

May 2, 2008

296 Highland Hill Drive
Durango, CO 81301

Renee Parsons, Mayor
Leigh Meigs, Mayor pro tem.
Scott Graham, Councilor
Doug Lyon, Councilor
Michael Rendon, Councilor

cc: Ron LeBlanc, City Manager

Dear Councilors:

The League of Women Voters of La Plata County, and all other LWVs across the country, now have a position on immigration from which to advocate for overall reform and against inhumane treatment of unauthorized immigrants. We're sending you, our Durango City Councilors, a copy of the position so that you will have an understanding of the basis from which we will be advocating for or against city legislation or policy involving immigration.

The new national position, announced by the national board of the League of Women Voters in early April, is distilled from the consensus of nearly 850 local LWVs across the country, including ours, after eighteen months of grass-roots study. During the study members discussed the components of an ideal immigration policy as well as treatment of unauthorized immigrants currently residing within our borders.

In a nutshell, League members nation-wide oppose deportations and support earned citizenship for unauthorized immigrants, as part of overall immigration reform. Individuals with no criminal record could earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria. 'We oppose deportations of current unauthorized immigrants with no history of serious criminal activity' said national League president Mary G. Wilson.

The League position sets criteria for legal admission to the U.S., including family reunification of spouses or minor children; economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.; political persecution or humanitarian crises; and study in the U.S.

Other highlights of the League's position include support for increased enforcement personnel at borders, more effective tracking of individuals entering the U.S., and significant fines and penalties for employers hiring unauthorized workers. Furthermore, the League will champion due process for all persons, including the right to humane treatment, a fair hearing, counsel, and appeal.

Additionally, to stem the flow of individuals and families desiring to come to the U.S. for economic reasons, the LWV supports complementary foreign policy designed to improve

economies, education, job opportunities and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations.

The League will also use this position to guide its advocacy work on federal and state legislation. Recognizing that immigration reform may take place incrementally, the League will examine all relevant legislation to evaluate whether it moves us in the direction of acceptable overall reform.

I have attached the full position on immigration reform, which may also be found, along with much supporting material, at www.lwv.org under Projects.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Brown, Chair
Immigration Committee
LWV of La Plata County
259-3593

Attachment: LWVUS immigration position