believe that there are too many immigrants in the U.S. support guest worker and seasonal worker programs as a means of bringing in short-term workers who will not stay and who do not become permanent residents or citizens. Conversely, some individuals who are pro-immigrant advocates oppose guest worker and other temporary labor programs because they worry that they create conditions for the exploitation of workers.

viii. Significant fines proportionate to revenue for employers who fail to take adequate steps to verify work authorization of employees

high priority lower priority disagree

Under current law, unchanged since 1986, employer fines for failure to verify work authorization of employees range from \$100 - \$1,000 per immigrant for paperwork errors and from \$250 - \$10,000 for substantive violations.

Question 5: Federal immigration law should address and balance the long-term financial benefit from immigrants with the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations

agree disagree

Because the federal government currently realizes a significant financial benefit from Social Security revenues, federal income taxes and Medicare taxes withheld from the wages of authorized and unauthorized immigrants, while some states and localities incur unreimbursed costs for the provision of education, health and social services to immigrants, should this inequitable distribution of resources be redressed?

Cleaning Out Your Medicine Cabinet

Don't flush your expired pharmaceuticals down the toilet or toss them in the trash! They will get into ground or surface waters and may pose a growing threat to human health. Fish and other aquatic species are also affected. Instead, take these items to a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event or a permanent hazardous waste collection site.

There will be a One Day Mobile Hazardous Waste Collection Event on **Saturday, November 3 in Universal City**. More information is available online at www.888CleanLa.com or call 1-888-CleanLA

Source: Burbank Public Works Bulletin - Summer 2007

More Water, Less Cost?

by John D. Sullivan, LWVC Water Consultant

This article first appeared in the LWV LA County Voter. It has been updated to reflect the current political situation. Governor Schwarzenegger called a special legislative session in September to deal with this issue.

CALIFORNIA HAS FACED a water problem almost since its inception: people seem to want to live, do business, and farm in places that are short of water. To cope with this situation, the state has developed a water infrastructure that moves water from the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and the Colorado River to places where people live, work, and farm such as the Bay Area, the San Joaquin Valley, and southern California. In an extremely important way, citizens of this state are intimately connected by these extensive water transport systems.

Now the state finds itself with a water system that is in crisis. The crisis stems from a number of sources: an extended drought with no end in sight, increasing population, an aging water infrastructure, and ongoing fights over who should get the water that is available.

Southern California has witnessed a constant focus on water issues with, most recently, the City of Long Beach declaring a water emergency and imposing measures to alter the way people in that city use water. This decision comes partly as the result of the current drought and partly as the result of a legal decision by a federal judge that could result in lower deliveries of Delta water to the southern part of the state. The judge's decision was based on the perilous state of the Delta smelt which are protected by the Endangered Species Act.

To deal with this crisis, Governor Arnold

Schwarzenegger has proposed a \$9 billion bond issue. If passed, the bond money would be used for the construction of at least three new dams in different parts of the state, as well as address the need for a "conveyance facility" to move water across the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The purpose of these new dams would be to increase the supply of water to water-poor parts of the state.

A network of environmental organizations around the state (including the LWVC) known as "Green California," has made a counter proposal to State Senator Don Perata for an "appropriate water supply response package." Green California's proposal would get the state additional supplies of water at half the cost of the Governor's proposal and require that the bond money be spent on improving water supply reliability (water recycling and water use efficiency), groundwater protection, water quality improvements including a focus on disadvantaged communities, Delta restoration and enhancement, and river and watershed restoration. Green California argues that its suggestions would cost about \$4.525 billion, roughly half of what the Governor is proposing and without the construction of new dams.

Another water bond could appear on the ballot as early as February 2008. The League is a signatory to the Green California letter and will likely take a position on any water bond on the ballot. The League will disseminate information about water bond developments as that information becomes available.

LEED at Glendale Community College

LEED stands for The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System, which was created by the U.S. Green Building Council. It recognizes performance in five areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality. LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a building project meets the highest performance standards. It is available in four progressive levels of certification.

Glendale Community College is currently finalizing plans for building projects on the Garfield Campus and a new student services building. In 2003, the Glendale

Community College Board of Trustees passed a resolution to build according to LEED standards and to obtain LEED certification at the highest LEED standard possible within the resources planned and allocated to each new building and renovation project.

Glendale/Burbank League Member Nancy Kent has led efforts to follow up with the Glendale Community College Board of Trustees regarding the 2003 resolution. At the October 17, 2007 Board meeting, Dr. Armine Hacopian (a member of the Board of Trustees and a League member) publicly assisted this effort. Our League is supporting LEED certification of the building projects planned for Glendale Community College.



Membership Application

It is easy to join the League of Women Voters of Glendale/Burbank. All Citizens of voting age are welcome. Associate Membership is open to all others.

YES! I want to add my voice to yours by joining the League of Women Voters as part of your voice for citizens and force for change. I enclose: (please check one or more of the following)

- \$60.00 for a one-year individual membership (includes a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- \$100.00 for a one-year household membership for two members who share the same address (includes a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- \$30.00 for a one-year student membership

I am unable to join League at this time, but enclose a contribution of \$ _____

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I would like to receive my VOTER by email.

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Make check payable to League of Women Voters. Mail to Vera Naylor, 7714 Via Capri, Burbank CA 91504

Gifts made payable to "LWV Education Fund" are tax deductible.



The Voter

THE VOTER IS PUBLISHED nine times a year by the League of Women Voter of Glendale/Burbank, California.

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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 advocacy.

The League never supports or opposes any political party or candidate. We advocate only on issues that members have studied and come to a consensus on. In an era of proliferating and powerful special interests, the League's advocacy in the public interest is increasingly recognized as an essential voice of democracy.

SAVE THE DATE 2007 HOLIDAY PARTY

OUR LEAGUE'S HOLIDAY PARTY WILL BE HELD AT OCEAN VIEW GRILLE IN MONTROSE ON THURSDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 6. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE. INVITATIONS WILL BE SENT AND MORE INFORMATION WILL APPEAR IN THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF THE VOTER.

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