

# ***1 The Montgomery Voter***

*December 2007/January 2008*

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery  
P.O. Box 231323, Montgomery, AL 36123-  
1323  
334 264-VOTE or 334 270-0539

## **The Presidents' Message**

*by*  
*Rosalind Toles and Anne Permaloff*

The January 16<sup>th</sup> General Meeting will be devoted to consensus on the national immigration study. The Consensus Questions distributed by LWVUS are at the end of this Voter [*or [click here](#)*]. Rosalind will lead the Consensus discussion.

After reading the Immigration Study Briefs and other immigration materials distributed through previous *Voters*, please read the Consensus Questions carefully. (If you did not receive these materials, please contact Anne at [grafton\\_mtgy@bellsouth.net](mailto:grafton_mtgy@bellsouth.net) or 270-0539.) Then, fill in your answers and bring the question sheet to the January meeting. If you wish more information, remember the LWVUS and LWVAL websites ([www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) and [www.lwval.org](http://www.lwval.org)) are available to you.

*Consensus means agreement among a substantial number of members who are representative of the whole membership. It does not refer to majority voting positions.*

Consensus meetings are held after members receive and study educational materials related to the topic under study and then discuss these materials. With a national study each Local League is involved. The Local Leagues each send a report to the LWVUS outlining where there is consensus and non-consensus for each Consensus Question. The LWVUS leadership then collates these reports in order to develop a

clear statement of the areas of consensus for the League membership as a whole. The consensus positions so identified become the basis of League advocacy (lobbying).

The report of LWVM consensus is prepared by LWVM Board action and sent to national. The Board has authorized a committee made up of most of its membership to write the report. Since the Consensus Report is due in Washington by February 1<sup>st</sup>, the committee will meet immediately after the January General Meeting. This will give the full Board time to review the document.

*Please make every effort to attend the January meeting. If you cannot, please e-mail or mail your responses to the questions to Anne (637 Horseshoe Curve, Pike Road, AL 36064) so that they are in her hands by Monday January 14<sup>th</sup>.*

## **Another Perspective on Immigration**

The November-December 2007 issue (vol.107, no.2) of *Minnesota*, the University of Minnesota Alumni Association magazine, featured an interview on immigration by Meleah Maynard of Dr. Donna Gabaccia. Gabaccia is a history professor at the university and Director of the Immigration History Research Center. The interview revealed some interesting facts about immigration in this country and around the world. Those that have not been covered by previous *Voter* articles or at our General Meetings are listed below.

- For Gabaccia the key issue related to immigration is “whether people have the right to move from place to place.” She notes that: “Though the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says people have the right to leave their home countries, it does not assert that they have the right to go anywhere else

...” And, “Without the right to enter another country the individual right to leave you home country seems meaningless.” (p. 18)

- Today, the largest groups of immigrants worldwide include peoples from Mexico, China, India, and the Philippines.
- Most immigrants to the U.S. are now coming from Latin America and Asia. In Europe the immigrants come from Africa and Asia. The Middle East is part of Asia.
- Foreign born populations (legal and illegal) are increasing in number in many nations. Numbers today include: United States—35-38 Million; Russia—12 Million; Germany —10 Million; France—15 Million; and Saudi Arabia —6.5 Million. In the U.S. that is 15% of the total population and in Saudi Arabia over 50% of the total population.
- Approximately 23 million of the 35 million foreign-born in the U.S. are working. The remainder is mainly children and women.
- About 10% of the illegal immigrants in the U.S. own their own home.
- U.S. unemployment was at <5% in 2007. Economics consider this “full employment.”
- Wages in some sectors (agriculture, construction and service) where immigrants work have declined slightly. Most of these jobs have wages <\$10/hour.

Dr. Gabaccia believes the real debate related to immigration “should probably be about whether it’s the law or the workers who create the problem.” (p. 22) The law referred to covers not only the current quota system for entry and rules for bringing in family members but the laws related to employment, economic policies that impact quality of life in other nations, and the like that are covered in the

LWVAL immigration briefs that appeared in a previous *Voter*.

## LWVM Information

Currently, 2007-2008 paid membership in the LWVM is at 47 with a 48<sup>th</sup> membership application received without the dues check.

Bills for Per Member Payments (PMPs) to the LWUS and LWVAL have been fully paid for the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

Merlin Newton and Martha Blackwell have updated *Who Represents You* to reflect changes as the result of 2007 elections. The Ed Fund Board at its January 2008<sup>th</sup> meeting authorized the printing of 1000 new brochures. They will be distributed to local Boards of Registrars which like to have them available for new voters and will also be delivered other public locations for distribution.

## LWVM Calendar

**January 16** General Meeting – noon  
Consensus on Immigration

**February 20** General Meeting – noon  
Presentation/discussion on local government study.

**March 5** Board Meeting, noon.

**March 19** General Meeting, noon Discussion of LWVAL Study Materials on Initiative and Referendum.

**April 2** – Board Meeting, noon

**April 16** General Meeting, noon. Consensus on Initiative and Referendum.

**May 21** – Annual Meeting, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.  
Special Location: Young House.