

LWVUS and LWVPDX positions on Immigration, Portland Police Bureau and Justice

LWVUS Immigration position

(Summary: **Immigration**)

Promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business, and employment needs of the United States; be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises; and provide for student visas. Ensure fair treatment under the law for all persons. In transition to a reformed system, support provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.)

Statement of Position on Immigration, as announced by the National Board, April 2008:

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.

LWVPDX position on Portland Police Bureau

Portland Police Bureau (1982)

The League of Women Voters of Portland believes the primary function of the Portland Police Bureau is the protection of life and property through the just and effective enforcement of the law, including crime prevention programs and strong visibility of the police.

Just and effective enforcement of the law demands good police/community relations. We support the specialized education and training of police personnel in human relations, including the use of specialists from outside the Bureau. The selection and assignment of police personnel should reflect the individual's knowledge of and sensitivity to variations in community needs.

We support citizen involvement in the functioning of the Portland Police Bureau including, but not limited to, budget advisory committees, precinct advisory councils, and citizen advisory groups.

LWVPDX position on Juvenile Justice

Juvenile Justice (2006, 2003, 1997)

1. The general goals and characteristics of the juvenile justice system should be to:

- **Protect the public.**
- **Stress programs for prevention, early intervention and treatment for delinquents and at-risk youth. These**
- **programs should provide care, guidance, treatment and control to promote the child's welfare.**
- **Provide fair and impartial procedures.**
- **Promote personal responsibility and accountability for one's delinquent acts.**
- **Reform and rehabilitate offenders.**
- **Promote swift and decisive intervention.**
- **Maintain an open and accountable system.**
- **Stress alternatives to detention or incarceration.**

2. We believe that mandatory minimum sentencing for a broad range of juvenile crimes is not a desirable goal of the juvenile justice system. The justice system should have some flexibility to consider a youth's family circumstances and personal history. There should be guidelines for sentencing to encourage equal sentences for equal offenses, but these should not be mandatory.

3. We support the adoption of a "second look" concept for 15- to 17-year-olds convicted of Measure 11 offenses. The purpose of this "second look" should be to encourage rehabilitation. The decision to reduce a sentence should be made in a court hearing before a judge and based on testimony from a panel of professionals acquainted with the case.

4. Although the over-representation of minorities in the Multnomah County Juvenile Justice system is due in large part to societal problems, we agree with justice officials that the justice system should

work to correct this imbalance in the following ways suggested by Krisberg and Austin in their publication *Reinventing Juvenile Justice*:

- Increase the ethnic balance in law enforcement, probation and court agencies.
- Require cultural sensitivity training for police, probation officers and judges.
- Establish drug treatment programs and make them readily available.
- Create job training and placement programs.
- Increase involvement of minority communities in police work.
- Establish family support services in minority communities.
- Build mentoring programs for at-risk youth.

5. Services of the justice system, such as parent effectiveness classes, should be extended to family members of youth involved with the justice system. Punishment of parents for the acts of their children should occur only after all other efforts have proved ineffective. An array of possible penalties in addition to financial fines should be available to provide a flexible response to gaining parental cooperation.

6. Youth under the age of 18 should not be subject to automatic waiver to adult court. Youth under 15 should be assumed incapable of understanding the legal system adequately to stand trial in adult court.

All other juveniles should be evaluated for their competency to stand trial before being turned over to the adult court system.