



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

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League of Women Voters of Illinois-Immigration Study

The League of Women Voters of Illinois has recently completed a two year study on immigration at the grassroots level in Illinois and has reached consensus on issues that impinge upon local, county and state jurisdiction.

One of our conclusions was that local municipalities should not deputize local police to enforce immigration laws. We talked to the police departments in many communities, and the overriding response was that they did not want that responsibility because they were short-handed and they were dubious about reimbursement from the federal government to carry out the necessary training and paperwork.

The other half of our findings cautioned against racial profiling and inhumane treatment. Also, there was an overwhelming concern about the uneven treatment of immigrants – both legal and illegal – from one municipality to another, making it very difficult for legal and illegal immigrants to know what the law requires and sending illegal immigrants even further into the shadows.

Our conclusions are directed towards deportation authority and in no way prevents the police from carrying out their responsibilities to keep the community safe.

The history of immigration and laws to regulate it show that often immigrants were scapegoats, particularly when there were problems and fears within the American society. History also shows that our country has benefited greatly from immigration. Just because the federal laws do not address our present needs does not mean that local police should have that responsibility.

The federal government needs to legislate a comprehensive immigration plan that is fair for businesses and all other citizens and to make clear the procedures to apply for citizenship. We must not let fears and emotions override both the humanitarian and legal actions which are important to all of American society. And it is the federal government that must make and carry out those immigration laws.

Jane Partridge

Director, League of Women Voters of Lake County
Member of the Illinois League of Women Voters Immigration Study